

UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO

Colegio de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

Political Systems in Nigeria: Democracy and Identity Cleavages

Sofia Rosero

Arturo Moscoso, Dr., Director de Tesis

Tesis de Grado presentada como requisito
para la obtención del título de Licenciada en Relaciones Internacionales

Quito, diciembre de 2014

Universidad San Francisco de Quito
Colegio de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

HOJA DE APROBACIÓN DE TESIS

Political Systems in Nigeria: Democracy and Identity Cleavages

Sofia Rosero

Arturo Moscoso, Dr.
Director de Tesis

Andrés González, PhD.
Miembro del Comité de Tesis

Tamara Trowsell, PhD.
Miembro del Comité de Tesis

Andrés González, PhD.
Director del Programa

Carmen Fernández, PhD.
Decana del Colegio de
Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

Quito, diciembre de 2014

© DERECHOS DE AUTOR

Por medio del presente documento certifico que he leído la Política de Propiedad Intelectual de la Universidad San Francisco de Quito y estoy de acuerdo con su contenido, por lo que los derechos de propiedad intelectual del presente trabajo de investigación quedan sujetos a lo dispuesto en la Política.

Asimismo, autorizo a la USFQ para que realice la digitalización y publicación de este trabajo de investigación en el repositorio virtual, de conformidad a lo dispuesto en el Art. 144 de la Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior.

Firma: _____

Nombre: Sofía Alejandra Rosero Abad

C. I.: 171628441-7

Fecha: Quito, diciembre de 2014

DEDICATORY

To all those who see in Africa a whole colorful and different world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my parents who were always willing to know about my new findings and to my brother who sometimes shared my amusement on what I was discovering. I thank them too, for encouraging me to take opportunities that eventually led me to learn and love African Politics.

Special thanks to Dr. Arturo Moscoso, for his valuable help and advice through out the development of this Thesis.

RESUMEN

Quince años atrás, Nigeria volvió a tener un gobierno civil, después de casi treinta y nueve años de dictadura. No obstante, los resultados de este cambio son aún cuestionables. En Nigeria, un país marcado por clivajes culturales, religiosos y regionales, la democracia no parece haber funcionado mucho mejor que las dictaduras previas. En muchos casos incluso parece que la democracia ha resultado peor, ya que se ha convertido en un legitimador de acciones que de otro modo serían inaceptables. Por ende, resulta necesario determinar qué régimen ha funcionado mejor para el país considerando los clivajes que marcan su cultura política. El economista Paul Collier ha realizado dos estudios que predicen dos circunstancias bajo las cuales estos sistemas pueden resultar peligrosos para el país; sin embargo, las dos predicciones resultan contradictorias en el caso nigeriano. Esta tesis tratará entonces de analizar el efecto de los clivajes etno-religiosos y etno-regionales en el desempeño del sistema democrático en comparación con el régimen dictatorial. Lo que este estudio demuestra es que aunque el régimen dictatorial parece haber tenido enfoques ligeramente mejores, no debería ser considerado mejor que gobiernos democráticos. En realidad, el problema del sistema democrático demuestra haber surgido debido a que el sistema político nigeriano no puede contar como una democracia completa en la actualidad.

ABSTRACT

Although the return of Nigeria to democratic rule was welcomed with high hopes, fifteen years later, the results of this system are still questionable. In Nigeria, a country marked by cultural, religious, and regional cleavages, democracy does not seem to have worked better than dictatorships. In many cases it even seems that democracy has been worse, as it has become a legitimizer of otherwise unacceptable actions. Therefore, it turns out necessary to determine which system has worked better for the country considering the cleavages that mark its political culture. Economist Paul Collier made two studies which predicted two circumstances under which these systems could be dangerous for the country; nevertheless, both predictions are contradictory for the Nigerian case. This thesis will thus analyze the effect of ethno-religious and ethno-regional cleavages in the performance of the democratic system as opposed to that of the dictatorial system. What this study shows is that although dictatorial rule seem to have had slightly better approaches, it should not be considered to be better than democratic rule. The failure of the current democratic system is thus found to arise because the Nigerian political system cannot account precisely as a full democracy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedicatory.....	5
Acknowledgements	6
Resumen	7
Abstract.....	8
Table of contents	9
Introduction	10
Background.....	11
Problematic	13
Research Question	17
Hypothesis.....	17
Theoretical Framework	18
Purpose of the Study.....	20
Literature Review.....	22
Genders of Literature Included in the Revision	22
Steps in the Literature Review Process	22
Literature Review Format	23
Dictatorial Performance	24
Democratic Performance.....	25
Methodology and Investigation Design	26
Analysis	28
Collier's Theories.....	28
Ethno-Religious Politics	31
Motivations driving politics.....	34
Democratic Performance.....	42
Important Remarks	50
Conclusions.....	52
Which to choose	58
References.....	61

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a country whose recent history has been one marked by problems as its highly divided society struggles to fit democracy as an appropriate political system. Only fifteen years after the return to civilian rule it turns rather difficult to assess whether the previous dictatorial regimes had worked better for the country or if democracy is best suited but needs only to go through an adaptation period first. Nevertheless, it is possible that characteristics inherent to Nigeria might be hindering the effectiveness of the democratic system in the country. One such characteristic that creates the space for misunderstanding and trouble is the existence of ethnic, religious and regional cleavages, all of them equally strong and influential in the political culture of Nigerians and in the way politics themselves are driven. This study will thus examine how identity cleavages affect the effectiveness of democracy in Nigeria, and how the performance of the current democratic system compares to that of previous dictatorships.

This question arises in part because of the apparent contradiction between two findings by Collier. The first one, that democracy makes societies with a GDP per capita lower than \$2700 dangerous (Collier 2009, 21). The second one, that “ethnic diversity is predicted to be damaging in particular circumstances, namely dominance and dictatorship” (Collier et al. 2001, 141). Considering that Nigeria falls under both cases, it turns rather unclear what kind of political regime would in fact be better for it. This thesis will thus analyze how identity cleavages have affected the effectiveness of the democratic system as opposed to that of the dictatorial system. It will start by analyzing the effect of ethno-religious and ethno-regional cleavages in the performance of democracy by studying how does the democratic system has worked in Nigeria. Later, it will be described how this performance compares to that of dictatorial leaders, and it will end up explaining that although

dictatorial leaders seem to have had slightly better approaches, they should not be considered to be better than democratic leaders.

Background

The Story of Nigeria: A conflict torn country

One of the problems that has defined Africa is the incredibly big amount of ethnic groups that live within the boundaries of a single country. In need to organize and divide territory, European colonialists arbitrarily formed states without considerations of the different groups that they were putting together into a single unit (Alapiki 2005, 50). This amalgamation of groups was an idea that was believed would allow better control over the colonies. However successful it actually was, after these countries started to gain independence the African petty bourgeois adopted and maintained this organization for similar purposes (Ojie 2006, 549). Many have actually seen the advantages of this amalgamation transformed into a means for individual gain.

Under these considerations, the Lagos colony and the protectorate of Southern Nigeria were merged in 1906. Nevertheless, two different administrations were kept, and so, although Nigeria as we now know it was geographically united in 1914, the North-South dichotomy on administrative, political and cultural matters remained evident. “What emerged up to 1946 was a country with two separate administrations and a growing schism in terms of tradition, character and orientation” (Alapiki 2005, 52-3). By 1954, under the Lytelton constitution¹, a three way federation was created, dividing the country in three different regions constituted by the three main ethnic groups (Akinrinade, 2000 in Agbiboa 2012, 12). The “northern Hausa-Fulani consist of 30% of the country’s total popula-

¹ The Lytelton Constitution declared Nigeria a federation constituted by three main regions; and it was done with the intention of promoting regional autonomy while relieving tensions by giving more power to the regions. An important feature of this distribution is that it maintained the equal distribution between the Northern and Souther Regions.

tion, the western Yoruba make up to 20% of the total, and the eastern Igbo constitute 17%” (Agbiboa 2012, 10). Through this division, ethno-regionalism in the political arena was established, and the difficulties for leaders, both, military or civilian, enhanced. As a matter of fact, difficulties go hand in hand with Nigeria’s diversity, which goes beyond of that delimited by the three main groups. It is conformed by about 250 different ethnic groups (Alapiki 2005, 52) whose ethnic boundaries, except in the Yoruba, tend to coincide with religion (Ukiwo 2003, 120).

At independence, all suspicions and fears of domination were only enhanced due to the size and population of the Northern Region. With it, it had assured more than half of the seats in parliament (Aiyede 2009, 257; Ojie 2006, 550) and was thus able to politically control over other regions. The Yoruba, on the other hand, although unable to get a hold on the control of national political power, had an educational and occupational advantage over the north, which at the same time allowed it to better compete in the global economy, a socioeconomic advantage that was also feared (Elaigwu 1991, 128; Reno 1999, 120). On the east, the Igbo had the geographical advantage of oil concentration within its boundaries, which was by itself, a great source of economic gains (Reno 1999, 120). These differentiated advantages made each region to fear the others each time more, and made the struggle for power and gains part of their strategies and their everyday lives².

The separate existence of these ethno-religious groups “accentuated the development of indigenous social structures along primordial lines, making ethnicity the most pervasive and determinant factor in gaining access to a mosaic of rights and privileges. Consequently, ethnic politics has dominated the Nigerian political arena and truncated its soci-

² The north, for instance, adopted a ‘northernization policy’ which was meant to protect its civil service (Elaigwu 1991, 128), and intended to control over the Igbo’s right of ownership of their resources, which was nevertheless challenged (Aiyede, 2006; Anugwon, 2004; Isumonah, 2005; Obi, 1995, 2005 in Aiyede 2009, 258)

opolitical and economic developments” (Ojie 2006, 561-2). Ethnic identity and cultural communities, probably for being more stable than other formal and informal institutions (Reno 1999, 120), have thus played a major role in determining the power holders within Nigeria and the direction politics and development have taken since independence. Moreover, since “politics in Nigeria is the gateway to sudden wealth, an ostentatious lifestyle and self-aggrandizement, [and it has become] a zero sum game which produces absolute winners and losers, [...it] encourages the resort to any means, including violence and mobilization of ethnic and religious sentiments, as well as the radicalization of organizations such as Boko Haram” (Aghedo & Osumah 2012, 868). Democratic and dictatorial leaders have both ruled in the Nigeria of conflict and corruption, and although neither has been completely effective in diminishing the influence of identity cleavages in political outcomes and the respect and inclusion of minorities, it is possible that characteristics of one of these regimes has made it comparatively more effective than the other.

Problematic

Nigeria is a relatively new state, which obtained its independence from the British Empire in 1960. As the nascent society it is, it is still struggling for strengthening its institutions and consolidating its identity as a state. Moreover, considering the great influence of the military in the country and the recent return to civilian rule in 1999, the Nigerian case can be said to be one surrounded by problems. Since its independence, Nigeria has constantly switched between democratic and dictatorial leaders; and despite returning to democratic rule, there are still questions on whether democracy has been effective in improving the country’s political performance, and in the generation of more inclusion and respect of the minorities. When it has not done so, it is considered that more ethno-religious based conflict and the emergence and radicalization of informal institutions like

Boko-Haram would have taken place, thus affecting stability in the country. Therefore, although currently Nigeria has a democratic government, the sequence of events that might follow the next presidential elections must be considered. As of now, a possible reelection of current President Goodluck Jonathan in 2015 might bring about dissatisfaction in the already aggravated North and a coup d'état should not be ruled out³. Under such circumstances it is still rather interesting to analyze how effective have democracies been for Nigeria as opposed to dictatorships within the framework of identity cleavages.

However, while there are studies assessing the effects of certain conditions on the effectiveness of democracy, there is no one obvious answer for Nigeria. What makes of Nigeria a rather complex study case are the ethno-religious cleavages, summed with a resource-based economy in a poor country⁴. Each of these conditions are considered to play as an incentive in the power game in Nigeria, but all of them have, for the most, been analyzed independently. These independent studies have been useful in their own ways, pointing to the preponderance or not of the role of each on the country's political performance; or by demonstrating what variables or factors affect politics, security and democracy. Nevertheless, little has been done to determine the actual effect of these characteristics in the effectiveness of political systems in Nigeria.

To do this, it is important to both make an assessment of the performance of the different systems and understand the motivations that guide the actions and decisions of the different leaders. This understanding will be useful in determining why one system might work better than the other, and the role of each in diminishing corruption and promoting respect and inclusion of minorities in the country. This work will thus move away

³ If we consider conditions that increase the possibility for a coup d'état according to Collier (2009, 147-50), we can assume that the danger of a coup d'état in Nigeria is high under the current circumstances.

⁴ Oil revenue "accounts for 98 per cent of the country's export earnings and 95 per cent of the government's income" (Aghedo & Osumah 2012, 861)

from the usual analyses of centralization and decentralization policies for inclusion, stability and democracy in Nigeria, to study how factors inherent to Nigerian society affect the effectiveness of democracy. For instance, while studies usually focus on the fact that “great ethnic conflict has usually been caused by the capture, or apparent near capture, by one group of control over the centralized state, and the dangers of dominance this has foretold” (Osaghae, 1995, 13 in Agbiboa 2012, 6), few notice how this is a problem inherent to a democratic system. Moreover, even when the usual solution to Nigeria’s problems points to a better and more equal distribution of power and economic benefits, there is little said about the constant fear of control that will remain existing in a democratic system (Collier & Hoefflert 2004, 571).

As a matter of fact, even when democracy has been considered to be the best possible system at hand, in the Nigerian case it hasn’t proven to be much better than dictatorial regimes. Ethno-religious and ethno-regional cleavages are so marked in Nigeria that they have affected the political culture of its people. Votes are for the most carried along ethnic lines, and leaders also dedicate themselves to benefit their primordial realms over the civic public realm, thus enhancing grievances and inequality.

Democracy, for being a system that should take care of the minorities, was expected to be a tool to solve the divisions marking Nigeria. In fact, with the return to democratic rule there were many provisions taken to ensure that votes will no longer be carried along ethnic lines, including a two-party system, and a very complex system for determining a winner. Yet, despite the various efforts of the democratic provisions, little seems to have changed in Nigeria since 1999, and if anything, things have gotten worse. Organizations like Boko Haram seem even stronger now, and violations of Human Rights and repressions remain, while corruption is the order of the day.

On the other hand, while dictatorial regimes in Nigeria have usually come from minority groups who want to get a hold of power to bring about change (Osaghae 1998, p.14), democratic regimes tend to have more selfish motivations. Moreover, although the changes dictatorial leaders pursue might usually be beneficial for their particular groups, they usually end up benefiting minority groups as a whole. Likewise, because they are conscious of the vulnerability of leaders in power, since themselves got to power by overthrowing the previous leader, they will try to govern in such a way that will assure them the most possible time in power (Collier 2009, 153; Reno 1999, 107). Democratic leaders, however, are not preoccupied of being overthrown, since they are protected by democratic rules and procedures. Furthermore, since democracy is internationally considered for most as a 'legitimate' system, there is little that can be done to challenge the actions of democratic leaders. This so called legitimacy has in fact allowed governmental leaders to take more 'reckless' actions for either individual or ethnic benefit. Such behavior is sustained on the democratic provisions that ensure leaders that they will maintain their hold of power during the constitutionally established period of time even if their governance and actions are questionable. Therefore, democratic provisions might have done little if anything to diminish corruption and to contribute to the inclusion and protection of minorities. As in other societies with ethnic majorities, in Nigeria there is also a need for "better protection of minority rights" as Collier et al. (2001, 155) point out, but democracy does not seem to provide for this solution.

|

Research Question

In consideration of the aforementioned issues, this paper will answer the following question. Has democracy -influenced by identity cleavages- affected the political performance of the country and the inclusion and respect of minorities in a different way than dictatorships?

Hypothesis

Given that the political culture of Nigeria is constructed around identity issues, a democratic -and thus legitimate- system might have institutionalized these divisions in the country, making all existing grievances even greater. Therefore, the all times existing cleavages and disputes between the three different regions of the country might have increased now that a democratic system legitimizes leaders' hold (and misuse) of power.

To begin with, ethnic, religious and regional considerations as the main source of identification, might allow the easy manipulation of people and thus of political outcomes. Although this might not be precisely different from what happened during dictatorial rule, it might be problematic in a democracy since new laws could be *legitimately* affecting the interests of particular groups. Likewise, since identity considerations are the power drive in Nigeria, it would be rather impossible to think about the existence of a rightfully legitimate or country-wide accountable democracy.

It is also possible to consider that democracy, for providing a legitimating quality to the government, would allow the legitimate use of state power and resources. Democratic leaders will thus be empowered at limits beyond those previously held by dictators who had to rely on more limiting means to hold power and remain in political office. Considering the possible benefits that could arise from *democratically* holding political office, it would also become more appealing for the different groups who would want to shift the distribution of power and resources in their favors. However, great levels of power do not

only facilitate enrichment and motivate corruption, but by enlarging the gap between different minority groups for the benefit of the power-holder, it can end up increasing grievances in minority groups. These grievances might encourage the creation or strengthening of militant organizations based along identity lines, like are the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Boko Haram, which threaten the security of the country but particularly of minority groups.

The problem is that democracy seems to have been adopted as a legitimizer of otherwise corrupt and endangering actions rather than as a control over them. Hence, since in Nigeria identity issues are so entrenched in people's political culture, they might end up guiding most if not all of their actions and decisions. It is possible then, that these conditions difficult the achievement of a truly consolidated democracy.

Theoretical Framework

Democracy

The period since Nigeria's return to civil rule, although marked by changes, has not proved to solve problems inherent to the structure of the country's institutions. To analyze why this has been the case, it is important to start defining what can account as Democracy. For this, this study will take into account the five criteria to reach the ideal Democracy as described by Dahl (1991)⁵.

First, the "appropriate and equal opportunities to express their preferences [...] and to express the reasons that lead them to subscribe to a solution instead of another" (135) accounts for *effective participation*. Second, is the *voting equality at the decisive stage* (135). Third, "citizens must account with adequate and equal opportunities to discovering and affirming the election of the matters to be debated that will best serve their interests"

⁵ The quotes for this text have been translated from the original by myself.

(138), which is called *enlightened understanding*. Fourth refers to the *control of the agenda* which means that “The demos must be the only one that holds the opportunity to resolve how the issues that must be decided in the democratic process will be ordered and brought up for deliberation” (140). And fifth, *inclusiveness*, which means that “the demos must include all citizens [and that they shall] have a legitimate stake of the collective decisions of the association” (147).

Although these characteristics point to an ideal type of democracy which will rarely be achieved, it serves as a guide of important characteristics that democracies are expected to have. Nigeria, for example, although failing to be a full democracy, does present some of these characteristics. For instance, they have elected officials, elections (although questionably free or fair), inclusive suffrage, rights to run for office and some freedom of associational autonomy. On what refers to enlightened understanding, however, even when there were better means to ensure that citizens would be able to differentiate which would be their best options, the political culture of the country will make this unnecessary as votes are conducted mainly along ethnic lines.

What should be questioned then is the quality of democracy in the country. This is characterized by the free and fair election of representatives at regular intervals, the partial independence of the representatives, the freedom of public opinion, the existence of an opposition, and freedom of decision making with the previous existence of a discussion process (Chabal 1998, 290; Manin, 1998: 237-8 in Martínez 2004, 665-6). When these characteristics exist, it can be considered that a democracy is actually consolidated.

On the other hand, it is also important to consider what is democracy within different contexts, and thus examine what Bradley (2005) calls a Western-style democracy as compared to other types of democracy. He considers that “democracy is a configuration of governance molded by the general values, biases, prejudices, and nuances of a given cul-

ture” (Bradley 2005, 407). Therefore, it follows that particular characteristics of a society will be reflected in the democratic system of each country. In Western country, part of this cultural configuration has been the conviction that the state will “reflect the desires of the body politic” (Bradley 2005, 407). Nevertheless, where identities within a country are markedly differentiated, like is the case in Nigeria, identity will be reflected on considerations of ethnicity, religion or region, rather than through the acknowledgement a national identity. Therefore, “the state’s conception of governance is not always congruent with the heterogeneous peoples of [this] particular nation-state” (Bradley 2005, 407).

Finally, it is important to remark that one of the factors that might be hindering the effectiveness of democracy in some countries, is the fact that they “may be lacking the preconditions whereby the accountability and legitimacy effects were going to work very well” (Collier 2009, 20). Therefore, even when some of the characteristics pointing to a (consolidated) democracy were present in Nigeria, these preconditions are problematic. One such precondition is Nigeria’s political culture based on identity considerations.

Purpose of the Study

Understanding why political systems need to adapt themselves to the conditions and needs of such complex states as Nigeria can be a breakthrough in the current attempts to implement western-style democracy all around the globe. The assessment of how other political systems might turn more effective in certain cases will also allow for the international community to support different systems for their qualities and performance rather than by their label. In this way blind support to (western-style) democracies over other systems simply on the basis of its alleged ‘legitimacy’ can be avoided, and thus support to best suited systems can end up reinforcing development in these states.

This study is thus intended to conclude whether democracy performs well in Nigeria despite the ethno-religious cleavages, and if it does not then to identify the reasons that would explain its failure. It will begin by reviewing two important findings by Collier that relate to the Nigerian case and the effectiveness or not of democracy under those conditions. This will be followed by an explanation of the methodology used. On the fourth section I will analyze the role of ethno-religious politics and the motivations that drive leaders to hold power, to then cover how this affects the performance of democratic and dictatorial regimes, and I will end with the conclusions on the fifth section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For purposes of this thesis, the information used will come from the available literature on Nigeria and on the work of some scholars on issues of development and democracy under dangerous situations. In this thesis it has been mainly considered the research made by Paul Collier in collaboration with other scholars, as well as on some of the critics of his work. Likewise, this thesis includes the works of some influential African scholars for the literature regarding the Nigerian particular case.

This section will develop on the literature used for this thesis, starting with information about the sources and then with a revision of the literature by topic. The topics that will be reviewed are Identity Diversity and Cleavages, Ethno-religious Politics, Dictatorial Performance and Democratic Performance.

Genders of Literature Included in the Revision

Sources

The information used for this thesis comes mainly from peer reviewed journals, but it also includes the information from two well known books, those of Campbell (2013) and Collier (2009).

Steps in the Literature Review Process

The topics for this literature review were generated in two important ways. First of all they come from the information and studies revised in an African Politics class, which gave me a guideline on the issues that matter the most for this kind of studies. Likewise, readings on the Nigerian specific case gave me too a basic idea of what are the issues that are affecting the country and that would require further research. This was complemented through research of key words and related topics on peer reviewed journals and on the research of authors that were continuously referenced in these articles.

Literature Review Format

This Literature Review will be organized by topics. This is done in this way because the different authors used in this thesis have done research on more than one of the areas covered here, so they might appear in more than one topic. Likewise, although the political scenario of the country might have changed during the time, there are similar characteristics on what refers to identity cleavages that have not changed during time but that have rather been maintained.

Identity Diversity and Cleavages

Ethnic diversity in Nigeria is considered one of the main variables affecting the effectiveness of the different political systems in Nigeria. Therefore, the literature for this topic will cover the basis upon which this study is built. It will cover information on the existing ethnic diversity in Nigeria and the important cleavages in the country. Osaghae explains how ethnic differentiation has occurred and developed in the country while providing some insights on the characteristics of each of the three main groups, the Hausa Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo. Mahmud, on the other hand focuses on the religious cleavages and how muslims and christians are affected by the policies or actions of the others. This information backs up the research made by Collier (2001) which finds ethnic diversity to be damaging particularly under a dictatorial system, which is in part what motivates the research question of this thesis.

Ethno-Religious Politics

Agbibo starts by reviewing how religion and ethnicity developed in Nigeria and started to override national identity. The creation and maintenance of the tribal identities created during the British colonial times, is thus pointed to be the main factor that constructed this form of identification and institutionalized this kind of assembly as both Ag-

biboa and Bradley emphasize. Therefore, Aiyede and Ojie explain how people started to lay their trust in kinships and leaders with a shared identity, to later sustain ethno-politics on the basis of this identification. Ukiwo, on the other hand, focuses on the characteristics from the state itself which encouraged this kind of behavior. Bradley and Reno further explain how ethnic-politics has also become a source of power and personal gain, and how almost all matters can be manipulated by appealing to identity.

Obi and Aghedo & Osumah, on the other hand, develop on how identity issues became the source of more domination and the creation of other types of political organizations. Likewise, Mahmud, Ojie and Riedl, analyze the role of religion on the creation of political dissatisfaction based on this issue, while in BRILL it is later explained how religious motivations drive the actions of Boko Haram.

Watts, Zalik, Nwajiaku-Dahou and Aghedo & Osumah further develop on how oil became a motivation for holding political power and the root for more dissatisfaction and alienation of the minority groups, particularly of those of the oil-rich states who find themselves affected by policies that try to shift revenue allocation.

Dictatorial Performance

Alpiki, Elaigwu, Reno Ojie and Osaghae focus on the particular actions by different dictators that were intended to improve the country's situation, particularly in what regards to inclusion of minorities. Reno, however, further explains how even well intentioned actions of dictators were sometimes countered by the military body as a whole.

Democratic Performance

The first important to analyze is what can be considered to be a democracy. Robert Dahl provides five important points that define an ideal democracy, points that are considered when assessing Nigeria's adoption of these conditions. Considering that, however, not all these conditions might be achieved, it is important to consider the quality of Nigeria's democracy. Chabal and Martínez thus describe what factors should be considered when identifying the quality of the democracy and whether it is consolidated or not. This is important because the problems in Nigeria might in fact be caused because Nigeria's democracy, due to its short history, has not been precisely consolidated yet. On the other hand, considering that identity is a major factor affecting the political culture, this study will also include research by Bradley, which pinpoints to the difference between Western style democracies and other type of democracies.

Following this, Ojie's work is considered since he starts by identifying the purpose of democracy, particularly in a divided society. Bradley, Ukiwo, Obi, Alapiki and Ojie then develop on the particular characteristics that have not allowed the democratic system to be effective in Nigeria, including the political violence that has resulted from the increased grievances. Ukiwo, Watts and Nwajiaku-Dahou also explain how during the democratic system identity violence has increased and identify the reasons motivating this kind of behavior. Obi and Osaghae, for their part, focus on the economic reasons that have enhanced the feeling of subordination by minorities while Nwajiaku-Dahou further expands on how economic considerations have become detrimental for the entire democratic system. Bradley and Campbell, on the other hand, explain how a long-term institution building will be needed for democracy to be effective in Nigeria, however difficult this might actually be.

METHODOLOGY AND INVESTIGATION DESIGN

A study case of Nigeria and its particular characteristics as well as the importance of them in shaping society will allow to determine how they influence people's behavior and decision making in the country. Identity issues, and thus, ethno-religious and ethno-regional cleavages are important since they determine the political culture of the Nigerian society; moreover they are believed to be a source of inequality and discrimination, which makes them an important factor increasing grievances. Therefore, considering their important role in shaping Nigerian politics, identity cleavages will be the main intervening variable in this analysis. The oil-richness of the eastern region, on the other hand, will be one of my intervening variables since it creates incentives for taking political office and changing some policies, but it is in part guided by identity issues as well.

A qualitative approach will be used to evaluate how these characteristics have influenced the way politics are driven in Nigeria and how the effectiveness of its political system has been affected by them. It will all be desk-work, investigation and analysis of information depending on the stage of the study. I chose this method because although the impact of each of these variables can be assessed quantitatively, the results from these kind of experiments can be contradictory, at least for this specific case.

As a matter of fact, the theories that attempt to explain what political system will work better in countries like Nigeria are various and thus also contradictory. There are different authors that analyze the factors that affect the performance of each of the systems, however, this thesis will consider only two studies made by economist Paul Collier. His studies are relevant since they have focused on what he calls the 'bottom billion' societies, group to which Nigeria belongs. Moreover, they analyze how well suited are democracy and dictatorship under two different conditions present in Nigeria, namely a low GDP per

capita and ethnic diversity. Nevertheless, the decision to focus on his studies is because of their implications, which point in two different directions.

Therefore, since according to both theories, both dictatorial and democratic systems might be dangerous for Nigeria, I will hereby examine how identity cleavages have influenced politics, particularly democratic rule, and how stability in the country has been affected. Second, I will analyze how economic and religious motivations influence politics and the need to hold political office. I will finalize this section by explaining how this has affected the performance of the dictatorial and democratic systems.

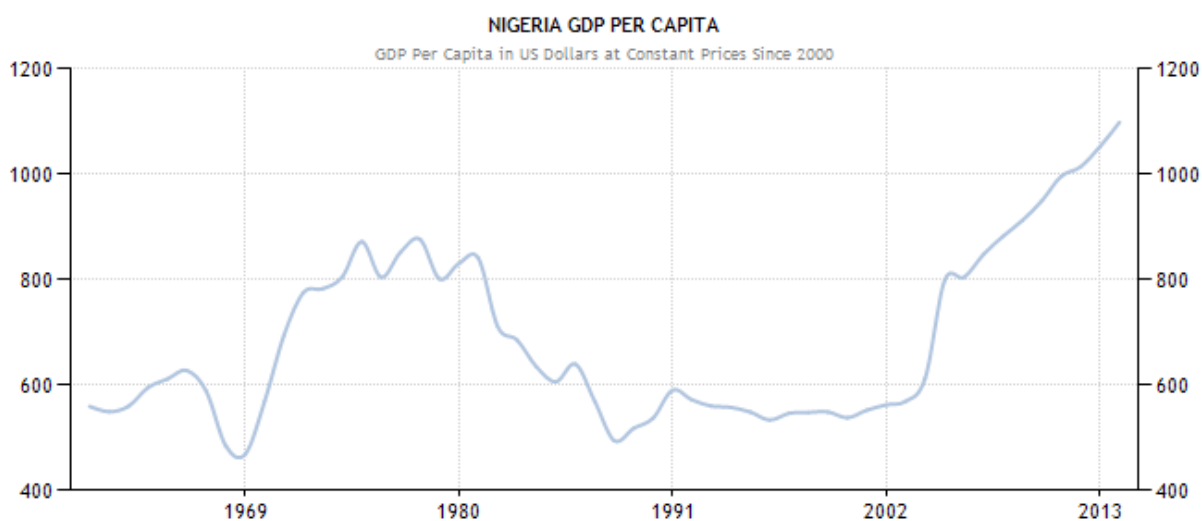
To analyze how ethno-religious cleavages influence politics I will revise what are kinships and how they work. Then I will analyze the differences in civic and public realms and the importance of each one for Nigerians. Finally, I will assess the importance and incidence of votes along ethnic lines. All of this points to the fact that politics in Nigeria have become to be 'ethno-religious politics'. This will be followed by a study of the motivations that move leaders to be in power. For this I will examine the existence of grievances in the different ethnic groups; oil as a factor motivating both grievances and greed; and the need for a change in the way distribution of resources is carried out. Democratic and Dictatorial performance will thus be assessed in consideration of the previously mentioned factors.

ANALYSIS

Collier's Theories

Low GDP per capita

The incidence of political violence according to Collier (2009, 18) was expected to be reduced with democracy since democracy was expected to provide with accountability and legitimacy to the people, and thus reduce the incentives for violent reactions. Nevertheless, societies of the bottom billion were considered to lack “the preconditions whereby the accountability and legitimacy effects were going to work very well” (Collier, 2009 20). Considering thus that these societies are distinguished for its poverty compared to that of the rest of the world, this factor was taken into consideration to analyze how democracy works in poor countries as opposed to rich countries. What was found was that although in “middle-income levels, democracy systematically reduced the risk of political violence, [...] in low-income countries, democracy made the society more dangerous” (Collier 2009, 20-1). The particular level of income which was found to make poor societies more dangerous, was found to be a GDP per capita lower than \$2700 per year (Collier 2009, 21).



SOURCE: WWW.TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | WORLD BANK

Nigeria's GDP per capita has historically been below \$2700 per year. In 2014, its GDP per capita at constant prices is of \$1097,97, far below \$2700. Figure 2 shows Nigeria's GDP per capita at constant prices from 1960 to 2013 (Trading Economics).

In consideration of this, we could assume that in Nigeria a democratic system could enhance the problems and dangers that already exist, thus being detrimental for its society. Nigeria, however, has also experienced a lot of problems that relate to its ethnic diversity, which is a second important factor for determining the most suitable political system.

Ethnic Diversity

Despite Nigeria's great ethnic diversity, there are three ethno-regional groups that have historically been predominant, namely the northern Hausa-Fulani, western Yoruba, and eastern Igbo. From these three, the northern Hausa Fulani have not been considered as proper minorities because they "are not subjected to domination or discrimination, and instead constitute dominant and hegemonic groups" (Osaghae 1998, 3). Moreover, they constitute the most numerous ethnic group in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the vulnerability of the Hausa Fulani as that of any other minority group will be considered for this study. This is done for three important reasons. First, although they are considered as the dominant group, particularly in the political arena, western Yoruba and eastern Igbo have other comparative advantages that make the North lag behind them. Second, this same assumed political domination has been challenged since southern Goodluck Jonathan ran for elections in 2011 when he should have stepped aside to allow a northern presidency (Campbell 2013, n.p). With the destruction of the zoning⁶, the South has now held the power longer than the North, and it is assumed to also run for elections on the next term. Third, the North is constituted not only by ethnolinguistic minorities, but also by religious minorities.

⁶ "Zoning was a tacit agreement among the country's elite to alternate the presidency between candidates from the Christian South and Muslim North" (Campbell 2013, n.p)

This places it in a more complex situation than other regions (Osaghae 1998, 8). Moreover, Christian evangelization in Muslim areas has been even more aggressive than that believed of Muslims in Christian areas (Mahmud 2004, 89).

The vulnerability of the Hausa Fulani as that of other properly called minority groups will be considered because it is necessary in explaining motivations of it as that of all other different groups in relation to the positions they hold vis-à-vis each other. Moreover, the particular circumstances that have made of the Hausa-Fulani as vulnerable as other ethnic groups, means that in Nigeria ethnic diversity is given in the way of fractionalization rather than dominance⁷. This is important because it marks a distinction in how the society will conduct itself, and in the factors that condition certain outcomes.

Ethnic diversity as a variable

Nigeria's diversity has for many reasons been considered to be problematic for the country's performance. In order to determine which are those, Collier made a study that concluded that it "is predicted to be damaging in particular circumstances, namely dominance and dictatorship" (Collier et al. 2001, 141). Therefore, considering the vulnerability of the Hausa Fulani, the effect of dominance will not be considered, instead, I will focus on the effect of a dictatorial system in a society with ethnic diversity. Collier et al. (2001, 142) find that

"in ethnically fragmented societies predatory dictatorships will be highly damaging, with narrow groups exploiting their power at the expense of overall growth [...] outside the context of dictatorship, ethnic fragmentation does not appear likely to

⁷ As defined in Collier et al. 2001, 134

produce markedly worse politics than ethnic homogeneity, and indeed the political system might work better”

Therefore, a dictatorial system is not expected to be good for Nigeria’s performance.

Ethno-Religious Politics

For Nigerians, religion and ethnicity have usually guided individual and collective conduct and have taken precedence over any broader national interest (Agbibo 2012, 4). This absence of a common national identity that makes them feel as belonging to one common unit, makes it all the more difficult for the ruling elite to work in and for Nigeria as a whole. The inability “of the state to provide economic and socio-political goods to the mass of the people irrespective of ethnic origins or religious inclinations” (Ukiwo 2003, 119) became each time more evident as identity and religion became the basis under which access to “opportunities, entitlements and participation” was delimited (Abah & Okwori, 2002, 24 in Agbibo 2012, 20). It is this how ethno-religious and ethno-regional politics became the only politics in Nigeria. Its importance is such that it has led politicians not only to campaign along ethnic lines, but also to be discredited for these same considerations (Ukiwo 2003, 126-7 and Ellis 2008).

Ethno-religious politics have in fact become somewhat of a strategy of all groups, regardless of being minorities or not, because all of them seem to find themselves in a constant struggle for recognition and relevance, as well as ascendancy in the political terrain (Agbibo 2012, p.10). There are, however, two fundamental issues that mark ethno-regional politics and the struggle for power: “(a) control of political power and its instruments, such as the armed forces and the judiciary, and (b) control of economic power and resources” (Agbibo 2012, 17-8). Both of them based on the need to redress political, so-

cial and economic subordination, and improve the position of the different groups in the country (Osaghae 1998, 4). Nevertheless, this focus might end up being detrimental since they might make the chances for democratic rule more difficult (although not impossible) (Bradley 2005, 411). The difficulty relies on the extent to which these forms of identification override that of citizenship. Ethno-religious “consciousness and loyalties, [however] ‘lend themselves to easy manipulation’” (Ukiwo 2003, 119) which has sometimes even lead to manipulated conflict (Reno 1999, p.107 and Ukiwo 2003, 126-7). Hence, it should not be surprising that since ethno-politics can become a means to personal gain (Reno 1999, 119), leaders themselves will try to make of ethno-religious⁸ identities more central and important than they would normally be, and thus keep the society divided and unstable. This form of manipulation is unfortunately likely to remain since it is historically embedded in Nigeria’s political culture.

Ethno-religious institutions

Ethno-religious differentiation had its origins thanks to the British policy of indirect rule. Although it was intended to be a way of preserving the indigenous cultures and native authorities, it helped to sustain tribal identities (Agbibo 2012, 11). Each group was thus ruled by a tribal leader, who was responsive to the needs and special circumstances of each particular group. Yet, although this kind of rule was supposed to be replaced by a broader national rule, primordial chiefs still have “an active role in the administration of government at the national and local levels [...] They are viewed as legitimate power brokers, representatives of clans, and genuine voices for their respective local communities” (Harrison 2002 in Bradley 2005, 412). Given the importance that people give to this type of tribal leaders, there has been a “historical tendency of Nigerian politicians to develop links

⁸ Islamization, for instance, was a mean for regional leaders to consolidate their power (Mahmud 2004, 86).

with local centers of political influence by association with shrines and other indigenous religious institutions” (Ellis 2008, 460). They were specially considered to play an important role in the social and political life of the eastern and western regions (Ellis 2008, 450).

Chieftaincies kept gaining power as individuals and ethno-religious groups couldn't give full respect to any official local authority (Ellis 2008, 449), and the state remained seen as “an agent of the enemy” (Ukiwo 2003, p.129). Therefore, people find chiefs to be their only legitimate representatives and the ones in charge of providing solutions to the problems that official authorities are not trusted to provide (Riedl 2010, p.32). The influence of shrines, for instance, was extended to social, political, legal and economic matters, as they performed even judicial functions (Ellis 2008, p.449, 450). They also “provide security and settle disputes and defend the rights of their members” (Ukiwo 2003, 131-2) at the local and national level. Moreover, they “enforce bilateral contracts among members, and provide group-level insurance or defense, anchored on a robust web of reciprocal obligations⁹” (Collier et al. 2001, 131). Hence, institutions of this sort have become to be possibly the only trusted institution that groups count on, that they listen to, and they respect; and this is also why individuals prefer and support representatives from their kinships to hold political power (Agbiboa 2012, 20).

Votes along ethnic lines

Considering the importance given to kinships, it is not surprising that traditional values common to an ethnic or a religious group can mobilize the electorate. In Northern Nigeria for example, people were moved by the “religious duty to obey and protect hereditary leaders” (Whitaker's 1970, 464 in Bradley 2005, p.418) who they also consider legit-

⁹ This is because clear rules are supposed to be established, and observability enhances accountability (Collier et al. 2001, 131)

imate. The manipulation of these values, however, has lead voters to align with those who seem to be able to represent them as individuals (Ukiwo 2003, 117), and who are moreover ‘entitled’ to steal from the civic realm¹⁰ for the benefit of the primordial realm¹¹, to whom they are accountable and morally obliged (Aiyede 2009, 260-1). Therefore, many Nigerians have tended to vote for those belonging to their kinships, who were furthermore supposed to “capture central federal resources, and bring these back to the regional community” (Agbibo 2012, 15). As a matter of fact, leaders always end up benefiting their kinships even if at the beginning they didn't have their full support, as is the case with Obasanjo (Ukiwo 2003, 123). Therefore, voting along ethnic lines becomes all the more tempting. An examination of the data between 1959 and 1979 shows that in fact a “prevalence of ethnic considerations in the pattern of voting among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria” (Ojie 2006, p.551); and the same can be said about the 2011 elections (CPAfrica; Nigeria Elections; Nigerian Muse). This, and the fact that members from ethnic groups are unlikely “to criticize someone from their own group in front of members of other groups” (Collier et al. 2001, 132), is nevertheless problematic for the performance of the nation. This way, elected leaders will not have a need to be accountable to the nation as long as they have the identity-driven support of their identity group, which more often than not, they will hold regardless of their actions.

Motivations driving politics

Ethno-religious cleavages divide Nigerian society by becoming the basis of discrimination and a perpetuator of inequality. Dictatorial leaders, usually belonging to minority groups, knew this already and saw political power as the means to bring about

¹⁰ It is “the political space within which the formal state operates” (Aiyede 2009, p.260)

¹¹ It is “the domain of modern social formations associated with ancient structures of kinship” (Aiyede 2009, p.260)

change (Osaghae 1998, p.14). Now, with the return to civilian rule, little has changed. The all times existing feeling of alienation from the state, the now high rates of poverty and unemployment (Aghedo & Osumah 2012, 861), unequal socioeconomic development¹², the militarization of society (Obi 2007, 380), and the ineffectiveness and bias of the Police Force (Ukiwo 2003, 130), have become reasons for the development of identity driven political agitation (Obi 2007, 380). As affected minorities started seeing the acquisition of political power as the least dangerous¹³ means to try to shift the distribution of benefits in favor of their regions (Ukiwo 2003, 134), political movements began to arise. Particularly in the oil rich states, regionally organized movements and minority coalitions began to organize common interest associations which became each time more overtly political¹⁴ (Osaghae 1998, 14). Motivations for holding political power increased too with the expansion of the oil sector, which “unraveled the use of the state as the major source of private accumulation by the political elite” (Aiyede 2009, 254). Although for the most, political aspirations seem to be based on the need to redistribute the national cake and improve each one’s conditions, motivations are both value-driven and selfish in different degrees.

Economic

Economy can be both an individual and an ethno-regional motivation. Ethno-regional motivations, however, are usually sought because of the moral duty that Nigeri-

¹² “The socioeconomic development statistics for the North are the worst in Nigeria, with 72 per cent of the people living in poverty compared with 27 per cent in the South and 35 per cent in the Niger Delta” (Aghedo & Osumah 2012, 861)

¹³ Northern and Central parts of Nigeria (Best & Kemedi, 2005), as well as the oil-rich Niger Delta region (Obi, 2004, 2006; Human Rights Watch, 2005; Peel, 2005) have been ravaged by conflict while “well-armed youth militia or vigilante groups engaged in acts of violence” as responses to discrimination and exclusion (Obi 2007, 380).

¹⁴ “These included the Association of Minority Oil Producing States (AMOS), Commonwealth of Oil Producing Areas, Southern Minorities Forum, and Middle Belt Forum which, along with similar organizations formed by elites of major groups, were banned by Decree 21 of May 1992 for ‘furthering political, religious, ethnic, tribal, cultural or social interest... contrary to the peace, order and good governance of the federation’. The regional contexts of these minority groupings indicated the extent to which they were divided” (Osaghae 1998, 14)

an's feel with their primordial realm. Moreover, by so doing they also improve their own conditions in the long run by providing their kinships with better socioeconomic conditions and opportunities that would also end up benefitting themselves. Nevertheless, although the losses to the country due to individual enrichment can be great¹⁵, ethno-regional motivations can end up being even more detrimental, particularly in a society as divided as is the Nigerian. According to Collier et al., "the costs of ethnic dominance are predicted to be decreasing in the size of the dominant group. The smaller is the group, the stronger is the incentive for it to choose redistribution to itself at the expense of growth to the economy as a whole" (2001, 141). Considering that Nigeria is conformed by about 250 ethnic groups of which just three of them constitute regional majorities, the possibilities for small groups to be seeking ethno-regional redistribution are high. Moreover, the gains that can be obtained from redistribution are considerable, assuring that the winning coalition will notoriously improve its socioeconomic conditions, even when it will do so at the expense of the rest of the country. By approaching redistribution through taxation, for example, the winning coalition is expected to be around 20% better off¹⁶ (Collier et al. 2001, 161).

An other important source of wealth is oil. It constitutes "98 per cent of the country's export earnings and 95 per cent of the government's income" (Aghedo & Osumah 2012, 861). This not only produces great incentives to be in power but to direct the money coming from it to the benefit of the different regions. Controversies about how oil wealth should be deployed and used, as well as struggles for control, ownership and rights are common in the oil rich states (Watts 2007, 643), particularly since the Nigerian state has

¹⁵ "In his short five years in office [Sani Abacha] reportedly succeeded in amassing some \$4 billion in private bank accounts overseas" (Collier 2010, p.88).

¹⁶ When the government represents only the interests of the winning coalition, the tax rate chose to maximize the income of the agent sets it at 33%. "The tax reduces income in the society as a whole by 11%, but the winning coalition gains at the expense of those who are excluded. Specifically, members of the winning coalition are around 20% better off, while the excluded group is about 40% worse off" (Collier et al. 2001, p.161)

tried to exert control over these ‘oil minorities’ by transferring “locally-derived oil industry profits to the federal level” (Zalik 2004, 401). These problematic introduced different - sometimes violent¹⁷- institutions in the politics of oil and the operations of the complex (Watts 2007, 638, 643, 652). They all demanded “a greater share of federally distributed oil revenues and the creation of more states” (Von Kemedi 2005, 7 in Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 301) to fight against Igbo commercial dominance (Manby, 2002 in Zaalik 2004, 405). Despite different efforts of retired generals (Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, p.301) and minority groups, it was only under the 1999 Constitution that derivation was increased to 13% although this number is questionable since “a 2002 report to the Federal Government indicated that only 7.8% of the accrued revenue from oil resources had in fact been paid to the Niger Delta states” (Manby, 2002 in Zaalik 2004, 405). As a matter of fact, thanks to the radical fiscal centralism, non-oil producing groups have gained at the expense of oil-minorities (Watts 2007, 642; Zalik 2004, 405; Apter 2005, Panter-Brick 1978 in Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 298), which has only increased the need to hold political power to fight against this economic and commercial domination. This is also evident because of the increasing mobilization of ethno-regional groups and elite political entrepreneurs arguing for a greater share of the national cake (Bach 1997, 334, Watts 2009, 27 in Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 298) and the end of the exclusion of these groups from access to public goods (Aghedo & Osumah 2012, 857). Therefore, it is not surprising that “political elites, ‘chiefs’, governors and indeed oil multinationals, who have sponsored rebellion, are still

¹⁷ Gangs of youth had been trained “to bring pressure to bear on oil companies to deliver direct material benefits or to add weight to their political demands” (Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 301). Likewise, “oil struggles between identity groups were behind the civil war of the late 1960s [... where] many of the Delta minority groups - including the Ijaw and the Ogoni - to side with the Federal Government against Biafra (Igbo secession)” (Manby, 2002 in Zaalik 2004, 405)

playing the ‘ethnic incorporation’ game¹⁸” (Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 308). Nevertheless, the 2009 amnesty¹⁹ together with the appointment of Ijawman Goodluck Jonathan, may seem to be the means through which political and economic interests of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) will be finally attended (Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 308). While it seems that the strength and violence from MEND has in fact been diminished since, this seems to be also related to its ‘eclipse’ by Boko Haram (Recorded Future, 2013).

Religious

Religious motivations are also based on grievances and dissatisfaction with the political administration (Ojie 2006, 556). Thus, where religious domination has been extensive, or when it increases, so does the creation of more overtly political organizations (Riedl 2010, 32) that stand against domination. When Christian General Olusegun Obasanjo took power in 1999, “Muslims began to feel politically marginalized” (BRILL 2012, n.p), giving birth to the struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims in the country. Consequently, the fear of a shift from Muslim to Christian dominance of the security forces and state structures is considered to have induced the introduction of the Shari’a legal system as a counterbalance (Ukiwo 2003, 124). This system however, instead of shifting the balance of power back to the Muslims, became the source of great dissatisfaction and violent reactions²⁰ in non-Muslim groups since it challenged the secularity (Mahmud

¹⁸ The ethnic incorporation game refers to the identity drive that motivates Nigerians to act for the benefit of their primordial group and for the purpose of placing them in political office

¹⁹ In 2009, the idea of an amnesty was first proposed. It called for militants “to surrender their arms and engage in negotiations via third parties or directly with the Nigerian state [... moreover], they were to be eligible for inclusion in a NGN50 billion ‘amnesty programme’ for rehabilitation and reintegration which included training and monthly allowances for four years (Nwajiaku-Dahou 2010, 305).

²⁰ “An attempt by Christians to demonstrate against plans by the Kaduna State House of Assembly to pass the Sharia Bill resulted in bloody clashes that claimed hundreds of lives in February 2000. Reprisal attacks in which Hausa/Fulani were victims followed in Aba, Onitsha and Uyo, as Igbo and Ibibio reacted to the slaughter of ‘their people’ in Kaduna” (Ukiwo 2003, 125)

2004, 91) of the country while endangering the Christian minorities of the twelve states where it had been implemented (Ukiwo 2003, 124). Moreover, while the implementation of full Shari'a meant the creation of two different and separate legal systems for Nigeria (Mahmud 2004, 89), which creates uncertainty to its people, particularly to the non-Muslim groups, it also proved that governors can challenge the federal government, making stability structures all the more fragile. Yet, despite northern attempts to reduce the influence of the south and stop it from getting political power, their failure became evident as by 2007 it was clear that their right for a northern presidency under the zoning would be denied (Ojie 2006, 557). Thus, for Muslims, the scenario was clear: they should struggle against southern dominance.

To counterattack the each time rising southern hold of political power, the only solution for Muslims was to work in government in order to avoid non-Muslims to find a legitimate way to harm them (BRILL 2012, n.p). Nevertheless, the problems between Muslims and Christians are of a more worrying degree. Muhammad Yusuf, funding leader of the terrorist group Boko Haram, for instance, was convinced that any government not based in Islamism was not legitimate and should be rejected. He was moreover convinced that non-Islamic governments should be replaced by an Islamic one regardless of the means and the consequences (BRILL 2012, n.p). Boko Haram's association with politicians (who are also a source of funding) and Islamic clerics has also allowed it "to attract followers with a strong resolve and the commitment to make a 'sacrifice' in the face of all odds" (Aghedo & Osumah 2012, 858, 863), thus giving strength to the organization, and allowing its acts to be more reckless and violent in degree. Moreover, since actions are primarily motivated by a religious duty and respect for those values and ideas, they are conditioned to be sustained across time. Therefore, Boko Haram has developed to become

a real threat to Nigeria, if not the most dreadful. It was responsible for around 550 deaths in 2011 (Aghedo & Osumah 2012, p.859) and by early 2012 it was already responsible for 900 deaths (Agbibo 2012, 23) of both civilians and public servants. Although currently attacks take place in the North, there is fear by southerners that they will extend around the country (Aghedo & Osumah 2012, 858). Unfortunately, this Islamization threat has caused Christian mobilization and demonstrations which have resulted in bloody clashes (Ukiwo 2003, p.125) and has made Christian activities sometimes even more aggressive than Islamic ones (Mahmud 2004, 89).

Both religious groups are thus encountered in a struggle for political and religious dominance, where their religious values and identities matter almost as much as any other material motivation. Therefore, while Muslim activities focus on the Islamization of people (Riedl 2010, 39), as well as the official acceptance of Muslim values and its extension to the legal and political sectors (Mahmud 2004, 89), Christians struggle to maintain the secularity of the country. In order to do so, they have intended to politically and economically discourage Muslims by insisting, for example, that oil revenues should not be allocated to Sharia states (Dauda 2001: 34 in Ukiwo 2003, 125). Although this demand has no logical basis, it is exemplar to the role and importance given to identity values at the time of dealing with politics in Nigeria, and to why religion is strong enough of a motivation for holding political office.

Dictatorial Performance

From independence until 1998 Nigeria was, for the most, under the rule of the military (Polity IV 2010, 1). Yet, although they are considered to have destroyed essential principles for identity conflict management in Nigeria, some of their approaches show that they might have not been particularly bad in terms of protection and inclusion of minori-

ties. Special attention had been given to revenue allocation and states creation, areas where constitutional provisions difficult effective and efficient action (Osaghae 1998, p.21). General Mohammed for instance, considered the creation of states as a means to enhance political stability in the country by bringing the government nearer to the people and their needs. This way, he believed, equal development would be promoted, or at least one that considers the particular needs of each group (Alapiki 2005, 58). General Gowon (1966-1975) was also compromised with federalism and all through his rule he attempted to reunify the country and reconcile the different ethno-regional groups (Elaiwu 1991, 137). Furthermore, it is under military rule that minorities have had the “opportunity to occupy top political positions which have been denied to them under democratic civilian rule” (Osaghae 1998, 20).

Military rulers have also attempted to put an end to ethnic-politics, which has been so detrimental for the country. One such measure, although its effectiveness might now be questioned, was suggested by military President Ibrahim Babadinda (1985-1993). He advocated for the imposition of a two-political-party system, which would force people to choose a candidate regardless of his/her identity by limiting their choices (Otite, 2000 in Ojie 2006, 555). On the other hand, General Mohammed (1975-1976), despite his disregard for bureaucratic process, showed both a compromise to reunification and to the improvement of Nigeria’s political system which was intended to allow for more liberty and accountability to its people. In some ways, it even seemed to be an approach to democracy, since he sought the establishment of a Constitution Drafting Committee (Elaiwu 1991, 138).

Despite these approaches, however, military rule was quite intolerant of grievance articulation and so it weakened or suppressed the means through which minorities could seek redress (Osaghae 1998, 21). Somehow paradoxically, however, it is exactly this what

motivated minority groups to seize power through military coups (Osaghae 1998, 13), and thus dictatorship was maintained. This lack of attention to minority rights is more a consequence of the divisions within the country and the strength of identities in the consciousness of the people than merely an unwillingness to attend such problems. Thus, even when more or better measures directed to promote equality or redistribution were desired by the leaders, they would not be carried out as it was in the end the military regime as a whole (Reno 1999, 108), who will want to keep power by remaining loyal to their kinship and its values²¹ (Collier et al. 2001, 140-1). As a matter of fact, attempts for the creation of a national identity or to keep the country together despite its differences, made leaders weak or ineffective in the eyes of the people, as was the case with Balewa (Elaigwu 1991, 131-2). It is thus not surprising that subsequent rulers tried to assure their survival as heads of state even when that meant the regularization and promotion of insecurity and identity rivalry; both Babadinga and Abacha (1993-1998) are cases in point (Reno 1999, p.107, 113, 117). Hence it seems that in the end it is indeed impossible to determine whether a seemingly benevolent dictator will end up becoming predatory at some point, as Collier et al. argue (2001, 140). As a matter of fact, despite the attempts of some of the military leaders to reconcile and unify the country, their actions were after all also influenced by a Hobbesian construction of power and by their own individual gains, thus interfering with a better performance of the country.

Democratic Performance

Democratic performance in Nigeria will always be attached to the problems arising from ethno-religious and ethno-regional cleavages. The fact that the society is so divided is

²¹ Take the case of Irons, for example, who could not punish southern rebels and maintain peaceful relations with the north since it was considered that, although by default, it was the south who, struggling for their rights, had brought him to power (Elaigwu 1991, 133-4)

in itself a contradiction to what democracy is supposed to achieve. According to Ojie (2006, 548),

“democracy is primarily about how common concerns are to be addressed. It has in focus a society with shared interests and common cause, in which the state is a public asset for managing the affairs of the people, the absence of which negates the basis for democratic governance”.

Nevertheless, the Nigerian society shares neither common principles nor a common cause, and most likely no leader will dedicate himself to the provision of public goods according to each group's interests. As previously noted by Collier *et al.*, while it is difficult for diverse societies to reach cooperative solutions, their economic growth can also be affected as they are “more likely to waste resources in distributional struggles” (2001, 130), since such behavior is more likely to be rewarded than any attempt for an equitable distribution of goods, revenues or power. Therefore, due to the differentiation between groups and the greed and grievances held by them, democratic leaders have no real motivations to act particularly different from what dictatorial leaders did before them, even when democratic leaders, as opposed to dictatorial ones, are supposed to have a duty to the society as a whole. Likewise, as ethnic-mobilizations persist, prospects for an inclusive democracy are hindered, and with it its possibilities to be legitimate and accountable nation-wide.

The persistence and reinforcement of ethno-religious and ethno-regional cleavages can also make of democracy a dangerous tool, as it can become into the means through which ethnic groups are *legitimately* subjected to the power and control of the winner. Therefore, democracy will turn to be a zero-sum game that all groups will try to gain. In this sense, it could be expected that only a long-term institution building directed to control or override identity issues would allow an effective democratization in Nigeria (Bradley

2005, 409; Campbell 2013). The absence of these institutions thus makes of politics simply a competition or a business rather than a mean to bring about change at the national level. Unfortunately, this is also what will keep appointing ambitious rather than visionary leaders to power.

In consideration of Nigeria's particular characteristics, it thus seems that constitutional democracy alone will not be enough to diminish the existent tensions (Bradley 2005, 410). For Mkandaqire (1999), "beyond the veneer of elections, the state remains ambushed, privatized, repressive and unpopular. The people who were tantalized by the prospect of a democratic revolution that would terminate decades of alienation and pauperization have been shortchanged and given a 'choiceless democracy'" (Ukiwo 2003, p.120). Moreover, despite the constitutional provisions there might be, what happens in society is to a great extent consequence of the furthering of individual interests of the elites through the use of political parties (Bates, 1981 in Bradley 2005, 408). Therefore, all interest to support the national democratic institutions is destroyed and any effort by it will be either seen with suspicion or boycotted. In this sense, it turns out important to first understand that democratization is inherently conflictual with identity cleavages because it requires, first and foremost, redistribution of power (Ake 2000, 112 in Ukiwo 2003, p.118), which seems to be conceptually problematic with the particular interests of minorities.

Despite the suspicion of the effect of democracy in the conditions of each of the groups, transition to this system seems to "have provided legitimacy for the political elite to monopolize State power, gain international credibility, and control access to vast providential petroleum resources" (Obi 2007, 379). The problem, however, does not only rely on the acquisition of power, but on the way it is used. Elites have thus perpetuated sectarianism and used it for identity and individual enrichment (Ojie 2006, 561). Even more wor-

rying, these elites and the leaders themselves do not only enrich through corruption²² but also end up investing what they get for the attainment of future power (Collier 2010, 88), thus making possible the perpetuation of their so called legitimate rule; a legitimacy that seems to be based only on highly manipulated elections (Obi 2007, 379).

Elections by themselves, which do not guarantee the exercise of a legal and representative process that will also assure legitimacy and accountability (Collier 2009, 18) of the elected candidate, can actually have a negative effect on the country. When the elected candidate does not succeed in carrying out his promises or in improving “the quality of life of the people, there is frustration, and people who already feel alienated from the state are vulnerable and likely to be mobilized around counter-elites who exploit extant popular alienation from the state by whipping up sectarian sentiments” (Ukiwo 2003, p.120). Therefore, an ineffective democratic process like the Nigerian will only end up increasing the incidence of identity violence. As a matter of fact, this is what has happened in Nigeria after the return to democratic rule, where forty cases of ethno-religious conflict arose during the first four years (Ukiwo 2003, 116). The numbers only seem to increase as of what goes of 2014 alone there are 6886 registered deaths for religious causes (Nigeria Watch). The feeling of alienation and the fear of domination brought with democratization (Agbiboa 2012, 11) seems to be pressuring “for the expansion of the political space to accommodate groups excluded by the present democratic dispensation” (Ukiwo 2003, 128); all of which would be expected to bring some stability to the country. Both stability and a feeling of inclusion and effective participation, according to Bradley (2005, 419) would be possible if citizens felt “that they have a stake in the day-to day governmental process of de-

²² For instance, “the low level oil theft (bunkering) that is controlled by the rebels [in the Niger Delat] as a way of financing their struggle, is organized through a vast state-centered syndicate linking high ranking military, politicians, the security apparatuses, and the Niger Delta special military task forces, and the coast guard. The Nigerian state in its vatus expressions and the rebels are both oppositional *and* organically self-sustaining” (Watts 2007, 650)

mocracy”. Nevertheless even when participation by itself has been considered to be a legitimator of the government and its actions, the Nigerian society would need to see the actual implementation of policies that reduce or limit subordination in order for identity tensions to be controlled. This turns to be a rather difficult task since democratic procedures do not allow for an effective accommodation of the different demands to take place (Moussea 2001:551 in Ukiwo 2003, 119). Therefore, even when the interests of all groups would be considered, or their voices heard, the direction of the resulting policies will roughly consider everyone’s needs; an issue that has maintained the need of identity politics.

Besides its difficulty in controlling identity violence, the new democratic policies have been at most unpopular and have brought moreover an increase in human rights violations and repressions from the government²³ at the expense of “restoring normal supply of petroleum products” (Ibrahim 2001 in Ukiwo 2003, 130). Yet, even this approach seems to be accompanied by dreadful consequences. Therefore, even when the supply of petroleum products has been reestablished, insecurity, violence and corruption rein in the oil producing areas. In the Niger Delta, for instance, there has been an intensification of military presence (Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 302) and of militias. The problem relies on the military-political class, civil servants and business people who have benefitted from predation in this area (Watts 2007, 650-1; Turner 1976, 64 in Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 299); and since rising insecurity means higher revenues, there seems to be no interest on their part to control violence in the region (Zalik 2004, 407). Moreover, the militias have been armed by the Nigerian military itself (Watts 2007, 650) and sponsored by politicians “for electoral and rent-seeking purposes” (Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 396). As a matter of fact, since the oil boom in the 1970s,

²³ Obasanjo’s government “deployed tanks to ‘quell’ riots, and [...] respond[ed] to criticism with such replies as ‘if you don’t want soldiers, then don’t find trouble’” (Ukiwo 2003, p.129)

“Nigeria’s emergence as an oil economy, its pursuit of policies of fiscal centralization, the ‘Nigerianisation’ or ‘indigenisation’ of the personnel structure of multinational companies operating in Nigeria and the important equity stake held by the Nigerian state in the mainly joint-venture-led oil production business (some 60%), accentuated, compounded and institutionalised corruption and expanded the scope of patronage (Omeje 2006, p. 48)” (Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 297).

Furthermore, the revenues coming from the oil business are so high that democracy just seems to ‘disempower’ the people (Ake 1994 in Obi 2007, 381) and increase inequalities. These grievances are caused not only by the way revenue is allocated and the consequent economic neglect (Watts 2007, 640) but from the lucrative high skilled employment of non-Deltan outsiders (Zalik 2004, p.405). Therefore, oil production has been disrupted by minorities seeking “political empowerment, increased fiscal allocation to compensate for resource exploitation and environmental degradation, and overall socio-economic development” (Osaghae 1998, p.7).

Finally, revenues from oil are detrimental for the whole Nigerian democratic mechanism. Since Nigerian “income is derived mainly from foreign sources and not local taxation [...] oil was translated into a defense spending, a repressive military machine and a long lasting military-style political culture” (Omeje 2006 in Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012, 298). Likewise, because political elites could benefit directly from oil revenues, there is no interest in taxing the people, thus eliminating an important accountability mechanism which would not take consideration of identities. Due to the lack of taxation and easy money, the government is also exempt from responsibility for the coprovision of public services, and lacks incentives to develop a better administrative and bureaucratic capacity (Fearon 2005,

p.487). This poor governance is thus believed to be the cause of more rebel responses which threaten the stability and security of the country (Collier & Hoeffler 2004, 567).

Remaining problems

Despite the different measures taken by democratic leaders to improve the country's performance and stability, there are still some issues that may need a different approach. Such is the case of measures as the majoritarian principle and decentralization as well as the problems that arise with patron-client relationships and an extended hold of power. The problem of the majoritarian principle, for instance, means that there will be constant dissatisfaction from the losing group. Hence, "ethnic parties that lose elections [will] tend to reject not only the election results but also the whole gamut of democratic institutions by appealing to violence" (Diamond *et al.* 1995 in Ukiwo 2003, 117-8). Violence, however, is felt at all stages of the democratic processes, as is evident from the assassinations²⁴ that took place on the eve of the 2003 general elections (Ojie 2006, 552). These violent acts arising from grievances would nevertheless be able to diminish in amount and intensity if minorities had a way to ensure their own development and avoid subordination. One such solution has been considered to be decentralization, which is expected to allow "the expansion of the political space to accommodate groups excluded by the present democratic dispensation" (Ukiwo 2003, p.128). Nevertheless, since decentralization creates more divisions by making politics more localized (Zalik 2004, 403), the decision making processes and the response to problems by the government is hampered. The difficulty relies on the fact that divergent interests of each of the groups often end up producing political impasses (Ukiwo 2003, 128), which reduces the effectiveness of the government. Moreover, federalism and democracy can turn to be even more problematic as

²⁴ From February 2003 to March 2004, there were 17 political assassinations known in Nigeria (Semenitari 2004 in Ojie 2006, p.553)

they legitimize the taking of certain actions that jeopardize the country. This is what happened during the process of implementation of Shari'a in the North, which despite following democratic procedures ended up harming its effectiveness. With full Shari'a implemented in the North, there are now two separate legal systems working on Nigeria "since theoretically the Shari'a states can carry out the highest punishments without seeking the approval of a federal court" (Mahmud 2004, 89). This threatens the stability of the country not only because of the fears this legal system causes on christian minorities, but because it points out to the vulnerability of manipulation of the democratic procedures in Nigeria.

On the other hand, democracy also seems to be hampered by patron-client relationships, not only because it incentivizes the use of ethnic politics but because of the corruption it creates. Thus, the game of politics becomes all the more complex since members of the ruling parties and governments are able "to retain their clients by a judicious allocation to their constituencies of public service appointments, contracts, government projects and resources" (Alapiki 1995:3-4 in Alapiki 2005, 52). Therefore inequality and domination can be institutionalized as grievances increase. Collier *et al.* (2001, 154) believe that "ethnic employment patronage in the public sector can be countered by greater transparency in hiring and promotion, perhaps reinforced by targets and quota protection for minorities". Nevertheless this would require a whole institutional change, which is believed to be possible only by the complete elimination of all previous institutions (Campbell 2009). Finally, another issue increasing instability is the obsession of leaders for an extended power. For Ukiwo (2003, 127), this threatens democracy and stability "as different factions of the political elite sponsor ethnic militias and vigilante groups to fight their electoral wars for them" (Ukiwo 2002). The proliferation of such groups has resulted in the rising incidence of assassinations and conflicts not only by organizations like Boko Haram, and to a lesser degree by MEND, but by action groups demonstrating their political dissatisfaction. One

such example is the political violence that arose between those who supported Obasanjo's second term and those who did not (Ukiwo 2003, 133). In more recent times, there has also been an increasing fear by the North who now feel threatened by Jonathan's prolonged stay in power and the shift to the South of the political power that once belonged to the North (Aghedo & Osumah 2012, 863). The problem sustaining this, however, seems to be the legitimization that domination, subordination and indigenization have obtained through the use of (manipulated) democratic procedures.

Important Remarks

The main problems affecting Nigeria seem to be rooted on the differences that mark its citizens as separate from one another. These differences not only shape interests and the political culture of Nigerians, but also determine the effectiveness of its institutions. Therefore, ethno-religious and ethno-regional cleavages have become to be one of the greatest obstacles for democracy in Nigeria, while democracy seems to become the legitimizing tool for corrupt and separatist politics. Even more worrying, however, is that identity cleavages are becoming a self sustaining problem since as long as identity affects the conduct of the people, identity politics will keep existing, sustaining at the same time the grievances that make people all the more dependent on their identity groups for protection. Under this scenario, any existing political system will thus have to adapt itself to the ongoing struggles caused by grievances and identity while avoiding more grievances to develop. Moreover, any leader would have to rule the country in such a way that neither his kinship feels betrayed and that other groups do not feel dominated, or stability will be even more threatened. Although this depends to a great extent on the particular characteristics of the ruler, we should consider that in a democratic system what the ruler can and cannot do depends on the constraints imposed by the system itself. For instance, democracy

is supposed to force the government to strive to perform because so doing can be rewarding in the form of a reelection (Collier 2009, 18). Hence, while a dictatorial leader is assumed to have, at least up to some point, a choice on how to carry out his actions, a democratic leader has some restraints; restraints that are established, among other things, to make the government accountable. In Nigeria, however, these restraints seem to have little effect in the way democratic leaders carry out their power once in office, thus distorting the whole concept of democracy.

CONCLUSIONS

Nigerian 'Democracy'

To understand how has the democratic system worked it is important to consider how democracy has brought or not legitimacy and accountability to Nigeria, while also improving inclusion and respect of minorities. This is nevertheless rather complicated since, to begin with, many Nigerians do not even recognize the democratic institutions as legitimate; thus, one of the pillars of democracy is in and by itself inexistent. The fact that people lay their trust in other type of institutions as shrines, does not only difficult democracy's role, but since these institutions override those at the national level, the existence of national laws, for instance, becomes pointless. If the trusted and legitimate institutions are not those established by the democratic system, then the rules of said democratic system will not be the ones determining actions. As institutions of this sort and local chiefs gain importance, there is also the danger that organizations like Boko Haram start expanding their influence. Considering that the establishment of national order in Nigeria is already difficult by the lack of trust in the government, the expansion and strengthening of local and informal institutions -which are also more legitimate- just enhances this problem. As Boko Haram tries to get a hold of power regardless of the means it has at hand, it seems that even a well drafted constitution will be of little use due to its acquired lack of legitimacy.

Order and stability are indeed difficult to maintain in a society where ethnic politics have such an important role. Votes, for instance, are carried along ethnic lines for the purpose of having in political office someone who will benefit the primordial realm at the detriment of the civic realm. This means not only that in order to be elected, leaders must compromise to benefit their primordial realm, but that once in office they cannot be benevolent with the civic realm as a whole because he will either be considered weak or a traitor.

Therefore, it is not enough, as Horowitz assumed, to foster stability by making it politically rewarding to compromise across group lines; it is not only that votes along ethnic lines will be maintained regardless of the appeal of the policies from another group (O'Flynn 2007, 736), but that voters themselves do not want this compromise to happen. This is in part out of fear of the subordination and domination that can result from having another group in power; and in part because they themselves want to dominate and subordinate the other groups who they regard as undeserving²⁵. Consequently, regionalism and indigenization will be enhanced and the prospects for an inclusive democracy hindered. On the other hand, since leaders are expected to capture the central resources for the benefit of their kinships, it does not matter what their actions are as long as the kinship is benefited, thus corruption becomes acceptable and personal enrichment easier. Nigeria's political system has thus sustained grievances, which likewise results in a constant struggle for power; a struggle that takes the form of insurgent armed groups that affect the security and conflict stability of the country. Even more paradoxical, however, is that even when grievances are acknowledged to be rooted on inequality and indigenization of policies, rulers will keep opting to favor their kinships at the expense of others even when national growth and security will be affected.

As a matter of fact, as long as elections keep being carried along ethnic lines, the prospects for a nation-wide legitimacy are minimal, and with this, the possibility for ethno-political conflict increases. Therefore, even when the Head of State had been elected through a (seemingly) democratic process, and his appointment to office is alleged to be the result of the will of the majority -particularly considering the provisions for elections in

²⁵ The South sees the North undeserving of political power because they got it just for being geographically bigger at independence. The North, on the other hand, sees the South as undeserving, as they consider their hold of economic power already big enough, and they believe that there must be an equilibrium on the power of each group.

Nigeria-, there will always be groups who, dissatisfied by the results, will not see the process as free, fair or legitimate. Such is the case with the current Jonathan's presidency, and his possible participation in 2015's elections. Jonathan's legitimacy as a Head of State has been questioned since he ran as Vice President for Umaru Yar'adua, whose victory is alleged to be the result of fraud. Since then, with his appointment as President in 2010 after Yar'adua's death, and because of his postulation in the 2011 elections, Goodluck Jonathan's permanence in power has been highly controversial and particularly challenged by the North who resent a monopolization of power from the South.

Accountability is also limited since leaders seem to be only accountable to their identity groups, who are the only responsible for getting them into power. Nevertheless, the accountability that leaders ought to their kinship is also minimal. Since identity groups struggle to maintain a certain stand in the eyes of other groups, they will justify the action of their leaders by any means, and they will therefore not criticize or demand any particular behavior from their representatives (Collier et al. 2001, 132). Consequently, as long as leaders have the unconditional support and acceptance of their groups, there will not be any real restraints on their actions, and any prospect for an accountable democracy that takes care of the society as a whole is inexistent. Accountability is however also limited by the lack of mechanisms guaranteeing it. Due to the revenues received from abroad, and the revenues coming from oil, there is no need for taxation in Nigeria. Therefore, the citizens lack any mean by which they can demand particular actions or behavior from the Head of State and hold him accountable. This has also caused Nigeria to hold a poor bureaucratic capacity, while being incapable of providing public goods to the nation, which in the end becomes another source of grievances.

The improvements that are supposed to come along with democracy, thus seem to have rather given place to drawbacks in Nigeria. Stability and corruption are another case

in point. Once in public office, politicians have used their political and economic power to sustain themselves and corruption. One such way has been through the funding of organizations like Boko Haram and militias like MEND, which they have used to maintain instability and insecurity, and thus sustain their power and economic gains. Democracy has thus become a cloth for illegal enrichment, patronage and manipulation and has likewise become the cause for sustained violence because of the funding by politicians of these groups on who they rely for support, enrichment, protection and sustained power. Moreover, since currently there is only one legitimate process through which power, both political and economical can be obtained, political elites have benefited from it through corruption and manipulation.

Finally, it is possible to claim that the current political system in Nigeria falls into the Africa-style kind of democracy described by Bradley. Since it considers issues of regional, religious and ethnic identities over the national identity, it is thus evident how this identification models the democratic system within the country along with the political culture of its citizens. Therefore, the political culture of the country disallows the fulfillment of some of the conditions for democracy exposed by Dahl. Consequently, as long as this type of political culture driven by identity cleavages is maintained, the possibilities for a full democracy are limited, and thus the current system cannot account as a full and consolidated democracy either.

How do Dictatorships compare?

Despite the means and methods sustaining dictatorial powers, military rule in Nigeria does not seem to have been entirely negative for the country and its minority groups. As a matter of fact, as was studied before, it has been under military rule that minorities have had the “opportunity to occupy top political positions which have been denied to them un-

der democratic civilian rule” (Osaghae 1998, 20). Nevertheless, the causes for this seemingly better approaches and results compared to those from democratic governments, might be rooted on the fact that dictatorial regimes were the first working in an independent Nigeria, where all hopes and expectations for improvement were part of everyone’s agenda. Therefore, the relative success of the first, dictatorial years, and the apparent effectiveness of the new policies promoted by them can be probably attributed to the honey moon effect. Another reason that can explain better results in terms of minority inclusion might have to do with the process through which political office was obtained rather than by specific efforts by dictators to guarantee inclusion. Since dictators belonged to minority groups, this results on minorities occupying political positions. Likewise, the attention given to minorities and all attempts for their inclusion might be the sometimes unwanted, sometimes unplanned result of dictators’ ethno-politics management. Coups d’état are usually stimulated by dissatisfaction of minority groups who feel alienated and subordinated by the ruling power; therefore, the new government will try to satisfy minority needs that were considered unattended during the previous rule. As policies are changed for this purpose, all other minority groups might, at some cases, be also benefited by them. Such was the case with the creation of more states which was considered as a mean to redirect resources (Zalik 2004, 405), and therefore so were the policies for resource allocation and the establishment of the Federal Character Commission in 1996²⁶. All these approaches, which were considered to benefit inclusion, are nevertheless no longer as highly regarded as they used to be. For instance, the creation of more states, which was considered a mean to favor minorities, is no longer considered the best way to approach the problem. While the creation of more states has been more often than not sought for political and economic

²⁶ On it every state is represented to monitor compliance (Osaghae 1998, 19)

greed paired with the enrichment of particular groups (Aiyede 2009, 262), it has also been detrimental as it has increased fragmentation (Zalik 2004, 405). Moreover, even when dictators might have benefitted different ethnic, religious or regional minorities at different points, this was only a side effect of their efforts to benefit their particular kinship (like with the Distributable Pool Account²⁷).

On the other hand, the fact that dictators seek power to solve subordination and alienation is in fact what maintained dictatorships for so long. Since dictatorships didn't really solve the issues of all minorities, but rather maintained indignation and differentiation between groups, more coups for the same purposes took place. Thus, had dictatorships been actually effective in attending minority problems, coups would not have taken place in the way they did, and the current identity issues and related conflict would have been at least lesser in degree.

Finally, it is important to consider that the reasons for which dictators seek power, are not entirely different from the reasons for which democratic leaders do. The fact is that the political culture of the country motivates and incentives them to take political office as a way to redirect political and economical power to the benefit of their primordial realms, while ending with previous domination and subordination. The difference relies only on the way these two types of leaders get to power. While dictatorial leaders rely on the use of force by the military, democratic leaders have, so far, done it through manipulated democratic processes. In both cases, however, it is ethnic politics what motivates and allows leaders to get to power

²⁷ “In 1970, [...] the new formula for dividing the Distributable Pool Account (DPA) resources among the constituent states allocated 50 percent equally among the states and 50 percent proportionally to their populations. This benefited those regions that had been split into the most states and worked to the disadvantage of the Western region, for which the new revenue formula meant a sharp decline in its share of the DPA from 18 percent to 7.3 percent” (Alapiki 2005, 59)

Which to choose

To say that one political system is better than another, is a somehow delicate issue, particularly when talking about a country that took the democratic path only fifteen years ago. Yet, at the same time, it is difficult to say that democracy in Nigeria has proven notoriously better than the dictatorial governments before it. After all, despite the fact that electoral processes -however manipulated they are- are now carried in Nigeria, there is little that has changed for good, while there are certainly things that might have changed for worst. What this study shows is that an effective democracy cannot work within the framework of ethno-religious and ethno-regional cleavages, which shape the political culture of the people, and thus make of politics a game played around and for those identities. While these cleavages exist, an inclusive, legitimate, and accountable democracy is rather difficult to achieve. What surges in its place is the all times known ethno-politics, which is now legitimized and covered under the name of democracy. Therefore, it is not that dictatorships have been better than democracies for Nigeria, it is just that Nigerian democracy cannot count as such yet. Besides the specifically political problems that have arisen with the current democratic system, one of its major flaws has to do with the methods used by it, which have resembled those used by dictatorships. Thus, despite the already problematic issues surrounding the electoral processes (particularly the 2005 elections), there is limited freedom of expression, Human Rights are still violated, and leaders remain in power for extended periods of time despite democratic provisions limiting the presidential period. Hence, democratic provisions exist mainly as legitimators of actions and leaders rather than acting as real restraints. Moreover, these provisions allow democratic leaders to act without worrying of being deposed of power, because they can eliminate the possibilities of a military coup; particularly since military power is controlled by the government itself. Paradoxically, thus, dictatorial systems might have actually had better means to ensure

accountability than the current democratic system. Therefore, while dictatorial leaders were checked by the military and their primordial realm, on a democracy, the leader is free to act in the way he so desires as long as his period lasts, without any fears of being overthrown by the military checking his actions.

Therefore, and in consideration of Nigeria's short history of democracy, it is reasonable to attribute the current flaws to be part of the transition process and expect that, eventually, they will be corrected. As of now, Nigeria's characteristics indicate that democracy in the country is not really consolidated (Chabal 1998, 290). As is the case with other African countries, elections, particularly in the 2005 elections, are believed to have been controlled and distorted. Second, there is the believe that democratically elected President Goodluck Jonathan, has every intent to rule for an extended period of time. And third, there are various limits and problems in the democratic nature of the system, since there is little if any place for political opposition.

The truth is that, currently, democracy has not really proven to be effective particularly since most, if not all institutions and political decisions are still mostly influenced by identity issues. Likewise, it should not be overlooked that, unfortunately, it has been under democracy that tensions between different ethno-religious and ethno-regional groups have increased, rising at the same time insecurity in the country. Civil liberties and respect for the minorities have not improved either, and if anything, repression is now sustained by the state powers at hand of the leaders. As a matter of fact, little attention has been paid to minority rights, people have no means to seek redress, and they have had to deal with (military) repressions. Therefore, the democratic regime's performance seems worse than that of dictatorial regimes. Nevertheless, although when comparing dictatorial and democratic performances there has been little if any improvement (when there has not been a drawback), dictatorships cannot be said to be precisely better than democracies. As a matter of

fact, both violate similar types of freedoms and rights of the people in their struggle for power.

What happens here is that there is a lack of conditions that would allow for the right functioning and implementation of democracy, and as other authors have said before, what would be needed in Nigeria is a whole institutional change. Moreover, if preconditions such as legitimacy and accountability are necessary for the beneficial effects of democracy to be made effective, it is possible to claim that identity issues not only have affected democratic performance but more importantly they might have imposed conditions that make the implementation of (African-style) democracy problematic.

REFERENCES

- Agbibo, D. E. (2013). *Ethno-religious conflicts and the Elusive Quest for National Identity in Nigeria*. Journal of Black Studies. Doi. 10.1177. Accessed in: 2014-09-20
- Aghedo, I. & O. Osumah. (2012). *The Boko Haram Uprising: How should Nigeria respond?*. Third World Quarterly. Doi. 1080. Accessed in: 2014-10-08
- Aiyede, E.R. (2009). *The Political Economy of Fiscal Federalism and the Dilemma of Constructing a Developmental State in Nigeria*. International Political Science Review. Vol. 30, No. 3. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2565906>. Accessed in: 2014-09-20
- Aiyede, E. R. (2004). *United we Stand: Labour Unions and Human Rights NGOs in the Democratisation Process in Nigeria*. Development in Practice. Vol. 14. No. 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4030128>. Accessed in: 2014-08-28
- Alapiki, H. E. (2005). *State Creation in Nigeria: Failed Approaches to National Integration and Local Autonomy*. African Studies Review. Vol. 48, No. 3. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20065139>. Accessed in: 2014-08-29
- Anyanwu, K.C. (1982). *The Bases of Political Instability in Nigeria*. Journal of Black Studies. Vol. 13. No. 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2783978>. Accessed in: 2014-09-18
- Bradley, M. T. (2005). *"The Other": Precursory African Conceptions of Democracy*. International Studies Review. Vol. 7, No. 3. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3699757>. Accessed in: 2014-09-30
- BRILL. (2012). *The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram*. Journal of Religion in Africa. 42.
- Campbell, J. (2013). *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers; United Kingdom
- Chabal, p. (1998). *A Few Considerations on Democracy in Africa*. International Affairs. Vol. 74, No. 2. pp. 289-303. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2623902>.
- Collier, P. (2010). *Bad Guys Matter*. Foreign Policy. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20753969>. Accessed in: 2014-09-30
- Collier, P. (2009). *Wars, Guns, and Votes*. Harper Perennial: New York
- Collier, P. et al. (2001). *Implications of Ethnic Diversity*. Economic Policy. Vol. 16, No. 32. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3601036>. Accessed in 2014-09-30
- Collier, P. & A. Hoeffler. (2004) *Greed and Grievances in Civil War*. Oxford Economic Papers. Vol. 56, No. 4. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3488799>. Accessed in 2014-09-30

- CPAfrica. (2014). *INEC Results: INEC Releases Official Nigerian Presidential Results for 29 States*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cp-africa.com/2011/04/18/official-results-inec-releases-official-nigerian-presidential-elections-results-for-29-states/>. Accessed in: 2014-10-29
- Dahl, R. (1991). *La Democracia y sus Críticos*. Paidós: Argentina.
- Davis, T. J., & A. Kalu-Nwiyu. (2001). *Education, Ethnicity and National Integration in the History of Nigeria: Continuing Problems of Africa's Colonial Legacy*. *The Journal of Negro History*. Vol. 86, No. 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1350175>. Accessed in: 2014-09-16
- Dickinson, E. (2010). *Watch List*. *Foreign Policy*, No. 180. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/207538967>. Accessed in: 2014-10-02
- Elaigwu, J. I. (1991). *Federalism and National Leadership in Nigeria*. Publius. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3330316>. Accessed in: 2014-10-29
- Ellis, S. (2008). *The Okija Shrine: Death and Life in Nigerian Politics*. *The Journal of African History*. Vol. 49, No. 3. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40206673>. Accessed in: 2014-09-16
- Fearon, P. *Primary Commodity Exports and Civil War*. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol. 49, No. 4. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30045128>. Accessed in: 2014-09-30
- Hills, A. (2011). *Policing a Plurality of Worlds: The Nigeria Police in Metropolitan Kano*. Oxford University Press. African Affairs. Doi. 10.1093. Accessed in: 2014-09-22
- Human Rights Watch. (2014). *Nigeria: Country Report 2014*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/nigeria>. Accessed in: 2014-10-27
- Mahmud, S. S. (2004). *Nigeria*. *African Studies Review*. Vol. 47, No. 2. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1514890>. Accessed in: 2014-08-21
- Martínez, M. A. (2004). *Political Representation and Quality of Democracy*. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, Vol. 66, No.4. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3541413>
- Nigeria Elections. (2011). *Nigerian Presidential Elections 2011-Final*. Retrieved from: <http://nigeriaelections.org/presidential.php>. Accessed in: 2014-10-19
- NigerianMuse. (2011). *Details of 2011 Presidential Election Results in Nigeria*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nigerianmuse.com/20110419040622zg/sections/general-articles/details-of-2011presidential-election-results-in-nigeria/>. Accessed in: 2014-10-19
- Nigeria Watch (2014). *Absolute Number of Deaths*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtStat>. Accessed in: 2014-10-27

- Nwajiaku-Dahou, K. (2012). *The political economy of oil and 'rebellion' in Nigeria's Niger Delta*. Review of African Politics. Doi: 10.1080. Accessed in: 2014-09-19
- O'Flynn, I. (2007). *Review Article: Divided Societies and Deliberative Democracy*. British Journal of Political Science. Vol. 37, No. 4. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4497320>. Accessed in: 2014-09-30
- Obi, C. I. (2007). *Democratising Nigerian Politics: Transcending the Shadows of Militarism*. Review of African Political Economy. Vol. 34, No. 112. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20406404>. Accessed in: 2014-09-20
- Ojie, A. e. (2006). *Democracy, Ethnicity, and the Problem of Extrajudicial Killing in Nigeria*. Journal of Black Studies, Vol. 36, No. 4. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40034770>. Accessed in: 2014-09-21
- Olugbade, K. (1992). *The Nigerian State and the Quest for a Stable Polity*. Comparative Politics, Vol. 24, No. 3. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/422134>. Accessed in: 2014-09-16
- Olukoyun, A. (2004). *Media Accountability and Democracy in Nigeria, 1999-2003*. African Studies Review, Vol. 47, No. 3. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1514943>. Accessed in: 2014-09-21
- Osaghae, E. E. (1991). *Ethnic Minorities and Federalism in Nigeria*. African Affairs. Vol. 90. No. 359. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/722781>. Accessed in: 2014-09-17
- Osaghae, E. E. (1992). *The Status of State Governments in Nigeria's Federalism*. Publius. Vol. 22. No. 3. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3330259>. Accessed in: 2014-09-22
- Osaghae E. E. (1998). *Managing Multiple Minority Problems in a Divided Society: The Nigerian Experience*. The Journal of Modern African Studies. Vol. 36, No. 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/161635>. Accessed in: 2014-09-30
- Osoba, S. O. (1996). *Corruption in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives*. Review of African Political Economy. Vol. 23, No. 69. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4006378>. Accessed in: 2014-09-16
- Polhemus, J. H. (1977). *Nigeria and Southern Africa: Interest, Policy, and Means*. Canadian Journal of African Studies. Vol. 11, No. 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/483669>. Accessed in: 2014-09-14
- Polity IV. (2010). *Country Report 2010: Nigeria*. Polity IV. Retrieved from: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/Nigeria2010.pdf>. Accessed in: 2014-10-21
- Recorded Future. (2013). *MEND is Maimed: Boko Haram's Eclipse of Nigeria's Former Militant Power*. Retrieved from: <https://www.recordedfuture.com/boko-haram-mend/>. Accessed in: 2014-10-24

- Reno, W. (1999). *Crisis and (No) Reform in Nigeria's Politics*. African Studies Review. Vol. 42, No. 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/525530>. Accessed in: 2014-08-27
- Riedl, R. B. (2010). *Transforming Politics, Dynamic Religion's Political Impact in Contemporary Africa*. African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review. Vol. 2, No. 2. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.279/africonfpecrevi.2.2.29>. Accessed in: 2014-10.03
- Tignor, R. L. (1993). *Political Corruption in Nigeria before Independence*. The Journal of Modern African Studies. Vol. 31. No. 2. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/161001>. Accessed in: 2014-09-22
- Trading Economics. (2013). *Nigeria GDP per Capita*. Retrieved from: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/gdp-per-capita>. Accessed in: 2014-10-22
- Ukiwo, U. (2003). *Politics, Ethno-Religious Conflicts and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria*. The Journal of Modern African Studies. Vol. 41. No.2. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3876192>. Accessed in: 2014-09-14
- Watts, M. (2007). *Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta*. Review of African Political Economy, Vol. 34, No. 114. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2040644>. Accessed in: 2014-10-03
- Zalik, A. (2004). *The Niger Delta: 'Petro Violence' and 'Partnership Development'*. Review of African Political Economy. Vol. 31, No. 101. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4006964>. Accessed in: 2014-09-21