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Democratic practice and development of ethnic militias in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria embarked on third experimentation of democracy in 1999 after the failure to sustain the earlier adoption in 1960 and 1979. As a form of government popularly considered best for mankind, democracy is marked by a set of principles that differentiate it from other forms of government. Such peculiar principles include among others, governance by rules, government by majority, freedom to make choice from alternatives, periodic elections, majority rule and minority rights, defined rights and obligation of citizens etc. The enjoyment of fundamental rights and the attendant obligations work out restraints to individual and group excesses. However, the adoption of democracy in Nigeria since 29 May, 1999 seems to have encouraged the development of ethnic militias in several parts. These groups which visibly capitalize on the rights that democracy confers developed and exhibited sub-cultural norms that threaten the rights of other citizens. Adopting the Merton's Anomic, Sutherland's Differential Association and Boundless' Relative Deprivation theories as foundation, this paper seeks to answer questions such as: What democratic value encouraged the emergence of ethnic militias in Nigeria? Does ethnic militancy enhance the deepening of democratic norms? Why were these militia groups not known before the adoption of democracy in 1999? Is democracy consistent with unbounded freedom? The paper proffers a return to conventional norms of democracy, emphasizing obligations as well as the fundamental rights and sincerity of purpose as the solutions to the practice of adulterated model of democracy in Nigeria.

Key words: Democracy, Ethnic, Government, Militia, Principles, Rights.

INTRODUCTION

The dramatic termination of the long and tortuous ideological cold war between the erstwhile super powers: United States of America (USA) and Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) in the early 1990s opened the 'flood gate' to the adoption and practice of democracy by nations of the world that were hitherto polarized into two ideological positions held by the super powers. The victorious United States of America ensured that some swift actions were taken to ascertain that it did not return quickly to the unpredictable ideological battle that was just lost and won. These she did through two strategic actions. First, was aggressive projection of democratic ideals to parts of the vanquished Soviet Union. Such actions were visibly backed by economic and financial aids which paid off as the hitherto unified Socialist Republic disintegrated into several independent states and quickly embraced western brand of democracy. Secondly, the 'olive branch' of economic aids was extended

to countries from other continents of the world to entice them to adopt the practice of democracy. Accessing economic aid for development and growth was to these countries bait to the adoption of democracy. This strategy equally worked for the donor country (USA) as it succeeded in making several developing countries of the world (particularly countries from Africa and Asia) practice democracy, no matter how poorly constituted (Amuwo, 1992, Odoma, 2013).

Scholars have argued that the motive behind advancement of grants and aids by the United States of America was to dissuade possible sympathiser nations from recourse to the much discredited communist ideology of the defunct Soviet Union. For instance, Odoma (2013: 195) asserts that:

"The quest to dissuade possible sympathiser nations from return to the communist ideology made the practice of democracy by states (particularly the developing ones) the necessary condition for the enjoyment of financial grants and aids from the sole victor of the cold war. This bait of economic windfall has since the early 1990s enhanced the spread of democracy on the continent of Africa, not minding how such democracies were constituted."

The above position accounted for the poor take off and dismal democratic performance of many third world countries, particularly those from sub-Saharan Africa who embraced western democracy basically because of the windfall from economic aids from United States of America (Amuwo, 1992) and not necessarily because of their in-depth knowledge of democratic principles and virtues.

The Problem

As noted earlier, Nigeria like many developing countries of the world was attracted to the political overture of the United States of America probably for wind fall, not minding her peculiar socio-cultural terrain and ethnic plurality. The naivety of the most populous nation of the black race, geostrategic player, geopolitical pivot in Africa as well as the largest regional and continental power (Kolapo, 2006) came to the fore as she failed her democratic experiment in 1979-1983 and her inability to deepen democratic culture in her renewed democratic experimentation from 1999 till date. Electoral crises and violence, military incursions into politics, flawed party primaries and general elections, dissatisfaction of majority of the citizens with democratic practice and corruption in public offices are some of the indicators of democratic failure in Nigeria.

The third democratic test in Nigeria beginning from 29 May, 1999 has further exposed the nation to yet another daunting dimension of social challenge that has raised several unanswered questions from political scientists and commentators as well as Sociologists. This challenge emanates from the formation of ethnic militias across the nation. At the moment, virtually all the geopolitical zones have developed distinctive ethnic militias (Albert, 2012, Odoma, 2014), making violence a widespread vice undermining our democracy. For instance, the South-west produced O'dua People's Congress (OPC), the South-south produced Egbesu Boys, the South-east produced Bakassi Boys, the Northern equivalence was Arewa People's Congress (APC), and the Middle-belt is overtaken by Fulani fighters, while the deadliest of them so far is Boko Haram terrorist group laying siege to the North-eastern Nigeria (Odoma, 2014). One thing that is common to these sub-cultural groups is lawlessness and violence that seem to have defied all known security prescriptions and has thus hindered the security and peace needed by any society to develop. The activities of ethnic militias have rendered every other thing in Nigeria secondary (Bohm and Haley, 1997) due to widespread insecurity across the nation. The foregoing raises the following questions, what democratic value encouraged ethnic militias in Nigeria? Why were these militia groups unknown in Nigeria before 1999? Is democracy consistent with unbounded freedom? These and other questions inspired this paper.

The Objective

The major objective of this paper is to examine the evolution of militia groups in democratic Nigeria. Other specific objectives are:

1). To explore the democratic values that encourage ethnic militias in Nigeria.
2). To examine reasons why these groups were not known in Nigeria until democratic practice of 1999.
3). To examine the impact of militancy on the deepening of democracy in Nigeria.

The Concept of Democracy

One sentence definition of democracy may be quite superficial or misleading. This is because the concept is perceived by many in several ways or mean many things to many scholars across the globe. For instance, Appadorai (2004) described democracy as a system of government under which people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by them. Cited in Danjibo (2012) is

Cassinelli (1961) who averred that the democratic state has a unique type of government.... The distinguishing feature of this type of government is the election to office of those men who possess the real and ultimate governmental authority. Yet, often credited to onetime American president- Abraham Lincoln is the definition of democracy as government of the people, by the people and for the people. Providing what look like a broad based definition of democracy, Danjibo (2012:53) argues that:

> "In line with this perception, a democratic society is one that first and foremost, promotes respect for human person, respect for the rule of law, enables political accommodation, respect citizen's rights, respect for the ballot system; it is in a system where decision-making lies with the (re)public. The benefits of all these attributes culminate in improved welfare and security of lives and properties of the citizens."

These varied perceptions notwithstanding, democracy is basically concerned with people (citizens), their dignity, welfare, rights and prospects (Appadorai, 2004). Whatever negates this basic standard amount to abuse of democratic practice. It is this perceived premium placed on the value of citizens by democracy that makes it popular and preferred to other forms of government. In fact, some scholars have argued that democracy is the best form of government ever known to man (Akinyemi, 1993; Oche, 2001, Omobowale, 2008, Odoma, 2013). The questions to ask here are, has Nigeria so far conformed to the ideals of democracy? How has this global political virtue fared in Nigeria? And what are the problems with the practice of democracy in Nigeria?

Theoretical Base

This paper is guided by the trio of Merton's Social Structure and Anomie, Edwin H Sutherland's Differential Association and Boundless' Relative Deprivation theories.

Social Structure and Anomie

Sociologically, society generates crimes and delinquent behaviours among members. Robert K Merton (1968) cited in Ritzer (1996) argued that the acute disjunction between the cultural norm and goals and the socially structured capacities of members to act in accord with them account for deviations and criminal activities in society. The failure of members obviously because of structural strain in achieving cultural values creates the drive to seeking personally created alternatives, unacceptable and sometimes illegal means of achieving

same cultural values. The only way members can avoid deviance in society is to conform in the face of obvious challenges to succeed. Every other alternatives amount to crime against society. Militancy in Nigeria no doubt negates the approved norms of hard work, diligence and resilience, no matter what inspired it. The desire to succeed and or access national wealth or dividend of democracy (approved social value) through other alternatives could be a plausible explanation for militancy in Nigeria.

Differential Association

Differential Association like the Anomie theory basically portrays crime as a creation of society rather than biological attributes of deviants. The theory is generally identified with its major exponent- Edwin H Sutherland. The theory is woven around the following basic assumptions (Conklin, 2007). It argues that criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with other persons through communication. The interactions that generate criminal ideas occur within small or sub-cultural groups. Therefore, societies that encourage free association with sub-cultural group posses greater potential to generating criminals. Criminal behaviours thrive easily if the definition favourable to violation is in excess of the definition unfavourable to violation of the law. In other words, the possibility to deviate is high when the probability of success and reward is higher than the probability of being caught and punished. The inability of the nation to punish deviant groups may have encouraged the proliferation of militant groups in Nigeria. However, the process of learning criminal behaviour in association with significant others is much the same as learning conformity to norms. The same needs and values that enhance conformity are the driving forces to deviation in society. The freedom and rights that democracy confers on citizens to freely associate with sub-cultural groups, particularly within these years of third democratic experimentation may have speeded the proliferation of ethnic militias in many parts of the country.

Relative Deprivation

Human beings have come to agree on acquisition of some virtues, values and properties around their social environments as indispensible for living. Such are sometimes considered as their entitlement for living or being part of the environment. Relative deprivation is the experience of being deprived of something to which one feels to be entitled. It refers to the discontentment people feel when they compare their positions and achievements to those around them and realize that they have less of that which they believe to be entitled. Relative deprivation

is often preceded by the perception of unfair treatment in the distribution of resources (Boundless, 2015).

Relative deprivation has been implicated as potential cause of social movements and deviant acts. In some situation, it can lead to political violence such as rioting, terrorism, civil wars, and other forms of criminal activities. Relative deprivation is often identified with groups, particularly in multicultural societies. A relatively deprived group could readily identify another group(s) or a people as the source of predicament. This makes violent acts against such groups inevitable. In a multi-cultural society like Nigeria, relative deprivation may have been responsible for the formation of militia groups in parts of the country in recent times.

Nigerian Version of Democracy

Probably because of the long and tortuous sojourn through decades of military regimes wherein most of the fundamental rights of her citizens were suspended, majority of Nigerians seem to have internalized military socialization (Onyeonoru, 2002). With the re-introduction of democracy in 1999, they became eager to enjoy such rights like many democratic nations of the world. This is evident in the form of democracy adopted by the nation. For instance, in the Nigerian version of democracy, so much emphasis is placed on freedom and rights that democracy advocates than the necessary obligations that accompany such rights. The enjoyment of rights and freedom not matched by the corresponding duties and obligations, no doubt exposes Nigerian model of democracy to lots of ambiguities that have made many to doubt if democratization has actually started in Nigeria.

As a result of the wrong notion and practice of democracy in Nigeria, impunity (commonly identified with military rule) got enthroned in public lives of the polity. Under several guises, public office holders defraud the citizenry with impunity. Corroborating this position, the deputy Senate President in the 7th and 8th Nigerian Senate, Ike Ekweremadu asserts that:

> "The collapse of the previous republics was attributed to impunity in high places, misuse of power of incumbency and flagrant abuse and manipulation of the electoral process. The Nigerian political system is highly skewed in favour of incumbent executives in particular, most of whom are ever willing to exploit it to the fullest, often to the detriment of democracy. **Source**: (Mutum, 2015)."

The same perception is no doubt extended to the six geo-political zones, where having been defrauded by political elites, citizens decided to take laws into their hands (Olorunfemi, 2007), thereby becoming laws in themselves in virtually all the zones. It is this mentality that has made the formation of ethnic militias lucrative in several parts of the country.

In Nigeria, the practice of democracy has empowered every category of citizens to belong to any form of association, with the aim of using same to hold the larger or main stream society to ransom. For instance, Association of the Cripple, Market women, National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), ethnic and religious groups have used the exercise of their freedom of association to unleash threat and terror on other members of the society. This practice that has gradually become a norm has made illegality, impunity and terror to thrive in the name of militia groups that could force vulnerable Nigerians to compliance.

It will certainly not be out of place to state that the form of democracy practiced by Nigeria at the moment is an adulterated version, since it substantially negates the representative form and grossly inconsistent with the conventional democratic norms across the globe. This explains why democratization process in Nigeria and several African states have been chaotic over the years.

Ethnic Militia in Nigeria

Militia groups can be described as youth organizations formed for the struggle against deprivation and marginalization which have transformed into violent militant youth, some of whom have also changed their objectives from ethnic desire into criminal activities (Adejoh, 2015). Militant groups emerged in Nigeria in response to military dictatorship and the perceived inhuman treatments unleashed on law abiding citizens, particularly after the hope of returning to democratic practice was dashed in 1993. The annulment of presidential election of 12th June, 1993 sparked the formation by pro-democracy activist by a group known as National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) to wrestle power out the hands of the military (Olorunfemi, 2007).

Although NADECO had its membership from several parts of the country, its activities were more visible in the South-west that felt the heaviest brunt of the denial and obstruction of transition to civil rule that would have produced a Yoruba president in 1993. The activities of NADECO serendipitously prepared fertile ground for the formation of O'dua People's Congress (OPC) militia group in the South-west in 1994. The formation of OPC was aimed at sustaining the displeasure of Yoruba (Afeniferi) people over the perceived political marginalization at the time (Adejoh, 2015).

Following the formation of OPC, the Arewa People's

Congress (APC) was formed apparently as a front to checkmate the incessant attacks on Hausa/Fulani population in Lagos, Shagamu, Oke-Ogun and other parts of Yorubaland (Albert, 2012, Adejoh, 2015). Citing Okechukwu (2003), Adejoh (2015) asserts that other ethnic groups followed in reference to the formation of OPC and APC to evolve their own militias. It thus became fashionable to have ethnic militia as potential fighting group for a possible check to ethnic marginalization in the country.

Furthermore, it is argued that the third democratic experiment was founded o fragile unity occasioned by the prolonged period of military rule in Nigeria. The military dispensation was not only dictatorial, but laid the foundation of violent conflicts which it bequeathed the democratic dispensation of 29 May, 1999. For instance, Odoma (2011b: 61) averred that:

"The criminalization of the Nigerian social system by the military was gradual as it span through the entire period of military rule. In the words of Onyeonoru (2002: 306), Gowon regime encouraged corruption, Babangida regime legitimized it, Abacha junta institutionalized it. Formal organizations were the machinery for implementation and they internalized and produced it. Consequently, the society internalized corruption as a copping mechanism with the 'weight' of military misrule. It was at this point that the image of the nation was badly battered for her to attain the status of the second most corrupt and unsafe country of the world. This was the state of the nation inherited by the brief regime of Abdulsalami Abubakar, the same was handed over to Obasanjo in 1999."

Complementing the inherited fragile state in 1999 to plunge the nation into untold chaos is the problem of bad leadership with which the democratic 'ship' is steered. Again, Odoma 2011a: 107) has argued that:

"...They have been accused of gross insensitivity to the plight and welfare of their followers even in the face of serious security threat and danger. The negative response of the government and relevant agencies to early warning signs of Boko Haram's sectarian attacks on the defenceless citizens and government of Borno State provide infallible proof to the insensitivity and negligence of the political leadership to the people they have sworn to protect and develop. Had the leadership been sensitive, proactive and alive to their responsibilities, the attack, destruction and loss of thousands of lives and unquantifiable properties

would have been averted...It will be safe to suggest therefore that, civil wars, politically motivated killings, hostage taking, kidnapping and other vices that have of late become the defining characteristics of many African countries cannot be separated from poverty occasioned by bad/poor political leadership that have become widespread."

The above suggest why Nigeria and her leadership have been contending with militia groups since the return to democracy in 1999, as groups across the nation realign in self-destiny and in the process of keen competition for available but scarce resources in Nigerian society (Mijah, 2005; Olorunfemi, 2007). Generally, the failure of government to meet its constitutional obligations in the face of perceived abundance has been implicated as reason in part for the emergence of militia groups across the nation (Olorunfemi, 2007). Militia groups are formed with the objective of taking own destiny in own hands. Furthermore, the inability of past political leaderships in Nigeria to galvanize the over 250 ethnic nationalities into a unified people with consciousness of nationhood, encouraged ethnic relevance at the expense of the nation. For instance, Odoma (2014:26-27) asserts that:

"...it could be said that many social issues of national importance are often viewed by most Nigerians with sectarian, ethnic and religious lenses. This has regrettably made security management porous and extremely difficult in recent times. It has equally threatened the deepening of democratic culture in Nigeria. Consequently, national security challenges are viewed by many as regional problems that are primarily the responsibilities of the regions where they manifest. Furthermore, such regions also are forced to localise the challenges as peculiar problems and use same to blackmail the national leadership. Regions, ethnic and religious groupings consequently withdraw to self and display solidarity within groups. This makes civil/police synergy and intelligence gathering required for nabbing many criminal activities extremely difficult. Today, citizens from regions, ethnic and religious groups are largely economical with vital information needed to arrest and or prosecute perpetrators of heinous crimes. They see such criminals as their kins, people and group members, who they must protect at the expense of national peace and security....There is therefore religious, regional and ethnic solidarity which hinders national allegiance and co-operation."

In the face of above situation, it might be difficult for

democracy to thrive as expected; it might equally be difficult for Nigeria to control the proliferation of ethnic militias. This is because different ethnic nationalities, some of which are in the minority which could not protest their perceived deprivation and marginalization during the military rule may have found the freedom of association that democracy advocates as safe haven to show their displeasure for not having enough share of the national wealth or the dividends of democracy. As long as militancy continues, national security is bound to suffer while the nation risks isolation in comity of nations.

Furthermore, since security is the background for every other human endeavour to thrive (Bohm and Haley, 1997), uncontrolled proliferation of militia groups in Nigeria will remain a cog on the wheel of robust provision of national security. The implication of this ugly development is that, both domestic and foreign investors will be scared to invest in the resource studded Nigerian economy. The presidential advocacy and prise singing about investment opportunities in Nigeria will not be enough to attract investors, unless the security of their lives, investment and personnel of prospective investors are guaranteed.

Proliferation of Militia groups in Democratic Dispensation

It is a known fact that ethnic militia never existed in Nigeria at least, not in the way they are today during military rule that lasted for over two/third of her existence as a sovereign state. Yet, members of these groups have lived as adults several years before the last democratic dispensation that began on 29 May, 1999. What could have kept them inactive waiting until 1999 to develop the kind of consciousness that encouraged the formation of militia groups, when they probably have faced similar, if not worse political experience under various military governments? Reflecting on 'political evils' inherent in military dictatorship, scholars have argued that no matter how poorly constituted, democratic rule is by far better than the best military government (Amuwo, 1992). Amuwo's position seems to present the popular perception of most Nigerian citizens. Yet, militancy against such unpopular regimes was hardly noticed until 1999.

Military dictatorships are traditionally characterized by naked use of force, intimidation and repression of human rights. To achieve this feat, whenever in office, they suspended the constitution and administered the state by decrees. Citizens were forced to comply with decrees through elaborate and brutal application of force. For instance, Appadorai (2004:239) ably posits that:

"It was not regarded as the mark of civilized polity that every citizen should be able to think as liked, to speak as liked and to vote as liked. Dictatorships make maximum use of force in government. They employ the secret police on a large scale...They therefore refuse to tolerate organized minorities and insist on state monopoly of those forces-the press, the radio, the film etc..."

Appadorai's position was true in Nigeria where the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), the only pro-democracy group that tried to resist the Babangida and Abacha dictatorships were forced to operate underground, while most of their members went on self-exile and operated from outside the shore of the country as long as the military regime lasted.

The foregoing no doubt would have forced Nigerians whose rights were infringed upon by the military dictators before 1999 to maintain ceiled lips probably for safer opportunities to demand for their rights. It is therefore safe to suggest that the absence of militancy during military rule in Nigeria does not mean all was well, it does not mean the groups were docile, it does not mean there was peace. It rather meant a period of enforced peace, period of terror, and of waiting for opportunities to vent such anger. It will also be safe to further suggest that, there cannot be better opportunities for the citizens to vent their displeasure than under democracy that preaches freedom, rights and dignity of man in society. This probably explains the widespread formation of militia groups by a people that have internalized military socialization for decades. It is however wise to demand those rights cautiously and constitutionally as expected in a democratic polity, if not, democracy will lose its essence.

Fundamental Rights in Democracy

There is no doubt that one of the features of democracy that stands it out from other forms of government is freedom, rights and dignity of citizens that it advocates. Human beings generally love freedom and pleasures (Reid, 1997) and are thus endeared to the practice of democracy. For people who have lived for decades under the reign of military dictators such as Nigerians of the 21st century, the desire for freedom and fundamental rights may take precedence over other social considerations.

The desire for rights and freedom notwithstanding, it is important to note that the foundation of such rights lies with the obligation and duties that citizens owe the state and other members. Since every citizen is entitled to most of these rights, there is the tendency for a clash of interests. For instance, if every citizen is entitled to free speech, the exhibition of such right by all at the same

time might lead to nuisance if there is no restraint. It therefore means that, human rights are neither unbounded nor automatic. The enjoyment of one's rights may end where another person's rights begin. Every citizen must ensure that the rights of others are protected so that they can enjoy theirs.

Nigerians no doubt are entitled to such rights as association, lawful assembly etc. If these rights hinder the right to life of others for instance, then there is the need for moderation such that, others can enjoy theirs. It is in this area that democracy suffers setbacks in Nigeria. Members of groups, regions, religions etc are probably quick to forget that other groups exist in the same democracy who feels their rights are infringed upon by our demands for rights. There is the need for restraint if not; the polity becomes chaotic to the extent that we may not enjoy ours.

Democracy is not a government of uncontrolled freedoms. It is actually a government of guided freedom. The only government that allow for unrestrained freedom is anarchism (Odoma, 2015). Anarchism allows a powerful and wealthy individual or group to do and acquire anything so desired without consideration for others. Life in such society is however unpredictable. Democracy and not anarchism is what Nigeria love and practice. It is therefore needful to hold on doggedly to democratic rules in our practice. Then we can begin to expect peace and development of the nation.

Implications for Deepening of Democratic Values

The beauty and preference for democracy over and above other forms of government ever known to man (Akinyemi, 1993; Appadorai, 2004; Omobowale, 2008) are functions of well defined rules and principles guiding its practice across the globe. If Nigerians have sincerely come to see democracy as the best form of government, it is only expedient that the rules of the game be obeyed by the citizens and their leadership. Whatever short-cut to enjoying the dividends of democracy other than the rules will definitely lead to chaos no matter who is involved. It is these same virtues that are respected by actors in developed democracies, that have transmitted the beauty and by extension enhanced the desire of others to practice it. Nigerians must learn to endure the pains of losses and magnanimous in victory, while waiting for other electoral opportunities to restratezise. With this, democracy will be deeply rooted soonest in Nigeria.

Recommendations

There is no doubt that democracy the world over enjoys public endorsement and is considered the best form of government ever known to mankind because of its concern for the dignity and wellbeing of man in comparison with other forms of government (Oche, 2001, Appadorai, 2004). It is equally gratifying to note that Nigeria has not only joined the league of democratic nations, but has been able to sustain unbroken democratic practice for fifteen years. The nation has also been able to create history in the continent of Africa as a democratic nation wherein the ruling party conceded defeat to an opposition party and yet, smoothly transited in 2015, instead of the culture of 'sit tight' mentality with which the continent has been known over the years.

However, to sustain efforts at deepening democratic culture and boost the enjoyment of dividends of democracy by her teaming population, a lot of issues have to be addressed urgently. Such issues include among others;

1). Democracy has so far enjoyed popular support of people across the globe because it is a form of government that is backed by clearly defined rules. The beauty of democracy wherever it is practiced is hinged on the strict adherence to the rules. If Nigeria like other democratic nations of the world have genuinely adopted democracy, it is only normal that she play the democratic game by its known rules. The use of militia and other undemocratic methods of enthroning and removing nonperforming officials from office are simply undemocratic, and cannot give us results expected of democracy. If we ignore the rules while playing the democratic game, we certainly would have created several illegalities. Today, it is the illegal methods of pushing corrupt politicians out of office that has created several illegal sub-cultural groups like Boko Haram, terrorists, kidnappers, thugs etc. These groups that are today threat to our peaceful co-existence, were some times in the past acknowledged, used, funded by some politicians to either remove nonperforming opponents and were latter dumped. Today the same groups are not only using these weapons against the society but are collaborating with international terrorist organizations to unleash mayhem on the nation. Nigeria would not have known Boko Haram if politicians in Bornu state did not invent them to perform illegal democratic roles.

2). Democracy does not mean freedom, it rather mean restraints of freedom and rights. The only form of government that allow for freedom of the type Nigerians have exhibited so far is anarchy. Anarchy condones lawlessness or the freedom to live a life of impunity. I am sure we have had enough of the side effects of unrestraint freedom to begin to desire a return to true democracy. As rightly averred by Odoma (2014), in societies where people think they can do and say whatever they want and get away with, there are in same

society either immediate crises or postponed crisis.

3). Nigerians should remember that democracy did not only offer us with freedom but also place on our shoulders several obligations. For example, Appadorai (2004:138) posits that:

Among the political rights outlined above, stress must be laid on the rights of speech, publication and association. These rights are integral to democracy because they make possible free discussion and the continuous participation of the people in Government, not only at the time of general elections. Free discussion is necessary because democracy is based on a belief on the value of individual personality. This implies the obligation to respect the other man, to listen to his arguments and to take into account his point of view.

It is good that we emphasize the freedom that democracy preaches, but we must not close our eyes to the obligations that accompany those rights, because it is through our performance of those obligations that our rights are strengthened.

CONCLUSION

Democracy is meant to liberate humanity from the claws of injustice, threat, insecurity and uncertainty and ensure enhanced dignity of man in his physical and social environments. This explains why democracy is identified with well thought-out rules and why it enjoys overwhelming support of majority of the world population. The virtues in democracy can only be enjoyed in societies where aside from the freedom it confers, the attendant obligations although, not always pleasant are cherished by all. Any practice of democracy that does not follow the laid down rules only guarantees adulteration and exposes such democracy to turmoil, crises and return such society to the abhorred state of nature. The adoption of militia groups and illegal channels other than the power of the poll to remove and enthrone politicians only amount to sowing the seed of confusion that can only breed crises and plunge such society into calamities of the magnitude that Nigeria has faced in the recent times. The earlier every parts of the country condemn militancy with all sense of sincerity, the better and brighter the future of our democracy.

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