

## Leadership and the Democratization Process in Nigeria/Africa: Issues and Challenges

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### Abstract

This study strived to unravel the challenges and problems confronting leadership, democracy and the democratization process in Nigeria and Africa. The study also examined key political and policy actions of selected African leaders and the impact of such actions on the people and economy. The study relied on secondary sources of data while the analysis was done qualitatively via content analysis. In terms of framework, this study was guided by the post-behavioural theory which is a protest against orthodox behaviouralism which was observed to be limited to mere formulation of theories and concepts. Findings of the study revealed that failure of leadership in several African countries accounted for high level of violence, insecurity, poverty, hunger, and underdevelopment in the continent. Anchoring its argument on the post-behavioural theory, the paper concluded that with commitment, dedication and patriotism on the part of political actors and elites, the problems confronting leadership, democracy and the democratization process in Nigeria and Africa will be address with ease.

**Keywords:** *Leadership, Democracy, Democratization process, Nigeria, Africa and Leaders*

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### **Background to the Study**

Statistics shows that early pan African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Felix Houphout Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire, Arab Moi of Kenya had good intentions but greed coupled with in ordinate ambition and desire to remain in power prompted them not to lay solid democratic foundations for the future benefits of their people and governments. Thus, the lack of succession plan coupled with external interference and frequent military coups have also helped to promote political instability and inconsistency in post-independence Africa. Failure of leadership according to Achebe (1984) accounts for the myriads of problems facing Africa hence; several measures have been put in place to improve the quality of leadership in Africa. In Nigeria for instance, several constitutional and political conferences have been organized by different administrations yet the challenges of leadership and governance remained unresolved. It is in the light of the above that this paperstrives to unravel the problems confronting leadership, democracy and the democratization process in Africa with specific reference to Nigeria.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Issues**

In terms of framework, this study was guided by the post-behavioural theory which is a protest against orthodox behaviouralism which was observed to be limited to mere formulation of theories and concepts. In the words of James John Guy cited in Ntete-Nna (2004), the post-behavioural approach looks at political science as having a public purpose hence, it should not only strive for generalization and the verifiable understanding of the political process but that practitioners and political leaders should commit themselves to making the world a better place. This approach, therefore posits that leaders and political scientists should be able to communicate with the victims of society and citizens to ensure that the choice of research projects and policies must reflect the immediate concerns for the daily struggles of the mass of the people not just elites in business. Post-behaviour lists therefore, are concerned not just with techniques of study but also with the broader questions of values such as justice and morality all geared towards policy engineering. Contextually, the various policy actions of past and present administrations in Nigeria clearly represents a bold and pragmatic step aimed at resolving the leadership challenges confronting the Nigerian state in line with post-behavioural ideals and philosophy.

### **Conceptual Analysis**

Most researchers and scholars have defined leadership in deferent ways but leadership from a general perspective refers to an individual who provides direction, implement plans, and motivate people. There are also several leadership styles that can be exhibited by leaders in the political, business or other fields hence, leadership style include the total pattern of explicit and implicit actions performed by the leader (Newstorm, 1993). It will be recalled that the first major study of leadership styles was performed in 1939 by Kurt Lewin who led a group of researchers to identify different styles of leadership (Lewin, et al 1939). This early study has remained quite influential as it established the following three major leadership styles:

- a. Authoritarian or Autocratic Leadership Style:- According to the research, the authoritarian or autocratic leader tells his or her employees what to do and how to do it, without getting their advice.

- b. Participative or Democratic Leadership Style:-In this case, include one or more employees in the decision making process but the leader normally maintains the final decision making authority.
- c. Delegated or Laissez-fair Leadership Style:-The leader in this case allows the employees to make the decisions, however, the leader is still responsible for the decisions that are made. Lippit & White (1939) argued further that good leaders use all the three styles with one of them normally dominant. He added that bad leaders tend to stick with one style, normally the autocratic style of leadership like the case in most African states.

In their contribution to the subject-matter, Tennenbaun & Schmidt (1973) expanded on Lewin & White's three leadership styles by extending them to seven styles and placing them on a continuum indicating that as you go from left to right, it moves from manager oriented decision making to team or subordinate oriented decision making. Thus, the team's freedom increases while the managers' authority decreases. On their part, Howell and Costly (2001) maintained that there are seven behaviour patterns or styles of leaders and that such behaviour pattern of leaders often produce negative or positive actions. They added that positive and progressive minded leaders will use rewards such as education, independence etc. to motivate and command respect while negative or autocratic leaders will emphasis on penalties and sanctions (Newstorm, Davis, 1993). With specific reference to Nigeria and Africa, Achebe (1984) identified leadership as the major problem facing Nigeria and indeed Africa. According to him, the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. While commenting on the concept democracy and democratic leadership, Akinyanju (2000) maintained that since democracy emphasizes majority input, it is much deeper and it can be appreciated by its salient features which include:

- i. Acknowledgement of the equality of men provision and respect for individual freedoms and rights (freedom of speech, association, right to life, property etc)
- ii. Sovereignty of the people: The state and law must receive the consent of the people validating at regular intervals (regular elections).
- iii. Accountability to the People by Government
- iv. Rule of law and equality before the law (existence of independent judiciary and impartial administration of justice).

Akinyanju (2000) therefore posited that genuine democracy implies equal material capacity to reach and mobilize the people. He contended that political democracy cannot be achieved without economic democracy and that democratization results as a reaction to monocratic authoritarian, personal regimes: and the perceived gains of democracy. He gave the following as the general features of monocratic centralize regimes: political exclusion and denials: resource concentration at the centre: concentration of constitutional and extra – constitutional powers in the hands of a few persons or a person with the courts and other institutions of the state emasculated or rendered dependent on the power centre. In his words:

Monocratic regimes like we have run in Nigeria for the better part of the existence of country have produced disastrous effects; gross deprivation, pervasive corruption, economic decline,

political violence and infrastructural decay. When it is then perceived that democratization fosters development and provides the basis for negotiations and bargaining in the polity, societies struggle to democratize. Democratization is very rarely voluntarily allowed. It is achieved as a result of pressure. The pressure could be internal or external but usually a combination of both. In Nigeria, the internal pressure to democratize had been against colonial or indigenous authoritarianism (Akinyanju, 2000:p.3).

Gurr (1994) corroborated the above position when he cautioned that if the rights of minorities are not respected and their feelings taken into consideration in the process of policy formulation and implementation, the rate of conflict and insecurity may increase in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He reiterated that for effective consensus building process to translate into good governance and leadership in any political system, there must be territorial constitutional integration as well as minimum consensus. In the same vein, Jega (2007) maintained that for leaders and followers to experience good governance and effective leadership there must be transparency and accountability by public office holders in discharging their duties. In his words: A democratic political culture developed over time creates the basis for sustainable processes of good governance in democratic countries including Nigeria (Jega, 2007:p.158). In the words of Eskor Toyo, democracy refers to the extent to which actual political power to determine their social destiny belongs to the vast majority of citizens who constitute the people distinct from a ruling oligarchy or class. This definition of democracy is in agreement with Abraham Lincoln's popular definition: Government of the people by the people and for the people. Thus, scholars have argued that no democracy can function without the people (citizens) hence, Ola Oni (1999) reaffirmed this position when he stated thus: democracy has been variously defined as a political and economic arrangement of society such that the interest of the majority of people determine the management and direction of society benefiting the majority of the people. Why democracy is yet to benefit the majority of citizens in Africa remains a paradox which this paper attempts to address. However, while appraising the impact of democratic leadership on development and good governance at any level, Awa (1973) argued that whether it is situational, traditional or charismatic styles of leadership, scholars and researchers are unanimous that good leadership is necessary and crucial for the survival, growth and development of any society.

### **Leadership Challenges and Problems in Africa**

This section of the study examined leadership problems and challenges in Africa and its impact on democracy and the democratization process.

**Blaise Campaore of Burkina Faso:** Blaise Campaore treaded a familiar African path on his way to the presidency of Burkina Faso. Born on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 1951, he started life as a soldier and in 1983 led a crop of young military officers to oust Major Jean Baptiste Ouedraogo. The coup master minds named Thomas San Kara as President and by 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1987, Campaore staged another coup in which Sankara was killed under controversial circumstances, ostensibly for not keeping faith with the articles of the Burkinabe Revolution, the mantra of the coupists on assumption of office as president.

Campaore ordered the arrest of captain Henri Zongo and Major Jean Baptiste Boukaary Lingani, two of the remaining officers with whom he plotted the 1983 coup. After summary trial, the duo was executed for allegedly plotting to upstage the government. He further engaged in parliamentary and constitutional amendments and manipulations to pave way for his transition from military to civil leadership when he founded the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) on whose platform, he was elected President in 1991. Several opposition parties and the electorates boy-cotted the election as only 25 percent of the electorates turned out for the election in protest against Blaise Campaore's presidency. Against the will of the people, he was declared winner in 1998 and given another seven year term but attempts to seek third term in 2005 was resisted by the people who argued that doing so would breach the new constitution that was only amended in 2000. While the disagreement was on, the Constitutional Council surprisingly ruled in favour of the then incumbent. Thus, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, 2005, Blaise Campaore began another term in office after forceful amendment of the constitution. The conflict in Burkina Faso got to its peak when Blaise Campaore attempted to amend the constitution in other to extend his tenure. This was resisted by the people who stage rallies and demonstrations across the country hence, Blaise Campaore left the country on October 31<sup>st</sup> 2014 after being ousted in a revolt sparked by his attempt to extend his 27 years hold on power (Wikipedia, 2018). However, the intervention of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Constitutional Court in Burkina Faso peace and stability was restored in the country (Burkina Faso).

**Paul Biya of Cameroon:** Paul Barthelemy Biya' abi Mvondo, has been President of Cameroon since 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1982. Born in the Southern region of French Cameroon on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, 1933, Paul Biya owed his political fortunes to Cameroon's first President, Ahmadou Ahidjo, who adopted him as a political godson and gave him key appointments in the government hence; he rose through the ranks and became a top member of the government and the ruling party. He was elevated to a ministerial status in 1968 and upon the creation of a unitary state in 1972 he became Prime Minister of Cameroon on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, 1975. All forms of elections and constitutional reforms were banned while he remains the president of Cameroon till date (2018).

**Yahya Jammeh of Gambia:** Yahya Jammeh ruled Gambia first as a military officer and later carried out constitutional amendments that allowed him to contest elections in the country. He later became a civilian president and ruled Gambia for about twenty three years. In a well supervised election in 2016, Yahya Jamneh lost to Mr. Adama Barrow who was the leading opposition candidate in the election. The election result was upheld by the Gambia Electoral Commission and international observers. Surprisingly, Yahya Jammeh rejected the results and refused to hand over power to the president elect. The intervention of the African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and other international organizations, Yahya Jammeh had no choice than to hand over power to Adama Barrow who was sworn-in as president of Gambia at the Gambian embassy in Dakar, Senegal on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017. After the exit of Yahya Jammeh due to international pressure, Mr. Adama Barrow was sworn-in again on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2017, this time in Banjul, capital of Gambia. The above analysis clearly shows that over ambition and sit-tight leadership is a common feature of African politics. This has no doubt slowed down the pace of development and economic growth in the continent (Africa).

### **Raila Odinga Odinga–Mwai Kibaki Leadership**

#### **Conflict in Kenya (2007-2008)**

After official release of the 28<sup>th</sup> December 2007 Presidential election results in Kenya, the opposition leader, Mr. Raila Odinga Odinga, whose Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), the party with the highest number of seats in the parliament stated in a press statement that the presidential elections in Kenya was rigged in favour of the then incumbent, Mr. Mwai Kibaki. The hard line position of the key actors led to post-election violence which left about 1,500 people dead and over 600 people homeless. However, after the intervention by the United Nations through Mr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, with parties and their supporters agreed to form a government of national unity with Mwaikibaki as president and Raila Oding–Odinga as Prime Minister. This was followed by constitutional amendments and power sharing between the two groups. Post-election violence has remained a major challenge in Kenya due to the self-centered nature of the political class.

#### **Tsvangirai – Mugabe leadership Crisis in Zimbabwe 2007–2009**

It will be recalled that after the presidential elections of 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2008, the Zimbabwe electoral commission refused to release the election results, arguing that it cannot release the results until it investigates anomalies which required a patient recount. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai also maintained that its leader and presidential candidate won the election and that the delay in releasing the result was to give the government time to rig and manipulate the results. In the same vein, Robert Mugabe and the Zanu – PF government through its spokesman and the then Justice Minister, Patrick Chinamasa, insisted that former President Robert Mugabe won the election and further alleged that the MDC and its leader was working with Britain to bring about regime change. The situation degenerated into an open instability which resulted to the death of over six thousand rendered homeless. In a separate move, the international community through the G8 group of major industrialized countries also joined calls for the official results of the election to be published. Foreign ministers from G8 countries also issued statements urging a speedy, credible and genuinely democratic resolution of the crisis in Zimbabwe. After series of negotiations between the parties brokered by the United Nations, both forces agreed to form a national coalition government with Robert Mugabe as President and Morgan Tsvangirai as Prime Minister respectively. Both conflicts revealed that key actors had majority support from their ethnic base even when their political parties were regarded as opposition parties hence; they narrowed the conflict to their native tribes through the use of ethnic militias. For instance, the election results in Kenya, pitched former president Mwai Kibaki from Kenya's largest tribe, Kikuyu, against opposition leader, Raila Odinga-Odinga of the Luo tribe. This assertion was confirmed when Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations and UN's envoy to Kenya stated thus, if recent events are anything to go by, than one cannot fault the agreement of some analysts who posit that the 28<sup>th</sup> December 2007 presidential elections in the East African country of Kenya has exposed it as a country where tribal bonds remain stronger than national identity (The Pulse Weekly Magazine of April/May 2008).

### **Quattara-Gbagbo Leadership Crisis in Cote d' Ivoire 2010-2011**

Available records indicate that the above leadership crisis started when the Cote d' Ivoire Electoral Commission declared Mr. Alassane Quattara, who is from the Northern part of Cote d' Ivoire as the winner of the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2010 presidential runoff election. On the other hand, the constitutional council charged with the responsibility of certifying the election results also declared the former incumbent President, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, from the South, as winner of the same election. Thus, the declaration of multiple election results by two institutions in the country set the stage for the political crisis that rocked Cote d' Ivoire in 2010. In a newspaper report captioned Gbagbo must quit, Quattara tells Mbeki, published in the Daily Sun Newspaper of Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Alassane Quattara urged the international community through African Union's (AUs) envoy to Cote d' Ivoire and former South African President, Thabo Mbeki to prevail on the then incumbent President, Laurent Gbagbo to quit power immediately. In a related development, Chooyoung-Jin the then United Nations representative in Cote d' Ivoire on behalf of the United Nations Secretary General upheld the election results declared by the electoral commission and consequently urged Mr. Laurent Gbagbo to step down and hand over power to Quattara unconditionally. While referring to the election results, the UN envoy added that Alassane Quattara scored 54.1% of the total votes while Laurent Gbagbo scored 45.9%. In the same vein, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) also expressed its displeasure over the conduct of the major actors in the Cote d' Ivoire leadership crisis hence, relying on article 45 of the provisions and principles of its Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, suspended Cote d' Ivoire from the activities of the Commission. Available records and events revealed that the crisis degenerated and left at least 3,000 people killed and more than 150 women raped (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Further attempts by the former incumbent president to forcefully remain in power led to increased tension and violence which led to his arrest by the UN forces and subsequent trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) which found him guilty of genocide in Cote d' Ivoire. Other leaders whose actions influenced the democratization process in Africa include:

**Hosni Mubarak of Egypt:** He became President of Egypt on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1981 and emerged the fourth president of Egypt after the assassination of President Anwar-EL Sadat. He was born on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1928, in Kafr-El-Meselha, Monnfa Governorate, Egypt where he joined the Egyptian military academy and rose to the rank of Chief of Staff for the Egyptian Air Force between 1972 and 1975. The 30 years old reign of Hosni Mubarak witnessed series of constitutional amendments which transferred political power and sovereignty from the people to the president and his family. Not satisfied with the sit-tight syndrome in the country, Egyptians from all walks of life gathered at the famous Tahrir Square in Cairo and called for Hosni Mubarak to step down or face unpleasant circumstances. Confrontations between anti-Mubarak protesters and supporters of the government left 836 persons injured, mostly as a result of stone-throwing and attacks with metal rods and sticks including petrol bombs. Rather than yield to local and international pressures, Mubarak who had previously sacked his cabinet quickly named a new cabinet and appointed a Vice President for the first time in thirty years. This subterfuge did not go down well with Egyptian opposition leader, Mohammed El Elbaradei and the Muslim Brotherhood who rejected his proposals and

called for his removal. However, the determination and resilience on the part of the Egyptian people coupled with sustained international pressure prompted Hosni Mubarak to bow out of office when he resigned and stepped aside as president on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2011 after his 30 years reign.

**Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria:** Born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1937, in Morocco. He was elected president in 1999 with 7percent majority vote. His foray into politics began at the age of 19 when he joined Front de Liberation National (FLN) and rose through the ranks to become the Administrative Secretary of Houari Boume dienne. His day of glory came in 1999 when General Liamine Zeroual, who was picked to succeed Boudiaf, unexpectedly resigned and called for early elections. Boute Flika contested as an independent candidate and with the support of the Algerian military he was declared winner of the election which was boy cotted by other candidates on allegations of fraud and irregularities. By 2006, he started scheming for tenure extension despite the two term tenure limit fixed by the constitution. Surprisingly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2008, the Council of Ministers announced the constitutional amendment would expunge Article 74, which fixed term limit for the president, and nine days later the People's National Assembly approved the proposal. Thus, clearing the way for Boute Flika who on February 12<sup>th</sup> 2009 announced his decision to run for third term as an independent candidate. By 10<sup>th</sup> April 2009, he was announced winner of the elections which was boy cotted by the opposition due to wide spread irregularities.

**Jose Edwardo dos Santos of Angola:** Jose Edwardo dos Santos, former president of Angola was born in Luanda on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, 1942. He started his political life as a freedom fighter in Luanda, the nation's capital, when Angola was considered a Portuguese territory. At the age of 14, he was bringing together clandestine groups in his neighbourhood to join the newly formed People's Movement of the Liberation of Angola-Labour Party (MPLA). He was on self-exile in Congo Brazzaville in 1961 when he became an official member of the MPLA. He later moved to the Soviet Union, where he earned a degree in Engineering from the Axerba-ijan Oil and Chemistry Institute in Baku, Azerbaijan. On his return to Angola in 1970, he joined the MPLA's guerrilla forces and rose through the ranks to become an elected member of the Central Committee and Poliburo of the MPLA in 1974. After the death of Angola's first President, Agostinho Neto, in September 1979, Dos Santos emerged as the elected leader of the MPLA and Commander in Chief of the nation's armed forces. Available records indicate that human right abuses and lack of democratic ethos was a common feature of his administration. Although, Dos Santos announced in 2001 that he would not take part in the next presidential election but he reneged on this promise and in 2003, he was re-elected head of the MPLA. After consolidating power, he introduced cajolery and subterfuge in the political process hence, rather than renew his mandate at the polls, Dos Santos caused his party to amend Angola's constitution such that the leader of the party with majority seats in the legislature automatically becomes the president. This and other unpopular actions no doubt threatened peace and stability in Angola throughout the reign of Jose Edward Dos Santos.



### **The Problems of Leadership, Democracy and the Democratization Process in Africa: The Nigeria Experience**

Political instability and sit-tight leadership that characterized most African states in the post-independence era also featured prominently in Nigeria hence, this aspect of the study examined the problems of leadership, democracy and the democratization process in Africa with specific reference to Nigeria. Prior to the enthronement of democracy on the 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1999, Nigeria witnessed several political and economic crisis which threatened peace and security in the country. A major crisis that threatened peace and national security in Nigeria was the events that preceded the 1993 presidential election in the country. The election witnessed the registration of two major political partiesnamely; the National Republican Convention (NRC) with Alhaji Bachir Tofa as its presidential candidate and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) with the late Aare Onakankanfo of Yoruba land, Chief M.K.O Abiola as the party's presidential candidate. Ironically, the election that was adjudged the freest and fairest in the annals of Nigeria's history was annulled by the military under General Ibrahim Babangida on grounds of what he called national interest and security. While reacting to the annulment, Professor Wole Soyinka challenged the legality of the annulment on the ground that the former head of state had no power to interfere with the electoral process since relevant decrees and laws already give the National Electoral Commission (NEC) the powers to oversee the elections. This period witnessed the most trying moment for Nigeria as a nation. The period, 1985 – 1995 also witnessed the death of Chief MKO Abiola and Sani Abacha, the major political actors in the country including Ken Sarowiwa, the Ogoni human rights activist. It will be recalled that the political transition time table in the country was manipulated and adjusted several times before the eventual annulment of the elections by the federal government under Ibrahim Babangida in 1993 hence, prompting the imposition of sanctions and suspension of Nigeria from major international organizations like the Commonwealth of Nations.

However, the enthronement of democracy on May,1999 and the swearing-in of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as president brought sanity, economic and political stability to the system as reflected in the huge debt cancellation, re-admission of Nigeria into the Commonwealth of Nations and other international organizations, economic reforms coupled with several international financial assistance which Nigeria enjoyed from 1999 – 2007. While commenting on Nigeria's foreign policy actions from 1999 – 2007, Jibrin (2004) stated categorically that the nexus and connection between domestic and foreign policy explained why the Olusegun Obasanjo-led administration embarked on domestic restructuring and reforms which led to the establishment of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practicesand other related Offences Commission (ICPC) before pursuing an aggressive foreign policy which yielded positive results. He therefore argued that personal leadership qualities of leaders play a major role in the policy formulation and implementation process of any nation hence: he reiterated that when Obasanjo assumed office as Nigeria's president in1999, he exhibited a sound element of charismatic leadership that held the nation together. In his words:

President Obasanjo is bold, fearless, courageous, principled, and steadfast. His performance should be assessed from the battle against human right abuses, fight against corruption, wide ranging reform policies towards economic recovery, peaceful transition from civil to civil rule, creation of a peaceful and cordial atmosphere of relationship with other countries, culminating into the hosting of major events and meetings such as the COJA games and the commonwealth games (CHOGM) among others. (Jibrin, 2004: p.7 and 143).

Outlining the contributions of the Olusegun Obasanjo-led administration to democracy and the democratization process in Nigeria, Jibrin (2004) reiterated that the Olusegun Obasanjo-led administration in 1999 appreciated early enough that to attract foreign investors: reschedule or cancel Nigeria's debt, stabilize the currency, attract foreign assistance, compete in the global market, accept and effectively exercise Nigeria's sovereignty and regain its prestige, position and status all over the world, popularly contribute to global and regional peace and security and improve Nigeria's image among others, can never be achieved by simply sitting back at home in a world that is fast becoming a global village. The role of political actors especially that of the president in foreign policy formulation and implementation was also highlighted by Okoro (2002) who insisted that the president's dominant position in policy issues and foreign policy in particular stems from the constitution as well as from real world necessities, formidable powers that make him commander-in-chief of the armed forces authorize him to negotiate treaties, and appoint and receive ambassadors. In the case of Nigeria, he added that the Nigerian Supreme Court recognized these powers hence, it placed the president above other foreign policy actors and that in respect of foreign affairs, the president assumes responsibility for major foreign policy actions and decisions (James Okoro, 2002:p.66). While analyzing the techniques and strategies adopted by Nigeria from 1999–2007, James Okoro maintained that former president Olusegun Obasanjo entered the presidency with rather clear-cut ideas of how he wanted to run the foreign affairs of Nigeria. In his words: His administration differs sharply from his predecessors as far as foreign policy issues are concerned. The difference is discernible from their personal experiences, preferences, orientations, perception threshold and interpersonal relations (James Okoro, 2002:p.57).

He went further to summarize Nigeria's foreign policy actions and goals from 1999–2007 to include:

- a. Re-integrating Nigeria into the world
- b. Management of Nigeria's external debts
- c. Renaissance Africa: and
- d. The recovery of looted funds.

On whether the above policy framework yielded fruits or not, Jibrin (2004) argued that in all Olusegun Obsanjo's diplomatic shuttles, his mission and interest were basically economic, political, peace, security, and socio-cultural. In his words:

Nigeria's foreign policy worked effectively during the period Obasanjo laid emphasis on personal contact with political leaders, business leaders, Nigerians residing in such countries,

the press and any other as situation may demand. Thus, this leader to leader approach further gave direction to Nigeria's foreign policy actions within the period. The lifting of the suspension placed on Nigeria by the commonwealth, the recovery of looted funds, and the reintegration of Nigeria into the comity of nations in the international. System and the signing of several bilateral and multilateral trade agreements which increased the volume of trade and foreign direct investment inflow are clear indicators to show that Nigeria's foreign policy actions from 1999–2007 witnessed tremendous success (Jibrin, 2004: p.7 & 143).

The above analysis clearly affirms the fact that success in leadership to a large extent depends on the personal qualities and ability of the leader in authority. It is pertinent to add that the Olusegun Obasanjo–led administration was able to stabilize the democratization process by handing over power to the Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan–led administration in 2007. The above analysis clearly revealed that strong political institutions, visionary leadership coupled with the practice of democratic values and principles greatly enhanced the policy formulation and implementation process in Nigeria from 1999–2007. The Yar'Adua–Jonathan administration further consolidated on the gains recorded by previous administrations with improvements in education, power, water resources, health etc. The struggle to consolidate democracy in Nigeria continued with the elevation of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan from vice president to president after the demise of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2010. In his bid to live up to the expectations of Nigerians for a credible electoral umpire, Jonathan announced Attahiru Mohammed Jeja, a renowned professor of political science, as the new INEC chairman. By May 2011, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan won the presidential elections and took the oath of office as president and commander in chief of the armed forces of the federal republic of Nigeria.

### **New Perspective in Leadership, Democracy and the Democratization Process in Nigeria**

The administration of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan as president of Nigeria witnessed a major paradigm shift from the usual sit-tight system to a more liberal and pragmatic leadership. In 2011, Jonathan launched the gas revolution to develop companies that will work on oil and gas derivatives in order to make gas available for both domestic and industrial as, as well as for power generation across the country. After winning the 2011 presidential elections, the Jonathan-led administration returned the country back to the path of honour by carrying out people oriented policies and programmes as reflected in the table below:

**Table 1:** Major policy actions of the Jonathan administration

S/N	Policy Action	Expected Outcome
1	Establishment of a national conference	Encouraged popular participation by giving Nigerians from all walks of life the opportunity to come together and chart a new course for the nation.
2	Introduction of the Almajiri education programme in the North-east.	A strategic long term plan aimed at curbing child abuse and insurgency in the North by deflating the ego of the ruling northern elites.
3	Restructuring of INEC	Prior to the 2011 elections, the federal government appointed prof. Attahiru Mohammed Jega, as INEC chairman, this restored credibility in the electoral process and elections in Nigeria.
4	Judicial and executive reforms	The National Judicial Service Commission (NJC) was repositioned through the suspension of some erring judges and justices. In the same vein, the executive arm of government was repositioned through the appointment of new board chairmen and executive secretaries to head government boards and agencies such as the EFCC, ICPC etc.
5	Signing of the Freedom of Information Bill (FOI) Act of 2011.	Increased public participation, accountability and trust in the governance process and in public affairs in general.
6	Signing of the local content Act 2010.	Increased indigenous participation in economic activities, particularly in the oil and gas sector.
7	Moderation in the use of political power and authority.	The period 2010–2015 witnessed high degree and respect for the fundamental human rights and liberty of citizens by the state and the president. It will be recalled that despite criticisms and opposition to government policies and programmes, nobody was intimidated, arrested or detained unlawfully.
8	Demystification of power and putting an end to sit-tight leadership in Nigeria and Africa.	Despite demands by members of the ruling People's Democratic Party on the then president to retain power by all means, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan conceded defeat and congratulated Mohammadu Buhari before the election results were officially announced.

**Source:** Kalama, 2018.

Comparing the contributions of leaders to democracy and the democratization process in Nigeria Nwankwo (2017) described the period 2010–2015 as the golden age of Nigeria's democracy. According to him, the freedom and liberty Nigerians enjoyed within the period 2010–2015 cannot be compared to any other administration in Nigeria. In his words:

Jonathan is a man of apparent honesty, an astute and dependable politician cum public servant of high repute, a thought-provoking teacher of impeccable value, technocrat and peace lover/maker, and Jonathan remains very popular not just in Ogbia, Bayelsa state of Nigeria but across Africa and the world at large as the man who has re-written the history of Nigeria's democracy and shown the example of a statesman whom all leaders in Africa should copy. He is indeed a made-in-Nigeria world first class product. He will for-ever abide in the consciousness as a builder of national bridges of unity and one prosperous Nigeria (Nwankwo, 2017:p.8).

Sounding like a prophet who has seen the future, Jonathan himself cautioned Nigerians to vote wisely during the 2015 presidential election with these words:

*The choice before Nigerians in the coming election is simple: a choice between going forward or going backward: between new ways and the old ways: between freedom and repression: between a record of visible achievements and beneficial reforms and desperate power seekers with empty promises... I have never been driven by the love of power rather I am where I am today by the power of love (Nwankwo, 2017:p.35).*

Post-2015 political events in Nigeria which later witnessed mass arrest and persecution of political opponents, especially members of the opposition including principal officers of the national assembly proved that indeed Dr. Jonathan's pre-2015 vision and warning was taken for granted. Available records indicate that from August 2015–July 2018 over 15 opposition leaders including Col. Sambo Dasuki Rtd, former National Security Adviser to Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (former President of Nigeria) were arrested and detained. The situation however, degenerated when a serving senator from Kogi state and Ayodele Fayose former governor of Ekiti state were physically assaulted by officers of the Nigerian police and the department of state services (DSS). A critical analysis of pre-2015 political events in Nigeria clearly revealed that the policy actions and decisions taking by Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan before and after the 2015 presidential elections averted what could have been a major national disaster and threat to peace and security in Nigeria by calling his supporters and followers to order. According to Nwankwo (2017) Jonathan literally turned a paradox into a platitude. He made that which seems contrary to reason and even almost impossible: common place. He restrained his supporters, stunned and sobered his ever-joy opponents. He made good his earliest statement that his ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian. While expressing the need for all Nigerians to sacrifice and consolidate democracy in Nigerian he (Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan) maintained that in all elections under his leadership the votes of every Nigerian must count. He argued further that where there is no opportunity for one man one vote, there will be no accountability and no responsibility. In his words:

*Democracy is a journey that every nation mindful of advancing the liberty of her citizens must undertake. Nobody's political ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian. Our votes must count, one man, one vote, one woman, one vote, one youth vote, nobody should rig for me. I assure all Nigerians that though I am contesting, nobody must manipulate votes in my favour. Our votes must count. I will congratulate the candidates of the other political parties for I regard them not as opponents but as partners. We must develop a democratic culture in which the will of the people will be treated as sacred and be immune to subversions and anti-democratic elements (Nwankwo, 2017:p.17).*

The contributions of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to democracy and the democratization process in Nigeria can be summarized in the opinion expressed by Labaran Maku, former Hon. Minister for Information and Orientation who described Jonathan as a patient and

humble man who sacrificed his personal ambition, life, and family for the growth and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. In his words: Dr. Jonathan has a special gift of humility that he may have inherited from his upbringing. He is a genuine intellectual and a quiet person whose quietness is sometimes mistaken for weakness. He is not a weak person. He can tolerate a lot and that is a particular strength that enabled him to demystify power. He does not exhibit airs inspite of his elevation and he remains focused on the task of building a better nation through institutions rather than by showing off his personal power. Presidential power in Africa is very deceptive because it gives the individual the illusion of being able to order anything to be done, but for it to work for good of the people the individual must be aware that all earthly power is temporary. Dr. Jonathan is one person who shows a profound understanding of the temporal nature of power, so he is more inclined to building and empowering institutions. This is exactly what Nigeria needs now and as God has helped him to maintain his modest and tolerant character, so has He helped Nigeria by putting such a person in the position to lead the nation today. The only previous leaders in Nigeria who showed such simple modesty were Shagari and to some extent Gowon under the military, but Dr. Jonathan is very different from either of them because he is much more focused on the task of demystifying power and building institutions that will sustain the people's expectations even after he is gone. An important element of Dr. Jonathan's administrative style and responsibility is revealed by some of his appointments. Ever since he appointed me and outlined the things he wanted done by the ministry, he has not interfered with our work in any way and has never tried to influence our decisions to favour anyone. Our nation will certainly benefit greatly from Dr. Jonathan's style of leadership, which is hinged on statesmanship, nationalism and patriotism (Alagoa, 2010:p.197-198).

### **Conclusion**

The study examined leadership and the democratization process in Nigeria and Africa: issues and challenges. In the course of the study, the researcher interrogated the nature, quality and leadership styles in Africa and observed that the leadership recruitment process greatly influenced democracy and the democratization process in Africa including the level of growth and development of the continent and its teaming population. In most African countries, the character and actions of leaders especially, the ruling elites have threatened the democratic process and promoted military rule, dictatorship and authoritarian tendencies which slowed down the pace of development and civil democratic leadership in such countries. In the same vein, new perspective in leadership, democracy and the democratization process in Nigeria emerged in some African countries between 1990 and 2015. The study further observed that in some African countries such as Zimbabwe, Gambia, Burkina Faso etc. the citizens fought against sit-tight leadership and with the help of the African Union (AU) and other groups and organizations, the peoples' will prevailed while in South Africa under Nelson Mandela and Nigeria under Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, leaders voluntarily relinquished power for the overall interest and good of their people and nation hence, proving that power can be demystified and absolute power cannot corrupt some leaders absolutely as it is widely believed. In view of the above analysis, there is every need to consolidate on the gains recorded through commitment and resilience on the part of leaders and citizens in Africa. To address the leadership question and also surmount the challenges of democracy and the

democratization process in Nigeria and Africa emerging leaders and members of the political class must lay down their personal interest for the collective interest of their people and nation. Above all, we must never be despaired.

### **Recommendations**

To address the problems of leadership, democracy and the democratization process in Nigeria and Africa, the following recommendations are hereby proposed:

1. Leaders in power without the mandate of their people should be banned from participating in regional and international organizations and meetings such as the United Nations, African Union, and ECOWAS etc.
2. International grants and other forms of assistance should be extended to countries and leaders who adhere to democratic principles and ideals to serve as encouragement and motivation. Leaders of such countries should also be given international recognition and immunity as global citizens.
3. There is need for a review of the leadership recruitment process in most African states to ensure that persons who emerged through military and unconventional processes are compelled to embrace democracy and constitutional means approved by their people.
4. African states must develop indigenous leadership styles and development frameworks to avoid imperialism and interferences in the internal affairs of African states.
5. Erring leaders who have over stayed in power through military force or coercion should be sanctioned and removed from office without further delay to serve as a deterrent to others.

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