



## De-Democratization and the Paradox of State Fragility: Can Nigeria's Democracy Survive?

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### Abstract

This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the discourse of De-democratization and the paradox of State fragility with special attention to Nigeria. While employing content analytical methods and structural-functionalism theory, the paper argued that Nigerian democracy is bedeviled with enormity of challenges ranging from hollow electoral process, economic conundrum, inequality and marginalization, corruption, ethnic chauvinism among others, which has weakened the country's democratization effort. Even though the country has existed for a century, it has failed to imbibe the democratic ethos. The discourse critically ventured into proffering possible ways that could ensure the survivability of Nigeria's democracy with a post – colonial state formation.

**Keywords:** De-democratization; Governance; State fragility; Electoral Process; Nigeria.

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## Introduction

With Nigeria's tortuous democratic transition to the fourth republic on May 29, 1999 hopes were high about the possibility of the sustenance of democratic values in the country. Before the 1999 political transition, Nigeria was under firm control of military autocracy for close to 29 years since 1966, when the military made their first incursion into Nigeria's government and politics, following the collapse of the first republic. Essentially, authoritarian governments were interrupted only by a brief period of civilian rule in the second republic 1979-1983 (Lewis, 1994). Thus, Nigeria's march to constitutional democracy was a chequered history marked by anti-colonial struggles, crises, coups, counter-coups and a thirty month agonizing civil war between 1967 and 1970. Nwabueze (1989) notes that Nigeria has passed through five different phases, viz;

- i. Era of colonial autocracy and absolutism, that is, period of formal colonialism till October 1960, when the country gained flag independence;
- ii. Emergence of constitutional democracy (1960-1966)
- iii. The return of military autocracy and absolutism-(1966-1979)
- iv. Restoration of constitutional democracy- (1979-1983 and
- v. The second coming of military autocracy and absolutism (1983-1989).

It should be emphasized that since 1989, the polity has added more phases to her democratization march. With the inglorious stepping aside of General Ibrahim Babangida in 1993, an Interim National Government (ING) was put in place, headed by Earnest Shonekan, hand-picked by the unelected military president; thereby suffering inversely from legitimacy crisis *ab initio*. The interim contraption collapsed after 82 days, following the declaration that it was illegal by a Lagos High court in Lawsuit instituted by the assumed winner of June 12, 1993 Presidential election- M.K.O Abiola. Dwelling on the court verdict, General Sani Abacha staged a coup d'état, dissolved all the external democratic structures retained by the ING and once again, reverted the country to full blown military dictatorship. Abacha's military autocracy and dictatorship was characterized by horrendous human rights violations, unprecedented kleptocracy, hostage taking, forced exile and physical elimination of opponents that defined Germany in the period 1936-1945, which Stalin's Soviet Union also characterized the behavior of the state (Adesina, 1998).



General Abdusalami Abubakar, who took over after Abacha, seemed to have learnt enormous lesson from the legitimacy crisis suffered by his predecessor. He made it known that he was prepared to hand over to civilians as scheduled. His effort dovetailed into the transition programme which was the shortest in the annals of military- midwifed political transition programmes in Nigeria (Ojo, 2004). Abubakar eventually handed over the reins of government to Olusegun Obasanjo after general elections in 1999. It should be pointed out that since 1999 till date; Nigeria has been practicing uninterrupted democracy with mixed feelings. In this attempt, efforts would be made to juxtapose democratization and state fragility with special attention to Nigeria. However, the cardinal objectives of this paper are to among other things;

- a. Identify the notion of democratization and state fragility;
- b. Analyze the root causes of democratic backsliding in Nigeria, and;
- c. To outline an alternative approach that would lead to the survivability of the post-colonial state of Nigeria.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

### **Democracy**

Democracy has been the subject of immeasurable interpretations by scholars over the years. It has often been used and misused, abused and described by people according to their perceptions and orientations. This is why Gitonga (1988) contends that, in view of the great variety and diversity of regimes and systems that pass for democracies it is not at all an easy matter to establish what the precise and objective meaning of democracy is, or can be. Without engaging ourselves into the controversy over the meaning, dimensions and foundations of democracy, we can see democracy in the light of its etymological series as the “rule of the people”. Consequently, it is even more difficult to properly conceptualize “rule by the people”. We therefore agree with one of the simplest, yet clearest definitions of democracy offered by Oyugi (1988) who describes it as the existence of an open polity that is responsive and accountable to the general citizenry.

In spite of the differences in conceptualization and practices of democracy, Osaghae (1992) notes that all its version, whether liberal or capitalist, socialist and African brand, share the fundamental



objective of how to govern the society in such a way that power actually belongs to all the people. Again, Chafe (1994) contends that democracy means, among others, the involvement of the people in the running of the political, socio- economic and cultural affairs of their society. Indeed, the peculiar virtue of democracy is thought to lie in the fact that it is the only form of government that can advance the interests of all the members of a politically organized community (Nkwede, 2013).

For the common good and mutual advantage to be realized, it is believed that government must be responsive to the wishes of the electorate. Unarguably, democracy as a political concept, is founded on three underlying ideals namely; democracy as a value, a process and a practice (Nzongola-Ntagalaja, 1997; Olugbade, 1992). A careful examination and analysis of democracy shows it as perhaps the most popular form of government because it not only guarantees popular participation but citizen's fundamental human rights as well as a government that exists and performs in the common interest of all.

### **Democratization**

The concept and practice of democratization connote two basic principles. The first principle has to do with giving freedom to every citizen of a country to participate in all public affairs without hindrance or manipulation. The second principle relates to the treatment of the citizens of such a country as equals, without social class divisions. Attahir and Dunmoye (1994) argue that democratization is dependent on the expansion of social values and structures to facilitate the increased participation in the exercise of state power.

From the above standpoint, democratization is the transition to a more democratic political regime, including substantive political changes moving in a democratic direction (Arugay, 2021). In some cases, it may be a hybrid regime in transition from an authoritarian regime to a full democracy, a transition from an authoritarian political system to a semi-democracy or transition from semi authoritarian political system to a democratic political system (Abjorensen, 2019). It should be mentioned here that democratization is a direct opposite to democratic backsliding or autocratization. Whether and to what extent democratization occurs can be attributed to variety of factors vis- a-vis, economic development, historical legacies, civil society, and international processes. Classifying a nation as a democracy or heading towards democratization is not a simple



process. Many scholars, political scientists, and others have argued that the process of democratization can have harmful repercussions.

For Carothers (1999) countries undergoing a shift from authoritarianism does not imply that they are undergoing democratization. He further maintained that countries that undergo democratization do not necessarily become democracies-and fall into a “gray area” that involves aspect of democratization while simultaneously involving aspects of the previous authoritarian regime. More so, Doorenspleet (2010) argues that for democratization to be properly applicable the true meaning of democracy and authoritarianism must be defined for the specific context. For him, a country cannot claim to be undergoing democratization if it still presents severe human rights violations, poor state institutions, and other factors- regardless of its direction. Levitsky and Way (2010) present this as fake democracy and went further to classify it as competitive authoritarianism. And Carothers referred to it as a façade/semi- democracy while arguing that despite this resembling a democracy, it is not and cannot be recognized as one.

Notable example was drawn from Hungary, which due to its general acceptance as a democracy led few observers to recognize its decline. Levitsky and Way (2010) maintained that classifying a façade/Competitive authoritarianism regime democracy as a legitimate democracy is detrimental and result in misinformation regarding the specific country’s actual policies along with promoting the potential rise of an authoritarian leader. Applying this concept to African,Geschiere& Jackson (2006) discusses the further damage of the potential misclassification of countries undergoing demoralization. To this end, as we explore the concept of democratization, what readily comes to mind is the variability of countries that are classified as undergoing the process of democratization, and we should not be oblivious of the consequences of misclassified nations.

### **De-Democratization**

Over the years, there have been insinuations in the academic milieu of an illiberal trend in different states across the globe of resurgence of non-democratic powers, and of the risk of a global autocratic drift. However, different terms are used by scholars to describe the deterioration of the state of democracy viz: de-democratization, democratic erosion, democratic regression or democratic backsliding (Luo & Adam, 2023).



Evidently, Nigerians have only known two types of regimes; military and liberal democratic regimes. Many scholars envisaged that Nigeria would always be in the vanguard of domestic democratic experiments, the expansion of rights, and the protection of people who live in its territories, but that is not the case even though they have practiced uninterrupted democracy since 1999. Many have always believed that when democracy reaches a country, it will be there forever, yet reverse is the case in Nigeria (Tilly, Ernesto, & Lesley, 2020). Nigeria is living in a period of de-democratization with the current exclusion of minorities, limiting their cultural and religious rights in the name of national interest. There have been incessant attacks on freedom of speech, an increase in racialization and political violence, and violation of the rights of association for religious minorities coupled with the interminable corruption and hollow electoral process, and attacks on protesters for reforms in the system (Tilly, 1995, Nkwede, 2018). All these culminated to the de-democratization in Nigeria judging from historical events and state capacity, the ability of the state to carry out its policies for the betterment of the generality of the Nigerian populace.

### **State Fragility**

Fragility is the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacities of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks (OECD 2020). The import is that fragility is an expected risk, its occurrence is regular, and the lack of coping and mitigating it is the problem and threat to states and lives. Implicitly, the International Organization, global community, Governments, Communities and individuals could be fragile.

Nweke (2022) notes that state fragility is a risk that emerges from “weak or failing structures and to situations where the social contract is broken due to the state’s incapacity or unwillingness to deal with its basic functions, meet its obligations and responsibilities regarding service delivery, management of resources, the rule of law, equitable access to power, security and safety of the populace and protection and promotion of citizens’ rights and freedoms”. From the above standpoint, it can safely be argued that fragility thrives because state policies and institutions are weak in these countries; making them vulnerable in their capacity to deliver services to their citizens, to control corruption, or to provide for sufficient voice and accountability. Similarly, they are a land of conflict and political instability. The concerned countries are caught in one or another of four traps: the



conflict trap; the natural resources trap; the trap of being landlocked with bad neighbours; and the trap of bad governance in or small country (Collier, 2007). Essentially, it should be emphasized that every country in the world has a degree of fragility, making it a global concern. But the greater concern is that most of the fragile countries are located in the global south.

Aware of the fact that the web of fragile statehood is complex and intriguing with the multifaceted interconnectedness, state fragility has five dimensions: political, economic, environmental, security and societal. Each of these dimensions is an embodiment of rumbling risk, undesirable and portends unimaginable danger for human livelihood and national security. Nweke (2022) opined that these five dimensions of state fragility negatively impact humanity in six ways viz:

- a. Threat to global action against poverty and peaceful co-existence,
- b. Promotion of irregular migration and insecurity,
- c. Increase in armed aggression and extreme violence,
- d. Erodes community and organizational resilience,
- e. Exacerbates absolute poverty and increase the risk of poverty traps, citizens' survival and purchasing power parity;
- f. Compromises citizens' participation in politics and governance.

Historically, the Nigerian state is transiting into the fourth stage of domestic neo-colonialism. This process commenced with the post-independence state captors, also known as Nigerian Nationalists. Those nationalists were primarily concerned with the struggle to control the Nigerian state to the detriment of state building, hence the complex and irreconcilable political unrest that led to the first military coup d'état of 15<sup>th</sup> January 1966. The military coup d'état adumbrated the second brigade of state captors. This group co-opted the political elites to assist and legitimize the internal pondering of the state. The end of the military era on 29 May 1999 marked a new generation of political cliques. The emerging fourth set of internal captors is the virulent ethno-religious political insurgents, terrorists, and bandits. These four sets of internal colonialism have consistently sought, recruited and controlled the machine politics of the Nigerian state. Contemporaneously, the fragility of the



Nigerian State is making human beings particularly children and women, vulnerable and exposed to insecurity, poverty and extreme violence.

### **Theoretical Postulations**

This study is anchored on structural functionalism. The structural functional theory (structural functionalism) is associated with Herbert Spencer (1903). The major assumption of structural functionalism is that it approached the society through a macro-level orientation as it looks at both social structure and social functions. According to Herbert Spencer (1903) he described state as “organs” that work toward proper functioning of the “body” as a whole. In the most basic terms, it simply emphasizes “effort to input”, as rigorously as possible to each feature, custom or practice, its effects on functioning of a supposedly stable and cohesive system. This view is more often than not required to as how different organs or institutions of state perform their roles to ensure the stability of a process and towards the promotion of an ideal society. Scholars such as Talcott Parsons (1952), Emile Durkheim, Rousseau and Auguste Comte gave credence to Spencer’s postulation of structural-functionalism.

The centrality of this theory is a continuation of the Durkheimian task of explaining the apparent stability and internal cohesion need by society to endure over time. Kingsley Davis and Wilbert .E. Moore (1945) gave an argument for social stratification based on the idea of functional society. Robert K. Merton made important refinements to functional thought. He fundamentally agreed with Parsons’ theory but acknowledged that Parsons’ theory could be questioned believing that it was over generalized. He identified three main limitations: functional unity, universal functionalism and indispensability. He also developed the concept of deviance and made the distinction between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions referred to the organized and intended consequences of any social pattern while latent functions referred to unrecognized and unintended consequences of any social pattern. Merton criticized functional unity, saying that not all parts of modern complex society work for the functional unity of the society. Consequently, there is a social dysfunction referred to as any social pattern that may disrupt the operation of society.

Leveraging on the above, it can safely be argued that if various organs perform their constitutionally assigned functions, there will be political stability, harmony and unity of purpose, but, role conflict





among different organs or body in a democratic setting will promote anarchy, bad governance, infiltration, abuse of human rights, political instability, mesmerism of democratic ethos and processes, identity crisis and inefficiency among others. Since independence, Nigeria has been confronted with varied crises that have continued to ravage the foundation of the country's unity and corporate existence. The dimension of these crises include electoral crisis, crisis over resource sharing and control, inter-ethnic struggles, religious uprising/extremists deadly attacks, insurgency, and terrorism. Chiefly, among these is governance and democratic conundrum identified as the root of all pandemonium associated with African states, Nigeria inclusive.

### **Methodology**

Documentary design was employed in this study. Data were elicited from secondary sources through the review of relevant texts, journals, official publications, newspapers, direct observation, media commentaries and scholarly writings on democratic backsliding and state fragility. The study also employed content analytical method wherein data collected through secondary sources were analyzed. This approach was necessary because it helps in gaining insight from the analysis of De-democratization and the paradox of state fragility with Nigeria in Perspective. In as much as the content analytical approach was relied upon to evaluate the data generated in the course of this study, it enables readers to understand the current Nigerian situation through holistic perspective.

### **Results and Discussion of Findings**

As the whole world is experiencing the democratic wave, especially among developing nations, the experience in most sub-Saharan African countries is far from over. This is because civil rule has become tantamount to democracy. In Nigeria for example, democracy is something much talked about- a set objective pursued with vigour but not yet attained (Jega, 2000). At the inception of civil rule in May 1999, people accepted the new democracy in Nigeria with high hopes and expectations. Citizens expected that democracy would be better than authoritarian and military dictatorship. They expected that there would be government based on the people's constitution, there would be respect for human rights and people's freedom and liberty would be guaranteed, they also expected better economic government resulting into better welfares for the citizens. Crisis free society was hoped



for because they expected democracy to address the historical anomalies created by colonialism and military imposed feeding bottle federalism and authoritarianism. However, these expectations were dashed away as it seemingly become utopian.

One does not need to over emphasize the point that no viable political superstructure for example, of democracy can be rooted and sustained on an economic base that is so battered and ruined by material poverty and heavy insecurity, unemployment of the labour force made up of energetic youths willing to contribute to national wealth production, denial of rights to education, freedom of speech, absence of social justice and economic crash down. No viable democracy can be constructed and sustained in the socio-economic environment of massive decline, stagnation of productive forces and unprecedented erosion of the welfare and material conditions of the people (Agu&kachina, 2013).It can safely be argued that Nigerian democracy is characterized by the following elements;

- a. Armed politics, especially thuggery, assassination, and personal militias which are used to frighten opponents, intimidation of voters and steal or appropriate their voting power in order to appropriate their collective resources;
- b. Arms trafficking fuelled by cross- border flows from freely circulating small arms in Africa;
- c. Inability or refusal of politicians to play the political game according to the rules, including election rigging;
- d. Poverty which render the hungry voters readily available for conscience purchase;
- e. Mass illiteracy and political ignorance
- f. Ethnic cum religious manipulation by politicians;
- g. Banditry, rebellions, insurgences, struggle for secession generated by unbearable socio-economic hardships facing the people, unjust sharing of national resources including political positions,
- h. Unwillingness of political leaders and gladiators defeated in free and fair elections to accept defeat;



- i. Terrorism engendered by electoral injustices; intra- party and inter- party conflicts which generate political intolerance and political assassinations especially where electoral fraud is involved.
- j. Electoral violence fueled by the political gladiators.

Going by the above tortuous democratic terrain and coupled with a number of inhibiting elements to democratic sustenance, it is obvious that Nigeria is heading towards de- democratization process. Table 1 and 2 below showcases democracy index in Sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria with a view to justifying the democratic status quo ante of Nigeria.

**Table 1: Democracy Index in Sub- Saharan Africa**

S/N	Characteristic	Democracy index points (10-full Democracy)
1	Mauritius	8.08
2	Botswana	7.73
3	Cabo Verde	7.65
4	South Africa	7.05
5	Namibia	6.52
6	Ghana	6.5
7	Lesotho	6.3
8	Malawi	5.74
9	Zambia	5.72
10	Madagascar	5.7
11	Senegal	5.53
12	Liberia	5.43
13	Tanzania	5.1
14	Kenya	5.05
15	Sierra Leone	4.97
16	Uganda	4.48
17	Gambia	4.41
18	Cote d' Ivorie	4.22
19	Benin	4.19
20	Nigeria	4.11
21	Mauritania	4.03
22	Burkina Faso	3.84
23	Mozambique	3.51
24	Mali	3.48
25	Gabon	3.4
26	Angola	3.37
27	Ethiopia	3.3



28	Niger	3.22
29	Comoros	3.2
30	Rwanda	3.1
31	Eswatini	3.08
32	Zimbabwe	2.92
33	Togo	2.8
34	Congo (Brazzaville)	2.79
35	Guinea-Bissau	2.75
36	Djibouti	2.74
37	Cameroon	2.56
38	Guinea	2.28
39	Burundi	2.13
40	Eritrea	2.03
41	Equatorial Guinea	1.92
42	Chad	1.67
43	Central African Republic	1.43
44	Democratic Republic of the Congo	1.4

**Source:** Statista, 2023

From the above democracy index, Nigeria falls at the Middle in Sub- Saharan Africa. Nigeria's democracy was given 4.11 points signifying that it is not yet ranking in the entire Africa as fully democratic. The index is based, according to the source, on the electoral process and pluralism, the government functions, political participation and culture as well as civil liberties. Many sub- Saharan and North African political systems are among the least democratic countries in the world. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has the most authoritarian regime in Africa and the fourth worldwide, after Central African Republic. Countries such as Mauritius, Botswana, Caboverde, South Africa, Namibia, Gana and Lesotho fell within the "hybrid regimes" with a score ranging from 8.08 points to 6.3 points meaning that they experience, for example, elections with irregularities, widespread corruption and Nigeria with 4.11 points is not an exceptional in this direction as it ranked 20 out of 44 countries.

**Table 2: Democracy Index in Nigeria**

S/N	Characteristic	Democracy index points (10-full Democracy)
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1	Electoral process and pluralism	5.17
2	Civil liberties	4.41
3	Functioning of government	3.93
4	Political participation	3.89
5	Political culture	3.75
6	Overall score	4.23

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**Source:** Statista 2023

It is evident that Nigeria's democracy is on course but still lagging behind judging from the above democracy index and that of the continental Africa

### **Major Problems Facing Nigeria's Democratization Effort**

1. **Economic Crisis:** Nigeria's economic situation has deteriorated significantly. The country's purchasing and selling situation are dire and depressing, the country's annual profits have decreased, significantly impacting the country's population. Inflation is significant issue in the country and has resulted in a decrease in the buying power of the currency. Worker's incomes are no longer sufficient to purchase physical goods from market places. This has passed a serious threat to many people's lives, which is one of the reasons why many workers are requesting for pay rise (Nkwede&Udu, 2018). Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been growing at a slow pace in recent years. GDP is one of the most important indices of a country's economic health. Also the GDP has decreased tremendously form 2.21% in 2019 to 1.79% in 2020 (World Bank).
2. **Ethnicity:** Nigeria, the continental Africa's colossus, is the world's most populated back county as it has a population of around 200 million people. The country's population is diverse, with over 250 ethnic groups represented. Nigeria's multi-ethnic character has many advantages as well as disadvantages. Naturally, when it comes to ethnicity, Nigerians are extremely sensitive, with tempers frequently flaring and occasionally resorting to violence.
3. **The problem of Amalgamation:**The British colonial authorities constructed Nigeria as a geographical place to make administration easier. Despite being neighbors, the mostly Muslim North and predominantly Christian south were never united until 1914. Some of the current



conflicts in the country can be traced back to this forced union. Even though the country has been together for over a century, it has failed to fully integrate. Northerners continue to be suspicious of their southern counterparts, and vice versa. There is a lot of debate about the “Northern agenda” and the “Southern agenda” but not much about the “Nigerian agenda”.

4. **Inequality/Marginalization:** This is due to the governments and its agencies apparent favouring of people or regions belonging to one tribe over another. There is an unspoken belief that ethnic majority dominate affairs of the country, which makes minorities feel like second-class citizens in their own country, not for any fault of their own, but because they are few, this causes a sense of perceived unfairness by the government and its apparatus towards these federating units.
5. **Resources Management:** Tension frequently arises when it comes to the control of the country’s natural resources. Across the country, groups have emerged to compete for control of resources located on their land. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) is a good example. In their pursuit, they have damaged oil pipelines and abducted oil employees. Even if they have suspended operations for the time being, their actions have drastically reduced crude oil output and made the country ungovernable.
6. **Corruption:** Corruption manifests itself in a variety of ways and infiltrates all political and economic organization. It is heart breaking to learn that the government which was established to strengthen the country and combat corruption is taking from its citizens (Nkwede&Abah, 2016). The government officials tasked with combating corruption are unconcerned about what is expected of them. Non- governing citizen are also judged guilty, even though they are supposed to be free of corruption. Nigeria with a population of 223, 804, 632 was ranked 5 with score of 724 out of 180 countries on Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index in 2022, making it one of the most corrupt countries in the world.
7. **Terrorism:** Terrorism is one of the major concerns in Nigeria. The daily massacres, kidnappings, bombings, and rape carried out by Boko Haram throughout the country are quite alarming (Nkwede, 2013). Nigeria was rated fourth in the world with the most international war deaths in 2016, according to the Global Peace Index. In Nigeria, Boko Haram is known as a destroyer, and the northern section of the nation has been so badly damaged that even students



are unable to complete their studies. In Nigeria, Boko Haram is a well-known terrorist organization since 2014 as kidnapping of hundreds of children predominantly girls from school and communities in Northern Nigeria is on the increase.

8. **Unemployment:** Unemployment is spreading like a virus in Nigeria. Due to the economic recession, there has been a high rate of unemployment as jobs are not readily available for the youths. Recently, 500,000 job hopefuls were in a rush to apply for roughly, 5000 openings in Nigeria's Immigration Agency and in the process, 16 people were murdered in a process. It should also be noted that unemployment is one of the key causes of social vices in the country. Students who attend tertiary education institutions frequently leave with no employment and low skills during their education and were too preoccupied with reading textbooks to understand how to apply what they had learned. This negativity is one of the main reasons for crime among Nigeria youths as they turn to illegal activities since they have nothing better to do with their time or money. 300,000 students graduate from colleges each year, yet many struggles to find work and others resort to less than- honourable ways of livelihood.
9. **Education:** another challenging and critical issue of concern in Nigeria is her educational system. Nigerian schools nowadays are political meddling. This is because politics is the most powerful factor in the Nigeria educational system. Many educational institutions are now founded and administered on political grounds. Entrance to universities, colleges, and polytechnics, particularly universities are more often than not, influenced by politicians and academic merit dashed away. The cost of education in Nigeria is skyrocketing and unaffordable to many Nigerian parents.
10. **Inconsistent Economic policies:** Every government comes into office with their own economic policies which often differ from the policies of the previous administrations and to that extent, the previous polices suffer fatally from poor implementation because before it is fully implemental to produce maximum result in the economy, the tenure of the initiator would have elapsed, and the policies will not be implemented further by the proceeding administration; resulting in a situation of an ever changing and poorly implemented economic policies which does no good to the growth of the economy.

## Conclusion/Recommendations



This paper has extensively argued that the Nigeria state is gripped with democratic backsliding. The paper concludes that the dearth of political responsiveness and development patriotism perpetuates the fragility and vulnerability of the state. Besides, a country that wants to transform, needs to invest in a political process that strengthens the institutions. With a compelling political process, other sectors will remain stable, from the economy to the environment. Stability makes countries sophisticated in economy and social cohesion. More so, the quality of governance is directly linked to the credibility of the elected process. This is because fragile statehood is a political economic crisis, and overcoming such process would require debate and arriving at a consensus on the appropriate government structure and process that could harness diversity and strengthen the capacity of the state.

Rethinking governance is an essential strategy that could lead to the stabilization of the political misfortunes in Nigeria. This is because fragile statehood is a political economic crisis and overcoming it begins with thinking and working politically on how to halt the governance challenges driving different dimensions of fragility. Extreme violent conflicts, slowing growth, corruption, electoral fraud, natural resources curse are a few of the governance challenges that require rethinking. The persistence of these in Nigeria's democracy counts for volatility, conflictual issues, and complexity in power contestation.

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