

NIGERIAN POLITICS AND THE INDICES OF DEMOCRATIC DESTRUCTION: A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION

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Abstract

Democracy globally is known as the legitimate system of organization in a political setting of any sovereign nation due to its character in institutionalizing constitutionalism, protection of fundamental human rights, accountability, sovereignty, citizens' participation, right to life and association and many more. Consequently, amidst Nigeria's long acclaimed uninterrupted democratic practice and experience from 1999 regardless of the earlier practice, concerns have persistently continued as regards the future of democracy in Nigerian state as well as the continually gradual erosion and destruction of democratic values, culture and institutions in Nigeria. This article critically examines the Nigerian politics from the lens of the indices of democratic destruction and tries to adequately evaluate the extent to which political negative practices have drastically weakened democratic governance in the country. Philosophical method of analysis is employed in order to critically clarify and systematically evaluate Nigerian politics and what it has become since the introduction of the system in the country. The research as well interrogates the visible and contradictory actions between democratic ideals and political realities in Nigeria. The paper, therefore, argues that democratic destruction is a reflection that is not only in corruption but also in electoral malpractice, judicial bias and prejudiced interference, civic disengagement, elite domination, institutional fragility and instability, insecurity, identity politics, erosion of public trust and political violence to mention but a few. The study carefully contends that Nigeria has consistently and persistently exhibits several negative characteristics clearly associated with democratic murdering, backsliding and diminishing, where it is noticed that democratic institutions formally exist but are clearly and increasingly neglected and undermined by the country's political actors and leadership as well as countless structural deficiencies. The article, hence, concludes that democratic renewal in Nigeria needs clear ethical leadership, constitutional fidelity and consistency, democratic institutional independence, and political system and culture embedded and strongly rooted in justice, equality, fairness, equity, accountability and common good for all and sundry.

Keywords: Democracy, Nigerian Politics, Political Philosophy, Democratic Destruction, Governance, Ethics, Leadership

Introduction

History never forgets, and history is not preserved just simply for humans to remember the past, but rather, it is carefully, critically and systematically preserved in order to challenge the present towards the good and betterment of the future. Nigeria's change of governmental system, power, and transition from military dictatorial rule to civil democratic governance in 1999, has experienced uninterrupted democratic administrations and regular civic elections. This change of government initially generated massive optimism and hope regarding the future of democratic consolidation and sustainability in Nigeria's political sphere with hope of adequate political development and progress in all spheres of the country's life. However, more than two and a half decades down the line, philosophers, political analysts and scholars has increasingly and continuously question whether Nigerian democracy has made any progress at all beyond normal procedural periodic elections, to globally acclaimed substantive democratic governance. The electoral existence and elections alone does not in any way guarantee actual democracy in a country.

Consequently, philosophers and political thinkers has consistently points to weak political party institutionalization, declining civic and public trust, elite state and political institutional capture and consequently political patronage as clear and significant contributors to Nigeria's democratic fragility and instability. Democratic governance in any nation requires separation of powers, respect for civil liberties, transparency, meaningful citizens' political participation, constitutionalism, judicial independence in every ramification, effectively built and run institutions of democratic governance, accountability, people oriented policies and many more. In a country like Nigeria where these basic tenets are missing or weakened, democracy may never thrive and may persist just in form under formality sake while in actual sense deteriorating in substance which is the needed foundation for a good democratic nation to succeed. This is simply referred as democratic erosion, murdering and/or backsliding.

Furthermore, Nigeria's case is philosophically questionable because it is quite noticeable that its democratic supposed institutions systematically coexists with consistent and persistent corruption, political violence of different forms, insecurity that has threatened every fabrics of the nation's strength, declining civic confidence in governance, electoral controversies, manipulations and intimidation, and executive dominance and institutional capture. These unwarranted political realities in Nigeria politics clearly suggest that democratic destruction is often put in place by politicians and leaders under gradual process rather than abruptly, and this actually occurs and rears its ugly face out through the continuous erosion of institutions, democratic tenets, norms, principles, political ethics and good democratic cultures rather than outright abolition and stoppage of the country's constitutions which would then look absurd by all means to the eyes. This study then investigates the Nigerian politics through the examination of the key principal indices of democratic destruction from a philosophical, institutional and ethical point of views.

Nigeria and Democratic Struggles Since Inception

Nigeria as a country which is regarded as the most populous black nation in the world and the most populous country in Africa came into being by virtue of the amalgamation of the two British protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria by Sir Fredrick Lord Lugard in 1914. Earlier on, there was the amalgamation of the Niger protectorate and the Lagos crown colony in 1906 to form the then Southern protectorate. The name Nigeria was coined, sixteen years prior to the merging together of the two distinct protectorates, precisely in 1898 by Flora Shaw, who later married Lord Lugard, according to Crowder, was the first to suggest the name in an article at the time, that the several British protectorates on the Niger be collectively and unanimously known as Nigeria.¹

Subsequently, the amalgamation of 1914, led to the strong spirit of nationalism in 1920s among Africans and Nigeria in particular. No mistake should be made however, in thinking of the people as a creation of the western world, for the people had history that date back thousands of years before the advent of the first Europeans on her soil favoured by Mother Earth. They have experienced the rise and fall of many Kingdoms and Empires. There have been cultural trade and political links and unions among the people and beyond. This is confirmed by facts gathered on the 'Trans-Saharan Trade History' which is said to have been in existence since the 5th century A.D. Hence, students, workers, market men and women as well as leading political figures including the media were all involved in the independent process and hopeful to see the new country grow for the good of all. They contributed a lot to the attainment of our independence on 1st October 1960. The independence move kick-off precisely in April 1st 1952, when Sir Anthony Enahoro passed a motion in the house requesting that Nigeria be independent by 1956. Although, this motion was not supported by the then most of the core leaders of the North or Northerners, yet it led to the adoption of it by the federal house in unison in 1957, seeking for independence by 1959 from British government.

The long awaited independence was realized on October 1st, 1960 with Dr. Nnamdi Benjamin Azikiwe the first Governor-General and President, while Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa the first prime minister of the country. This was the country's first taste of democracy and it is rightly called the First Republic. But, political disputes and displeasures among contending forces and political interests with an over ambitious and politicized military hanging around could not allow it to last long. Thus democrats were the first set of people in Nigeria to go all out for the capture of power through the front door of unconstitutionality by way of an attempted civilian coup. This callous attitude towards democracy by big time politicians and prominent politicians has been at the roots of the unsuccessful story of the practice of the democratic system since independence right to this date.

More so, the ethnic nature of our society contributed immensely to the short-live or fall of democracy on the midnight of 14th – 15th January, 1966 when the military led by some young majors officers ousted out the government through 'coup d'état' which led to the killing of most prominent political and military leaders of that time. This then, brought in

the first military rule with which major general Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi came into power as the first military head of state. Browne Onuoha captures it succinctly and carefully that Nigeria's democratic challenges are strongly influenced by the legacy of military rule. Centralized executive power, authoritarian political culture, and weak civilian institutions continue to affect democratic governance.² The military came in and painfully our democrats of the time welcomed this anomaly and democratically absurd development with hearty congratulations and cheers, but unaware of what was in store for them and the country at large for military growth in Nigeria in the years ahead, because the worse started happening accordingly after few months into the military era. With the several military phases, face-offs, killings cum civil war, etc, the military remained in power according to Ikime, until Olusegun Obasanjo handed over to a democratic government led by President Shehu Shagari on 1st October, 1979.³ This is also called the Second Republic Era.

Furthermore, everything possible was done by some politicians, public office holders and so-called democrats most especially some elected officials to frustrate the Shagari administration. It was however politically recorded that certain governors during Shagari's political dispensation especially the then executive governor Bola Ige of Oyo State for example used bulldozers to shatter and bulldoze to the ground the federal housing units meant for the people of the state. He then came up with a 'secret police' of sort in the name of state road Marshals to counter federal forces' presence in the state. At each public gathering and outings due to unknown and undefined hatred and animosity, Shagari was an object of ridicule and mockery by some governors of his administration especially southern governors of then in all public spheres and some even refused to receive him at airports when he was on official visit to their states. Such opposition was extended terribly to the National Assembly, some of whose members refused to see any wisdom in what the executive was doing.

According to online source, Wada opined that, like deering the first republic when some democrats secretly continued to murder democracy, those who played key roles in this, repeated their antics in 1983 deering media power and military connection.⁴ Meanwhile, this second democratic epoch as already seen from the explanations above did not last long due to the actions and inaction of selfish democrats. According to Aluko in Wada, because the legislature was dominated by the combination of opposition parties, about '14 Bills' were left untouched until the military struck back in the early hours of 1st January 1984⁵ precisely midnight of 31st December, 1983 and then ushered in the government of Major General Mohammadu Buhari. Wada continued by stating that, it was completely ignored that a destroyed federal executive was a destroyed road for democratic survival.⁶ With the military and some democrats aided by the media, their collaborators and allies, the matters were made even worse for Shagari's administration. After the conclusion of the 1983 presidential election and Shehu Shagari and Alex Ekwueme won, some media came out openly to pad and align with the military to murder democracy and when this was eventually done and achieved, some wrote fully fledged editorials commending the role of the media in the fall of the Shagari administration. This is simply an act of betrayal of democracy and democratic destruction which some democrats involved themselves back

then to murder the same thing they claim to be protecting and fighting for or fought for. They never saw it as the downfall of democracy in any way due to their selfishness and tribalism that beclouded their mentality and sense of reasoning, but, nemesis was to catch up with them in the years ahead for the crimes they committed against democratic survival in Nigeria. They had only themselves to blame later for collaborating with the military when they became the victims of decree no. 2 put in place by the then Buhari's military regime and subsequently more military decrees that followed.

Consequently, by August 27th 1985, another coup d'état occurred bringing in General Ibrahim Babangida (IBB) to power. As General Babangida came to power, he initiated first what may be called quasi democracy, or diarchy as late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe would describe it in 1992 after staying in office as the military head of state for about seven years. During his administration, state and local government structures were put in place along the line of democratic principles and further constituted a democratically elected National Assembly. However, following the aborted June 12th, 1993 election, a lot of pressure was mounted on him, both internally and externally. On August 26th, 1993, he stepped down and installed an interim civilian government led by Chief Ernest Shonekan (the Third Republic) emerged. This regime according to Iheme lasted barely for three months in office as the military led by General Sani Abacha on November 17th, 1993 struck and took over again.⁷ Sani Abacha with a plan to succeed himself after been in power as a military dictator and head of state for about 5 years, decided to stage what is known as 'a mock election' in which all political parties would adopt him as their unanimous presidential candidate during the election. This was resisted vehemently by all especially the group called NADECO (National Democratic Coalition), whom he imprisoned most of their key members on the charge of attempted coup d'état on his regime which is a treasonable felony. However, he later died on June 8th, 1998 and was immediately replaced by General Abdulsalami Abubakar on June 9th, 1998. The coming of General Abdulsalami Abubakar after the death of Abacha opened yet another door and hope in our democratic history when like Obasanjo, he restored democracy to its rightful place and full potentials, and therefore earned rightful place as a hero of Nigerian democracy. Notwithstanding, many things as military officer, he certainly deserves commendations on this most grateful scorecard of a lifetime in Nigerian politics.

Retired General Abdulsalami Abubakar handed over the mantle of leadership of Nigeria to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo on 29th day of May 1999. Thus, Iheme opined:

It was Abubakar who oversaw the elections and handed over power as he promised to the civilian democratic government on May 29th, 1999. This was led by President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). His first term ended and he was re-elected for the second tenure running from May 29th 2003- May 28th, 2007. He handed over to President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua of the same (PDP) party on May 29th, 2007. President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua died in office on 6th May, 2010 and was immediately replaced by his Vice, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.⁸

This change in power was the beginning of another democratic Era in Nigeria known as the Fourth Republic. The election of General Obasanjo brought a relief to the nation with his democratic role in our national affairs and the considerable traits of non-tribal personality showed by him in 1979 presidential election. Nigerians hoped that he was the man well fitted for the job who would heal the wounds of the nation by carrying everyone along. Goodluck Jonathan was later re-elected at the end of his Boss's tenure and then began his official term on May 29th, 2011. He later handed over to Alhaji Mohammadu Buhari on May 29th, 2015 after the expiration of his tenure, who then governed two tenures before handing over to the incumbent President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on May 29th, 2023.

Contemporary Indices of Democratic Destruction in Nigeria

Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic on May 29th, 1999, Nigeria had continued to struggle with the delivery of democratic governance and democracy dividend, social welfare, justice, equity, fairness, and equal access to resources, security and power to mention but a few. Often times, it seem as if the transition from military to civilian rule has been simply cosmetic transition due to the not too impressive scorecards of the civil governance that has been in place, hence, prompting scholars to assert that Nigeria is yet to attain the status of a democracy or democratic State. After over two decades and a half of the current democratic era, there is the need to identify concrete quagmires to democratic governance in Nigeria with a view to contextualizing the core factors that continues to obstruct and obfuscate democratic governance in Nigeria as it stands today. According to Ogundare and Yakubu, Nigeria is experiencing democratic backsliding, reflected in declining institutional independence, shrinking civic space, reduced electoral credibility, political interference in the judiciary, and weakening checks and balances.⁹ In the light of the foregoing, and amidst the obviously daily seen clearly denigrating factors to Nigerian democracy by the political office holders, we are going to make use of the UNDP's standard characteristics of democratic governance in measuring the Nigerian own situation. In this work, we will focus on only some of the most immediate and perennial pitfalls often seen and noticeably evident in the Nigerian political circle.

Social Injustice, Corruption and Abuse of Power

Experience through history has shown that widespread discontents and loss of civil confidence in the system have ways of affecting national political stability. Invariably, the continuing escalation of violence and crises across the nation would definitely impinge on the survival of the country's nascent democracy. Beyond the effects of security concerns on the economic fortunes of Nigeria, the nature of insecurity facing the country also have terrible effects and implications for the country's political democratic system. Thus, social cohesion and justice among various groups and interests is very important in the process of national political development and nation building to avoid escalation of different agitations by the citizens for rights infringements and resource control. According to Ajayi and Fashagba, Nigerian politics has continued to be shaped by ethnic politics, religious divisions, patronage, money politics, corruption, and political godfatherism. They contend that these practices weaken democratic institutions and prevent politics from serving the public interest.¹⁰

Considering further, the greatest democratic ill from all indications facing Nigeria today is 'Corruption.' Corruption has been seen in Nigeria as a norm and disease that has no cure. It has eaten beyond human comprehension into the nation's politics and it's a serious political impediment to the development of the country. From Kofele-Kale's definition of what corruption is all about, he stated unequivocally that corruption means, requesting, offering, giving or accepting directly or indirectly a bribe or any other undue advantage or the prospect thereof, which distorts the proper performance of any duty or behavior required of the recipient of the bribe, the undue advantage of the prospect thereof.¹¹ Asserting his own point on the corruption intensity in Nigeria, John Odey argues that:

Today in Nigeria, corruption has become a structural sin so contagious that it hardly leaves anybody without a smear. And since the country has been justifiably stigmatised as a den of corruption, all Nigerians, both the guilty and the innocent, have been paying costly for it. Everywhere in the world, Nigerians are generally feared like mad dogs, dreaded like criminals, cautiously approached like dangerous snakes and watchfully avoided like lepers.¹²

The painful institutionalization of corrupt behaviours and cultures in all spheres of public life and activities is the major dilemma to the survival of democracy in Nigeria. Additionally, major financial resources meant for the country's development are redirected to service unjustifiable and insensitive self styled life-styles of the so-called first families and their cronies. This is corruption and a gross abuse of political power and it is quite unfortunate to be seen in Nigeria today. Aside these unwarranted public finance wastages, the conducts of Nigerian democratic leadership in managing the country's limited resources has been the main reason for national instability bedeviling Nigeria for long now. The evil of corruption and political office power abuse has dominated Nigeria's mentality to the extent that it looks funny, insensitive and even unnatural to stand against it, for if you do, you would be tagged a saboteur for doing the right thing. Corruption in Nigeria is as bad as that as it stands now. For Loimeier:

Corrupt and power hungry politicians, who hijacked votes and self imposed leaders, declare billions of fictitious amounts of naira as assets only to be recouped as investments through falsification and over pricing of contracts awards, in spite of the existence of framework of due process and diligence in contract awards and procurements.¹³

In addendum, looting of public funds and treasury has become the order of the day and it has so tremendously inflicted colossal afflictions and unfathomable damages to collective psychology of the sense of unity and oneness enshrined in the country's constitution. In view of this corruption evil in the political system of the country, every part of the Nigeria's national political community through coordinated arithmetics and statistics indicated the domestication of youth unemployment in high rates, poverty, insecurity, hunger, and social vices of all kinds.

Furthermore, there is also this evil monster of corruption used as a means of social injustice in most cases of an unnecessary and discredited Poverty Eradication/Alleviation Programs or simply Empowerment Programs, purportedly established by the government, which are in the real sense just a mere conduits wire channels for siphoning the national wealth and deliberate emptying of the national treasury in disguise by any means possible by the ruling class who pledged to protect democracy, but instead are the same ones bent on doing everything possible to destroy it from existing at all cost. All these are corruption practices, abuse of political powers and social injustice no matter how they are looked at. The rate of citizens surviving beyond poverty margin is quite alarming but the political leaders, the so-called elites, and the government uninterestedly continues to give lip service to the country's social dilemma. It is as terrible as that and very shameful by all means, and most of these are done by so-called democrats who claimed to have fought for the survival of democracy in Nigeria. This is exactly what makes it unimaginably terrifying and un-understandable in any way. What an irony and contradiction per excellence.

Consequent to the above, a political scholar Olu-Adeyemi opined that, in Nigeria, an understanding of what constitutes corruption transcends officialdom and discussing corruption broadly as a perversion or a change from good to bad will not be inappropriate.¹⁴ Olu-Adeyemi, therefore, continued:

Citizens thrill at the non-enforcement of the rules that define the institutional basis of social, political and economic exchange, as corruption has become the dominant social norm and reflections on the first four decades of political independence no doubt indicate that citizens themselves are instrumental to the national decay, however, they are receptive to corrupt friendly regimes, thus, celebrating the potent force of mal-governance and underdevelopment.¹⁵

Nigerians after multiple years of independence seem to still harbor the terrible and negative mentality that public money belongs to no one and that any person who has access to it should convert it into his or her personal use and gain. Corruption has seriously permeated into every corner and sectors of the Nigerian community, ranging from millions and billions of scam e-mail messages sent each day, month or year by people of different category that disguised themselves as Nigerian officials seeking business collaborations with foreigners, in order to have the means and gateway to push large sums of money in dollars out of the country.

More so, to the security agencies especially the Nigerian police officers who mount road checkpoints in almost all the corners of the country, especially, in the country's federal highways, and subsequently routinely and forcefully collect hard earned painfully suffered money of road users especially the commercial drivers and riders which sometimes is just every few yards or meters away (one to two poles as the case maybe), to extract bribes of N100, N200 or N500 naira and above as the case may be from these poor drivers, and in some cases of not giving as requested can lead to a terrible consequences of different kind, inclusive but not limited to, capital punishment like death which are often tagged as “accidental discharge” by the powers that be from the force headquarters. This is social

injustice, evil, abuse of power, corruption in high places, and unforgivable crime against humanity no matter how it is looked at, covered or coated.

Election Rigging, Malpractice and Institutional Decay

Electoral corruption is prevalent in Nigerian socio-political system like mad. This is a situation that includes the purchase of votes with money, promises of office or special favors, coercion, favouritism, intimidation, and interference with freedom of election which should be free and fair by all indices of democracy system. It includes sale of votes, killing and maiming of innocent citizens in the name of election, arrest of rightful and/or accredited voters, removal of voters names from the election registers and keeping them stranded especially on the election day, and unnecessary transfer of voters from one polling unit to the other without their consent and even prior knowledge till the day of the election in order to destabilize them and their favourable candidates as well as disenfranchise them in favour of the anointed candidates especially of the incumbency and the powers that be which finally ends up to a situation whereby “losers end up as the winners and vice versa” in the elections, and votes turn up magically in areas where votes were never cast at all. This is why Rotimi Suberu argues that Nigeria has introduced important electoral reforms, democratic consolidation remains threatened by electoral malpractice, vote buying, weak electoral institutions, political violence, and low public confidence in elections. Credible elections are essential to democratic legitimacy.¹⁶

Similarly, in most cases as it has often been seen and noticed for long now in Nigeria, some INEC officials aid these crimes by allowing themselves due to momentary monetary benefits to be used to rig-in the unpopular candidates and the losers and rig-out the real popular winners and the people's candidates and choices. The judiciary is not left behind in this crime. Most judicial personnel and officers work hand in hand with the executive, legislature and INEC officials to perfect the rigging process in the country's elections by refusing to say the truth, stand on due process and delivering justice and fairness as it should be and in the way it should be seen to have been done by all in a pre-election, election and post-election matters brought before the “home of justice” known as the “last hope of the common man” etc to mention but a few. This is pure power and administrative rascality and democratic institutional decay by all indices and a crime against humanity as it concerns specifically the global democratic principles of fairness, equality, equity and justice, and in particular to the country's citizens in question. All these and many more are pure evil, institutional decay and injustice, and have clearly undermined true political democratic governance in Nigeria, and continue to be an impediment to the growth and democratic success in the country. This is so shameful to even discuss because it has actually become the order of the day, and the worse of all is that most of these rugged and dangerously election riggers and criminals continuously claim most often and on a regular base to be democrats and as well claim to have fought for democracy survival in Nigeria. What a contradiction. It is as pathetic and terrifying as that.

Insecurity

Insecurity is another area of the country's democratic predicaments and the actual real big deal as it stands now. The governance challenges facing the polity have trickled into the society, resulting in moral decadence. The growing dissatisfaction, discomfort and distress within the larger society coupled with the unabated official corruption, high unemployment rate, economic crisis, pauperization of the masses, decaying infrastructure and a futile national integration project have heated up the socio-political environment. Security on its own is the condition of being protected physically, emotionally, psychologically and otherwise as well as from other form of harms, attacks, terrors and many more which could be considered in actuality as non-desirable. Security is defined as the assurance of the future wellbeing and freedom from threat of any kind especially from the political government of the day.

Security is everyone's duty and collective efforts but it is more specific and particular to the political government in a particular nation, because it is seen as their first primary fundamental function amidst other duties and functions assigned to it by the country's constitution. Similarly, national security is a collection of precautions, financial and human resources, and institutions built to secure a sovereign state as well as necessary security equipments and gadgets. For Idowu et al, Nigeria's development has been hindered by poor political leadership, corruption, insecurity, ineffective governance, and weak accountability. Democracy should improve citizens' welfare, but these problems have limited its effectiveness.¹⁷

Consequently, providing national security at all cost for the protection of lives and properties within a sovereign state is a vital social contract between the masses, the government and the state in which the citizens reside. The state is legally bound to offer protection against possible loss, harm or total destruction of human and material resources that promotes human capital development in its sovereign environment. A secured state allows for the development of human beings while an unsecured nation allows for easy attacks on the foundation(s) that builds human capital and promotes the destruction of human capacity of a state. Lately, Nigeria has been seriously enmeshed in something that seems to be unquenchable firebox of insecurity which leads to scores of deaths of innocent civilians, foreigners, some members of the nation's security personnel, few elected government officials, many government workers, ordinary traders and innocent school children. The insecurity challenge has assumed formidable dimensions in real honesty. As it stands now in Nigeria, there are increasingly major security threats to the nation and its people that are man-made, which are causing physical, psychological, material and other forms of damages to the growth of human life and national development. Amongst them include the activities of Islamic fundamentalists, kidnappers, cultists, arm robbers, and community militias etc. These later forms of insecurity that are pre-planned, humanly driven and orchestrated have turned into a big threat to all levels and stages of human life and development in the country.

Basically, the above is exactly what has been going on in Nigeria for long now and seems escalating day by day beyond control and it has caused tremendous fears and uncertainty all over the country and people are very scared of their lives daily and at every point in time.

Kidnappings, raping, and killings have become the order of the day and becoming somewhat institutionalized in Nigeria nowadays. Unknown gunmen, arm robbery, bandits, cultism, fulani herdsmen terrorists etc has continued in their maiming, terror life-style and massacrings against the innocent citizens, and the government that is saddled with the sole responsibility of protecting the lives and property of its citizens in the country is doing little or nothing to tackle this evil menace in Nigeria. This is terrible and very painful in any way it is looked at.

Additionally, in this case, parents have died; children are kidnapped from their classrooms and dormitories, raped, impregnated and killed in most cases while some are left and tortured to death in the thick forests and bushes under rain, cold, sun, hunger, thirst and diseases. Mothers face the same fate as their daughters, fathers are shot and most times beheaded randomly when kidnapped, and farmers are being murdered continuously in their indigenous farmlands for no crime of theirs. Youths both male and female are massacres on the streets and abducted at will and used for whatever reason or purpose as it pleases their abductors and caricatured in an inhuman form beyond human comprehension and most times displayed on the social media space for all to see. This is philosophically inhumanity to man and something must be done about it very urgently to quench the escalation by all means possible. Let the government do their constitutional functions and duties to safeguard the lives and properties of the innocent Nigerian citizens from being kidnapped and killed almost on a daily bases, because that is the trust hinged on them by the people and by the virtue of the political democratic positions and offices they occupy.

More so, armed conflicts, unabated terrorism, ethno-religious holocausts, political assassination, militia and other violent crimes have become the order of the day in Nigerian social relations under the country's democratic leadership. The thirst for blood and the preference for violence in expressing pent-up frustration and disenchantment with the state and its citizens may be a pointer to the need to revive the co-existing values within the socio-economic, political, religious and educational institutions in Nigeria, because security is vital and non-negotiable in whatever a country does. In this light, Imhonopi and Urim opined that, the number of violent crimes such as kidnappings, ritual killings, car-jackings, suicide bombings, religious killings, politically-motivated killings and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry and others has increasingly become the regular signature that characterizes life in Nigeria since 2009.¹⁸ This, therefore, may not be unconnected with the increasing ethnic hate, religious bigotry, political rivalry and a growing population of disgruntled citizens in the country who feel that they have been short-changed and given very limited or no access to the common patrimony and others of no conscience.

Similarly, this insecurity in Nigeria has led the nation to continuous loss of human life and capital; bloodshed is everywhere, which impacts negatively on the country's economic and democratic progress and development. The schools, colleges, universities, research centers, training institutes, companies, government offices and working places etc that are meant to be the paradise for human training and development are nowadays increasingly

becoming insecure and a fearful grounds in the country. Schools and physical structures in many institutions that are used for human capacity building have collapsed and some razed-down by fire-outbreak at different times in different parts of the country due to insecurity menace or its remnants thereby, leading to the destruction of capacity building material resources that nurtures democracy through human capital improvement and development, while others similarly have been blown-off by wind and/or conquered by flood in one way or another. These things are inhumanity to man in all ramifications and should be made to stop in earnest and without further delay. Egwu in his own view argues that:

The primordial tendencies of various ethnic groups towards violence, the perennial eruption of various ethnic militias and the preponderant religious fundamentalism in place, given expression to by some sections of the dominant religious establishments in Nigeria, have inevitably aggravated the scale and propensity of insecurity and widened its scope in various ramifications.¹⁹

Not only has the continued state of insecurity threatened the very fabric of national integration in Nigeria and created the ecology of fear, disquiet and anxiety, it has also meted a deadly blow to the industrial development of the country and dislodged it from meeting up to her other democratic nation's counterparts. These acts of terrorism, kidnapping, religious extremism, political violence, militia etc have led to the crippling of the economy and the destruction of the badly needed infrastructures which has taken the country many years' backwards and financial wastages. Hence, Nigerian democratic leaders and politicians must 'for the peace and unity of the country' be forced to uphold co-existing natural and democratic principles and values as well as moral virtues and compassion in all their conducts, in order to lead by example and to avoid heating up the polity unnecessarily by their conducts and comments, actions and inactions, which sometimes incites violence in their followers, and this would serve as a roadmap to peace, unity, economic and human capital development in the country, Nigeria.

Evaluation and Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the shape and hope of Nigeria's democratic leadership in the future depends on the responsibility and consciousness of every citizens of the country. The simple conclusion is that Nigeria as a country is still far very deep in the woods of dictatorial political leadership fantastically disguised as democratic leadership but mixed with insignificant and minimal few doses of democracy with many of its provisions tactically practiced in the breach and half-baked. To this, the practice of democratic leadership in the country may be described as the libertarian version of the old military rule system. This year knowledgeably would mark Nigeria's 27th uninterrupted political democratic anniversary as a republic with still a dangling, fledgling and unrealistic democratic dividends or as argues in some quarters nothing to write home about when compared to other global democracies in the world over.

Consequently, leadership is not a child's play and those who cannot chest it should

stay aside by all means possible so the best amongst equals can do the job as supposed. It is a national political burden and willing service to humanity and only the best and/or the philosopher king as stated the philosopher Plato that can handle it accordingly, adequately and appropriately without any form of bias and prejudices but with human conscience, duty-bound, accountability, responsibility, capacity and compassion. Leadership is not meant for political convenience and those who cannot should honourably step aside because you cannot govern the affairs of the state with lack of mental and emotional capacity, responsibility, accountability and the mind of humanity. Severe political, judicial and constitutional sanctions including life imprisonment without the option of fine penalty is hereby recommended as alternative to combating every terrifying and country's democratic destruction corrupt practices and wicked corruption menace in high ranked public offices in Nigeria.

The above punishment should without any hesitation of any kind be meted on those that holds the master key to political democratic progress, development and security of the country but refused to use it for the good of the people but for their own selfish, political and personal family gains. To address or put a permanent stop to these bad situations in the country, squarely and honestly, requires a tremendous radical political and social medical surgery of political leadership in Nigeria, with the frantic determination to lay a solid foundational rock-stand for progress, development, peace, tranquility and harmony in the country. *The articulated and the outlined points above illustrate the critical democratic governance predicaments facing Nigeria and therefore, the study recommend accountability, competence, capacity, compassion and global ethical principles in political democratic leadership for true democratic governance to blossom in Nigeria at least for the first time in history or at most once more if any before for the good and betterment of all and sundry.*

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