

The Failure of Western Model Democracy in Nigeria and a Case for an Alternative Indigenous Demowase

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Abstract

Although, punctuated for a couple of times, democratic governance has struggled to maintain itself in Nigeria since 1960. Western Model Democracy, borrowed and practiced in Nigeria first through the British parliamentary system and later American Presidentialism has been hailed or celebrated in western developed polities and even other part of the world as the best and most civilized form of human attempt at governance since human history. In the case of Nigeria however, this model of governance or administration has shown otherwise over the years. In the Nigeria case, democracy has been employed to achieve judicial rascality and corruption, executive impunity and corruption; legislative brigandage and corruption. Such official connivance in the area of fragrant abuse of power has generally led to the pitiable and unenviable condition of Nigeria and the Nigerian people typified by abject poverty, monumental corruption, unemployment, kidnapping, insurgency banditry, backwardness, underdevelopment and dependency. This can be said to signify the failure of western democratic model at ensuring the goodies. Recently, Nigerians exhibited indignation at such near slave situation by voting out one of the most corrupt administrations in the country's checkered history with the hope that the incoming administration would bring about the desired change. The administration has expended its first tenure of our years and it is about two years into its second tenure. The question to be asked is whether the new administration has lived up to the expectations of the Nigerian people. The view of this paper is that, it has not. Consequently, the paper disagrees with the wholesale importation of undiluted western norms such as this and adhering dogmatically to them with a view to achieving our desirable goal. Consequently, this paper presents an alternative indigenous political model known as Demowase, which is aimed at guaranteeing the desired change, thereby brining about a better Nigeria.

Keywords: *Western Model Democracy, Failure, Nigeria, Indigenous Demowase*

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Background to the Study

Following the worldwide success in the twentieth century of western liberalism with its attendant values of liberal model representative government, combined with market-based economies that had dominated political and social development in the West since the nineteenth century, spreading remorselessly throughout the globe; U.S. social theorist, Francis Fukuyama declared that Western liberal democracy was the final form of human government.¹ The reason for this seemingly bogus declaration of Fukuyama has been suggested by Andrew Heywood:

Evidence to support this thesis is easy to find. After the collapse of fascism in 1945, the principal alternative to Western Liberalism was Soviet-style communism. However, this too collapsed, spectacularly in the eastern European revolution of 1989-91, undermining in the process, the very ideas of planning and interventionism. In Africa, Asia and Latin America a process of democratization was underway that involved the spreads of competitive party systems and a growing enthusiasm for market reforms.²

This assumption is clearly understood. However, it should be noted that worldwide contemporary issues in the 21st century sweeping across the world negating liberal democratic thought would equally appear to indicate that the above submission is but a wishful thinking. There are so many challenges to liberal triumphalism globally. Nevertheless, considering the fact that this is not the main concern of this paper, there is need to just mention in passing as an example that political Islam is one of such and quickly move over to the Nigerian case.

In Nigeria the western model democracy has failed woefully. In fact, it is this failure of the western liberal model of governance-democracy that has led to so many agitations in the country, leading to some citizens and even groups to classify Nigeria as a failed state. Indeed, recently a coalition of Christians in the north under the auspices of the Arewa Christians and indigenous Pastors Association went further to demand the urgent United Nations intervention in Nigeria's situation in order to prevent a "full-blown" war in the country.³

Considering this therefore, it may be submitted that the western liberal model democracy was human creation and therefore not completely free from human weaknesses or shortcoming to warrant been declared as the final form or perfect model for human governance. Moreover, even if it were to be a perfect system or model in the western world, it still cannot be scientifically proven to be a perfect model or system for all societies or communities outside the West. In other words, such generalization may likely not be correct. Moreover, it is important to caution ourselves as Africans and in this case, Nigerians that we should not accept every western creation as a perfect model for humanity, including us. There is need to decolonize our mentality. It is in line with this that this paper attempts to suggest a model system of governance for the country to be known as "Demowase".

¹. Andrew Neywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, New York, Pangrave Macmillian, 2003, 65.

². Ibid, 65

³. "National Instability: Northern Pastors asks US, UN to intervene in Nigeria and prevent full blown war," in mscopernews.com, retrieved on 26 February, 2021

In doing this, I draw a lot of inspiration from the Late Algerian revolutionary and theoretician, Frantz Fanon. For, in accordance with this view he posits:

So, comrades, let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from her.

Humanity is writing for something other from us than such an imitation, which would almost an obscene caricature.

If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe... than let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us.

But if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to bring it upto a different level than that which Europe has shown it, than we must invent and we must make discoveries.

*If we wish to live up to our peoples' expectations, we must seek the response elsewhere than in Europe.*⁴

Conceptual Clarification

There are various conceptions of Democracy, but this paper has chosen to address or discuss the variant of it that is known as the western liberal model which the Marxist term bourgeois democracy. Democracy is an old system of government with its theory dating back to the days of the Greeks.⁵ The Greeks had identified the concept with the people's power or a system in which “rulers are accountable to the people for what they do therein”.⁶ The origins of the term democracy can be traced back to the Ancient Greece. It is derived from the Greek word *Kratos*, meaning power or rule. Democracy thus stands for “rule by the demos”, demos meaning “the people”, though it was originally taken to imply “the poor” or “the many”.⁷ In modern times the late American President, Abraham Lincoln, 1861-1864 popularized or reaffirmed this status of democracy in his 1863 Gettysburg oration by declaring it “a government of the people, by the people and for the people”.⁸

The spread and importance of the democratic system in the modern world is obviously astronomical. A renowned historian. H. A. L. Fisher once observed that, “of the governing tendencies of the modern world by far the most important is the spread of democracy”.⁹ Although democracy is a well-known and familiar term however it is difficult to arrive at a universally accepted definition and practice of democracy.

Commenting on the subject in a similar manner, Stromberg posits:

Democracy is a fuzzy term. The word is all around us; it is constantly used in the news media and everyday discourse to define our own culture and to shape our policies toward others, who are said to be delinquent if

⁴ . F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1963, 254

⁵ . J.C. Johari, *Principles of Modern Political Science*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 2003, 499

⁶ . Herodotus quoted in J.C. Johari. *Principles of Modern Political Science...* , 499

⁷ . Ibid, p. 500

⁸ . Ibid, 500

⁹ . H.A.L. Fisher quoted in R.N. Stromberg, *Democracy; A Short Analytical History*, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1996, 3

they are “undemocratic” and may even need to have nebulous entity thrust upon them by force. Democracy continues to occupy large space in headlines: it triumphs over communism, is restored in Haiti, is hailed as the master principle of our age. One of the five goals for joint action by the United States and the European Union, proclaimed in December 1995, as “development of democracy”. It is presented as a cure – all for troubled peoples and lands. But its failures or inadequacies even at home are also frequently deplored ... “The main political issue in a Polish colleague of Lech Walesa proclaimed in 1989.”¹⁰

He points out confusing terms used in relation to democracy when he says:

But there is much confusion in usage of the term. Democracy is confused with liberalism or constitutionalism or social equality or national independence; it may be taken to mean majority rule or minority rights. The meaning varies with the time and place. Democracy is invoked as a model and used to legitimize different causes for different reasons. Democracy, Christopher Hollis once exclaimed metrically, means “One thing at Moscow, one at Rome. A third in Sudan and a fourth at home”.¹¹

According to Stromberg, democracy as a term has undergone strange transformations in many climes and is being invoked by everybody including tyrants:

In assuming absolute power, Sheik Majibar Rahman of Bangladesh explained in 1975 that banning opposition parties and strikes was necessary in order to “ensure democracy”. The long time Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos published a book proving that his rule was, as the title claimed Today's Democracy. Communist-ruled countries called themselves “people's democracy”. More recently in post-communist Russia, members of the extreme nationalist party, which many dubbed fascist and which in combination with ex-communists strove to overflow the precarious reform government of Boris Yeltsin, called themselves (ironically?) the Liberal-Democrats ... Democracy is a hurrah word.¹²

As can be seen from the above there is no single conception and settled definition of the term democracy. However, it would appear that the most successful of these democracies has been liberal democracy as it appeared to have vanquished its major rivals.

As a model of democracy, liberal democracy has, according to Neywood, three central features:

¹⁰. Ibid, ,3-4

¹¹. Ibid, 4

¹². ibid, 4

Liberal democracy is an indirect and representative form of democracy. Political office is gained through success in regular elections, conducted on the basis of formal political equality – “one person, one vote; one vote, one value”.

It is based upon competition and electoral choice. This is ensured by political pluralism, a tolerance of a wide range of contending beliefs, conflicting social philosophies and rival political movements and parties.

It is characterized by a clear distinction between the state and civil society. This is maintained both internal and external checks on government power and the existence of autonomous groups and interests, and by the market or capitalist organization of economic life.¹³

Continuing his submission on liberal democracy, he also advanced the justification for the need for and practice of liberal democracy to include, among other things, that liberal democracy was based on consent and the idea that citizens must have a means of protecting themselves from the encroachments of government. Citing Mills, Neywood posits:

... in the absence of democracy ignorance and brutality will prevail ... the central virtue of democracy is that it promotes the “highest and most harmonious” development of human capacities. By practicing in political in political life citizens enhance their understanding, strengthen their sensibilities and achieve a higher level of personal development.¹⁴

It is further submitted that “... the attraction of democracy is that it is the only system of rule capable of maintaining equilibrium within complex and fluid modern societies. As democracy gives competing groups a political voice it binds them to the political system and so maintains political stability”.¹⁵ The concern of this paper is not to offer a critique of the above features of liberal democracy, neither does the paper intend to offer a different definition or understanding outside the one shown or captured above. Rather, the paper, for now, substantially accepts the ideas captured above notwithstanding certain areas of divergence.

The fundamental concern of this paper is to interrogate if these noble goals of liberal democracy highlighted above have been achieved in post-colonial Nigeria or are tenable in post-colonial Nigeria. It is the position of this paper that such beautiful intention as represented by liberal democracy would appear to be a mirage after years of attainment of the so-called independence in 1960. The most unfortunate situation of the Nigerian case is that under the current administration, it has been clearly shown that there is no hope for such aspirations as represented by the Western liberal model of democracy. This implies that even if this model of democracy succeeds in the western capitalist countries, it has sincerely and indeed failed in Nigeria. In that case, why then do we continue to hold on to a western model of

¹³. Andrew Neywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, ..., 43

¹⁴. *Ibid*, 45

¹⁵. *Ibid*, 46-47

democracy hopelessly or against all odds? Here again, we find quite valuable the ideas of the late French-born, but Algerian/ African son, Frantz Fanon quoted above.

Demowase

Demowase is a word coined from two languages English and Tiv.¹⁶ “Demo” for the English word democracy and “Wase” from the Tiv language meaning “Our” and joined together as “Demowase” meaning “our democracy”.¹⁷

The Failure of Western Model Democracy in Nigeria

On the 31st December, 1899, the royal charter granted the Royal Niger Company by the British Crown to administer the area later to be known as Nigeria on its behalf was revoked. Consequently, the task of administering the area was to be done directly by the Crown through its colonial office under the Secretary of States for the colonies. Therefore, a protectorate was, on the 1st of January, 1900 declared on this area, implying that this area had been brought under British rule and by implication a British colony under her suzerainty. In other words, this area had become part of the British Empire. From this date up to 1st October, 1960, notwithstanding initial challenges that were later surmounted, Nigeria as known by 1914 following the amalgamation of that year – was generally under colonial administration.

However, on the 1st October, 1960 the erstwhile British colonial administration granted independence to Nigeria. A general euphoria greeted this occasion as it was seen by so many as marking freedom for Africa or the black race generally. The thinking was that the country was going to play a leadership role towards the emancipation of the black race. By that time, it was difficult to imagine that the euphoria that heralded Nigeria's independence was unfounded. It was very possible to imagine the possible success story of the country as the new-born African country could boast of so much available potentials both in human and material resources.

It is important to note that at this period of independence celebration of 1st October, 1960 there was wide scale uprising in Tiv land. The Tiv people of Central Nigeria were revolting against the policies of Northern Nigeria administration. Yet, overtaken by the euphoria of independence the Tiv uprising against the administration had to be down played at the detriment of the subsequent well-being of the country. The view captured here can be supported by the submissions made by Crowder and Ademoyega. Crowder posits:

*When the Union Jack was lowered at midnight and the green white and green flag of Nigeria raised in its place on October 1st 1960, there was considered optimism in the British press about the future of that erstwhile British colony. The leaders of its three political parties were all by their own declarations committed to the practice of liberal democracy ...*¹⁸

¹⁶. Tiv is a group of people found in Central Nigeria. The word Tiv represents both the group and the language spoken by the people.

¹⁷. The conception, definition and understanding is mine being a Tiv.

¹⁸. M. Crowder, “Whose Dream was it Anyway? Twenty-Five Years of African Independence,” Oxford Journals, The Royal African Society, vol. 86, no. 342, 1987, 7

Commenting further on the same issue Crowder maintains:

*The prospects for the country seemed rosy with its apparently sound agricultural base and the promise of additional foreign earnings from its proved oil reserve. An optimism about Nigeria pervaded most of the British press for the next five years. The riots that were taking place in Tiv land at the very time the new flag of Nigeria was being raised were conveniently ignored by many press-men intent on conveying an appropriate euphoria to their British readers.*¹⁹

Notwithstanding this window-dressing regarding the Nigerian case less than a decade following the independence, the reality of the problem prevalent in Nigeria were brought to the fore. The protracted and insurmountable Tiv uprisings, among other things, led to the first bloody Nigerian military coup of January 1966. Commenting on such problems Ademoyega writes that the Air Force, "...by late 1964 ... had acquired a few Dornier 27 aircraft which were small tactical planes, with these, it had started to join in various military exercises. These included the Maiduguri exercises of October 1964, the Makurdi anti-Tiv operations of 1965 ..."²⁰

Notwithstanding these military exercises, the Tiv upheaval continued till the first bloody military coup in the country in 1966, it is in line with this contention that Ademoyega, in continuation with this submission on this subject writes, "The year 1965, witnessed the worsening of the political situation in Nigeria. The Tiv war against the oppressive Sardauna government warmed up and showed no sign of abating. It careered on, until the coup of January 15, 1966".²¹ At this juncture, it can be submitted that in spite of the time magazine talk of Nigeria's "impressive demonstration of democracy's work ability in Africa" at the very early period of independence the reality on ground presented the direct opposite.

Indeed a summation of the first twenty years following Nigeria's independence in 1960 by Crowder can be very apt and instructive here:

*In the twenty years that followed, Nigeria has suffered four more military coups, at least one failed coup, a three year long civil war, a brief return to an elective form of government that made a mockery of liberal democracy, and an oil boom that permitted lavish spending and corruption on a massive scale, followed by the near bankruptcy of the country, which today is economically on its knees. As a result, Nigerians of all classes have developed a deep cynicism about their leaders, both civilian and military, and certainly have little faith in the liberal democracy and mixed economy that were the legacy of their colonial rulers.*²²

¹⁹. Ibid, 7

²⁰. A. Ademoyega, *Why we Struck*, Ibadan, Evan Brothers, 1981, 93

²¹. Ibid, 20

²². M. Crowder, "Whose Dream was it Anyway?...", 8

This conclusion on the state of Nigeria was made about forty years ago from now. There are so many questions to be asked here regarding Nigeria. For instance, what is the state of the country and the conduct or practice of liberal form of democracy in the country now? How has it been in or for Nigeria and Nigerians since then? Many more may be posed. In time perspective it can be seen that the period has doubled i.e., from twenty years to forty years. But in terms of deterioration or decay in the or, of the country and the practice of the liberal democracy bestowed bequeathed or imposed on the neo-colonial state of Nigeria by its former colonial master cannot be likened or equated with the time perspective of double. The decay since then is abysmal and indeed unparalleled and appears to lack appropriate expression in words.

In the case made forty years ago of Nigeria, there were four military coups and an unsuccessful one. But Nigeria in of today, it can be said that the political coups are tagged by political parties and politicians in order to present leaders at all levels in the name of elections and court judgments without end in sight and this is worse than military coups that had occurred in the past forty years. Even at that time-forty years ago- Crowder talked of election as being a mockery of liberal democracy and about a civil war that lasted for three years. In Nigeria today, the Boko Haram war has been in progress for over ten years and there is no end in sight with continued daily and heavy casualties.

The monumental and unquantifiable corruption prevalent in all facets of government – executive, legislative and the judiciary can only make a mockery and obliterate the lean or feeble representation of the corruption of the forty years ago presented by Crowder. A country where anti-graft officials re-loot the looted resources of the country! A country where corrupt government officials embezzle trillions of naira yet they walk brazenly with shoulders high and are even celebrated. A country where you are treated as VIP on grounds of how much more you are able to embezzle or steal from the government treasury. A country where the head of the anti-graft body is arrested, put under detention, tried and sacked for corruption allegations. A country where suspects of criminal activities are elevated to the chairmanship of its anti-graft body! A country where its legislators, national or otherwise comprise substantially corrupt elements with despicable and questionable proclivity! A country where the judiciary – supposedly hope of the common man continued to be weakened by corruption to a shameful level that justices, even of the apex level of the country are arrested and detained on allegations of bribery and other forms of corrupt practices!

This is the country where according to Soyinka:

*Of every Naira revenue earned by Nigeria, 80 kobo goes for the upkeep of select Nigerian legislators and executive members. And you begin to have all manners of allowances: perfume, wardrobe, cream and what have you; Now, even the application of the remaining 20 kobo by the bureaucrats, which is reserved for the vast majority of Nigerians, is riddled with corruption, as this is not well applied but diverted by them.*²³

²³. Wole Soyinka, quoted in the “on the Marble,” *News Watch*, Nigeria's Weekly News Magazine, vol. 52 no. 17, October 25th, 2010, 6

Furthermore, while stating that corruption is the greatest challenge to the Nigeria's development, Nuhu Ribadu, former chairman of the Nigeria's anti-graft body, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, E.F.C.C laments, "we cannot have Nigeria of our dream without fighting and winning the war against corruption. Corruption has become so endemic in our system, particularly among the leaders".²⁴ Following the line of Crowder's argument, Ndubuisi Onyenandu writes regarding Nigeria:

In as much as there is no justifiable reason for man to engage in criminal activity, we must also accept the fact that the Nigerian state and its leadership have encouraged and created the environment for such anti-social behavior. Ours is a country blessed with abundant human and natural resources, but rather than use same to uplift the Nigeria masses, the elite and the politicians, have turned it into an empire of wealth, through the institutionalism of corruption in every aspect of our national life. These have created a "survival of the toughest" kind of society. The present generation's understanding of being relevant in the society is through acquisition of ill-gotten money through any means. It is the case of the "end justifies the means".²⁵

Contrary to Crowder's lamentation in respect of lavish spending permitted by the oil boom in Nigeria today, no spending can be considered lavish spending as corrupt government officials and leaders convey their stolen and embezzled money in bullion vans while they embark on spending spree. It is shocking to note that stolen government paper money is overloaded in planes by these corrupt leaders so much so that it becomes too heavy for the plane to carry or fly with the currency.

In fact, Nigeria of today can even make a far mockery of Ndiribe's assessment of the country. An assessment which came after that of Crowder, not to talk of Crowder's. In his lamentation over the state of Nigeria Ndiribe writes:

We have all sorts of "loyal dogs" that insist that the system is not to be changed even when Nigeria is bleeding to death ... (these are the people) who have divided and shared Nigeria's wealth as their private estates while others watch. ... Like loyal but stupid dogs, these people are protecting a nation bleeding to death, at the brink of total collapse They are protecting a country with a mountain load of debts, one of the most corrupt nations on the face of this planet. A nation where young mothers perish during childbirth because the hospitals lack the most basic drugs ... where the affluent minority ride half a million dollar Mercedes Benzes on roads ridden with gullies and potholes and where the dead cannot remain intact until burial because electricity supply to the morgue is erratic. They are protecting a nation where each ethnic group sees the other as the source and culmination of all the problems... a country that feigns ignorance and helplessness as the only

²⁴. Ibid, p. 6

²⁵. Ibid, p. 4

*means to extract help from the international community...in effect, they are protecting doom, decay and disaster. They are presiding over a terminally sick patient who requires urgent blood transfusion, where the physician must not be admitted because he will discover the festering sour called a nation. This is the dog sense of loyalty in Nigeria, the shame of the entire human race.*²⁶

The gloomy picture of Nigeria pointed out by Ndiribe is not out of place. He has tried but has left so many other important issues deserving mentioning, even if it is in passing. But this can be understood because of the so many terrifying phenomena occurring in Nigeria that appear to be incredible due to their (the occurrences) antithetical representation of what true western liberal democratic principle represents. Therefore, Ndiribe has tried, but in practical terms, he has done little in showing the decay of Nigeria. This paper can neither do much considering the time and space constraints.

Gyuse appears to be saying a similar thing when he writes;

*Until 1966, we were recording growths in the Gross National Product in excess of 6 per cent a year. The year 1966 proved to be a watershed because in this year, the military rule was established in Nigeria. We have had many since then. Each successive military government increased the intrusion of the state into all areas of society resulting in a net decline both in the human spirit and in productive capacities. The steep decline we experienced during the Babangida years was only a continuation down a well-greased slope provided by previous administrations. Under successive regimes, the most productive area of investment became corruption. Our schools rotted away, our hospitals became mortuaries, our industries rusted away; our graduates wandered the streets...looking for employment.*²⁷

Other issues reflecting monumental decay of the Nigerian state such as educational decay, Fulani menace and general insecurity arising from banditry and kidnapping activities should be allowed a space here. In Nigeria of today, the educational sector is in shambles and this is not strange as Nigeria continues to renege on the mandatory agreed United Nations twenty three percent of national budget going to education by the countries signatory to the UNESCO. Even half of that is never considered in Nigeria. Under the present administration, it hardly gets up to seven percent. This has for years, reduced the educational sector to a pitiable state or level.

At the tertiary level, effective research is hardly carried out. University laboratories have for some time now remained in a laughable state. Now, even salaries of university lecturers are

²⁶. A.A Ndiribe, quoted in P.M. Dikirr, "Transforming Africa: from initiating a People-centred political Culture to cultivating Environmental Literacy," A Paper presented at the Multi Media University Conference, Nairobi, Kenya, 2016, pp. 8-9

²⁷. T. T. Gyuse, "NEPAD. Democracy, Leadership and Good Governance in Nigeria," Being a Keynote Address at National Conference on The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Makurdi, Benue State University, 1st December, 2005, 3

being owed for months by the federal government of Nigeria as the government keeps on crying and advancing lack of funds as a reason for this. Yet, the same government keeps on paying hundreds of millions of naira to the most undesirable and completely useless elements of the society in order to pacify the miscreants and encourage them in carrying out legally punishable crimes such as kidnappings and banditry which should be legally punishable in the society. These crimes have now turned to very lucrative business in the country as if Nigeria does not have security agencies to suppress them. This is indeed an irony of the highest order.

There is also the problem of insecurity caused by the Fulani menace. The herdsmen have continued to constitute a serious menace across the country generally. For a period of time now, mayhem has been unleashed on almost all the Nigerian groups by this marauding horde under the nomenclature of Fulani. In this regard, peace among the Nigerian groups has continued to remain a mirage. The intensity and endemic nature of this scourge led to the diaspora Tiv organization in the United States of America under the name, Mzough u Tiv ken America (MUTA) to send a petition to the House of Representatives to be presented, on their behalf, by Mark Gbilah,²⁸ over the atrocity perpetrated against their Tiv brothers in Nigeria. This petition was blocked by the Deputy Speaker of the House, Hon. Wase who presided over the affairs of the House that day.²⁹ It is important to note that, although a member of the House of Representatives, representing Oluyole Federal Constituency, Hon Tolulope Akande-Sadipe, who is also the Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Diaspora Affairs, has apologized to Nigerians in Diaspora, most especially the Tiv³⁰ nevertheless, this issue has continue to generate strong public indignation and condemnation from so many quarters. In its reaction, Nigerians in Diaspora Organizations (NIDO) worldwide, has petitioned the Speaker of the House, Hon Femi Gbajabamila and "...demanded unconditional public apology from Deputy Speaker of House of Representatives, Ahmed Wase, for castigating the group as an intruder and disallowing his colleague from submitting a petition".³¹ It is stated that NIDO's letter was e-signed by its chapter chairmen in Europe, America, Oceanic and Africa and copied President Muhammadu Buhari, Senate President, Ahmed Lawan, Nigeria Governors' Forum and the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission. In the protest letter to the Speaker, NIDO raised very fundamental concerns and:

...demanded full retraction of Wase's "unfortunate statement and that Rep. Mark Gbilah be allowed to re-present his petition on behalf of Mutual Unions of Tiv in America (MUTA) as concerned group of Nigerians in Diaspora. In the petition, MUTA had raised concerns over the plight of the Tiv people whose ancestral lands had been taken over by killer herdsmen and have been in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps for years... NIDO said that Wase, while presiding over the House plenary last Thursday, made "disparaging and derogatory statements

²⁸ . "Wase: Nido Petitions Gbajabamila, demands apology from Deputy Speaker, "in operanewsapp.com retrieved on 21st March, 2021

²⁹ . ibid

³⁰ . ibid

³¹ . ibid

to vilify all Nigerians in Diaspora and putting to doubt our citizenship, privileges and rights as Nigerians.

*Wase openly displayed total ignorance of the provisions of the Constitutions that allows for dual citizenship, with rights and privileges of the diaspora to call to the attention of the federal government on issues of common concerns. He castigated the Nigerians in diaspora as intruders and persons of no locus standi on issues bothering on Nigerians socio-economic well-being. He showed without self-restraint, his hatred and disdain for the Nigerians in diaspora, NIDO said. The organization said that Wase's utterances rubbished twenty years of Federal Government's Diaspora engagement at the time when the contributions of the Nigerians in diaspora are highly needed and desired. With Wase's disposition, the \$23 billion yearly remittances (according to World Bank records), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), medical missions, community development programmes and professional skills transfer, amongst others, that Nigerians in Diaspora, routinely brings into the economy of Nigeria should also be seen as unwelcoming distractions and undesirable, it said. According to NIDO, it is the fundamental right of the Nigerians in diaspora to intervene in respect of their kinsmen back home. The organization therefore asked the Speaker to convene an urgent Virtual Meeting with NIDO within 14 days to address the issue and to reassure it of his full support, failing which it might be compelled to call out all Nigerians in Diaspora to withhold further home remittances with immediate effect”.*³²

Also commenting on such Fulani activities, Davidson Edieye writes:

*From only 63 killings in 2013, to 1, 229 killings in 2014, the Fulani terrorists have become the “fourth deadliest terror group in the world. The Benue people, located in central belt of Nigeria, have cried out for help, describing the Fulani killings of the Benue as “genocide.” Most recently, 73 persons killed by suspected Fulani herdsmen in Guma and Logo local government areas of Benue State, were buried in a mass grave in Makurdi, the state capital.... While the conflict between the sedentary farmers in Nigeria and the Fulani nomadic cattle herdsmen is decades old, the present escalation into a full-blown war between the Fulani and the farmers is a recent phenomenon. As the blood-letting continues on a higher proportion, security agencies appeared to have been overwhelmed by the sophisticated nature of the arms used by the mercenaries. The killing of men, women, and children and the destruction of farm crops and animals become a trade mark of this war, which has chased people out of their ancestral abodes into intolerable situations as internally displaced person.*³³

³². *ibid*

³³. D. Edeya, “The Menace of Fulani Herdsmen Attack and its Effects on the Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria,” available at <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3476374>

Beyond the issue of Fulani menace, there are also other forms of insecurity created by the activities of bandits and kidnapers in Nigeria. These activities have succeeded in creating a culture of permanent fear in Nigeria. Today, it is safer or to be sure of your domestic animal such as goats and chicken to trail (walk) out and return back to their houses than human being going out or travelling out and returning back safely without being seized by either the kidnapers or bandits. And for where such occurs it takes the divine intervention of the Almighty for a lucky one to be able to regain freedom again at a very high cost of huge sums to the miscreants usually amounting to large sums of millions of naira, as the security agencies in the country appear to be overwhelmed and helpless. Nowhere in Nigeria is safe anymore-homes, boarding houses in schools-not again. The endemic nature and the attendant human casualties is alarming and indeed pathetic. Today, almost every Nigerian is terrified by the activities of these criminal gangs. Even government is terrified and continue or keeps on negotiating and paying large sums of money to the gangs to secure release of seized Nigerians in their captivity. This is indeed a shameful, pathetic and annoying situation especially against the background that the government spent a lot of money for security. Recently, above five hundred students were alleged to have been kidnapped in their boarding house in Jangebe in Niger State. They were returned back only after negotiation was made between the government and kidnapers culminating in the payment of large sums of hundreds of millions of naira to the kidnapers.

Again kidnappings and banditry have been on the rise in Nigeria since 2014. Although nobody can be said to be safe from the threat arising from insecurity generated by kidnapers and bandits, however, schools with boarding houses continue to suffer from these activities. It has been reported that:

*From 2014 till date, there have been series of mass kidnappings in Nigeria by Boko Haram terrorists and suspected bandits especially in the northern part of the country, in which school children are always the victims. The agenda behind it is not quite clear, but there is evidence that all these series of kidnapping was actually for ransom and also eradication of western education from the north.*³⁴

In continuation, the report explains:

On the night of 14-15 April, 2014, 276 mostly Christian female students were kidnapped from the Secondary School in the town of Chibok in Borno State, Nigeria.... On February 19, 2018 at 5:30 pm, 110 school girls aged 11-19 years old were kidnapped ... from the Government Girls' Science and Technical College, Dapchi... in Yobe State, ... Nigeria... During the 11 December, 2020, over 300 pupils were kidnapped from a boys' secondary school on the outskirts of Kankara, Katsina State, ... Nigeria... Armed gunmen suspected to be Fulani stormed ... the Government Science College, Kagara, ... Niger State on February 17, 2021, ... at 2 am... killing one student and kidnapped 27,

³⁴. "List of five profile school abductions that have taken place in Nigeria since 2014 till date," in news-af.feednews.com, retrieved 21/3/2021

*three staff of the college and 12 members of families at the school ...
Gunmen suspected to be bandits invaded Zamfara school and abducted
317 female students. It was gathered that The notorious gunmen
stormed Government Girls Secondary School, Jangebearound 1
a.m.... February 26, 2021.³⁵*

However, a teacher in the Jangebe school has disputed the figure of the students reportedly kidnapped declaring that, “550 girls, not 300 were kidnapped.”³⁶ These are but few examples. Going by the submission above, it can be said without doubt that the situation in Nigeria has failed to capture the noble objectives or principles of Western liberal democracy, signifying therefore that the model has failed woefully in Nigeria. Consequently, there is need for an indigenous alternative which is presented here as Demowase capable of guaranteeing a way forward for the country.

The Way Forward

The Tiv have a traditional democratic arrangement of conducting their own administrative or political activities that has been with the group as old as the group has been known in history. That is the concept of *ya na aningbian* which direct translation is “eat and give to your brother.” It can also be taken as eat and pass it over to your brother. This concept has been with the Tiv for long and they still employ it effectively in power sharing issues, contest, and participation in traditional institutions and modern governance in Nigeria where the Tiv people are involved. In who becomes a Senator in the senatorial zones of the Tiv, this concept is used. In who becomes a member of House of Representative, federal constituencies in Tivland, this principle is employed. In who becomes a member of any of the state constituencies in Tivland, this principle is also used. In fact, even the Governor of Benue State, which they share with ethnic minority groups such as Idoma and Egede, the Tiv still use the same principle to determine who emerges the Governor in their favour.

The fundamental composition or understanding of this principle is borne out of the fact that all the Tiv people are a descendant of a common progenitor known as Tiv and as such all the Tiv people irrespective of diversity in clans are still brothers and sisters, originating from Tiv, the progenitor. Lack of understanding of this concept has made some Tiv neighbours who are non-Tiv, like Idoma to refer to this principle which the Tiv so much believe in while accusing the Tiv of not showing that same spirit in the politics involving the Tiv and other groups within the state of Benue. But this is a show of misunderstanding of this principle by other groups. This principle implies or has to do with contest or participation involving brothers and in this Idoma and Tiv are not brothers. But here the Idoma are not considered Tiv brothers because of this divisive tendency of attachment to the Tiv progenitor. Otherwise, the Tiv and Idoma can be seen as Benue brothers. Similarly, at the larger Nigerian level, all the numerous Nigerian groups including Idoma remained attached to this retrogressive sentiment accounting for ethnic particularism which is against nation building. But if this tendency is eliminated, all

³⁵. *ibid*

³⁶. “Zamfara abduction update: 550 girls, not 300 were kidnapped-school teachers declares, “in m.scoopernews.com, published on 2th February, 2021

Nigerians can look at themselves as brothers within the Nigerian national arrangement. There is need to abolish all these traditional institutions of massive exploitation of the masses such as Emirs, Obas, Oonis, Ezes, the Tors, the Ochis, the Etsus and the rest which serve no positive value in the current society but aid the perpetration of backwardness and divisive proclivity which continually negates the goal of nation building towards the actualization of the more desired project of nationhood.

Following the abolishing of all divisive structures, there is need to erect or create a Nigerian national culture in which all Nigerians can participate as brothers and sisters within the new Nigerian arrangement. The job should be done by all Nigerians but government should be able to give direction. Do not say we can't but just say, Obama did, yes we can. And indeed, we can, if government shows the political will, readiness and sincerity as it did under General Buhari/Idiabon military leadership of the 1980s.

Therefore, on the basis of this, the paper calls for the adoption of this Tiv principle and to combine it with some positive aspects of the western liberal model democracy to allow for our own type of democracy to be known as Demowase, meaning our own democracy.