The Democratization Process in Nigeria: The Factors behind the Incomplete Transition

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Submitted to the
Institute of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
International Relations

Eastern Mediterranean University
September 2020
Gazimağusa, North Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine on the democratization process in Nigeria by employing Rustow dynamic model of democratic transition on the basis of the following hypothesis:

Transition to democracy in Nigeria is incomplete because of the existence of unsupportive socio-political circumstances, namely the weaknesses in the sense of national unity, the lack of prolonged political struggle, the lack of conscious action by the political elite to adopt democratic rule and the lack of a consensus among the political elite on the rules of the game (democratic principles).

This study argues that although there was a transfer of political power from military to civilians in 1999, democratic transition process has not been consolidated, thus it is incomplete. The study argues that although the military has never attempted to control political power after 1999 democratic standards remained poor. After transition to civilian rule, regime characteristics emerged till today demonstrate a semi-democratic system in which a democratic and authoritarian elements continued to exist with a stable combination. A number of un-democratic regime characteristic such as corruption, god-fatherism, election irregularities, patron-client relations and ethno-centrism blocked the transition process. The study shows that since Nigeria has experienced long years of military rule before transition to civilian rule the attempt towards transforming the political regime in 1999 encountered several challenges such as ethno-religious conflicts, underdevelopment, poverty, secessionism, nepotism and Boko Haram terrorism. As a general conclusion, the study shows that these challenges

need to be overcome and non-democratic practices should be eliminated to ensure consolidation of democratic transition in the country.

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, aşağıda belirtilen hipotez temelinde Rustow'un dinamik 'demokratik geçiş süreci' modelini kullanarak Nijerya'daki demokratikleşme sürecini incelemektir:

Nijerya'da demokrasiye geçiş, destekleyici olmayan sosyo-politik koşulların varlığı, yani ulusal birlik sağlanmasında ortaya çıkan zaaflar, uzun süreye yayılmış bir siyasi mücadelenin ortaya çıkmaması, siyasi elitin demokratik yönetimi benimseme yönünde bilinçli bir davranış göstermemesi ve siyasal elitler arasında oyunun kuralları (demokratik ilkeler) konusunda bir uzlaşmanın olmayışı nedeniyle tamamlanamamıştır.

Bu çalışma, 1999 yılında askeri yönetimden sivil yönetime geçilmiş olmasına rağmen, demokrasinin konsolide edilemediğini ve dolayısıyla siyasal rejimde demokratikleşmenin tamamlanamadığını ileri sürmektedir. Nijerya ordusu 1999'dan sonra hiçbir zaman siyasi iktidarı ele geçirme yönünde ciddi bir girişimde bulunmamasına rağmen, demokratik standartlar hep yetersiz kalmıştır. Nijerya'da sivil yönetime geçiş sonrasında, demokratik ve otoriter özellikleri bünyesinde istikrarlı bir şekilde günümüze kadar devam ettiren yarı-demokratik bir rejim ortaya çıkmıştır. Yolsuzluk, efendi-uşak ilişkileri (Godfatherism), seçim usulsüzlükleri, patron-müşteri kültürü ve etnosantrism gibi bir dizi demokratik olmayan rejim özelliği geçiş sürecini tıkamıştır. Nijerya'nın sivil yönetime geçmeden önce askerlerin uzunca bir süre iktidarda kalması nedeniyle 1999'da siyasi rejimi demokratikleştirme yönünde yapılan girişim, etnik-dinsel çatışmalar, az gelişmişlik, yoksulluk, ayrılıkçılık, adam kayırmacılık ve Boko Haram terörizmi gibi çeşitli zorluklarla karşılaşmıştır. Bu

çalışma, sonuç olarak, ülkede demokratik geçişin konsolidasyonu için yukarıda ifade edilen zorlukların aşılması ve demokratik olmayan uygulamaların ortadan kaldırılmasının bir gereklilik olduğunu gösteriyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Demokrasi, Demokrasiye Geçiş, Demokratik Geçiş Aşamaları, Tamamlanmamış Geçiş, Nijerya.

DEDICATION

To My Family

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge my parents and thank you for your love, prayer, and support throughout my studies.

I acknowledge my supervisor, Prof Dr. Yücel Vural for his continuous support throughout my studies and research work. I appreciate his patience, advice, motivation, immense knowledge and enthusiasm. His guidance, ideas, and experiences has help me throughout my research and writing of this thesis. I could not have imagined having a better supervisor and mentor for my thesis.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my family, friends, and course mate for their love, support and encouragement during the period of my studies and thesis. Thank you all for your contributions and may God bless you all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC   Action Congress

ACN   Action Congress of Nigeria

AD   Alliance for Democracy

AG   Action Group

ANPP   All Nigerian People's Party

APC   All Progressive Congress

APGA   All Progressives Grand Alliance

APP   All People's Party

ASUU   Academic Staff Union of Universities

CAN   Christian Association of Nigeria

CAP   Capacity Acquisition Programme

CD   Campaign for Democracy

CDHR   Committee for the Defense of Human Rights

CLO   Civil Liberties Organization

CPC   Congress for Progressive Change

CRP   Constitutional Rights Project

EFCC   Economy and Financial Crime Commission

FCP   Federal Character Principle

FCT   Federal Capital Territory

FMG   Federal Military Government

IMF   International Monetary Funds

INEC   Independent National Electoral Commission

MAP   Mandatory Attachment Programme

MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
NAPEP	National Poverty Eradication Program
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria Citizens
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDPF	Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
NLC	Nigerian Labor Congress
NOA	National Orientation Agency
NPC	Northern People Congress
NRDCS	Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme
NUNS	National Union of Nigerian students
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
OPC	Oodua People's Congress
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PPBA	Plateau State Peace Building Agency
PRC	Provisional Ruling Council
PTDF	Petroleum Trust Development Fund
PTF	Petroleum Trust Funds
PVCs	Permanent Voters Cards
RIDS	Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme
SOWESS	Social Welfare Services Scheme
TMG	Transition Monitoring Group
YES	Youth Empowerment Scheme

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is one of the countries that has attempted a democratic transition during the Third Wave in the last quarter of the Twentieth Century. Its transition attempt, however, has been incomplete. This study concentrates on the stages of transition using Rustow's terminology to explain the factors which have been responsible for the failure of the transition to democracy. Since the end of the military rule, towards introducing a democratic regime in 1999, Nigerian political system has undergone a significant transformation facing numerous challenges mainly because the political environment has not been supportive of democratic rule. Several factors such as corruption, god-fatherism, election rigging, patron-client relations and ethno-centrism posed a threat to the transition process. Besides, the central government and its agencies failed to establish a direct link with mass people. This failure prevented the emergence of a country-wide national consciousness. Meanwhile, as pointed out by Rustow, national unity should be achieved before proceeding to democratization.

In Nigeria, the masses are being alienated from the elites by not having access to basic amenities and not included in any actual political process exerting influence on decision making which develops the sense of belonging. Also, the existence of a low level of integration between cultural groups (ethnic, religious and tribal) with different beliefs and practices has affected the transition process (Maiyaki, 2006:3). The masses

used to have pronounced their ethnic or religious identity at the expense of national identity.

Likewise, competitive elections held in 1999 gave rise to the hope of establishing a peaceful democratic polity. This attempt to transition from military to civilian rule was a significant step for the establishment of a democratic process in Nigeria, but it has failed to reach a consolidation. Democracy has been portrayed to be based on rule of law, free and fair elections, limited government, and freedom in all domains of individual life either political, economic, social, educational, or cultural but these principles have been undermined in Nigeria. The concepts of democracy and political stability are somehow linked with each other. There will be democratic political stability if there is a proper governance which benefited all sections of the Nigerian society, not minority and when the government embrace national unity.

Meanwhile, after the attempt to transform the regime from military to civilian rule in May 1999, the political institutions have witnessed disputes especially between the executive and the legislative organs at the national and state level. Apart from the challenges listed above affecting the democratization process of Nigeria, the election process cannot be ignored. Elections are one of the important tools for democracy by which citizen's vote for a person in a political office. Nigeria has managed to conduct six consecutive elections for the federal presidency in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 have been marred by series of violence, conflicts, displacement, misinformation and rigging.

Another crucial factor in establishing and sustaining democracy is economic development. Nigerian has been considered one of the poorest countries in the world

with the majority of its citizens living below the poverty level. As a result, the democratic process has been constructed on a fragile economy although some measures have been taken to alleviate poverty (World Bank, 2018). After the attempt to introduce a civilian rule, the administration has been characterized by corruption which was carried by the military to the present civilian administration. Meanwhile, there have been concerns about how the existence of democracy in Nigeria will unify the political entity. Also, on what steps or measures that will be taken by the government to overcome these challenges. Therefore, it is important to know that for the transition to be completed its political domains needs to be reshaped and simultaneously entrench the rule of law, embrace diverse ethnic groups to promote unity and create a conducive environment for democracy to prosper.

1.1 Research Question

This study will answer the following questions:

1. What are the steps and initiatives taken towards democratic transition since 1999?

2. What are the role of socio-political circumstances in the unsuccessful attempt to democratize Nigerian politics?

The first question concentrate on the democratization process in Nigeria. It analyze the transition process in various steps. It elaborates on the efforts and challenges to national unity, and prolonged struggle in the democratization process.

The second question is employed to give details about the how socio-political factors affect the transition process. It explains how political elite either embrace polarization or pluralism and other factors towards the incomplete transition.

1.2 Hypothesis

H1: Transition to democracy in Nigeria is incomplete because of the existence of unsupportive socio-political circumstances, namely the weaknesses in the sense of national unity, the lack of prolonged political struggle, the lack of conscious action by the political elite to adopt democratic rule and the lack of a consensus on the rules of the game (democratic principles).

1.3 Methodology

To examine the democratization process in Nigeria, the thesis first explains and examines the democratic transition since 1999 to date, by analyzing the various steps that have taken towards transition employing Rustow's terminology on transition.

Rustow theory which stress that before preceding to democratization national identity question must be resolved to avoid problems after transition. This thesis explains the challenges to national unity, effort to national unity and other factors behind the incomplete transition in Nigeria. It also explains the roles played by the socio-political circumstances affecting the political system in Nigeria which led to the incomplete transition. The thesis employs qualitative methodology. With the use of secondary resources which will include journals, newspapers, articles, magazines, textbooks, and reports from governmental and non-governmental institutions. The thesis attempts to evaluate the democratization process and highlights the obstacles behind the incomplete transition.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The study focuses on the democratic rule in Nigeria and factors behind the incomplete transition from 1999-2019. So it does not include any process taken place before this date. The study will mainly discuss the democratization process and the obstacles

obstructing the incomplete transition. Although the institutional design of the Nigerian state is out of the interest of this study, it sometimes referred to it when is needed.

The limitation also includes the inability to have face to face contacts with government officials and non-government officials. Another limitation is limited access in getting some valuable textbooks. In the sense that, the author might not be able to get necessary textbooks which can only be access in Nigeria to support the main points since the author is not presently in the country.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research topic was influenced by the need to understand the democratic transition process in Nigeria with an attempt to test the theory suggested by Dankwart Rustow. This thesis intention to examine the reasons for incomplete transition will enable further understanding about the measures to be taken for a complete democratic transition in the country. Therefore it informs us the validity of Rustow's theory of transition to democracy with a specific emphasis on the reasons of incomplete transition.

1.6 Organization of Thesis

This chapter is designed to include an introduction, research question, and hypotheses, methodology, definition of key terms and literature review.

Chapter 2 concentrates on the features of transition process in Nigeria by applying Rustow theory. Here, I am going to explain or identify the basic characteristics of transition process in Nigeria.

Following the theory of Dankwart Rustow chapter 3 focuses on the **'*background condition and preparatory phase'*** of transition in Nigeria. Rustow points out that national unity should be achieved before proceeding to transition. Therefore, this chapter will explain the strength of national unity in Nigeria: the challenges to national unity, the prevalence of ethnic, religious and tribal identifications and the capability of the national political elite to mobilize people. It also deals with class structure and struggle for power beginning in the early periods of democratization. This chapter also focuses on the elite formation and the social composition of the contending forces including both the leaders and the mass people.

Chapter 4 concentrates on what Rustow called *'decision and habituation phase.'* Rustow emphasizes that the preparatory phase will led to decision phase when democracy is achieved through a process of a conscious action on the part of the top political leaders. Hence, this chapter will explain the deliberate decision of the political leaders to accept political pluralism in the country. This chapter will also explain the stability in competition and conflict resolving mechanism.

Chapter 5 concludes the thesis with a discussion that elaborates on the outcomes and implication of incomplete transition in Nigeria.

1.7 Literature Review

This session focuses on the relevant concepts such as democracy, semi-democracy, authoritarianism, transition to democracy, stages of democratic transition, incomplete transition, national unity, class structure and elite formation to develop a conceptual framework on the incomplete transition in Nigeria.

The democratization process is usually studied through three stages which are the liberalization, transition and consolidation. Democratic transition means "a passage from non-democratic to a democratic situation" (Ibrahim, 2005:1). In other words democratization literally means the process of transferring the control of the state power to elected representatives. Democratization "is a process leading to pluralism and multiparty system, popular participation in the political process, rule of law, respect for human rights, respect for the rules of the game" (Fasakin, 2015:305).

There have been several approaches to transition theory. Some scholars focus on regime changes while some emphasis the democratic process as economic development, political culture and role of civil society. Rustow (1970) used a dynamic model to explain the democratic transition process in individual nations. He disagrees with some scholars such as Lipsett's (1959) that focuses on socio-economic preconditions for democracy. He explained democratic transition in four phases. Firstly, background condition are importance that there must be a sense of national unity which is vital to democracy. Secondly, preparatory phase in which there must be entrenched and serious conflict which occurs differently in all countries. Thirdly, the decision phase were democracy is achieved through a process of a conscious action on the part of the top political elite to adopt democratic rule and value. Lastly, the habituation phase where democracy becomes the only game.

According to Kumar, the transition from military to civilian rule since 1999 has been seen "as pseudo-transition, that is Nigerians are being exploited, oppressed and manipulated by the political elites and that this transition does not yield social, political and economic improvements" (Kumar 2005:374). Such elements in the transition process constitute a threat to the foundation of democracy and affect efforts to

consolidate democracy. Since Nigeria embraced civilian rule several obstacles which derived from political culture such as god-fatherism, corruption, patron-client relations and ethno-centrism have led to the failure of consolidating democracy. Among other, consolidating democracy requires a democratic political culture. A democratic political culture can emerge when self-expression values are incorporated into the political culture.

Thus, this study aims at testing the validity of Rustow's 'dynamic model' approach to democratic transition in the case of Nigeria. This theory will be used mainly because in Nigeria, democratic transition has been a struggle since its political independence and have witnessed long military rule. There has been an absence of national unity in Nigeria among the mass people and the elites. The masses and political elite are alienated from each other.

Key Term: Democracy, Semi-Democracy, Transition to Democracy, Phases of Democratic Transition, Incomplete Transition, National unity and integration, Elite formation and Class Structure.

It is important to know that there are important difference between the classical democracy and the present liberal democracy. According to (Hague, Harrop, & McCormick, 2019) the major features of the contemporary liberal democracy will be listed below:

1) Competitive elections:

Democracy today is based on elected government rather than self-government. The modern democracy today view election as an act of expression rather than a denial of democracy. The elected government is based on competitive (free and fair) elections.

Elections has been regarded as a means by which voters have a connection with the government, and how politician and parties compete for public office. Hence, in a competitive election different political parties contesting for an office use all means to persuade the people that they are right candidate for the public office.

However, competitive elections (free and fair elections) help to determine democratic legitimization of the activity of the public authority. In this sense, "with competition it ensures the legitimacy of the decision taken by the elected representatives, provided all adults are eligible to participate in the election" (Wojtasik, 2013:25). Also, competitive elections "enables those in the office with authority and enable them to be effective in their duties, and facilitate the decision, accountability, dialogue, and legitimacy" (Hague, Harrop, & McCormick, 2019: 252).

2) Representative government:

Modern democracy is a representative form of government. The representative form of government is done through an act of election whereby the representative's bodies are elected to represent the interest and make decisions for the citizens on their behalf (Hague, Harrop, & McCormick, 2019:.74). It allows the citizens to choose who will speak and act on their behalf in the government and if the representative failed to meet their expectation or interest they have the right to replace the representative in the next election.

3) Limited government:

The power of government is limited and ensures that individual's rights are protected under a constitutional law which is sustained by an independent judiciary. Thus the elected government and the citizens are both subjected to constitutional law. (Hague,

& Harrop, &McCormick, 2019:71). Modern democracy ensures that elected government respect the will of the citizens and defend them against its rulers. In this sense "minorities can be protected from another of democracy's inherent dangers: tyranny by the majority" (Hague, & Harrop, &McCormick, 2019:71-72).

The government respect the will of the people by placing limits on the powers, and reach of the government. They ensured that individuals have certain rights and freedom that cannot affected by government actions. These rights include "liberty, security, privacy, life, equal treatment, and a fair trial, as well as freedom of speech and expression, of assembly and association, and of the press and religion" (Hague, & Harrop, &McCormick, 2019:76).

4) Free media:

Democracy today is characterized by "a diverse and independent media establishment, subject to few political controls and free to share a wide variety of opinions" (Hague, & Harrop, McCormick, 2019:71). Media communication is important due to the exchange of information. Effective as well as responsive government depend on such communication exchange to know what the citizens want and for the citizens to know what the government are up to or doing. Media establishment play a significant role in a democratic society by providing the "public with quality and relevant information, encourage public deliberation, represent the voices of contending parties and represent the platform for dialogue" (Ullah, 2009:245).

Ullah argued that modern democracy require "a media system that provide people with a wide range of opinion to debate on important issues, and ensure accountability of both the party in power and bureaucrats in the administration" (Ullah, 2009:348).

Therefore, media helps the mass to get political information and allow them to choose a competent leader base on the information they get from the media and it also holds political leaders accountable for their actions.

5) Rule of Law:

Modern democracy is based on respect for the rule of law which entails "the principle that societies are best governed using clear, stable, and just laws to which all residents are equally subject regardless of their status or background" (Hague, & Harrop, & McCormick, 2019:107). Both the elected government and citizens are subjected to the rule of law. If an elected official is not in compliance with the law citizens can use either domestic or international courts to uphold their rights (Hague, & Harrop, & McCormick, 2019:107).

Furthermore, some scholars highlighted several conditions of democracy. Lipsett's for example, argues that a number of social and economic factors are a necessary condition of a stable democracy such as high per capita income, widespread literacy, and prevalent urban residence (Lipsett, 1959:76). While some scholar's emphasis on certain beliefs or psychological attitudes among the citizens as a condition of democracy.

Authors such as Almond and Verba (1963) stressed that "civic attitude is required for the successful working of a democratic system. Discuss the ideal civic culture of a democracy and suggests not only modern attributes but also other traditional or parochial attitudes" (Rustow, 1970:338).

Other authors such as Lijphart point out that "social homogeneity and political consensus is regarded as a prerequisite for or factors strongly conducive for a stable democracy" (Lijphart, 1977:1). He believes that social divisions and political differences can cause instability and breakdown in a democracy. Likewise, Robert A. Dahl have also argued that "democratic stability requires a commitment to democratic values or rules, not among the electorate at large but among the professional politicians" (Rustow, 1970:338). Dahl also point out that democratic stability does not only require a belief to the democratic norms or values but high democratic stability is required by the electorate accepting the democratic values or procedures (Dahl, 1961:314). He then explained that professional politicians tends to be more educated, know more about politics and have more experience and agreement among the professional politicians on democratic norms constitute a stable democracy (Dahl, 1961:320).

As the concept of modern democracy have been examine, we also have hybrid regime which is sometimes called semi-democracy. Hague & Harrop argued that semi-democracy is a regime which "lacks the theoretical purity of either democratic or authoritarian rule" (Hague & Harrop 2004:46). It is a system of government that share both democratic and authoritarian elements. Levitsky and Way argued that semi-democratic regimes violates democratic principles and fails to meet democratic requirement which created uneven relationship between the government and the opposition. They point out that the mere existence of elections in semi democratic regimes does not provide a guaranty to democratic processes since the political leadership "abuse state resources, deny the opposition adequate media coverage, harass opposition candidates and their supporters, and in some cases manipulate

electoral results" (Levitsky & Way, 2002:53). Therefore, this characteristics cannot be regarded as a democratic regime as it violates all democratic features.

Thus, semi-democracy has been defined "as an illiberal democracy in which democracy elected presidents do not respect individual rights, or in which elected governments to form a facade behind which traditional rulers continue to exercise effective power" (Hague, & Harrop, 2004:35-47). Hence, semi democracy is a system of government that combine democratic principles and authoritarian features even though rulers are elected they often lack respects for individual's rights and harass opposition groups. Meanwhile, democratic transition is the process in which there is a meaningful departure from authoritarian rule to democracy. It requires the dissolution of authoritarian regime and the emergence of democratic institutions.

That been said, the concept of authoritarian rule has been viewed as a non-democratic system. According to Linz authoritarian rule "are political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without intensive nor extensive political mobilization, and in which a leader or a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones" (Linz 1964:255). Meanwhile, the main characteristics of authoritarian regimes "are political demobilization and de-politicization" (Ezrow &Frantz, 2011:4). Also, authoritarian regimes "are based on submission to authority, characterized by ruling elites, limited political pluralism, centralized political control, intolerance of opposition, and human rights abuses" (Hague, & Harrop, & McCormick, 2019:71). Hence, authoritarian regimes is a non-democratic system that is ruled by single leader or group of leaders that is obsessive with power, have limited political pluralism and does not tolerate opposition and lack of respect for human rights.

Therefore, transition to democracy can occur with the dissolution of authoritarian features. According to some authors democratic transition is defined "as a transfer of power which consist of two distinctive phases: a process of dissolution of authoritarian regimes and a process of emergence of democratic institutions" (Guo, 1998:67).

Furthermore, democratic transition "is a movement aimed at establishing a democratic political system, committed to democracy, tolerating opposition, allowing bargaining, and compromise for the resolution of social conflicts, and engaging in fundamental transformation of political structure" (Guo, 1998:69).

Haggard &Kaufman in regards to democratic transition argued that "economic conditions influence the timing and terms of democratic transitions and post transition political alignments" (Haggard &Kaufman, 1995:266). They explained two different types of democratic transitions, which is the crisis transition which occurs when a country is faced with economic decline and non-crisis transition which occurs when there is economic stability in the country. They argued that "economic crisis undermine authoritarian bargains forged between rulers, and key sociopolitical constituents which expose rulers to defection from within the business sector and protest from below" (Haggard &Kaufman, 1995:267). They point that "when there is economic stability authoritarian leaders tends to have more leverage, they will enjoy wider support, less protest, and fewer internal divisions when economic performance is strong" Haggard &Kaufman (1995:269). Thus, they believed that transitions to democracy are often dependent on the economic circumstances that a country is facing.

Meanwhile, Rustow's perspective to democratic transition which is employed in this study is however, different from the many authors. He disagrees with the

overwhelming functional approaches that focused on "economic, sociopolitical, and psychological prerequisite to democracy." He state that almost all authors asked the same kind of questions and have evidence to support their answer. Rustow points out that "the question is not how a democratic system comes into existence but rather how democracy, assumed to be already in existence, can best preserve and stable" (Rustow, 1970:339).

Thus to him, not all factors "that keep a democracy stable may not be the ones that brought it into existence" (Rustow, 1970: 345). He point out that transition to democracy should be based on "genetic approaches and that we should not assume that the transition to democracy is a worldwide uniform process, which always involves the same social classes, political issues, or even the same methods of solution" (Rustow, 1970:345). But on the other hand, "a wide variety of social conflicts and of political contents can be combined with democracy" (Rustow, 1970:345).

He also points out that "the genesis of democracy need not be geographically uniform that is there may be many roads to democracy" Rustow (1970:346). He further contended that only national unity was an essential background condition for transition to democracy. Among other things, the most significant thing for a transition from authoritarian rule to democracy was consensus between elites on the new rules of the game (Rustow, 1970:346).

Rustow points out four dynamic model to democratization which will be the major focus of this study:

The **"*background condition*"** of democratization refers to achieving national unity. Rustow argued against other scholar's that regard socio-economic development as a

background condition for democracy. He stressed the importance of national unity as a background condition for democracy. He therefore considered social-economic factors as an indirect features for national unity but not a background condition. This means that the social or economic factors are consequence and not the cause for democracy.

Rustow points out that there should be a common sense of belonging among the majority of citizens (Rustow 1970:350). He believed that if national unity is achieved before the initiation of democratization then, it will be easier for transition to take occur which can also lead to democratic consolidation. Rustow suggested that this condition can be fulfilled "when national unity is accepted unthinkingly, is silently taken for granted" (Rustow 1970:351).

He also proposed that this background condition "should precede all the other phases of democratization but that otherwise, its timing is irrelevant" (Rustow 1970:351). For instance, in Turkey the issue of national identity was first resolved before the initiation of democratization. A "process of Turkization occurred so that the old Ottoman identity was replaced with a new Turk identity" (He, 2001:102). The national identity process preceded all other phase of democratization in regards to Turkey in the 19th century as suggested by Rustow. It is obvious that Rustow does not consider the possibility of national integration to be challenged by ethno-regional mobilization, so he implied that once national integration is achieved and democracy gains consolidation challenges for national unity will not lead to a reverse transition.

As mentioned before, according to Rustow there are specific styles in the democratic transition. The first phase called "*preparatory phase*" which consists of either political

or economic processes that set democratization off. Rustow hypothesized that "against the background condition, the dynamic process of democratization itself is set off by a prolonged and inconclusive political struggle" (Rustow 1970:352). This is inconclusive because the regime should change and if not the struggle for regime change continues. In this phase, the actors should be in well-defined groups on issues that have deep meaning to them. It involves the forces of the old rulers and new elite in favor of transition. For instance, in Sweden the transition from oligarchy to democracy involves an intense struggle at first between "the lower middle class and working class against the oligarchy or the representatives of high bureaucrats, industrialists and farmers over issues such as tariffs, taxation, military service, and suffrage" (Rustow, 1971:23). He however points out that this struggle can happen differently in all countries and democracy is eventually conceived of this conflict. Rustow maintained that it is crucial for national unity to continue, so as the actors can reach a consensus rather than to be at war with each other. He explained that when this political struggle reaches a dead-end, it paves way for democratization. This imply that with the strong pressure from the opposition, the old rulers realize that they cannot continue but instead compromise.

The second phase is the "*decision phase*" when democracy is achieved through a process of a conscious action on the part of the top political leaders. Rustow emphasizes that "the preparatory struggle leads to the decision phase when the political leaders accept the existence of diversity in unity and, to that end, to institutionalize some crucial aspects of democratic procedure" (1970:355). That is when the conflicting parties understand that they are at a point of dead-end in the inconclusive political struggle they choose to compromise and embrace democratic rules. For

instance, the adoption of universal suffrage in Sweden can be regarded as a conscious decision on the part of political leaders. Also, the prolong conflict between the lower middle class and the high officials, were able to be resolved with peaceful compromise among the leaders (Rustow 1970:355-356). Meanwhile, Rustow points out that the decision in favor of democracy requires reaching a decision through negotiation by several actors and groups (both new and old from the preparatory struggle) that are or not part of political leadership.

The last phase which is the "*habituation phase*" once a decision is made, it establishes a procedure of selecting individuals who are in favor of democracy, among parties in general elections and politicians competing for leadership. That is, in this phase democratic procedures are generally accepted and obeyed. Also, political actors accept that democracy is the only game in town. According to Rustow, transition to democracy "may require some common and distinct attitudes on the part of the politicians and of the common citizens which are more transparent in this phase" (Rustow, 1970:360). Sweden is another example when there was consensus among the political leaders, a commitment to democracy was made and there was spread of democratic convictions among the transitional politicians and among the successors which regard democratic values as a habit. Also, in Sweden those leaders who reluctantly accepted democracy retired or died and were succeed by those who genuinely believed in it (Rustow, 1970:358).

This phase include that, decisions made by political leaders "should be implemented among the citizens in such a way that the generations to come, and future leaders will genuinely believe in democracy rather than their predecessors who accepted the democratic features out of obligation." In this phase, Rustow also mention that

democracy do not only involves competition for offices but also resolving conflicts among human groups. For instance, in Sweden there have been issues surrounding "taxation and conscription system inherited from the Sixteenth century." After democracy was adopted lots of conflicting issues were resolved (Rustow, 1970:358-359).

After the following styles to democratic transition that was explained as mentioned by Rustow. He asserts that for the transition process to be completed its dynamic model is necessary to the genesis of democracy. He state that firstly, there must be a sense of national unity. For a second, there must be prolonged and serious conflict between forces of democracy and the old authoritarian rulers. Third, "there must be a conscious adoption of democratic rules and values. Lastly, the politicians and electorate must be habituated to these rules" (Rustow, 1970: 361). Thus, according to him when all these factors are not present in a country that want to adopt democracy the transition process will be incomplete.

He went further that all these process must be convene or applied one at a time and that each phase has its own relevance and its protagonist. For the quest of national unity, a group of administrators is needed to ensure unity. For preparatory struggle, it involves a mass movement by the lower class and upper. For the task of decision, small group of political leaders to ensure negotiation and compromise for the preparation of democratic transition. Finally for the task of habituation, a set of organization men is needed (Rustow, 1970: 361). He believed that democratic transition process will be paralyzed if any country apply this model at once.

He also suggests that this model should be in sequence "from national unity as background, through struggle, compromise, and habituation, to democracy" (Rustow, 1970: 362). According to him, if this model is not applied in sequence transition process may not be completed and there is tendency to move back to authoritarian regimes. So, Rustow believes that national unity is precondition and achieving national unity cannot be postponed to any phase of democratic transition.

However, the concept of national unity is defined "as a relationship of community among people within the same political entity, to act together, and to be committed to mutual programs" (Jacob &Tenue, 1964:9). Thus, this definition refer to people who are willing to live and work in a harmony. Also, integration can be defined as "bringing people of different racial or ethnic groups into an unrestricted and equal association, as in society or an organization" (Soukhanov, 1996:938).

Similarly, national integration is viewed "as the progressive reduction of cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities in the process of creating a homogeneous political community" Coleman and Rosberg (1964:9). In other words, promoting peace and reducing segregation of cultural and regional tensions in order to endorse unity.

Accordingly, Karl Deutsch et al defined national integration "as the attainment within a territory of a sense of community, institutions, and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure for a long time, dependable expectations of peaceful community" (Karl Deutsch et al 1966:2). Hence, a "sense of community" is an integrated group of people. According to them, a "sense of community" means a belief with respect to individuals in a group that has come to an agreement that social issues should and can be settled through procedures of peaceful resolution. This peaceful

resolution means resolving social issues without the use of physical force. Hence, it can be concluded that national integration is the coming together of various ethnic, regional, religious, and cultural groups into one political entity which promotes political stability in a democratic country. Likewise, it means individuals in a community can resolve social problems with peaceful resolution without the use of force.

To go further, Rustow argued that democratic regimes can be installed by groups of revolutionary elite (1970:341). Therefore in order to understand democratization process it is necessary to explain the inter-elite relations and challenges by the newly emerging revolutionary elites against the old authoritarian elites. Rustow stressed that elites are important in democratization process since a consensus among the elites is required for transition to democracy to take place. That is democracy will be best preserved and stabilized based on consensus among the elites. This consensus however can be in common beliefs in the principles or rules about the nature of political system. In this sense when there is continuous agitation for democratic practice by the mass, the elite reach a compromise to transition to democracy.

Dogan & Higley (1998: 15) defines political elites as "holders of strategic positions in powerful organizations and movements, including dissident ones, who are able to affect national political outcomes regularly and significantly." Thus, transition to democracy doe not only require mobilization of people but also elite leadership. Therefore, in this study the political elite which led the democratization in Nigeria, its ideology, its relations to social classes and its composition will be taken into consideration to understand the dynamics of incomplete transition.

Following Rustow dynamic model, democratization process also involves an intense struggle between the social classes of the old regime and those agitating for the new regime over issues that are very profound to them. For instance, in Sweden it was struggles between "the lower middle class and working class against conservative alliance of bureaucrats, large landowners, and industrialists; and the issues were tariffs, taxation, military service, and suffrage" (Rustow, 1970:353). Rustow regarded class structure as important factor due to the fact that they will agitate for issues that is contradicting their interest. To him, the demands by social class for change is important because it increases the prospect of democratization.

As indicated by Saunders, "class structure in Western societies includes three fundamental layers: upper class, middle class, and lower class" (Saunders 1990:2). These classes are subdivided into smaller classes regarding the occupation. Meanwhile, Karl Marx considers "class position to be characterized by a person's relations to the means of production, which is ownership or non-ownership of property" (Karl Marx 1848 cited in Saunders 1990:5). Along these lines, "the ruling class (the bourgeoisie) and the working class (the proletariat) safeguard their social situations by keeping up their relationship within the means of production" (Karl Marx 1848 cited in Saunders 1990:7). In any case, Max Weber sees class structure differently in contrast to Karl Marx and alludes to it "as groups within a population who share certain common economic characteristics" (Max Weber 1978 cited in Saunders, 1990:20). As per Max, "individuals form a class in the event that they share generally basic life possibilities" (Max Weber 1978 cited in Saunders, 1990:21).

In a Nutshell, the class structure is a social position within groups of people who share common features either above or below one in the prestige scale. There are clearly

various individuals that make up the class structure. They are the bourgeoisie (upper class), the working class (middle class), and lower class which will be the class composition that will be used in this study in relating to Nigeria.

Chapter 2

FEATURES OF TRANSITION PROCESS IN NIGERIA

2.1 Regime Characteristics of Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the countries that is still struggling to develop and find workable solutions to its political system issues and national identity a midst the multiple internal divisions. Since the achievement of independence in 1960, Nigeria has witnessed four periods of civilian administration, series of attempts by military coups, civil war and thirty years of military rule. However, in 1999 a continuous attempt to transition from authoritarian regime to civilian administration took place. The current constitution regards Nigeria as a democratic state and has held several elections between 1999 till date. But it has been observed that, Nigeria upgraded from authoritarian regimes to hybrid regime on the democracy index, which means that Nigeria practice semi-democracy (Economic Intelligent Unit, 2019:43).

Nigerian regime could be regarded as a hybrid system (semi-democracy) because its system appears democratic yet the institutions is weak, the power of political elites are not limited and elites are not accountable to people. Since the country embraced civilian rule several obstacles which derived from political culture such as god-fatherism, corruption, patron-client relations and ethno-centrism has undermined the democratic process. The political institutions are weak mainly because politics are based on patron client relations limiting individual freedoms. The political leaders engaged in competing patron-client relations for political position to gain control of

economic wealth. Likewise Nigerian politics have been known to be elite game in other to purse their selfish and personal interest over the national interest. Excluding population participation and effective control as well as limitation on elite rule (Campbell & Page, 2018).

The democratic institutions such as the civil society organizations, political parties, electoral commission, rule of law, and the independent judiciary are weak. For instance, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) that was established to conduct elections have not been working effectively but rather engaged in several electoral frauds. As observed by Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), INEC contributed to electoral problems in 1999 elections as well as in other elections. They did not select suitable persons to be in charge of thumb-printing which undermine the secrecy of the vote and expose the voters to plot conspiracy on how to rig the election. Also, they did not make an appropriate arrangement on how sensitive electoral materials will be transported to the polling unit and collation centers. They also had numerous logistical problems in preparing for elections (Agbu, 2016:44-46). The electoral commission so far has shown inadequate and poor organization at all levels, which often lead to unauthentic results just because they serve the interest of the ruling party thereby constituting electoral challenges. This weak systematization of the INEC has caused the inability to conduct free and fair election. (Agbu, 2016:127).

Also, as stated by Civicus observers, cases of harassing journalists that are covering elections, and protests as well as lack of respect for fundamental freedoms in the country were widespread. The journalists were "detained, prosecuted, experienced death threats and physically assaulted by security operatives or other armed individuals. They were also denied access to get the report on polling stations, and

forced to discard some information they had." Some the journalists tried to protest but they were repressed (Civicus, 2019: 15-17).

Furthermore, within the political parties' organization, several intra-party conflicts of all shapes have been part and parcel of Nigerian democratic journey which undermined the progress of the democratic process and quest for national integration. Olorungbemi points out that since the inception of civilian rule "the political party were transformed into a battlefield characterized by hatred, enmity, victimization and suspicion resulting from bitter struggles among party members in their quest to achieve public and (or) personal interests" Olorungbemi (2014:248). Likewise, several violent conflicts have erupted in the country and affecting the progress of democratization in the country such as the emergencies of ethno-religious conflict from the inception of civilian rule, Biafra secessionist movement, Niger delta crises, and Boko haram insurgencies has been thriving in the country (Falola, Heaton, & Genova, 2018:11-13).

Meanwhile, after the transition, the elected president and its successors ensured that all military officers that held political offices during the military rule in the pre-1999 era were retired irrespective of their age and length of service (Ehwarieme, 2011:504). While those involved in human rights violation during the military regime were jailed (Irish Times, 2004). It explained why there was no successful coup in the present civilian administration. The elected government embarked on the reorganization of military officers, ensured that military officers living above their stipend are investigated; ensured that military officer goes for training and seminars; and that consistent statement is submitted by each service heads of the armed forces pledging their loyalty and commitment to democracy as well as abstaining from politics (Ehwarieme, 2011:505).

2.2 National Identity and National Unity in Nigeria

In Nigeria, there are three main ethnic groups which are the Hausa in the northern region, the Yoruba in the southwestern region, and the Igbo in the southeastern region. Other ethnic groups are called "minorities" (Falola, Heaton, & Genova, 2018:3). Also, religion is linked to the ethnic ties of these three dominant groups, the Hausa Fulani are mostly Muslim and the rest are Non-Muslim. However, ethno-religious identities have proved to be stronger than national identity. The masses and frequent conflicting ethno-religious groups in Nigeria are more loyal to their ethnic and religious ties over the vast interests of the Nigerian state (Agbiboa, 2013:13). In Nigeria, one of the factors that have caused a threat to national integration (unity) and the embrace of a shared sense of national identity is cultural affiliations (ethnic, religious and tribal).

Although, the presence of diverse ethnic or religious groups does not by nature constitutes a problem. When the group is discriminated, manipulated and exploited it causes a problem in a democratic system. However, several efforts have been taken to unite Nigeria as a whole. One of the efforts taken to promote national unity is the 1999 constitution, which affirms that people should live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation section 2(1) of the 1999 constitution. Also, other extensive provisions are included to promote national integration in the country. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was introduced to promote national unity in Nigeria. The scheme was implemented such that fresh graduates from universities and polytechnics are conveyed to serve the country in states which are different from their states of origin, and the states in which they schooled so they can have a better understanding of the cultures, the language, and even general lifestyle of

their host communities. The National anthem is designed to bring a feeling of patriotism to make people work for progress and unity of the country.[1] The federal government also embarked on socialization programs to promote unity, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) is responsible for the re-orientation of Nigerians to foster patriotism and national unity. Its aim is to communicate government policy, prompt a sense of common belonging and the development of Nigerian society (Daniel 2015; Eme-Uche, & Okonkwo 2020:681).

2.3 Elite Formation and Class Structure in Nigeria

The genesis of the elite formation and class structure in the Nigerian political system takes various forms by the historical events that begat the country. However, I will not dive too much into the historical (pre-colonial era) event as it is very extensive and not the focus of this thesis. The elite formation in Nigeria was followed by the pattern created by the former colonial leaders. Indeed in the pre-colonial Nigerian Kings, chiefs, and titleholders were regarded as elite and were differentiated from the non-title holders. (Odubajo & Alabi, 2014:134; Kia & Vurasi, 2013:54).

Howbeit, with the adoption of western education a new elite emerged. These elites united and initiated a political movement against the colonial rulers over such issues as taxation, freedom, utilities, land acquisition, and discrimination. However, as a result of the growth of nationalist movement demanding independent Nigerian state, a constitution legislated by the British colonialists which provided a parliamentary system of government and three regions which is the North, West and East moved Nigerian towards independence (Ugobude, 2019). Meanwhile, after independence was

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[1] I pledge to Nigeria my country to be faithful, loyal and honest, to serve Nigeria with all my strength, to defend her unity and uphold her honor and glory so help me God.

achieved, these united elites divided as they strive to pursue their personal and regional interest by using ethnic ties as their base. National leaders became the leaders of their respective regions dominated by specific ethnic/religious groups (West, East and North). Each of these national leaders was also leading in the political parties in the first civilian administration. Namely the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) which constitute members of Igbo ethnic groups, the Action Group (AG) was named with the Yoruba ethnic groups, and the Northern People Congress (NPC) majority of its supporters were the Hausa-Fulani of the North. These nationalist leaders and their followers (ethnic ties) occupied key political positions at the regional and national levels in Nigeria political system (Nwonwu & Kotze, 2008; Adeleke & Charles, 2015:62).

In Nigeria, it is argued that the factors that promoted the elite formation were westernization, the spread of education, urbanization, and competition among the public servants to acquire personal wealth. The desire of the politicians, public servants and business people to control state resources in order to acquire wealth led to the corruption of public offices in the political system. The struggle for the control of state resources was more regionally based during this period due to the fact that regions were powerful and each region had control over its resources. This is the period when elite formation commenced (Nwonwu, & Kotze, 2008:109-110).

Furthermore, vast elite emerged during the military era and played a major role in the political system. Emerging elite from the ethnic minorities started agitating for the creation of new regional entities because they felt they were being marginalized in the larger regional units. However, the first civilian administration collapsed in 1966 due

to political instability, minority agitations, and ethnic rivalries. The military taking over power in 1966 took some measures that impacted the structure of federalism in Nigeria and the process of elite advancement in society. Under the military leadership of Yakubu Gowon (1966-1975), new states are created and three larger regional structures were abolished to solve the problems of ethnic minority agitations and with the expectation of fostering national unity (Bourne, 2015:120). Also, the creation of states was aimed at weakening the power of secessionist Biafra groups from the eastern part of Nigeria, as well as bringing people closer to the federal government. Also, it was used as a strategy to bring new members of the elite class into politics. But those who benefited from the state creations were "civil servants, academics and other professionals who became commissioners, permanent secretaries, chairman and directors of various institutes belonging to their new states, others categories of people were contractors and business owners who monopolized official contracts in respective states" (Nwonwu & Kotze, 2008:112-113).

So, therefore, elites from different ethnic groups and states began to compete for resources throughout the military regime. This period was the expansion of elites and wealth accumulation. Furthermore, as mentioned above the vast majority of elites emerged during the military regime from various ethnic groups occupied political offices such as Head of States, governors, ministers. They expanded their influence on commanding political positions so as to ensure that their ethnic compatriots are employed to public offices. However, it has been argued that transition from military rule to civilian rule "was as a result of an agreement among leaders seeking to maintain their power and privileges inside ostensibly democratic structures. The broader society was hardly involved" (Coleman and Lawson-Remer 2013:9).

It is also observed that "both the federal and regional elites (with no involvement of middle class or the poor) orchestrated the 1999 transition from military to civilian rule and were the beneficiaries of the new regime, as they had been of the previous ones" (Campbell 2013b: 210). The 1999 civilian president was a former military general who was once head of state in 1976 and governed the Nigerian state from 1999 till 2007.

However, in Nigeria, "democracy has not yielded the expected results due to the character of the political elites who has a limited understanding of what governance requires" (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019:7).

Meanwhile, it can be argued that the class structure in Nigeria is drawn along occupational and educational lines. There are three different types of classes which are upper class, middle class, and the lower class. The upper class are the wealthy Nigerians which include individuals who occupy important positions in high offices as well as rich business persons. The middle class mainly consists of people from various professional groups such as doctors, lawyers, professors, and engineer amongst others.

The lower class mainly consists of peasants, skilled or unskilled workers who mainly engage in works like ditch digging, craftsmanship, agriculture, and construction. Other unskilled jobs include domestic servants who are generally illiterate and are poorly paid. Thus, this class structure has always been part of Nigerian society since after independence till today (Imhonopi, Urim, & Iruonagbe, 2013:10).

However, in Nigeria except for the upper class, other classes are disorganized as there is a weak middle class and working class. For instance, in January 2018, the National

Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that the national income of the upper class made up of about 10 per cent of the population, it increases between 2004 and 2013, arriving at 59.42 per cent in 2013 and declined to 58.39 per cent in 2016. Meanwhile, the middle class recorded just 30.26 per cent in 2016 from 29.14% in 2013, a small increment, while the lower class estimated for 11.36 per cent. Thus, this shows that there is a weak middle class in the Nigerian economy. In addition, of over 200 million population in Nigeria, the poverty rate among middle and lower classes is high compared to the upper class who control economic wealth and political sources. A report carried out by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2019, shows that 82 million (40.09%) out of the 200 million Nigerian citizens are living in poverty this shows that the middle class is weak in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019; Oseghale, 2019).

Nevertheless, during the military rule, the working class such as professionals groups formed some association and struggle for democratization. They agitate on issues that have profound meaning to them such as human rights, democracy, and better economic conditions. They engage in several demonstrations and struggle against the harsh policies of the military leaders that affected them (Mbah, 2014:25-27).

2.4 Stages of Transition in Nigeria

Rustow points out that national unity is the '*background condition'* in the transition to democracy. He explained that national unity should be achieved before democratization is initiated so as to avoid any difficulties in a democratic system. In Nigeria, national unity was not fully resolved before the inception of civilian rule. This led to the pronunciation of ethno-religious identity at the expense of national identity.

The manipulation and discrimination of ethno-religious groups have led to a series of conflicts which pose a threat to national unity.

Meanwhile, in an attempt to ensure national integration several attempts were initiated although they were not totally successful. First of all, some attempts such as a single 'national anthem' aimed at creating symbols of national integration was launched by the military regime. The national anthem is still in use across the country till this present moment, although ethnic leaders particularly those from the east (Igbo) still do not believe in one Nigeria. Also, the military government established the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) with the aim to instil the Nigerian identity among Nigerian youths. Graduates across the country are strategically deployed to different states across the country to serve their fatherland for a year. This scheme is to foster the spirit of ownership of their own country (Bourne, 2015:133). The scheme was very effective at first but after some years, the system was abused as some graduates boycott the service year, some abscond their place of deployment, some lobbied for the preferred state of deployment while some corps members lost their lives in the process due to ethnic and religious crises (Bourne, 2015: 253-254).

Likewise, it can be argued that the adoption of the English language, despite diverse ethnic languages has been helpful to create oneness and foster unity in Nigeria. The majority of the citizens communicates in the English language other than their ethnic languages which bring a feeling of solidarity and unity. Also, the 'Federal Character Principle' was aimed to achieve fair and effective representation of diverse ethnic and religious groups into various tiers of government in a position of power, status and influence. Meanwhile, some appointments have been lopsided to some section of the country which hinders national unity (Bourne, 2015:253; Asaju & Egberi, 2015:131).

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For instance, the incumbent president political appointments have favored a section of the country which is the north (Leila, Arnim, & Ukoha, 2020:4). So, therefore, the national identity question was not totally answered which led to several difficulties (ethno-religious conflicts) when civilian rule was adopted.

The first phase is what Rustow called *'preparatory phase'* in which there is inconclusive political struggle prior to democratization. According to Rustow democracy is born of this conflict which is a must for democratization to occur. The Nigerian state gained its independence in 1960 of which the post-independence civilian rule was short lived. Between 1960 and 1966, the political environment was characterized with regionalism and ethnicity as well as other political turmoil which led to the demise of administration in 1966 and the military to power (Akinleye, 2004; Helen, 1991). During the long years of military rule, Nigeria experienced economic instability, political instability, low standard of living, human rights violations, corruption and poverty. Whenever a military dictator took over the government there is always a promise to return the country to civilian administration which has led to several weak attempts to establish a civilian rule. Military dictators were clouded by their personal ambition and greed. For instance, in 1993 there was an attempt to transition, presidential elections were conducted but the results were annulled for no definite reason and military rule continue.

The outcome of this resulted in several struggles to end the authoritarian regime and adopt the civilian rule. The major actors in this struggles have always been civil society organizations such as National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS), Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC), Campaign for Democracy (CD), Civil Liberty Organization (CLO), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Constitutional Rights Project (CRP),

and the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR). These unions engaged in a struggle against the military regime and their representatives on harsh policies and issues that have profound meaning to them such as human rights, better economic conditions and agitation for democracy (Mbah, 2014:25-27; Bourne, 2015:181). The struggle for democratization was however conclusive due to pressure by the demanding groups as well as western ambassadors convinced the elite to adopt democratic rule (Bourne, 2015:200).

The second phase is the *'decision phase'* with respect to Rustow's theory which there is conscious action by political leaders to embrace democracy and their willingness to accept political pluralism. The military dictator that was appointed by the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) embarked on measures to ensure a peaceful transition such as releasing the opposition politicians from jail, the formation of new political parties and dissolving the old parties, the removal of military officials from political office and the implementation of a new constitution. Meanwhile, "negotiation for transition which involved a compromise between rival beneficiaries of the military regime and their democratic opponents" (Bourne, 2015:203). Three compromises emerged from the negotiation table which includes opportunities for career advancement when the transition is made, no consequences for looting government money during the military regimes and exemption for human rights violation during the military regime. They manage to reach a compromise and transition election commenced (LeVan, 2019:32).

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established to conduct elections at all levels (national, state and local) and to register political parties. New political parties were formed and elections were conducted into different levels (national, state and local) in 1999. The return to civilian rule started on the 29th May

1999, and the new civilian president from the Yoruba ethnic group was elected from People's Democratic Party (PDP) (Bourne, 2015:202; Falola, Heaton, & Genova, 2018:11).

The PDP was the dominant party ruled from 1999 to 2015, and within that period the party had experienced party leadership and intraparty crisis which resulted in defections of its members to another party. The party lack coherent ideological principles and internal democracy in the process of selecting party organs and nominating candidates.

Under the PDP leadership, there was a decline in socio-economic and political development. As a result, several opposition parties merged and formed the All Progressive Congress (APC). APC announced that its aim was to reduce the strong influence of PDP and to promote socio-economic and political development. The merger led to the demise of PDP in the 2015 election and became the ruling party. This relatively peaceful change in power was not meant a democratization step since APC started ruling the country arbitrarily. Just like the PDP, the APC was faced with the intra-party crisis between executives leadership and members of the legislative organ both at state and federal level which pose a threat to promote national unity (Kastina, 2016:4-5; Babayo & Muhammad 2019:127).

The third stage is the *'habituation phase'* by which democratic procedures is generally accepted and becomes a habit. In other words, it is the phase in which democracy becomes the only game in town. The transition to civilian rule in Nigeria has led to a dramatic change in the political system as the majority of the military dictators that reluctantly accept the democratic values were dissolved from political offices, few

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retired, jailed and died (Ehwarieme, 2011). Others political forces that strongly believed in democratic values ensured that democratic convictions are spread to the masses and generations to come. The incumbent president of Nigeria is a typical example, he was a former military dictator prior to the transition, he did not believe in the democratic values but now he does and laying a legacy for generations to come.

However, Nigeria has been able to hold uninterrupted six consecutive elections regularly in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019. Though elections in Nigeria have not been regarded as free and fair, there have been several reports of elections malpractice, irregularities, and violence. The electoral commission (Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) also contributes to the electoral problems due to their inadequate preparations for the elections having several logistics problem. The organization of the election has been poor, between 2011 and 2019, elections were postponed at the last minute, which causes frustration and suspicion among people that politicians were delaying things to perfect their rigging strategies (Omotola, 2010; Adekoya, 2019).

Also, in this phase, Rustow points out that democracy also requires resolving conflicts between human groups and not just competition for office. There are several conflicts between the masses and the political elites, between ethno-religious groups and within the political elites. However, the conflicts resolving mechanisms that were initiated to resolve these above conflicts have been a mirage. Due to the fact that the conflict is unresolved and continue.

2.5 Incomplete Transition in Nigeria

As has been observed, the transition process in Nigeria is incomplete because there is a lack of national unity among the Nigerian people with the diverse ethnic groups in the country. The masses are more loyal to their ethnic and religious ties rather than the national interest, even despite several measures taken by the government to foster unity it yields ineffective. Over the years several ethnic militant groups have erupted in the country thereby posing threats to the transition process. Also, the institution is weak the judiciary cannot control the executive's decisions, the political elites constitute to the incompleteness of the transition as their power is not limited and they are not accountable to the people. As it has been observed "the political elites often lack the capacity or willingness to address Nigeria's pressing and important problems, they are corrupt, autocratic, and unaccountable and often use the instrument of power for self-aggrandizement" (Sadeeque, Mukhtar, & Bashir 2015:16). The democratic institutions have been characterized by polarization and inefficiency, it has been crippled with corruption and mismanagement. Likewise, the inability to conduct free, fair, and credible elections pose a serious challenge to the transition process in Nigeria has always been one of the major challenges (Isiqwe, 2012).

Chapter 3

BACKGROUND CONDITION AND PREPARATORY PHASE

3.1 Introduction

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic state with over 200 million population (World Bank, 2020), and with a federal system of government that consists of 36 States and a Federal Capital Territory. It is difficult to identify a single Nigerian national identity which unifies people living in different regions. The country comprises of over 250 ethnic groups, with over 250 languages practicing different religions and traditions. However, there are three main ethnic groups that dominate the country's population, they include the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo with other ethnic groups been called minorities. The Hausa-Fulani are based in the Northern part of the country and make up about 29 per cent. The Yoruba are based in the South-Western part, making up about 21 per cent of the country's population, while the Igbo are based in the South-Eastern part, making up about 18 per cent of the country's total population. Religion practices in Nigeria are linked with ethnic or cultural affiliation, as the large population of the Hausa-Fulani practice Islam, some part of the Yoruba's practice Christianity and other part practice Islam, while the Igbos mainly practice Christianity. Meanwhile, one can still see the Igbo practicing Islam but it is on a rare occasion (Agbiboa, 2017:3; Falola, Genova, & Heaton, 2018:4).

However, one of the major challenges to national unity in Nigeria is the lack of a unifying national identity. It can be argued that the mere existence of ethnic and religious groups does not constitute a dangerous element in a plural society like Nigeria.

They, however, become problematic when they are used as instruments of discriminatory practices, or when an ethnic and religious difference is manipulated and politicized. Ethno-religious conflicts tend to rise in Nigeria as a result of a political and economic imbalance or discrimination between the groups. Meanwhile, some of the minority groups felt marginalized and deprived of their rights to political and economic resources. This eventually causes mistrust, fear, and suspicion of the dominance of one ethnic group over the others. The outcome of this as resulted in competition among different ethnic groups since independence (Asaju & Egberi 2015:127; Adeforiti, 2018: 207).

For instance, in the 1990s there has been an intense struggle in the oil-rich Niger Delta region. The minority groups of the region especially the Ogoni and the Ijaw felt marginalized and exploited by multi-national companies, as well as the federal government that mainly consists of the three dominant ethnic groups. This led to political unrest as violence erupted in the Niger delta over the struggle for oil wealth, underdevelopment in their region, caused the emergence of several ethnic militias group to emerge in early 2003 to gain control of the oil resources within their own region. Ethnic militias groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPF), and Oodua People's Congress (OPC) amongst others (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017:11).

Moreover, the emergence of Igbo secession movement in the 1960s led to a civil war. The Igbo felt marginalized by the north domination in the government. The immediate cause of the war was due to massacre launched by the Hausa-Fulani in the north on the Igbo residing in the northern region (Jacob, 2012:15). Over time, since the post-civil war, there have been several instances whereby the Igbos demanded an independent state. Recently in 2017, the Igbos agitate for a Biafra state and also for the Hausa-Fulani residing in their state to return to their land. In reaction, the north youth (Hausa-Fulani) had a clash on the Igbo residing in the north demanding that they leave their region within a stipulated time. It led to tensions and uproar in some part of the country especially in the north and the east. However, the northern leaders intervened to curb the threat proposed by the northern youth. Likewise, the government launched a military operation called "operation python dance II" to curb the tensions in the south-east states (Hussain, 2019).

Another challenge which hinders the quest for national unity is the political environment due to the fact that "Federal Character Principle" (FCP) has been abused and have not yielded the expected outcome. The FCP rejects majoritarianism through requiring the participation of other groups in political organs. However, in regards to appointments, employment, and promotion, the elites and public officials who are supposed to be committed to this principle, violate it. Some appointments are lopsided to some section of the country created the feeling of domination by Northern Muslim (Hausa-Fulani) which hinder the quest for national unity (Asaju & Egberi, 2015:131).

For instance, most of the political appointments of the incumbent president Buhari favored the northern (Hausa-Fulani) section of the country (Leila, Arnim, & Ukoha, 2020:4).

Notwithstanding, several policies have been initiated to promote a common identity and to foster national unity. Notable among them is the establishment of Unity Schools. To this end, a federal college was established in each state which aimed to create a perception of common identity among the youths in the country. Another one is the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), aimed to develop a common identity and foster national unity among the youth. A scheme by which graduates are deployed to serve the country in various states other than their state of origin, so as to instil a better understanding of the cultures, language, and lifestyle of their host communities. In addition, Federal character principle was aimed to achieve fair and effective representation of diverse ethnic and religious groups into various tiers of government in a position of power, status, and influence. Despite all this polices achieving national unity among the ethnic and religious groups has been a mirage (Onifade & Imhonopi, 2013: 78-79).

Meanwhile, the idea of 'Nigerianess' is weak as the huge majority of the citizens pledge their loyalties to their ethnic and religious identity rather than national identity. Mainly because the leaders do not evenly distribute basic and social amenities (welfare) in the country. This made the citizens not to be motivated to support a common identity but instead resort to their ethnic ties so as to have access to national resources (Gambari, 2008; Asaju & Egberi, 2015:130). Issues regarding the welfare of the citizens need to be addressed by the leaders so as the majority of the citizens can develop a sense of 'Nigerianness.' The public officials and political leaders tend to pronounce their 'Nigerianness' due to the fact that they benefited from the system through corruption and manipulation amongst others. For instance, the former president Goodluck and his then ministry of petroleum Diezani Alison in 2011, have

been reported to engage in misappropriation of public funds of about $1.3billion oil deal. That been said, the Nigerian political leader has shown non-commitment to the basic citizen's welfare but are rather more concerned of their welfare, this action is responsible for the political and economic challenges of the country (Falade, 2008: 20, Libby, 2019).

3.2 Identity among Mass People

Prior to the independence of Nigeria in 1960, the country comprised of the Northern protectorate and Southern protectorate which were amalgamated in 1914 by the colonial rulers mainly for administrative purposes. Meanwhile, the people of Nigeria are of different ethnic groups, cultural heritage, languages, beliefs and norms. To this end, the prevalence of ethnic identities over a common identity has been present in Nigeria since independence. This is what was inherited from the colonial era. It could be argued that a strong collective political leadership to foster unity among the different ethnic groups is needed.

Notwithstanding, ethnic or religious identification has proven to be more important to Nigerians than a common identity (being Nigerian). The masses pledge their loyalties to their ethnic or religion leaderships and they tend to have access to national resources through their ethnic or religion membership. For instance, regarding employment, promotion, and appointment both in private and public sectors merit have been disregarded mainly because of ethnocentrism. The politicians also use ethnic or religious ties to their advantage to get support from their ethnic or religious groups, to achieve their political ambitions instead of promoting a sense of common identity among the masses. This divided the mass people along ethnicity or religion lines (Asaju & Egberi, 2015:130-131).
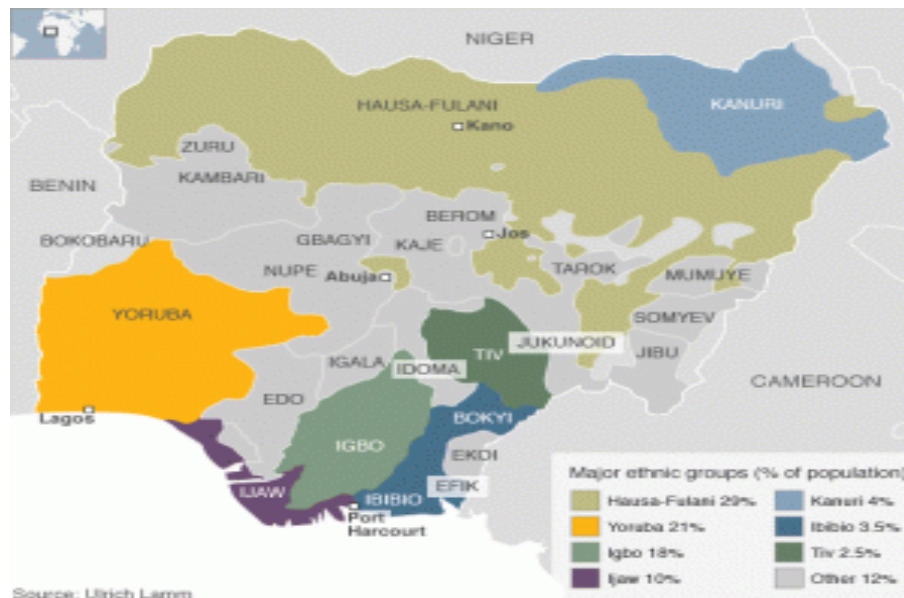
Figure 1: Territorial distribution of ethnic groups in Nigeria

The three dominant ethnic groups are explained below:

The Hausa-Fulani

The Hausa-Fulani are mostly Muslims and occupy the northern part of the country, particularly in states like Kano, Kaduna, Kastina, Maiduguri, and Zamfara amongst others. But, common religion, inter-marriage and the adoption of their dialect have united these groups. They are the largest ethnic groups and dominated the Nigerian federal politics following independence. Meanwhile, Islam is the key component of their ethnic identity which explain why they implemented the Sharia legal codes in the early periods of democratization. They believe it is their religious right and freedom to follow Sharia legal codes in public life. Several northern states (constituent entities) in the federation adopt the Sharia law that led to conflict between the majority Muslim community and the minority Christian living in the northern states. The Christian residing in the northern state see this as a strategy towards Islamization of the Nigerian

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[2] This map shows the major ethnic groups and other minority groups. The map was taken from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-16510922 source: Ulrich Lamm.

Federation (Agbiboa, 2013:22). Nevertheless, the implementation of sharia law has created division in the country, even in the Northern region, due to the fact that Nigeria is not a Muslim dominated country but rather a country with a variety of different religion. Some Christian and other religions might not comply with the sharia system, since it is not part of their belief and doctrine. This affects the sense of belonging as there is a division in the country.

Meanwhile, the Hausa stands to be most predominant. Their primary identity is both their religion and ethnicity. Though they share the same religion with some Yoruba ethnic groups what differentiate the two ethnic groups is their ethnic culture. The Hausa-Fulani support one another and believe more in their religion than any other tribe. In Nigeria, ethnicity and religion are inter-related together. A survey carried out by Lewis shows that 43 per cent of the Nigeria population prefer to define themselves with their ethnic attachment rather than their national identity or religious group and class membership (Lewis, 2007:5). Another researcher argued that religious identity is more salient than ethnicity (Pew Researcher 2010). In this regard, the Hausa-Fulani tends to pronounce their religious identity than their ethnic identity. Meanwhile, the other two ethnic groups Yoruba and Igbo tends to pronounce their ethnic identity more than religious identity (Lewis & Bratton, 2000:27; Lewis 2007:6).

The Hausa-Fulani also played a prominent role by preventing the development of national unity in Nigeria with their consistent demand to control political power especially during the military regime that rules the nation for almost 30 years. The leaders in key positions both military and civilian used to be from the northern region (Bamidele, 2015:21). The third civilian administration was aborted and elections results were annulled in 1993 due to ethnic reason, and the Hausa-Fulani felt their

political dominance will be threatened (Jacob, 2012:21). Even after the inception of civilian rule, their tendency to dominate power has led to a series of violence over the years.

The most notable among them is the 'rotation in presidency' which was the principle of the then ruling party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) between the south and north. However, in 2011 the north believes it was their turn for the presidency due to the fact that former president Yar'adua a Northerner (Hausa-Fulani) died in office without completing his term. This led to a post-election crisis between the north and the south youth when a south minority former president Goodluck became the president (Bamidele, 2015:21).

That been said, the political elites from Hausa-Fulani are known as the most influential group having control in federal politics. In this regard, they 'are widely considered as those ruling and ruining Nigeria' (Jega 2000:52). The vast majority of Nigerian citizens are mostly influenced by their ethnic and religious membership, which sometimes cause discrimination in areas such as political appointment, employment and distribution of basic amenities. For instance, the balancing of ethnic or religious groups has been undermined in the appointment to strategic political positions in the country. It is argued that the incumbent president who is a Hausa-Fulani from the North is promoting ethnicity and religion at the federal level. The appointment of most of the service chiefs, and head of other security agencies in Nigeria hails from the Northern (Muslim) and few have been sacked and be replaced by the Northern (Muslim) (Omonobi, 2020). The Inspector-General of the Police, the Chief of Army Staff, the Chief of Air Staff, Director of state security services, the Minister of Defence, and the

National Security Advisor amongst others were all appointed from the northern part of the country (Omonobi, 2020).

The President pointed out that this appointment was based on merit while some Nigerian leaders and other politicians believed otherwise. The House of Representatives and professional bodies oppose to the lopsided appointment. They argued that there have been an increase in insecurity challenge and all the appointed service chiefs are not being effective (Omonobi, 2020). Likewise, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) also accused the president of religiously biased and lopsided in his appointed. They argue that the appointments do not promote national unity and that President Buhari has been the only president since the inception of the civilian rule that promotes his religion and a section of the country at the expense of others (Opejobi, 2019).

The Igbo

The Igbo occupied the south-east region of the federation in states such as Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi, and Abia amongst others. They are predominately Christians and during the colonial era, they occupied key positions in the government and military. They lost their influence in the administration following the military regime as most heads of state throughout the military regime was from the North. The civil war which emerged in the late 1960s was due to their agitation for secession as they felt marginalized by the Hausa- Fulani in the north. Likewise, the Igbo played a major role in opposing the sharia law that was implemented in the northern states in 2000 after the inception of civilian rule. Mainly because they reside in northern states and were affected by the law which is against their own religious belief. They also play significant roles in the Nigerian oil trading (Agbiboa, 2013:22; PBS News Hour, 2007).

The Yoruba

The Yoruba occupied the south-west part of Nigeria in states such as Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Kwara etc. It embraced both Christianity and Islam. The Yoruba primary identity is their ethnicity and culture, although some of the Yoruba shared the same religion with the Hausa-Fulani which is Islam, they have been differentiated by their culture.

The two ethnic groups (Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba) are bounded by their culture, though there have been some instances of inter-marriages between the two ethnic groups (Gatawa 2013:174). A good number of the Yoruba people still have faith in their traditional religions. The Yoruba's are the most educated among all ethnic groups, they control financial sectors and also play significant roles in politics. They occupy some key offices but the Hausa-Fulani's sometimes outshine them (PBS News Hour, 2007; Jega 2000:53).

3.3 The Strength of Civic Identity (Nigerianness) among Mass People

Civic identity has been regarded as a factor that 'stimulates coexistence of constituent identities (that is, ethnic, religious, linguistic, regional, and local) and allows a multiplicity of individual identities' (Vural, 2012:408). In the case of Nigeria, it has been argued that civic training is needed for the development of 'Nigerianness' (Falade, 2008:19). Meanwhile, Rustow emphasizes on the importance of national identity as the background condition. But, with all the challenges bedevilling the Nigerian people, it is more difficult for citizens to have a sense of 'Nigerians.' Nigerian citizens are more loyal to their ethnic identity at the expense of national identity. For instance, a survey carried out by Lewis shows that 17 per cent of Nigerians pronounce

their national identity, which is low compare to 31 per cent who pronounce their ethnic identities.

While, about 51 per cent of Nigerians stress both their ethnic and national identities (Lewis, 2007:7). Being Nigerian to the mass people means having a sense of ownership of their own country where people can live together in harmony, equality, and justice. Also when the mass people have access to basic amenities it is possible for them to have a sense of common belonging.

However, the challenges such as poor standard of living, poverty, unemployment, insecurity and poor economic infrastructure made the Nigerian citizens not to develop a sense of common identity and support for the federal state. They instead resort to their ethnic or religion membership at the expense of national identity (Gambari, 2008). For instance, with the issue regarding unemployment, the NYSC program that was initiated by the government over time became frustrating for the youth, whereby after the completion of one year service at states other than their states. They do not get jobs in places they serve under the NYSC program mainly because they are being viewed as non-indigenes and even if they got a job it is based on contract (Onifade & Imhonopi, 2013:78).

Meanwhile, governing political elites and non-governing elite use their ethnic or religious attachments to gain support by promising the citizens social amenities. Most, citizens have trust in their ethnic group membership and there is this belief that one can get easy access to power, resources, and any other material needs only through ethnic connections (Adeniji & Ofiwe 2015: 77). Mostly, those who benefited from the Nigerian economic and political resources feel more Nigerian than those that benefit

less. Those that feel more Nigerian and loudly pronounce their 'Nigerian identity' are mostly those that are benefitting or have benefited either from mismanagement, corruption, patron-client, selfishness, social and gender inequalities. The beneficiaries group includes those successful civil servants, public office holders and political leaders (Ogundamisi, 2015).

The political class that is supposed to promote a common identity engage in manipulation and exploitation of the citizens especially during the election by using ethnic or religious sentiments. The voting pattern is mainly base on ethnic attachment. Nigerians are supposed to vote on the basis of the value and vision the leaders have for the country. For instance, the 2015 general election results show that ethnicity affected the voting pattern. The incumbent Hausa-Fulani President Buhari from APC had the majority votes in the northern region while the opposition candidate Jonathan from the south (minority ethnic group Ijaw) had the majority of the votes from the southern region (Abdulrahman & Danladi 2016:10). This shows a divide between the north and the south in terms of voting behavior.

Likewise, being Nigerian among the citizens can mostly be associated with sports activities particularly the Nigerian national football team 'super eagles.' This is when most Nigerians have a shared sense of national identity (Agbiboa, 2013:4). Shared national identity is also common among students who schooled abroad and pronounce their Nigerian identity. Mainly because base on the situation, identity perception can change when they are abroad, they need to distinguish themselves with people from other countries and not from people within their country (Nigeria). It is also common among youths that engage in civic education in schools. Civic identity can also understand among the citizens in regards to national anthems and symbols. The

working class and business people sometimes pronounce their national identity but they most identify with their ethnic group membership (Agbiboa, 2013:4; Falade, 2008:17).

Howbeit, it can be argued that there is a strong presence of civic identity among the Nigerian army. In this sense, they believe that they represent the national interests irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds (Gaub, 2010:31). They have the knowledge of common interest which serve as a united force. The Nigerian army has had a strong tradition of implementing unity within its barracks and to portray a national outlook (Gaub, 2010:31). They were inspired to build a military institution that corresponds to 'the western ideas of a modern, nationally minded armed force.' These efforts within the army took place on three levels: "implementation of a quota, the establishment of multi-ethnic units and creation of a pseudo-military service that would promote Nigerian identity among young men" (Gaub, 2010: 32).

Even after the civil war in the 1970s, the army did not exclude the Igbo officers that were involved in the war, but they integrate them back into the force as it is vital to portray the national outlook (Gaub, 2010:37). The army also ensured that they keep their distance from ethnic/religious affiliation and used abbreviations of their first names as initials on the uniform. Since most Nigerian names show a clear indication of ethnic or religious belonging (Gaub, 2010:38). It can be concluded that the Nigerian army possesses the feeling of national spirit and patriot as they represent the country and not individual. They fight against extremists such as Boko haram insurgency and ethnic groups that pose a threat to national unity (Gaub, 2010).

3.4 Preparatory Phase

Rustow points out that this is the phase in which there is an entrenched political struggle prior to democratization. Meanwhile, the Nigerian political environment has experienced destructive struggles due to the lack of compromise among the political elite. The intense power struggle without any sign of consensus has paraded the political system since independence causing several attempts by the military to overthrow the civilian government. As a result of this, the civil society inclusive of the labour unions, the media, professional bodies, organized students, and human rights groups engaged in several measures to agitate for democracy and other issues such as economic conditions, human rights, and women empowerment.

Nigeria's first attempt to establish civilian administration was after its political independence. The civilian administration commences in 1960 but failed in 1966 as the country's political system was affected with regionalism and ethnicity threatened the stability of Nigerian civilian rule. The major political parties were from the three major ethnic groups. The Nigerian People's Congress (NPC) which were Hausa-Fulani Muslim, they dominated the Northern region. Also, the Action Group (AG) represented the interest of the Yoruba people in the West and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) represented the interest of the Igbo Christians in the Eastern of Nigeria. There were also parties formed by minority groups that oppose the dominance of the majority demanding independence of regional state (Helen, 1991). The first elections were held in 1959 were the three dominant parties received majority votes in their regions but not powerful enough to form a national government alone. An alliance was formed by the NPC and NCNC for a national government. There was a parliamentary system and Nnamdi Azikiwe (NCNC) an Igbo became the first

president and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (NPC) a Hausa-Fulani became the prime minister of Nigeria, while Obafemi Awolowo (AG Yoruba) became a leader of the opposition (Helen, 1991).

Howbeit, with the coalition government of NCNC and NPC, the NPC used the federal government power to favour the Northern region. The NPC allocated budgets, projects and political positions in the federal public service to the Northerners. These action by NPC seems alienated to NCNC coalition partner and they feared the political dominance of the NPC. The steps taken by NCNC to counter NPC political dominance in the federal the government can also be amount to the collapse of first civilian administration. Among the difficulties going on between the North (NPC) and the South (NCNC), others factors that contributed to the collapse of the first civilian administration was a split in the leadership of AG Yoruba dominated group. This led to a crisis that a state of emergency was declared by the federal government to resolve the issue in the Western region. As a result, the AG was removed from regional powers and new party was formed named the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP).

Meanwhile, in preparation for the next general election that will commence in 1965, the political sphere has been polarized into a competition between opposing alliance. The whole electoral process was full of various rifts, violence, and electoral malpractices which led to the fall of the administration in 1966 (Helen, 1991; Bourne, 2015:89-91).

The failure of the civilian government has resulted in a bloody military coup in 1966. An eastern general (Igbo) Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi became the head of state and was unable to resolve the ethnic tensions. Ironsi 'suspended the constitution, dissolved all

legislative bodies, banned political parties and as an interim measure formed a Federal Military Government (FMG)' (Helen, 1991). Ironsi issued a decree to abolish 'the federation and unified the federal and regional civil services.' This did not go well with the Northern (Hausa-Fulani Muslim) region accusing the Igbo of dominating the political domain and also accuse Ironsi of favouritism towards the Igbo (Helen, 1991).

This led to counter-coup in the same year by the northern officer which brought Major General Yakubu Gowon to power. During that period a number of brutal ethno-religious conflicts emerged between the Hausa-Fulani (Muslim) and the Igbo (Christian) which resulted in an attempt by the eastern region (Biafra) for secession. This eventually resulted in a civil war which continued from 1967 to 1970. The war had an adverse effect on Nigeria economy and many lives were lost, it was also the period that military officers became stronger in the political system (Bourne, 2015:116-125; Falola, Genova, & Heaton, 2018:8).

However, Gowon failed to return the country to civilian administration till the second military coup in 1975 which brought General Murtala Muhammed to power. In this period there was a high level of corruption and mismanagement of public funds by public office holders, which resulted in removing the military dictator by another coup in 1976. General Olusegun Obasanjo succeeded Muhammed, there was a second attempt to return the country to civilian rule in 1979. The first step was to formulate a new constitution, which shaped Nigerian civilian rule and made Nigeria abandon the British style parliamentary system and adopt the American style presidential system.

Elections were conducted in 1979, and the FMG handed over power to President Shehu Shagari. After this election, the political system experienced four years of political

turbulence, serious economic challenges that led to the country into recession, inflation, corruption, rent-seeking, and ethno-religious conflicts. These challenges led to the collapse of the civilian rule in 1983 and paved the way for the military coup to take over the government (Bourne, 2015:138-141).

The military rule in the 1980s and 1990s took a drastic form as those in power were driven by personal ambition and greed. The plan to return the country to civilian administration was based on procrastination and Nigerians experienced lots of terrible treatment from the dictators. During those periods there was a continuous struggle by opposition groups agitating for democracy and better economic conditions especially from the students, labour unions, professional associations, media, and human rights groups against the regime by staging demonstrations. Aside from the student movement and labour movement, the majority of these groups are from the middle class. Howbeit, in 1986, in an attempt to revive Nigeria from the economic crisis, the military dictator General Ibrahim Babangida imposed austerity measures to revive the economy. He turns to the International Monetary Funds (IMF) for assistance but does not accompany loan which recommends a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), this involved extreme cuts in public spending, deregulation, wage cuts and currency devaluation among others. This led to a series of violent resistance from the middle class, and lower class, in various states across the country as their standard of living was affected due to these policies. Likewise, the Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC), media and affected groups also involve in violence means against the IMF plan and the regime (Mbah, 2014:27).

Nevertheless, a transition program was announced to commence in 1990 although it was always postponed. Two political parties were allowed to be formed to give the impression of civilian rule. But, the citizens were already displeased with the regime due to bad economic conditions. Some human rights activists and pro-democracy groups such as the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP), the Campaign for Democracy (CD), the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR), and the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) including professional and labour bodies regarded the dictator as an oppressor to civilian rule and national interest (Bourne, 2015:181). In 1993 the dictator accepted to step down and a general election was conducted across the federation under the transition program of Babaginda. It was considered to be free, fair and peaceful, but there was an argument between the military officers on allowing the winner to take over the government or the continuation of the military rule (Bourne, 2015:185).

Having said that, the acclaimed winner of the election M.K.O Abiola a Yoruba Muslim was denied and the result was annulled for no definite reason. Many scholars argued that the results were annulled due to the fact that the North (Muslim) wanted to preserve their political hegemony (Bourne, 2015: 184-185). The outcome of this action led to protest, strikes, and killing among several groups in the country. The National Labor Congress (NLC) organize a strike though it was unsuccessful, the organization was weakened. A lot of demonstrators and rioters were killed by security agencies such as polices and military soldiers. Also during the crisis period, there was an attempt to increase the petrol price which results to protest by oil workers. The country characterized by strikes and rioting. Many workers were not paid their salary during

this period, the police especially resort to the street to extort money from the people (Mbah, 2014:26; Bourne 2015:186-188).

Some few days later, Sani Abacha took over power as the head of state in 1993. This military dictator term was regarded as the worst in Nigerian history. Abacha disengaged all civilian positions and programs and replaced them with military officers. Abacha (dictator) like is predecessor promised a transition to civilian rule but he used excessive force to attain his ambition. Under the military, the rule of law, press freedom, and human rights were violated. The government used violence as a weapon against its opponents and critics. The most notable among them is the trial and execution of political and human rights activists which led to the suspension of Nigerian involvement in international activities such as Commonwealth. The United States, United Kingdom, and others imposed sanctions on Nigeria including travel restrictions on government officials, as well as the suspension on military assistance (Bourne, 2015:190-193). The military dictator and his followers used the state as an instrument of personal gain. During the Abacha regime, the country had a low GDP and witnessed high economic instability, low standard of living, corruption, unemployment and poverty (Bourne, 2015:196).

In 1998, the sudden death of Sani Abacha paved the way for military disengagement, the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) appointed General Abubakar as the new head of state, he was pressured by the groups demanding democracy and he as well urged by western ambassadors and commissioners to adopt democracy (Bourne, 2015:200). He quickly led a "transition program which also involved a compromise between rival beneficiaries of the military regime and their democratic opponents" therefore, resulting to transition to civilian rule in 1999 (Bourne, 2015:203).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been able to highlight the challenges to national unity which largely undermine a complete transition and development of common identity in Nigeria. The chapter focuses mainly on background condition and the preparatory phase of Rustow democratization process. As mentioned above, the issue of national unity has been rooted in cultural affiliation. The discrimination, manipulation, exploitation, and lack of common identity among diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria contribute to the persistent ethno-religious conflicts, which pose a threat to democratic consolidation and national unity.

Despite all the policies initiated by the government to foster unity and a sense of belonging, the mobilization of ethnic or religious identity is still present which hinder the accomplishment of the policies. Also, there is weak and unstable political leadership at the federal level, along with weak institutions constitute the failure of ensuring a sense of common identity national unity and other challenges in the country. The political elites constitute to the challenges of national unity because they are power-driven and use ethnic or religious sentiments to achieve their aim. Also, it can be argued that the long years of military rule affected the perception of political elites and how they addressed the citizen's needs. The elites are too corrupt, rent-seeking, and personalization of power which affected their relations with the masses. That been said, Nigeria needs leaders will work collectively and committed to the democratic procedure.

Chapter 4

DECISION AND HABITUATION PHASE

4.1 Introduction

The sudden death of the military dictator General Sani Abacha in 1998, who proclaimed a self-succession paved way for civilian administration that commenced in 1999, after a series of the power struggle in the Nigerian political system. The Provisional Ruling Council (PRC)[3] appointed Abdulsalam Abubakar as the head of state, embarked on several measures in 1998-1999 to ensure a swift transition to a civilian administration.

These measures included a) the release of political opponents from jail, b) the removal of military officials from political office, c) that the plan to allow new political parties to be formed and dissolution of the political parties that were formed during Abacha regime d) implementation of a new constitution, and e) to held well-organized elections at all levels of governance (LeVan, 2019:30). Likewise, negotiation between the military rulers and the civilian opponents commenced over the term of transition. Three compromises emerged from the negotiation table. These included a 'professional rewards that provided opportunities for career advancement in the civilian administration when the transition is being made, no consequences for looting government money during the military regime, and impunity for human rights

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[3] The Provisional Ruling Council its where the government of Nigeria enforces is authority the federal security agencies such as the military, police, State Security Services(SSS) and other enforcement agencies which rule by decree.

violations' (LeVan, 2019:32).   The military leadership and civilian opposition managed to reach a compromise.

That been said, transfer of power commenced in 1999 and transition elections were conducted at all levels in the political system from December 1998 to February 1999. This process took place with nine political parties contesting for local elections while three parties contested for the state and federal level elections. The PDP candidate (Olusegun Obasanjo), who contested for the presidential election was a Yoruba-Christian, prevailed over the coalition of Alliance for Democracy (AD) and the All Peoples Party (APP) candidate (Olu Falae), who was also a Yoruba-Christian. Both candidates were from southwest part of the country but the PDP candidate received the majority votes in most states and geopolitical zones[4] of the country.

However, international observers that were led by the Carter Center (U.S former president Jimmy Carter), National Democratic Institute (NDI) along with other observers were invited by the Nigerian government. They reported irregularities such as ballot-box stuffing and election malpractices. Also, there was a wide disparity between the number of voters that were present at the polling stations and the results that were announced by INEC. Hence, based on the findings expressed in the observers' reports Olu Falae rejected the results of the election and challenge it in the Court of Appeal at Abuja. The court, however, dismissed Falae challenge because of lack of merit and Obasanjo was sworn in as the president (Agbu 2016:126-127).

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[4] North West, North Central, North East, South-South, South West, South East. Agbu, O. (Ed.). (2016). Elections and Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Dakar: Codesria. African Books Collective p.126

PDP was a state-wide party associated with various ethnic-religious groups members. The party was formed by G34[5] members together with other political parties from various ethnic-religious groups who opposed Abacha self-personalization of the political system formed PDP (LeVan, 2019:39). The PDP was the ruling party at the federal level from 1999 to 2015. This party had been able to control the majority seats at the National assembly and governorship level during the same period. The party had an informal agreement principle known as 'power shift'[6] they agreed on the rotation of the presidency between the north and the south after two-term. This principle was suggested to promote ethnic and religion balancing to reduce mistrust between religious or ethnic segments in Nigeria. This principle explained why they manage to get the majority supports from the six geopolitical zones in the federation (LeVan, 2019:49).

Howbeit, PDP has been regarded "as the most unstable and crisis-ridden party with absence of internal democracy and coherent ideological principles" (Kastina, 2016:4). They lack of internal democracy in the process of selecting party organs and nominating candidates. This led to intra-party crisis as several members were excluded from the party's decision making. This resulted in defections of its members to another political party. In addition, the opposition was intimidated and oppressed. Under the PDP rule the country was faced with decline in socio-economic and political

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[5] These are thirty four opposition politicians known as G34 (also called "Group of Patriotic Nigerian Citizens") these group opposed Abacha military rule.

[6] Power shift in Nigeria is the rotation or alternation of presidency from one geo-political zone to the other to guarantee ethno-religious balancing in the political system. LeVan, A. (2019) The End of a New Beginning: Nigeria's Transition, 1999–2015. In Contemporary Nigerian Politics: Competition in a Time of Transition and Terror (pp.49). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

development, bad governance, corruption, poverty, and sectarian tension (Kastina 2016:4-5).

Due to the challenges affecting the governance of the country numerous civil society organization started criticizing the ruling party and its leaders. The civil society struggled to promote good governance and to deepen democratic practice thereby ensuring that the party and leaders is accountable and transparent in their actions (Adelabu, 2018:104). Likewise, several opposition parties merge to form All Progressive Congress (APC) so as to promote socio-economic and political development in the country. The strong merger of the opposition parties led to the demise of PDP in the 2015 election. The APC campaign promises were built on revamping the economy, fight against corruption and tackle threat to national security.

However, under the APC administration from 2015 to present this promises seems to be a mirage, the political system thrives on corruption and most Nigerian citizens are living in extreme poverty. The party was also faced with intra-party crises within the party and between the executive leadership and members of the legislative organ both at the federal and state levels. In addition, there have been several human rights cases of abuse and activist have been arrested, detained, persecuted and jailed. The relations between ethnic groups did not improve and tensions grow between the Fulani herders and local farmers thereby causing insecurity in the country (Carsten, 2019; Babayo & Muhammad 2019:127).

Notwithstanding, there is no difference between the APC and PDP in terms of implementing their ideological principles and policy preferences such as education, human right, economic development, foreign policy, and harmony between various

ethno-religious groups. The PDP principles were built on 'justice, equity and inclusion' of which the party deviated from. Meanwhile, APC promised 'change' they promise to improve national security, education and health sectors, alleviate poverty, promote national integration, create employment and among others. However, APC and PDP failed to deliver their promises but instead battle with policy inconsistencies and intra-party conflicts. The political leaders themselves lack political ideology as they see political parties as an instrument in advancing their career. This explained the defections of politicians from PDP to APC and vice versa as a result of their political career been threaten (Mogaji, 2019: 2-3).

4.2 Willingness of Political Elites towards Pluralism

Rustow pointed out that the process of preparatory phase is completed by 'a deliberate decision on the part of top political leaders to accept the existence of diversity in unity and, to that end, to institutionalize some crucial aspect of democratic procedure' (1970:355). After the death of the military dictator in 1998, the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) organized meetings and three compromises emerged between the beneficiaries of the military regime and the civilian opponents. The former military generals laid down their demands to ease their departure and negotiated their influence after handing over to the civilian administration (LeVan, 2019:44). The civilian rulers and the military leaders agreed on the following:

Firstly, the former military leaders negotiated for promotion and opportunities to ease their departure after handing over to the civilian administration. The promotion and appointment of Zakari Biu, and General Bamaiyi, who were top security officers during the Abacha regime and tortured Abacha opponents received lots of criticism from human rights groups (LeVan, 2019:44). Meanwhile, after the transition retired military officers embraced their civilian status. They had opportunities for new careers

and joined the PDP leadership. For instance, retired military officers such as Brigadier Jonathan, General Nwachukwu, Tunde Ogbeha, and David Mark (who later became Senate President) won seats in the 1999 national assembly election. In addition, many retired officers also proceed into private sectors such as agriculture, telecommunications, manufacturing or oil, and transportation sectors. Though the retired generals in each sector were still in close ties to politics due to the fact that government power is needed to avoid regulatorily and also, access to government spending is needed for capital (LeVan, 2019:53-54).

Secondly, the reluctance of the PRC to expose and pursue consequence for money looted by Abacha indicate a compromise with the exiting former military. Even when the Transitional Provisional Ruling Council discovered the US $690 million by January 1999 looted by Abacha, his national security advisor was investigated about the money discovered but he was released. Meanwhile, the discovery of the looted money outrage the minority's ethnic groups in the Niger Delta oil region. Mainly because the money looted was from the oil sector in their region. (LeVan, 2019:45). Meanwhile, since the transition to a civilian administration in 1999 till this moment much of 'Abacha loot' is still being recovered and discovered. In 2020, for instance, the Nigerian government announced that a sum of US$321 million will be recovered which was stolen by the former military head of state (Sanni, 2020).

The third compromise was the approach to human violation under the previous dictators that will be carried out by the transitional government. There were argument, as some factions wanted the incoming civilian's government to handle the human rights violations, while some factions wanted the transition programs to proceeds. However, the chairperson of human right panel died which made the regime not to go

further with the persecution of human rights violation. Few hardliners were cut off the hook, while the civilian administration handled other human violations that took place under the military regimes (LeVan, 2019:46). Meanwhile, after the transition, PDP leadership established a truth commission, and also appointed Justice Chukwudifu Oputa to investigate, identify perpetrators in human rights violations from 1983-1999, and to also make recommendations for rectification. Despite this, the government did not release the findings of the Oputa panel nor prosecuted the major perpetrators of human rights abuses under the military regime (LeVan, 2019:52).

Nevertheless, during the transition process, the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) initiated the formation of the political party. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established for the registration and conduction of election within 1998-1999 at the local, state, and federal levels. The PDP candidate, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a retired military officer and a Yoruba-Christian was declared the winner of the presidential election. Though the election results were challenged by the defeated opposition candidate Chief Olu Falae a Yoruba-Christian. International observers led by Carter Center and National Democratic Institute (NDI) reported the election not to be credible. Base on the report given by the observers, Falae issued a petition and challenge the result in the court of appeal. However, the court dismissed the petition due to lack of merit. Overall, the transition election was mainly to disengage the military from the political system so much attention was not paid to the credibility of the result (Omotola, 2010:544).

Among the various parties in the Nigeria the PDP was the successive party in the political system for 16 years before they lost power to an opposition party in 2015. The PDP was a country-wide and had a stronghold in most regions of the country, held

majority seats at national, state and local government levels. While, other oppositions parties had minimal positions (Omodia, 2018:73; Agbu 2016:127). The PDP multi ethnic-religious members had a principle known as 'power shift' which is the rotation of the presidency between the south and the north for two presidential terms. It first begins from the south-west in 1999, meanwhile, the party nominated a Yoruba presidential candidate to represent the party in other to honor the Yoruba ethnic groups of the 1993 annulled election (LeVan, 2019:56). PDP also had an agreement that if the presidential nominee was a Christian, the vice president will be a Muslim and vice versa. This principle was also initiated in order to prevent the domination of one ethnic or religious groups in the political system (LeVan, 2019:49-56).

The principle is not a legal regulation by the federal state but an informal agreement within the PDP party and between ethno-religious elites. It is, however, an important principle which tends to encourage ethno-religion pluralism and inclusion. Meanwhile, other parties that were formed at the early stage of civilian rules such as AG and APP did not abide by this principle. They were sectional and so, therefore, their candidates were nominated from the regions they represented. However, these parties (AG and APP) along with other opposition parties of different ethnic and religious groups that merged to form All Progressive Congress (APC) now abide by the principle. For instance, the incumbent president is from the North (Hausa-Fulani Muslim) and his vice is from the west (Yoruba-Christian). In addition, for the 2023 coming election, APC has agreed to shift power to the south to ensure national cohesion in the country (Campbell, 2019; Ogunje, 2020).

However, the PDP 'exhibit a general lack of internal democracy, which reflects internal crisis and disorder. Their management of issues and events did not reflect the

expectations of masses but rather the articulated interests of the party leadership' (Adejumobi & Kehinde, 2007:102). There are several causes of an intraparty crisis involving parties such as PDP, AD, and APP. Such crisis emerged due to 'lack of ideology, the imposition of candidates, party funding, zoning frmula in the Nigerian context, party primaries and party executive arbitrariness' (Sule & Yahaya, 2019:121).

The aforementioned was mostly contributed by the PDP due to their strong dominance in the political sphere. For instance, 2003, and 2007 general elections were not considered free and fair. Most times, the PDP members have engaged in several irregularities such as 'vote-buying, stuffing of ballot boxes, monetization of the electoral process, voter's intimidation, electoral malpractices, and political manipulation.' This action resulted in electoral violence between the supporters and opposition parties. For instance, the 2003 elections was very fraudulent, members of the PDP and ANPP clashed as a result of PDP rigging of election. Likewise, AD supporters revolt against election results violently. (Uguwuja, 2015:24-27).

In addition, PDP also received lots of criticism from the civil society organizations such as the Save Nigeria Group (SNG), Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC) and other groups strive for good governance and deepening of democratic practice. Their demands were 'accountability, transparency, fight against corruption and campaigns against funds and financial recklessness by agitating for openness and information on governmental affairs' (Adelabu, 2018:103). For instance, after the civilian government comes to power, civil society organization struggled for a Freedom Information Act to be passed into law. It took them twelve years of struggle to achieve this aim. Such organizations as Media Rights Agenda, the Nigerian Union of Journalists, and Liberties Organization propagated for this law. Unfortunately,

some certain areas were objected by Obasanjo and refuse to grant ascent to the act before his tenure expired. Nonetheless, the groups advocated for the act afresh under the new leadership of Jonathan of which was successfully passed into law in 2011 (Olukotun, 2018:18).

However, as mentioned above PDP was a crisis-ridden party of which so many of its members have decamped from one party to the other. The principle of the power shift agreement between the north and the south for two terms was violated by former president Goodluck. Between 2011 and 2014 the party was polarized into two factions, the aggrieved members called their faction 'New PDP' (Ibrahim & Abubakar, 2015:121). These factions were not pleased with the leadership of the party which includes the repression and suspension of its members, as well as the re-election of former President Jonathan for 2015 presidential candidate. The consistent crisis in the party explained why between 1999 and 2014, the party had changed its leader eleven times. Also, the persistent intra-party crisis and the inability of the party leaders to resolve this crisis resulted in defections of several members to opposition party APC in 2013. Overall, the internal crisis that bedevilled the PDP affected the stability of the party leadership and its support base along with the relationship among its party members (Ibrahim & Abubakar 2015:121-122).

Meanwhile, other opposition parties such as Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), the Congress of Progressive Change (CPC), and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) merged to form the All Progressive Congress (APC) in early 2013. By the end of 2013, much of PDP members have defected to APC as a result of intra-party conflicts between the president and members of the legislature. The APC became the strongest opposition force against

the ruling party PDP in the 2015 general elections (Campbell, 2019, Omodia, 2018:72-73).

However, APC campaign promises were to address 'national security, good governance and promote human capital development' that declined under PDP leadership. They started on a good note in terms of internal democracy in areas such as party primaries, the nomination of candidates at all levels. They further drifted into intra-party crisis over the sharing of executive positions and barely a year of APC coming to power some members left the party because they felt marginalized. Likewise, a rift emerged between the executive leaders and members of the legislature at state and federal level, over the election of the Senate president and speaker of House of Representatives respectively (Sule & Yahaya, 2019:133-134).

Recently, there have been some serious internal crisis in the leading political party, APC. The party leader, Adam Oshiomole was suspended from office for misconduct and other offences. Meanwhile, this led to a rise of different factions within the party. One of the factions was in support of the suspension while the other faction who were with Oshiomole, were aggrieved, felt it was wrong to have suspended the chairman of the party, this also led to some internal crisis and disagreement within the party.

However, the National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting for the APC leadership committee was held, and the former members of the committee that was led by Oshiomole were dissolved. In this meeting, new committee members were appointed and Yobe state governor, Mai Mala Buni was appointed as the national chairman caretaker committee (Adenekan, 2020). Similarly, under the APC rule, the relationship between the ethno-religious groups did not improve. There is growing tension in the

North and South parts of the country due to conflict over grazing land and scare resource between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers. This resulted in violent clashes, deaths, displacement and destruction of agriculture and livestock (Kodili, 2020:55). What's more, there has been cases of human rights abuse under APC leadership. Activists have been arrested, assaulted, and persecuted.

Nevertheless, PDP and APC have minimal differences in their ideological principles and objectives. Their objectives were based on improvement in economic development, national security, education, promoting democratic principles, human rights, and ensuring harmony among various ethno-religious. Meanwhile, the PDP and APC lack policy consistency in their approach to implement their objectives effectively, they are characterized with internal conflict, problems of subordination between party organization and members holding political offices (Kastina, 2016:4, INEC, 2020). When these dominant party were in power there seems to be not much improvement in the economic and political life. But, instead, there is an increase in insecurity, high rate of poverty and corruption (Shittu, 2020).

Overall, the implications of intraparty conflicts most especially from the PDP and APC rule has undermined democratic governance in Nigeria. Mainly because since the democratic principle is not applied within the party, democratic behaviours were also not present in the governance. Intra-party conflict also affected the relationship among the members of the party and their effort to work effectively in delivering their campaign promises and manifestoes. It led to political instability and discourage citizens in participating in political activities that will foster the democratic process. In addition, intra-party conflicts have led criminal activities in political struggles which involves assassination. For instance, between 2001 and 2006 some PDP politicians

such as Bola Ige, Funsho Williams, and Ayodele Daramola were assassinated due to rifts within the party. Also, prior to the 2003 and 2007 elections, some politicians were assassinated and politics resorted to ethno-religious mobilization leading to conflicts. These actions undermine the development of political development and threaten the democratic process as a contestant is being assassinated before elected (Ibrahim & Abubakar, 2015:125-126; Babayo & Muhammad 2019:136).

4.3 Elections and Nature of Political Competition

Elections is one of the important features in a democratic system. Since the transition process in 1998-1999, Nigeria was able to hold elections at a regular intervals in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019. But, elections has not been regarded free and fair due to several irregularities that occur and the poor organization of the electoral bodies of the country.

1999 Elections

Elections were conducted at all levels in 1998-1999 in which three political parties namely, People's Democratic Party (PDP), Alliance for Democracy (AD), and All People's Party (APP) took part. Meanwhile, as a constitutional principle, for a candidate to be declared the winner in the presidential election, he or she must get at least 25% of votes in two-thirds of the 36 states of the federation (Akinleye, 2004). This is a principle which encourages a candidate to develop state-wide policies. The candidates for the 1999 presidential election were both from the same ethnic group (Yoruba) in the south-west of the country. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the PDP was declared the winner of the presidential election with 62.7 per cent of votes. While, Chief Olu Falae with the joint coalition of AD and APP, gained 37.2 per cent of votes. The analysis of the results announced by Independent National Electoral Commission

(INEC) shows that PDP received the majority of votes in all regions of the country, except the south-west (Yoruba) part, of which the majority votes were received by the rival APP/AD coalition due to their stronghold in the south-west. The PDP candidates also got the majority seats at the National Assembly (Senate and House of Representative) and Governorship elections (Agbu, 2016:125-126).

Overall, international and local observers such as The Carter Center, National Democratic Institute (NDI), and Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), reported that though the election was peaceful, there was "low voter turnout and serious irregularities nationwide. These included ballot stuffing, inflation of results, and voter intimidation widespread enough to question the credibility of the elections' outcome" (Carter centre 1999:11). Based on the report above made the election results to be challenged legally by the defeated candidate Chief Olu Falae, he questioned the credibility of the election results in the court of Appeal. But, his petitions were dismissed due to lack of merit and Obasanjo was sworn in as the president. Similarly, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) were blamed for the irregularities in the election, saying INEC committee engaged in election rigging to favour former President Obasanjo. The INEC inability is derived from the lack of financial and institutional autonomy. The executive (president) is vested with the power to appoint the chairman and member of the INEC (Omotola, 2010:544).

2003 Election

The 2003 election is seen as an important step taken towards democratic consolidation. The country managed to hold another national election which was not disrupted or hindered by a military coup. During this period, political parties increased from three to thirty. Meanwhile, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) ability

to conduct elections was also questioned. The registration of voters was late and was not carried out in a coordinated manner. There were allegations of "manipulation, fraud and very poor organization" affected their effectiveness in preparing for an election, and eligible voters were not able to be registered for the election (Agbu, 2016: 127).

Likewise, president Obasanjo changed the order of elections in 2001 through the Electoral Act. In 1999, elections were first conducted from the lower levels to higher levels. So, therefore, this act is to ensure that the presidential election comes first before all other lower levels of elections. On the other hand, there were accusations and counter-accusations by the opposition surrounding the motives in the order of election (Agbaje & Adejumobi, 2003:33). In addition, before the National assembly (Senate and House of Representative) election in 2003, the relationship between the executive and the legislature were not cordial. There were attempts to impeach the president in 2002 due to issues surrounding budget endorsement and execution processes.

For instance, in 2002 a budget proposal was sent by the executives to the legislature for approval. Instead of the legislature passing the proposed budget they increased the capital allocation, these activities made the executives to revised the budget and proceed with the implementation of the revised budget. In reaction, the legislature attempts to impeach the president but with the intervention of respected party leaders, the impeachment process did not commence (Ihemeje, Zaid, & Jawan, 2016:22).

Moreover, prior to the election, there were incidents of criminality, political thuggery, violence, and ethno-religious conflicts erupted in the Niger Delta oil region and several

attacks were carried out by militia groups and the federal troops. Also, there were killings and violence during campaigns which raise many concerns to many. For instance, the campaign coordinator for the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) was killed before the election commenced. Several party offices were destroyed and opposition, as well as supporter members, were assaulted or killed. Due to the high rate of the violent act, the federal government responded by ensuring that political parties sign electoral conduct to refrain the parties of engaging in electoral violence during campaign and election (Agbu, 2016:127).

Meanwhile, President Obasanjo PDP candidate, who was from the South West (Yoruba) part of the country and a Christian was re-elected with 61.80 per cent of votes. While, his opponent General Mohammed Buhari ANPP candidate, from the Northern (Hausa-Fulani) part of the country and a Muslim, had 32.3 per cent of votes. These two candidates were retired military leaders. The gubernatorial and National Assembly (House of Representatives and Senate) positions were heavily contested. However, PDP won majority seats in the House of Representatives and Senate, state assemblies and gubernatorial positions. From 2003 onward, the PDP became the dominant party in the political system while other opposition parties were regarded as less effective (Omotola, 2003:130). However, international observers give a final report on 2003 elections which presented evidence for massive electoral irregularities such as "violence, intimidation, harassment, vote-buying, ballot box stealing and stuffing" in some states (Agbu, 2016:129, Human Right Watch, 2004).

2007 Elections

Another election commenced in 2007 which is third since the transition to civilian rule. It was an opportunity for the transfer of power to another civilian administration. But

before the election, there was tension in the ruling PDP for the nomination of presidential candidate between President Obasanjo and his vice president Alhaji Atiku Abubakar who aimed to contest for the presidential election. Obasanjo strongly opposed the nomination of Atiku with several accusation and counter-accusation of wrongdoings. The allegations against Atiku was his engagement in fraudulent activities during his leadership which led to his suspension from PDP, and the PDP nominated Alhaji Umaru Yar'Adua as the presidential candidate. Atiku, however, defected to Action Congress (AC) and emerged as the presidential candidate of the opposition party. The two presidential candidates for PDP and AC hails from the (Hausa-Fulani) North part of Nigeria. That been said, the issues surrounding the imposition of candidate by the political leaders, affect their ability in delivering a credible election. It also discourages the masses in participating in political activities which eventually led to low voters turnout (Omotola, 2010:548; Agbu, 2016:130).

As with earlier elections which involves violence, voter's intimidation, vote-rigging, and amongst others, the 2007 election was not much of a difference. Kastina state in the North was a battleground, and it was the home state to the two presidential candidates Yar'Adua and his opponent Buhari. However, it was observed that polling stations were never opened in some areas in Kastina state and it was these areas, that later announced massive victories for PDP. In cases whereby voters were able to vote in other states, it was marred with delay in the opening of polls, limited ballot papers, prevalent voters' intimidation, vote-buying, stealing of ballot boxes by political thugs along with other irregularities. In addition to the role played by political thugs, most political parties blamed the PDP, because it was the dominant party with the capacity

to finance and hire thugs. But this was virtually a practice or doctrine in all parties (Human Right Watch, 2007).

Notwithstanding, INEC announced the result of the presidential race, Yar'Adua of the PDP emerged with 70 per cent of the votes, Buhari of the ANPP had 18.65 per cent of votes and Atiku of the AC had 7.25 per cent of votes. Also, the PDP got the majority seats at the House of Representative and Senate as well as governorship positions (Omotola, 2010:546). In the post-election, several petitions were laid down against the election results at all levels. The presidential had eight, governorship 105, the Senate 150, the House of Representatives 331 petitions respectively. But, the presidential petition was rejected by the court and the Supreme Court declared Alhaji Yar'Adua as the legitimate winner while the petition against election results at different levels was annulled. The gubernatorial elections result in some states such as Ondo, Edo, Kogi, Ekiti, Sokoto, Kebbi, and Adamawa were annulled and in some instances re-run occurred which PDP won (Omotola, 2010:550).

2011 Elections

In the buildup of the 2011 election, President Yar'Adua started on the right footing promising Nigerians credible elections in the subsequent election. He set up an 'Electoral Reform Committee' which was called 'the Uwais committee' they were in charge of nationwide consultation and offering recommendations in producing a credible election in the future. The committee report submitted to the president recommended that the political party system needs to review. They recommended that 1999 constitution should be amend so that INEC can be independent of the executive branch, likewise the appointment of INEC committee should be done by the judiciary

and legislature. They also recommended that, civil society should be empowered legally so can effectively function as guard of democracy. In respect to the recommendation, 2010 'Electoral Act' was amended, though some recommendations were not approved.

For instance, the Senate did not approved INEC independent from the executive branches in appointment of INEC committees but their funding was delinked from the executive. The 2010 Electoral Act, also provided requirement for primaries and banned 'carpet crossing'[7] which is a common doctrine in Nigeria political system were a candidate switch to another parties after elected to office with another party ticket (IRI, 2011:8).

Notwithstanding, there seem to be some improvements in INEC preparation for 2011 election than in the previous years. INEC introduced a system of transparent counting of votes increasing the reliability of election results. They also received some criticisms due to the poor organization of voter's registration, logistical problems, and the incompetence in handling electoral instrument which led to the postponement of elections. (Gberie, 2011:3). Moreover, the PDP has been the ruling party since the inception of civilian rule. The myth of power rotation principle was violated when Jonathan a (south-south ethnic minority) also the vice president of Yar'Adua (Hausa-Fulani Muslim) was sworn in as the president following the death Yar'Adua in 2010.

In the pre-election, the PDP northern politicians nominated a northern presidential candidate to represent the party in 2011 election which Jonathan defeated in party

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[7] Carpet crossing is also known as decamping, party switching or defection. It is a situation where politicians switch from one party to the other due to issues such as personal clash, disagreement on party position, power tussles, and different views on the operations of political party ideology.

primaries (Gberie, 2011:7). Meanwhile, in the National assembly (House of Representatives and Senate) elections there was improvement towards establishing free and fair elections although there were the presence of violence and electoral irregularities. The ruling PDP during this period won 203 seats out of 360 seats in the House of Representatives while other parties shared the remaining 157 seats. Likewise in the governorship election, PDP won in 23 states of the three dominant ethnic group, out of the 36 states in the federation and won 83 seats out of the 109 senatorial seats (Okolo & Onunkwo, 2011:66). However, the presidential race was challenging. It was regarded as the well-organized election in Nigeria election history but also the 'deadliest' (Gberie, 2011:11). The notable candidates were the incumbent President Jonathan of the PDP and the opposition candidate General Buhari of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). INEC announced the result and Jonathan who was a Christian from the marginalized Niger-Delta region of the south region had 58.9 per cent of the votes while, Buhari a Hausa-Fulani from the North had 31.98 per cent of votes (INEC, 2011).

The post-election reaction was deadly in twelve northern states such as Niger, Zamfara, Kaduna, Adamawa, Katsina, Bauchi, Sokoto, Borno, Jigawa, Kano, Yobe and Gombe. The supporters of Buhari were not happy with the result of the election and violence broke out resulting in ethno-religious killings. This violence pitted Muslim against Christian and vice versa, lots of lives were lost, thousands displaced and properties were destroyed. In addition, the state police, military and security personnel responded to the violence was repressive with the excessive use of force on protesters (Human Right Watch, 2011). Also, the presidential candidate Buhari (CPC) filed a petition rejecting the presidential results of the 22 states in the south along with

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the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. But, the 'Nigerian Presidential Election Petition Tribunal' demised the petition and upheld the election results announced by INEC (IRI, 2011:26). Even with the challenges of the 2011 elections international and local observers report that the election marked a 'significant improvement' in Nigerian democratic election experience (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

2015 Elections

Nigeria had gone through a tough time between 2011 and 2015 with the emergence of Boko-haram insurgencies in the Northern region. There were high expectations for the 2015 elections in which the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) showed some improvement like in the 2011 election. They introduced electronic voting system, Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) and card readers so as to avoid electoral corruption.

There were, however, issues with these PVCs as most cards were not ready before the day of the election. Election dates were postponed by INEC due to the logistical and security reasons in the North. This outcome had an effect on the citizens as there was low voters turnout. Notwithstanding, the 2015 election made a dramatic change in the political system which marked the first time power was transferred to an opposition party (Olowojolu &Ake, 2015:14-15). The ruling PDP was already weakened due to defections of its members and had to compete against a strong opposition party All Progressive Congress. APC was a merger of several opposition parties in early 2013 such as Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), a faction of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), and Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) (Omotola & Nyuykonge 2015:6). It can be said that this was the first time real political competition commenced in Nigeria.

The candidates were Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP and General Muhamadu Buhari of the APC. This was the fourth time Buhari contested for the presidential election. Buhari was declared the winner of the election with 53.96 per cent of votes and Jonathan with 44.96 per cent of votes (INEC, 2015). Buhari who was a Hausa-Fulani Muslim received the majority votes from the 21 states of the federation in the northern and southwestern regions. While Jonathan a Christian minority ethnic group received votes from 15 states of the federation in the south-south and south-east regions. This result also showed that ethnic and religion attachment played a role in the voting of masses since both candidates received votes from their ethnic bases (Isiaq, Adebiyi & Bakare 2018:130).

The APC had the majority of the seats in gubernatorial elections winning in 24 states while PDP won in 11 states. At the House of Representative and Senate election, APC won 64 seats out 109 senatorial seats while PDP won 45 seats. The House of representative APC had 225 seats, PDP had 125 seats while the other parties shared the remaining 10 seats (Olowojolu &Ake, 2015:17). Although the election was not without violence, international observers reported that "the conduct of the presidential and national assembly elections was credible, peaceful, and transparent and it reflected the will of the people of Nigeria" (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2015:8).

2019 Elections

The 2019 election started on a rough patch with several challenges that befall the country such as economic recession, poverty, Fulani herders clash and Boko Haram terrorist group. Elections were postponed just hours before polls opened this led to a low voter turnout for the next scheduled date. Mainly because many voters had to

travel to their district for election and were not motivated or had the means to go to the voting stations on the scheduled date. The INEC claimed that the election date was rescheduled because of logistical problems and not for political reasons. Tensions emerged between the two state-wide parties APC and PDP accusing each other of wanting to influence the election result by colliding with INEC to postpone the date (Atuluku, 2019:5).

However, 73 candidates from different political parties contested for the election which also included young aspirant candidates of which they were not given much chance. The two notable candidates were the incumbent President Buhari of the APC and Atiku of the PDP. The two candidates were Northern (Hausa-Fulani Muslim) (Babayo, 2019:132). Prior to the day of the election, a series of violence erupted during the presidential campaign in some states which led to some casualties. Buhari of APC was however declared the winner with 55.6 per cent of votes and Atiku of PDP had 41.22 per cent votes (INEC, 2019). Buhari had most of his votes in the Northern regions while Atiku had most of his vote in south-south and south-east regions while, they both shared the votes in the south-west (Babayo, 2019:133).

The gubernatorial elections were very competitive, APC won in 15 states out of the 29 states that contested for election while PDP won in 14 states. At the House of Representative and Senate elections, APC won 65 seats at the senatorial level, while PDP won 43 seats and Young Progressive Party (YPP) had one seat. At the House of Representative, APC won 212 seats while PDP won 127 seats and the other parties shared the remaining 21 seats. Overall, violence was present among the party supporters, politicians, and security agencies in at least 19 during the state elections, due to the fact that elections were suspended in some areas and INEC declared some

inconclusive. Election irregularities such as 'ballot box burning, ballot snatching, bomb blast, political thuggery, killings, voter suppression, abduction and sexual assault' of electoral officials were also reported by INEC (Henrik, 2020:421-427). Meanwhile, international observers reported that 'the 2019 election did not meet the expectation of many Nigerians' due to the fact that presidential and National Assembly elections dates were postponed and delays in the polling stations which made Nigerians distrust the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) (NDI, 2019).

4.4 Conflict Resolving Mechanisms

As Rustow points out "politics consists not only of competition for office but also it is, a process for resolving conflicts within human groups whether these arise from the clash of interests or from uncertainty about the future" (1970:358). Meanwhile, in Nigeria we can identify different type of conflicts. There is clash of interest between the masses and the political elite, due to the fact that the political elites are not effectively performing their duties in catering for the needs of the masses. Likewise, there were conflicts between ethno-religious groups, and within the political elites. As explained below each of these conflicts has had resolving mechanisms to reach an agreement although these conflicts have been unresolved.

Conflict between the masses and the political elite

Nigeria is known to be blessed with natural and mineral resources yet the people is still poor. The political elite and masses are alienated from each other. The masses used to be given only figurative roles in politics since the colonial era. This didn't change much after the inception of civilian rule (Awe, 1999:11). After independence in 1960, under the new civilian rulers, the masses are not been involved in the political processes. Thereby, the provision of basic needs, equality, and rule of law made the

masses to deviate from the state and resort to their ethno-religious leadership for support. Also, the discovery of petroleum did not help to improve the standard of living of the citizens, as well as the relations between the masses and the elite (Awe, 1999:11-12).

The oil boom also led to a decline in agricultural sector as oil drilling caused pollution thereby affecting farmlands. There were cases of many farmers losing their farmland and were not compensated by the government which led to riot and violence. Meanwhile, with military seizing power there was widespread corruption and mismanagement in the state. Majority of the citizens were excluded from governmental processes and do not enjoy services provided by the government agencies (Awe, 1999:13).

However, with the inception of civilian rule in 1999, there was hope for improvement in the relations between the masses and the political elites. It, however, got worsen, the masses tend to pronounce their ethnic identity at the expense of national identity as they are not enjoying services provided by the political elite. But, instead the elite benefit more from the system than the masses through corruption and manipulation (Gambari, 2008). There has been an increase in ethno-religious tensions and poverty level. For instance, since 2003 the Niger delta region that produces oil, and the major exporting sector in the country had experienced clashes between minority ethnic groups, and multinational oil companies as well as the federal government. The mismanagement of oil has caused air, land, and water pollution, and the communities living in the Nigeria Delta region suffer this impact. Minority ethnic groups such as Ijaw, Ogoni and others felt exploited and that despite having this natural resources

they lack access to basic services such as healthcare, electricity, education and employment (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017:10-11).

Meanwhile, the political elites enriched themselves through the oil economy at the expense of the development of the region. Therefore, the ethnic groups demanded the control of oil resources in their region which has led to the emergences of several ethnic militia groups, engaging in violent activities in the region. The government under the leadership of President Yar'adua in 2007, established the Ministry for Niger Delta Affairs and Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to restore peace in the region. These two schemes have helped to improve the development of infrastructure, rehabilitation and employment in the region. Also, in 2009 Yar'adua in order to address the insecurity issues and to restore peace in the region launched an Amnesty Programme of which thousands of militia's agreed to a ceasefire (Agbu 2016:133).

However, this peace did not last long as new ethnic militants emerge in 2016 and engage in unpleasant activities such as the abduction of foreign workers and the bombing of oil installations. But, government response to resolve the crisis was repressive and launch 'operation crocodile smile' against the militias in the region many lives were lost. The action of the minority ethnic groups was mainly because of extreme poverty and lack of access to basic needs that is affecting the country. That been said, corruption, poverty, and underdevelopment are the reason for violent conflict in the Niger delta and in Nigeria as a whole (Izeoma & Frank 2019:4-5; Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017:11).

Howbeit, in 2019 National Bureau of Statistics reports that about 40.1% of the Nigeria population is poor. This shows the weakness in the middle class as about 89 million citizens are poor of its estimated 200 million population. The World Bank poverty clock as of 2019 reported Nigeria as one the poorest country. Nevertheless, several measures and programs were implemented by the government to 'eradicate poverty, revamp and reconstruct the economy' (Hussaini, 2014: 718). Notable among the scheme is the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) which was introduced in 2001 which involves 'coordinating and monitoring all poverty eradication attempts at all levels of government with the sole purpose of eliminating absolute poverty' (Babayo & Umar, 2019:17).

This program was structured to integrate six sector schemes which are 'Youth Empowerment Scheme' (YES), which entailed providing skills acquisition, training and employment to unemployed youths. Secondly, 'Capacity Acquisition Programme' (CAP) was launched which aimed at providing training in different skills and empowerment for self-sustenance to the affected section of the population. The third scheme which is 'Mandatory Attachment Programme' (MAP), is aimed to provide the basis for giving credit and training in trade and commerce. The fourth scheme is the 'Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme' (RIDS), which aims at ensuring the development and provisions of infrastructure needs in areas such as communication, energy, water and transport particularly in rural areas. The fifth scheme is the 'Social Welfare Services Scheme' (SOWESS), which aimed to provide basic social services, quality education, intensify farmer's economic power, and provide health care. Lastly, is the 'Natural Resources Development and Conservation

Scheme' (NRDCS), scheme that ensures a "participatory and sustainable development of agriculture, mineral and water resources" (Babayo & Umar, 2019:18-19).

Howbeit, these schemes seem to be well drafted but the poverty rate keeps increasing. Also, there is a lack of proper coordination and government commitment which contribute to the failure of the scheme. The NAPEP scheme along with other poverty alleviation programs was beset with "persistent deficiencies such as mismanagement of public funds, corruption, lack of transparency, logistics problem, and nepotism and over-centralization of planning and implementation" (Babayo & Umar, 2019:20).

Meanwhile, without improvement in the distribution of economic values, the conflict between the political elite and masses would continue. As argued by Rustow democracy requires the 'principle of conciliation and accommodation' between the masses and the elite to be able to reach an agreement (Rustow, 1970:58).

Conflicts between ethno-religious groups

Since the inception of civilian rule in 1999, there has been a rapid increase of ethno-religious conflicts in the country which affected the relations between the ethnic or religious groups. Notable among them is the Jos crisis, the capital of Plateau state between the Hausa-Fulani (Muslim) who are regarded as 'settlers' and the Christian ethnic groups who are referred to as 'indigene.' The dispute between these groups emerged over unequal access to land, political power, social, economic, and cultural resources. The crisis continued between 2001 and 2018, but the government response and measures to curb the crisis was only effective for a short period as conflict kept occurring. The federal and state government appointed a judiciary commission of inquiry to unravel the root of the conflicts and offer a solution, but the commission

was inefficient and the conspirators of the crisis were not persecuted thereby the violence continued. The government deployed military and police forces which only contained the conflicts for a while and did not yield a successful result as violence erupted. Government-led peace initiatives were also launched at the early stages of the conflict which proved ineffective as both parties did not yield a consensus (Jana, 2010:47; Ogbuleke, 2019:36-39).

Presently, the state government establish 'Plateau State Peace Building Agency' (PPBA) to respond to peace and security challenges in the state, and also to promote harmony and peaceful co-existence between ethno-religious groups. Despite the fact that plateau state is divided along religious and ethnic lines, under this scheme (PPBA) peace conferences and summits have been held to ensure peace and cohesion in the state. The Plateau state peace and security challenges are yet to be resolved (Gbande, 2018; Ahovi, 2020).

Conflicts within the political elites

Notwithstanding, in regards to the conflicts between the political elites it can be argued that 'power shift' principle has been used as an instrument to promote ethno-religious accommodation at elite level (LeVan, 2019:49). This principle ensured that power is rotated between the north and the south so as to avoid the domination of one ethnic or religious groups over others. However, this principle lack effectiveness due to the fact that not all political parties adopt this informal agreement. The two major parties (PDP and APC) that adopt the principle lack consistency in implementing it. Likewise, for the election of a federal president the constitutional principle ensured that for a candidate to be declared winner, he or she must get at least 25% of votes in two-thirds of the 36 states of the federation (Akinleye, 2004). This means that the votes of a

candidate should not be based in a section of the country, but also a considerable percentage of votes (25 per cent) from two-thirds of states that is different from is ethno-religious membership. While the 'power shift' principle aimed at promoting accommodation between elites from different ethnic or religious communities, this minimum vote principle aimed at reducing the legitimacy gap.

In addition, the 'Federal Character Principle' (FCP) was also used as a conflict resolving mechanisms which rejects majoritarianism in all tiers of government and aimed to achieve fair and effective representation of diverse ethnic, and religious groups into various tiers of government in a position of power, status and influence (Asaju & Egberi, 2015:131).

However, this conflict mechanism on the issue of ethno-religious accommodation is unresolved, due to the fact that the incumbent president appointment to strategic positions favored a section of the country which is the northern-Muslim. For instance, out of 44 ministers in Nigeria, only sixteen (16) are Christians while twenty-eight (28) are Muslims. In addition to this, the appointment of security and services chefs have been lopsided to the northern Muslims. In the defence and security sector, only four out of seventeen (17) heads are Christians while the rest are northern Muslims (Ajayi, 2020). Meanwhile, other conflicts between the political elites in Nigeria appear to be unresolved on issues relating to party leadership and nomination of a candidate. Rustow argued that failure to resolve such political questions will block democratization as democracy requires resolving political questions peacefully (Rustow, 1970:359).

4.5 Constitutionalism: Respect to the Rules of Political Game

As pointed out by Gbadamosi & Adewoye "the rule of law refers to a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, including the state itself, are accountable to laws that are consistent with international human rights norms and standards" (Gbadamosi & Adewoye, 2010:348). In the case of Nigeria, this principle tends to work in theory and not in reality. Nigerian political rulers have found it difficult to obey, respect, and operate within the norms of a given establishment. Nigerian politicians behave and act like they are above the laws or authority. There are many cases of leaders disobeying court orders. For instance, during president Obasanjo administration (1999-2007), there were records of disrespect to the rule of law. The consistence disagreement between the executive and legislative was due to interference of power by the executive in regards to budget or project proposals. For example, in 2005 there was disagreement between the Federal government and Lagos state government over budget allocation for Lagos local government. Despite the Supreme Court verdict on the issue, the federal government refused to comply by resorting back to court (Elijah, 2011: 212). This act by the political rulers means a disrespectful behavior against the rule of law. For example, is the issue of the former national security adviser that was arrested and detained in 2015 on charges of money laundering which was budgeted for fighting Boko-Haram insurgency. He was granted bail base on the court orders but the federal government order to be re-arrested by Department of State Service (DSS) and he has been in detention centre since then without any court orders on charges (Albert, 2019:66).

In many cases, Nigerian rulers have used the law to achieve their purposes by using oppressive polices. For instance, some human right activist such as Sowore and Bakare

were arrested, persecuted, detained, and even charged to court. After the court verdict on the accused, the federal government disrespected the court orders and security services made a re-arrest in the court. This act by the rulers is unjust which made an average Nigerian have minimal trust in the judiciary system. This act does not show an independent judiciary but the system that is controlled by the executive arm (Nnochiri, 2020). Likewise, the way security agencies make an arrest on the accused persons has been considered as a violation of the rule of law. For instance, some judges in 2016 were arrested over corruption allegations based on petitions against the judges. The arrest was made at about 1.00 am along with hitting, breaking, and banging of which the judges mistook about 45 security agents as robbers. This act was widely condemned by many people (Albert, 2019:57).

Likewise, there is persistent corruption among the rulers and some of them have been called out by Nigerians and civil society organization of which the federal government failed to comply with the petition. For instance, the former Governor of Lagos state and the APC chairman Bola Tinubu was accused of money laundering due to bullion van that was seen at his home after the 2019 presidential election. However, the government agency, Economy and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) failed to prosecute him (Sanni, 2019).

That been said, Femi Falana argued that "the majority of political office holders in the country are not committed to the observance of the rule of law. In place of the rule of law, the political system has enthroned the rule of might or rule of rulers." In this situation, the rule of law has failed in Nigeria which the political rulers see it as an instrument to achieve their aim and agenda (Falana, 2018).

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the attempt to democratic transition in Nigeria since 1999. It focuses on decision and habituation phase of Rustow democratization process. It shows that the elite culture had undermined political development and democratic consolidation. Nigerian rulers engaged in several measures such as political manipulation, monetization of the electoral process, electoral malpractices, irregularities, and amongst others so as their preferred candidates can be elected to office and also advance their political career. This habit is against democratic principles and shows a lack of internal democracy.

Meanwhile, the nature of the electoral process has been characterized with all sort of violence this often led to low voters turnout and the inability of voters to come out to vote peacefully without fear of attack or violence. Likewise, intra-party crisis and lack of internal democracy among the political parties have led to poor performance in their respective duties, it affects the democratic process in the country. The lack of internal democracy among the then ruling party PDP and is predecessors APC can be amount to the reason for intra-party crisis and defections which have a negative effect on political development and national unity. Despite the fact that APC and PDP were state-wide parties they failed to promote national integration due to conflict of interest. They placed individual or personal interest above collective interest.

Also, the conflict resolving mechanism established by the government to resolve conflicts between human groups is weak and several issues are unresolved. As a result of this, when there is no improvement or if proper measures are not taken to resolve the issues mentioned above the conflict will continue. Overall, respect for the rule of

law in the country is weak due to the fact that political rulers fail to comply with constitutional rules. The judiciary does not have power over the executive. It is important for public office holders to obey court orders and operate in accordance with the constitution of the country. There is a need for the government at all levels to respect the rule of law in reality and not just in theory, so we can have a better and progressive democratic system.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This study explains and analyzes a number of factors obstructing a complete democratic transition process in Nigeria by employing Rustow's dynamic model approach to democratization. Rustow hypothesized that the *'background condition'* to democratization is national unity. He emphasized that before proceeding to democratization, national integration should be achieved and the citizens should have a sense of common belonging which is vital to a democracy.

However, this study argues that in Nigeria, national integration was not fully achieved either before or after the attempt to transition. The Nigerian government have initiated several measures to ensure a sense of common belonging which were not very effective. Since the inception of civilian rule, several cases of ethno-religious conflicts have been recorded. Meanwhile, the numerous ethno-religious groups cannot be seen as the source of conflict but the lack of a common identity and inequality creates a ground for ethno-religious identities to strengthen their presence in politics. To this end, the masses tend to pronounce their ethnic or religious identity at the expense of national identity.

This is because the elite does not provide equal access to basic amenities such as education, employment, health, transportation, and electricity among other things resort to their ethno-religious membership for their provisions. This study concludes

that there is weak state-wide political leadership at the federal centre in Nigeria. The political elites pronounce their national identity because they are the benefactor in the political system through corruption, patron-client relations, and mismanagement. The Nigerian political system aggravates exclusion and inequality while ethnic, religion and regional identity is frequently manipulated by politicians for their personal gain. Numerous political elites provide public resources and services through patron-client relations that only benefit the minority at the expense of the majority.

Moreover, the introduction of elections as an important element of democratization became an instrument in the hands of ethno-religious elites to gain power both at the regional and national level. The rival competition is not visible only in the institutions controlled by regional and ethno-religious political elites, but also in statewide institutions where the political elite consists of various ethno-religious elements. This intra-level conflict is divisive hiding the problems and degenerating the solutions at the expense of national unity.

Rustow also emphasized that the first stage is *'preparatory phase'* which requires "inconclusive and prolonged political struggle." The struggle, according to Rustow is between the old ruler of the status quo and new forces over issues that have deep meaning to them. Rustow points out that the struggle will be inconclusive because the regime should be changed and if not the struggle will be inconclusive. This study argued that in Nigeria the struggle for democratization emerged during the military regime.

However, the Nigerian political environment have experienced several military coups and counter-coups as well as civil war. Nigerians have experienced economic

problems, political hardship, and human rights violations during the military regime. As a result of this, civil society inclusive of labour unions, human rights groups, professional bodies, organized students, and media engaged in several measures to agitate for democratization, good economic conditions, human right, and women empowerment.

These groups engage in demonstrations, strikes, and riots as a measure to ensure that their demands are met. Most of their demonstrations were unsuccessful due to the fact the military response was repressive. However, the military response did not stop the opposition groups from continuing to agitate for democratization which eventually commenced in 1999. This thesis argues that the old rulers are power-driven and lack the will to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy. This study concludes that although there was demand for democracy by civil society groups and though the military gave up power in 1999. This did not mean that democratic forces won the struggle because civilian government came to power.

Rustow pointed out that the *'preparatory phase'* will lead to the *'decision phase'* which is achieved through a process of conscious action on the part of political elites to adopt democratic features. This study argues that after long years of power struggle, several measures were taken to ensure a swift transition which also included negotiation between the military rulers and the civilian opponents in pre-1999 period. The power shift from military to civilian rule was rapid and peaceful. There was strong pressure from civilian opponents convincing the new military head of state to transition. The negotiation was carried between the old and new rulers which include opportunities to advance their career in the civilian administration, as well as impunity for human rights violations. A compromise was managed to be reached. However,

Rustow emphasize that the negotiations and agreement should be between those that are or not part of political leadership. This means that it should include the forces (lower and middle classes) that demanded democracy. However, this thesis argues that in Nigeria, the agreement and negotiation to adopt democratic rules and values was done from the above without including the broader society in the negotiations table. This implies that there was no transition to democracy but a change in political personnel. Meanwhile, the political personnel lack the will to embrace pluralism. The state-wide party People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressive Congress (APC) lack internal democracy, ideological principles, and are bedeviled with an intra-party crisis. The study argues that the intra-party crisis is one of the major hindrances to democratic governance. It has affected the leaders to perform their role in ensuring Nigerian development and unity. Thus, this study concludes that the consistent intra-party conflicts among other factors have led to the failure of the political parties to serve as agents of democratic sustenance and to foster national integration. The political parties' needs to strictly embrace internal democracy particularly in electing party leaders and the nomination of candidates to represent the party in elections. An election is an important feature of a healthy democracy where the citizens elect their leaders to represent them in the public offices.

Meanwhile, since the inception of civilian rule in 1999 to present, elections in Nigeria have been marred with irregularities such as violence, electoral rigging, corruption, political thuggery and voter's intimidation. This caused low voter's turnout and also constitute a hindrance to democratic sustenance. The political elites are fond of using ethno-religious sentiment in order to gain votes from the masses through undemocratic ways. This act undermined the ability of the masses to vote for committed and

visionary leaders that will promote Nigerian development and a sense of common belonging.

Rustow points out that democracy requires *'habituation phase'* or a competitive process among individuals who are supporters of democracy, parties and politicians competing for leadership. This study shows that although the democratic procedures are undermined, and elections have been marred by violence and irregularities, the military did not intervene since the inception of civilian rule in 1999. Nigeria managed to hold six uninterrupted elections at a regular interval in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019. Besides, Rustow also argued that democracy does not only include competition for offices but it also requires resolving conflicts within human groups. There are different type of conflicts such as the clash of interest between the masses and the political elite, conflicts between ethno-religious groups, and within the political elites.

The conflict resolving mechanism for these three issues did not work well. Hence, this thesis concludes that for the conflicts between the masses and the political elite to be resolved, equal distribution of economic values such as providing employment opportunities, access to education, food, and health care to reduce poverty in the country. Meanwhile, for peaceful relations between ethno-religious groups to exist, strong and unified leadership of the different ethno-religious group is needed to promote and encourage a sense of common belonging. Likewise, the political elites need to agree on the rule of the game in other to resolve the conflicts within them.

In a Nutshell, Nigeria today has experienced 20 years of civilian rule and its transition process has failed to be completed. National disintegration plays an important role as

a factor that contributes to the incompleteness of democratic transition. It is expected that for measures initiated to promote national unity to be effective and not a mirage. The mindset of masses and leaders needs to be changed, the strong mindset of blaming colonialism for the challenges to national unity. However, for the change in the mindset of Nigerians to be addressed and attained, the problem of inequality and discrimination among ethnic or religious groups should first be addressed. There should be equal distribution of economic values and political power among the diverse ethno-religious groups. That been said, the mindset of political elites need to be changed by viewing the political system as an instrument to advance their political career. This mindset brings division among the elites when their political interest is threatened. This division among the leaders tends to undermine the progress of national unity as a whole and democratic sustenance.

Another factor that contributes to incomplete transition is the existence of weak institutions. The electoral commission, INEC that conduct elections need to be independent of the control of the executives. Their lack of financial and institutional autonomy affect their ability to conduct free and fair elections which undermine the democratic process. Likewise, there are weak civil society organizations to ensure democratic sustenance. Many civil society groups in Nigeria have experienced several issues. Notable among them is inadequate funding which affects their ability to perform effectively in democratic consolidation and promoting the doctrine of democracy. Most civil society depends on foreign donors and even on the government to proceed with their agenda, which have made some of them pledge their loyalty to the incumbent government. The political elites also play a considerable role in the

incomplete transition. The elites are corrupt, unaccountable to the people and lack the willingness to address Nigeria pressing problems.

Overall, the political regime that was established since 1999 has been practising semi-democratic features. Because, the electoral process since 1999 has not been free and fair but instead marred with electoral violence, rigging, intimidation and among others. The political leaders lack the will to embrace pluralism but instead adopt polarization which has caused several types of intra and inter-party crisis. Likewise, the failure of the government to tackle Nigeria problems such as insecurity, poverty, unemployment and corruption has made the citizens have low-level trust in the government which also led to low voters turnout during elections. The political system is plagued with widespread corruption and the rule of law is weak due to the fact the judiciary is not independent. Worst still, there is no freedom of speech in the country. There is frequent abuse of human rights and disrespect for civil liberties. There are many abuse cases of journalist and protesters against the established order, they have been harassed, repressed, and detained this implies weak political participation.

It is expected that when the above challenges are properly addressed it will enhance the prospects for national integration. Therefore, for the transition to be completed its political domains need to be reshaped and simultaneously entrench the rule of law, embrace diverse ethnic groups to promote unity and create a conducive environment for democracy to prosper.

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