Nigeria and the allure of a new horizon for democracy: In the shadow of delegate democracy

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Abstract

This paper in its scopebeams searchlight on the appeal, charm and attraction of party delegate as an emerged perspective of the concept of democracy in Nigeria. Thus, the paper deployed the qualitative research methodology which included distinct operational, political and socio-economic contexts in interrogating its explanations, workings and implications of 'delegates' in principle and how it worked in practice amongst principally the two major political parties in Nigeria. This is to make for a better understanding of its implications by gauging the political parameters of delegate system in democracy as a democratic approach to elections for rule through elected public officers in Nigeria. The paper seems to build theory around the concept of delegate democracy. Key findings of the paper is deeply rooted on that fact that as far as understanding can go, that it is pertinent though may appear arguable that "delegates" as featured in practice of electing but not limited political parties Presidential candidates portrays a seeming delegate democracy which is different in some regards from the "representative" democracy that has been upheld by dominant approaches to the study of democracy.

Keywords: Party Delegate, Democracy, Delegate Democracy, representative democracy

Introduction:

Nigeria's election period as is elsewhere globally is presently disquieted with divided prevaricating political interest, intrigues and antics. Perhaps, as may have been well said by Abraham Lincoln¹, who was the 16th President of America 1861 – 1865 that to give victory to the right, not bloody bullets but peaceful ballots only are necessary often quoted as "the ballot is stronger than the bullet", explains why electioneering season is always flagging red lines to such extent that political elites are always at the margin, seeking for power acquisition at all available means notwithstanding the provision of the electoral umpire guidelines. To such extent is conjured in the foregoing, it is observed

 $^{^{1}}$ Ratchliffe, Susan. Oxford Essential Quotation 4(eds). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

that Nigeria is presently at that elections trajectory. In fact, the manifestations' of contestations for power amongst Nigerian's multi – ethnic citizens and political elites in this 2023 election cycle unarguably has the capacity to either mar or make as they continue to skew things to their favour.

As precursor to elections, political parties are already busy with permutations on how to decide their flag bearers for various political offices through the primaries. This has led to the readjustment of already released timetable and schedule of activities for the 2023 general election. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) which released the timetable and schedule a day after the Electoral Act 2022 was passed had to readjust the timeline to allow political parties to finish up with their primaries.

Primaries as, Cross and Pilet² provided incisive insight to is referred to as Plebiscitarian is a mechanisms to select candidates and leaders which is increasingly popular in electoral democracies. Providing with empirical richness, Kenig, Rahat and Hazan³ observed that out a sample of 71 parties in 23 democracies, half of the party leaders/candidates were elected by inclusive selected members, supporters, both or voters. In Nigeria, as is conjured elsewhere, these primaries are conducted by political parties through delegates.

This paper therefore, beams searchlight on the alluring nature of a new horizon for democracy with a focus on the rays of delegate democracy, its electoral effects through party primaries which refers to ethos of internal democracy by political parties for purposes of elections and for selecting political leaders or candidates for offices.

Conceptualizing democracy: In the eyes of elections

The word democracy⁴ derives from two Greek words, 'demos' which means 'the people' and 'Kratain which means 'rule of or by'. It therefore literally means 'rule by the people. Despite been relevant, the concept of democracy like most concepts have no universally accepted definition. Scholars have conceptualized if from different perspectives. Examining literature on democracy shows lack of concordance on the definition. Hence, different scholars have attempted to define the concept from their own perspectives. Spectacularly, it is perhaps much easier to identify a democracy than to define it.⁵

Heater⁶ alluded to the fact that democracy may be regarded as a form of government, a way of life or an attitude of the mind; it is essentially a method of

 $^{^2}$ Cross W and Pilet JB. *The Politics of Party Leadership: a cross-national perspective.* Oxford: Oxford University Press., 2015.

³ Kenig O, Rahat G and Hazan R. *Leadership Selection versus Candidate Selection:*Similarities and Differences. In Sandri G, Seddone A and Venturino F (eds), Party Primaries in Comparative Perspective. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015.

⁴ Enemuo F. "Democracy, Human Rights and Rule of LAw" in Anifowose R. and Enemuo F. (eds), Elements of Politics, . Lagos: Sam Iroanusi Publications, 1999:141.

⁵ Enemuo F., op cit, 144-145.

 $^{^6}$ Heater D. B. $\dot{P}olitical\ Ideas$ in the Modern World,. New York,: William Morrow and Coy, 1995.

organizing society politically. He provided further insight and coverage of the concept, pointing out that:

There are, it is suggested, five basic elements without which no community can call itself truly democratic. These elements are equality, sovereignty of the people, respect for human life, the rule of law and liberty of the individual.

On his part Warren⁷, stated that democracy was described as "people – men and women with all their virtues and flaws, trying to work together to produce ordered liberty". Almond⁸, on the other hand argued that democracy is a "political system in which citizens enjoy a number of basic civil and political rights and in which their most important political leaders are elected in free and fair elections and are accountable under a rule of law". Sadoro⁹ further posit that; "the essential ideas of democracy are that people have the right to determine who governs them. In most cases, they elect the principal governing officials who are held accountable to their actions". As earlier stated, available literature on democracy reveals that there is apparent lack of concordance on the definition. Hence, different scholars have attempted to define the concept from their own perspectives. However, the most conventionally used definition of the word "democracy" is as attributed to Abraham Lincoln by Lord Charmwood.

According to Charmwood¹⁰ in his discourse, democracy is defined as "the government of the people, by the people and for the people". Iheonu¹¹ however subtly corroborated with the stand of Lincoln definition but did not obviously collaborate with the stance as he reasoned that Lincoln was not obvious with such definition of democracy in those words as he (Lincoln) attempt on a theory and definition of democracy is a world far away from what is attributed to him. Perhaps, his assumption was predicated on the fact as he observed that as the American civil war raged on, some state governors decided to institute a National Cemetery in Gettysburg and Lincoln was invited to give s closing remark. It is from his remark that what was essentially attributed and commonly accepted as the definition of democracy flowed thus: "That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth".

⁷Warren E. B., It is so ordered. William Morrow and Coy: New York, 1995.

⁸ Almond G.A. *Comparative Politics Today: A World View.* New York: Peason. Longman Ltd, 2005

Sadoro M.J., Comparative Politics Today: A Global Introduction (3rd ed). Boston: Mc Graw
Hill Publishers, 2008.

¹⁰ Charmwood L. Abraham Lincoln,. New York: Pocket Book Inc, 1965.

 $^{^{\}rm 11}$ lheonu A. U. Democratic Studies: A Fundamental Exploration, . Okigwe: whytem Publishers Nigeria, 2011.

Lending credence to Lincoln, however, $Tobi^{12}$ conjured democracy as a word of "very large purport and signification. It is not only large but generic and at times vague and nebulous: he identified with Abraham Lincoln's definition while identifying the common denominator or common expression in the definition as "people".

From the foregoing discourses, it is observable that various definitions notwithstanding most visibly illustrate how democracy as a practical political concept is deeply rooted in people as its pillar. In this direction, it is pertinent to mention, that people been epicentral in a democratic setting is situated within the realm of elections which is a subtle subject anchor in this paper. Elections itself is unarguably a significant feature in democracy. This is because; the people must have their voices heard and opinion valued by rulers and in key decision making.

Elections as captured in the Encyclopedia¹³ of the Social Sciences, is "The process of selecting the officers or representatives of an organisation or group by the vote of its qualified members. Predicated on the definition above, it is noteworthy to point out in stance with Momoli and Adejumobi¹⁴ that elections occupy a central place in the democratic process through the enlivening force they provide for representative government.

 $Nnoli^{15}$ attempted a lucid explanation to the meaning of elections. Thus he stated:

The manner of choice agreed upon by a group of people which enables them select one or few people out of many to occupy one or a number of authority positions.

Elections are embedded in a process and encompass a lot of activities before, during and after elections such as Political parties' registration, party primaries and campaigns.

Thus, Nwabueze¹⁶ posit:

The electoral process is a more comprehensive form of a democratic system that entails the selection or election of people into positions of leaderships. The electoral process comprises of all the constitutional procedures, arrangements and actions involved in the conduct of elections. It includes

¹² Tobi N. Law, Judiciary and Nigerian democracy, Ayua, I. A., (ed.) Law, Justice and The Nigerian Democracy: Essays in Honour of Hon. Justice Mohammed Bello,. Lagos: NIALS, 1995

¹³ Ayeni and Soremekum (eds. "Nigeria's Second Republic." *Daily Times Press*, 1988: 35.

 $^{^{14}}$ Momoli A. and Adejumobi S. "The Nigerian Military and the crises of Democratic Transition,." Civil Liberty Organisation, 1999.

 $^{^{\}rm 15}$ Nnoli Okwudiba. $\it Ethnic$ Politics in Nigeria. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978.

 $^{^{16}}$ Nwabueze B. O. "The Electoral Process and the 1999 consitution." The Electoral Journal Vol.1 (June 2007): 49.

the suffrage, the registration, the right to contest elections, electoral competition between rival political parties, the body charged with the conduct and supervision of election, the method of selection of candidates, method of voting, the actual conduct of election, the determination of results, trials and determination of election disputes, electoral malpractices and their consequences.

Thus, this paper building upon knowledge from the alluring new horizon of democracy as envisaged in the shadows of delegates as gleaned in the happenstances of party primaries conducted by political parties for purposes of selecting candidates as prelude to 2023 elections, makes for a better understanding of its implications by gauging the political parameters of delegate system in democracy as a democratic approach to elections for rule through elected public officers in Nigeria.

The alluring new horizon: Delegates in Nigeria's 2023 elections

As highlighted earlier, democracy is an essentially contested concept. Perhaps, one may say that the contestation as a concept transcends to how its offers democratization route as by inference offers a contestation process of change of public officers. The aforementioned statement is predicated on the believe that it is an alluring horizon which is captured in our discourse as new horizon which is situated within the issue of delegates for the purpose of electing and presenting candidates for the entire citizens of Nigeria to elect from. Clearly gleaning from the notion of democracy representative democracy is a viable point of departure at this instance.

For Dahl¹⁷:

Citizens must have unimpaired opportunities to formulate their preferences, signify them and have them weighed equally. This requires certain institutional guarantees: freedom to form and join organizations; freedom of expression; right to vote; eligibility for public office; right of leaders to compete for support; alternative sources of information; free and fair elections; institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

Dahl's profound and robust submission as stated above chiefly brings to the fore, the true subject matter of elections in democracy prone states such as Nigeria. However, it is unarguable that a number of issues evidently do affect democracy and elections.

In seeming collaborating stance, Pastor¹⁸ noted that in developing countries, the problem of conducting free and fair elections is compounded by the intensity of

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 $^{^{\}rm 17}$ Dahl, R. Polyarchy: Participation and opposition. New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 1971.

politicization at an early stage in democratization. In democratization process however, it is pertinent to observe as Reilly¹⁹ posit that the question of whether, and how, democracy can survive in divided societies (such as Nigeria) has long been a source of controversy. Some of the greatest political thinkers have argued that stable democracy as history has shown is possible only in relatively homogeneous societies. John Stuart Mill cited by Reilly, for example, believed that democracy was incompatible with the structure of a multi-ethnic society, as 'free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities'. This was a view prevalent amongst many scholars and policy-makers until at least the 1960s, with the perils of 'tribalism' and ethnic division frequently cited as causing the failure of democracy in the newly independent states of Africa and Asia in the post-war period.

The implication of the above conjecture for independent states of Africa such as Nigeria is scary. Perhaps the inference will rest on the supposition that democracy with all its variations as is practiced with particular reference to the horizon of political party primaries, will make it not too far to lend credence to the fact that delegates and their roles in the political parties primaries poses a democracy question and to a large extent is not - nor seem to be moving toward representative democracy in which it presents the form of democracy as delegation. The above assertion is deeply rooted in the contention as could be gleaned in preceding paragraph and subsequent discourse that democracy is difficult for democracy to survive in divided societies such as Nigeria. This stems from the fact that considerations with regards to the horizon of democracy powered by delegates in political party primaries, is incompatible with the structure of a multi-ethnic society as it is next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities.

The above postulation corroborates with the stance of a Former President of Nigeria, Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan²⁰ as he significantly underscored the horizon of democracy as experienced in prelude to Nigeria's 2023 elections. With regards to the Political parties primaries in Nigeria, in his speech during a book launch "Political Party Governance" written by Mohammed Wakil, a former Minister of State for Power, he faulted the National Assembly for allegedly making mistakes in the amendment of the Electoral Act, saying it has 'messed' up the ongoing primary elections across the country.

He posit thus:

The National Assembly made alterations in the electoral law and now only what they call electoral delegates has to elect people that will vote and One day the whole Nigerians will wake up and say they are voting for the President. Who presented these candidates for you? Very few people at the

¹⁸ Pastor, R. "The Role of Electoral Administration in Democratic Transitions: Implications for Policy and Research." *Democratisation* 6/4 (1999): 1-27.

¹⁹ Reilly, Benjamin. Democracy in divided societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

 $^{^{20}}$ Bakere, Majeed,. "Jonathan slams NASS on Electoral Act amendment, demands removal of Section 84." Premium Times, May 27, 2022.

national level, at the state and at the senatorial district..."Let me use this opportunity to advise the National Assembly, that laws must be designed to solve problems, not designed to create problems. Laws must be made assuming that those making the laws are blind. Just like the judges. "Laws must not be made to target individuals or an individual. When you go into that system of making laws, you make this terrible mistake that has really messed up the whole primary going on," he said. Let me give you a very horrible example in my state, Bayelsa State. In one way or the other, those who created these wards do their magic but there is a particular state constituency in Bayelsa State made up of only two wards and every ward has only three delegates, so it's only six persons that will decide the candidate say for PDP and meanwhile, four people are interested in contesting. Only six people would select among these four and present somebody and at the end of the day, when Indepent Electoral Commission conducts election, they will say the whole world voted for that person because those are the only two presented to you.

Generally speaking, as earlier revealed, democracy by inference is a system of government by the whole population or all eligible members of a state. It has since become the preferable system of governance acceptable to many. Nonetheless, Mamman²¹ provided an extended coverage of the subject matter as he captured the fact that constitutions as a guideline is a mere political charter to enforce norms and an instrument used to carter for the welfare of the people. Thus the courts of law has in ways numerous to mention, interpreted and underscored the practical meaning of democracy through elections. In a case between Amechi versus Omehia, Sagay²² stated as follows:

> An observer of the Nigeria political scene today easily discovers that the failure of the parties to ensure intra party democracy and live by the provisions of their constitutions as to the emergence of candidates for elections is one of the major causes of the serious problems hindering the enthronement of representative government in the country. If a political party was not to be bound by the provisions of its constitution concerning party primaries, why would there be the need to send members of the parties aspiring to be candidates for an electoral offices on a wild goose chase upon which they dissipate their resources and waste time.

²¹ Mamman T.S., "March to democracy: Understanding the growth and characteristics of constitutional order." In Law, Justice and the Nigerian Society: Essays in honour of Hon. Justice Mohammed Bello, by in Ayua I.A (ed.), 123 - 124. Lagos: NIALS, 1995

²² Sagay I. E. The Enforcement of Electoral Law and Case Law of 2007 Election Petition Judgments. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd, 2012. Also see: Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi Versus Independent National Electoral Commission & ORS. SC 252/2007 (In the Supreme Court of Nigeria, January, Friday, the 18th day, 2008).

Sagay's postulations as captured above lucidly points out to the fact that political party primaries dovetails with provisions of respective parties and their constitution. At the instance of what happened during the primaries that made for the aforementioned case, it appears however that an aspiring candidate for an electoral office was sent on a wild goose chase upon which he dissipated his resources and wasted time.

Perhaps, it could be well said at this juncture that it is in the light of the foregoing that the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) 23 in its section 14 (1) entrenched the Lincoln concept of democracy in the Nigerian situation. Thus, it states that:

"The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a State based on the principles of democracy and social justice."

It is hereby, accordingly declared that -

- a. Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from who government through this constitution derives all its powers.
- The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government; and
- c. The participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this constitution.

The implication of the foregoing prescription as enshrined in the constitution to a large extent is that Nigerian people accept it as a binding principle to be governed through her elected representatives, especially in relation to the legislative and executive arms. This is the best approach in the circumstances of a country of over 200 million people since everybody cannot be the President, the Governor or legislator. But we must not lose sight of the fact that in adopting representative democracy as the system of governance, the Constitution carefully retained power for the people, in section 14 (2) (a) 24 , wherein it states that "it is hereby accordingly declared that sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority."

The legislators further attempted to expand the concept of democracy into the political parties through section 84 of the Electoral Act 2022²⁵ by providing for direct and indirect primary elections through which they will produce their candidates to stand for elective offices. Thus, section 84 stipulated as enunciated below:

²³ Nigeria. 1999. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lagos "Section 14 (1)

²⁴ Nigeria. 1999. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lagos "Section 14 (2)

²⁵A Bill for an Act to repeal the Electoral Act, No. 6, 2010 and enact the Electoral Act, 2022, to regulate the conduct of Federal, State and Area Councils in the Federal Capital Territory elections and for related matters enacted by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

- (1) A political party seeking to nominate candidates for elections under this Act .shall hold primaries for aspirants to all elective positions which shall be monitored by the Commission.
 - (2) The procedure for the nomination of .candidates by political parties for the various elective positions shall be by direct, indirect primaries or consensus.

Qualifications of Aspirants and Candidates.

(3) A political party shall not impose nomination qualification or disqualification criteria, measures, or conditions on any aspirant or candidate for any election in its constitution, guidelines, or rules for nomination of candidates for elections, except as prescribed under sections 65, 66, 106, 107,)3 i, 137, 177 and 187 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) as amended.

Further prescription of the Electoral Act, 2022, in afore stated section 84 with regards to direct primaries is as enunciated below:

- (4)A political party that adopts the direct primaries procedure shall ensure that all aspirants are given equal opportunity of being voted for by members of the party and shall adopt the procedure outlined:
- (a)in the case of presidential primaries, all registered members of the party shall vote for aspirants of their choice at a designated centre at each ward of the Federation:
- (b) the procedure under paragraph (a) shall be adopted for direct

primaries in respect of Gubernatorial, Senatorial, Federal and State Constituencies;

(c)Special conventions or congresses shall be held to ratify the candidate with the largest number of votes at designated centres at the National, State, Senatorial, Federal and State Constituencies, as the case may be.

The Electoral Act, 2022, also stated subsequently in same section 84 with regards to indirect primaries as spelt out below:

Candidate shall adopt the procedure outlined —

- (a) in the case of nominations to the position of Presidential) candidate, the -
- (i) political party shall hold a special presidential convention at a designated centre in the Federal Capital Territory or any other place within the Federation that is agreed to by the National Executive Committee of the party where delegates shall vote for aspirants of their choice,

- (ii) aspirant with the highest number of votes cast at the end of voting shall be declared the winner of the presidential primaries of the political party and that aspirant's name shall be forwarded to the Commission as the candidate of the party;
 - (b) in the case of .nominations to the position of a Governorship candidate, the political party shall, where it intends to sponsor candidates -
 - (i) hold a special congress in the State Capital or any other place within the State with delegates voting for aspirants of their cboire at the congress to be held on a specified date appointed by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the party, and
 - (ii) the aspirant with the highest number of votes cast at the end of voting shall be declared the winner of the primaries of the party and the aspirant's name shall be forwarded to the Commission as the candidate of the party, for the particular State;
 - (c) in the case of nominations to the position of a Senatorial candidate, a Member of the House of Representatives and a Member of a State House of Assembly, the political party shall, where it intends to sponsor candidates -

Furthermore, the electoral act on the issue of Consensus Candidate spelt out in same section of the Act that:

- (5) A political party that adopts a consensus candidate shall secure the written consent of all cleared aspirants for the position, indicating their voluntary withdrawal from the race and their endorsement of the consensus candidate.
- (6) Where a political party is unable to secure the written consent of all cleared aspirants for the purpose of a consensus candidate, it should revert to the choice of direct or indirect primaries for the nomination of candidates for the aforesaid elective, positions.
- (7) A special convention or nomination congress shall be held to ratify the choice of consensus candidates at designated centres at the National, State, Senatorial, Federal and State Constituencies, as the case may be.

As can be gleaned from the foregoing, it is observed that although the Act did not define what an indirect primary election means, the plausible interpretation is to take it as the opposite of direct primaries as defined above. Probably for convenience and to cut costs, most political parties have adopted the indirect primary election to choose their candidates, which leads us to the issue of delegated democracy.

Although the word was used in several sections of the Electoral Act, there is no specific definition of who should or can be a DELEGATE. According to the

learned authors of Merriam-Webster online dictionary²⁶, a delegate is "a person acting for another: such as a representative to a convention or conference". He is an agent, assignee, attorney or a representative who is entrusted with the responsibility of exercising authority on behalf of the one who has chosen or appointed him. In a cartoon circulating on social media, a pupil was asked by the teacher to state his career path and he responded without batting an eyelid that he would love to be a delegate. In times past, we did not hear much about them because godfathers would just simply issue binding commands to them.

However, section 84 (8) of the Electoral Act²⁷ which stipulates that a political party that adopts the system of indirect primaries for the choice of its candidate shall clearly outline in its constitution and rule the procedure for the democratic election of delegates to vote at the convention, congress òr meeting. This has significantly placed delegates in the limelight by insisting that political parties should adopt democratic methods in choosing their delegates who would in turn choose the candidates, making them the bride in this new dispensation.

The experience with the delegate system has not been very comforting but it is about the best that we can have now, if it is properly implemented. The monetization of the delegate system has posed a great challenge to the practice of democracy, whereby the choice of candidate is not necessarily based on programmes, ideologies and principles but rather payment of money.

It is imperative in this direction to note that a situation where votes are based on any consideration other than merit, character, track record, integrity and manifestoes does subsume democracy in unprecedented peril. Delegates to this end are strongly individualistic in manifestation and the question should be, if the delegates' choice does not reflect the will of the people in a democratic setting, why the delegate process in Nigeria?

The present situation as gleaned from the foregoing assertion in Nigeria has become scandalous and a poser, given reports through the media in particular. Underlying the scandalous situation notion as stated above is the contemplation as is obvious that, if you are an aspirant and you are not willing to bribe delegates with big cash, it is impossible to win the election. These delegates don't care about competence. They only care about their pockets. And the people that put them there as delegates plan this from the onset. They put them there, hide their names, release their names at the nick of time to the aspirants, and bring them to the aspirants as they negotiate how much the aspirant shall pay for the votes. When the money is paid, it is shared and if he delegate does not play game, he will not make the list the next election season. It is a vicious cycle that needs to be amended. Other countries do delegates but in Nigeria, it has been bastardised by corruption. The electoral process is the bedrock of development, lose it and everything crashes. INEC must supervise the process of electing delegates, so that delegates can come through election and not someone somewhere compiling the list and putting the people he wants there

²⁶ "Delegate." Merriam - Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam - Webster, https://www. Merriam - Webster.com/dictionary/delegate, Accessed 6 June, 2022

²⁷ Electoral Act, 2022, op. cit

to favour a particular aspirant who has already been decided that he would pay big money. Because delegates do not emerge as the people's choice and have no conscience of their own, money will remain relevant

In one bizarre case, National daily newspaper²⁸ in a report exposed a tale that after losing party primary election, a serving senator attacked delegates, asking for \$5600 refund. According to the report, pained by his loss a candidate regretfully lambasted a delegate thus:

> You also went ahead to collect \$5,600 for 7 delegates at \$800 each and N150,000 for hotel expenses collected from his house with your instruction by Wole Akinjo, CINCERO Akindiose and Oriola AKINWONMI on 23rd May 2022 at about 6am in the morning and you confirm delivery of cash to you on phone when the 3men got back to you for the 7 Delegates in your care to vote for him, when you know that you were not going to vote for him. You confirm that you never voted for him, this is a breach of verbal agreement with Sen. Ayo Akinyelure, an action that will not entitle you to be given a car after the election out of some cars already bought by him to be distributed after the primary to some chairmen and others he promised along with you.

On his part, Reuben Abati²⁹ embarked on an imperative review of echoes from party primaries and alluded to the view that delegates simply obeyed the law of the stomach – man must eat, and danced to the tune of the highest bidder. In his apparent view of the prevaricating shadows of the delegates observed the manifestations of what he termed as 'excessive "commercialization" and "obscene monetisation" of the primaries process. In his discourse of the primaries conducted so far and their fall-outs. He observed that:

> In Kaduna North Federal Constituency, for example, Adam Namadi Sambo, son of former Vice President Namadi Sambo, reportedly gave out N2 million each to 38 delegates, and yet he got only two votes and lost. He has since insisted that his money should be returned! In Ondo State, one aspirant senator in Ondo Central (PDP), Ayo Akinyelure, seeking a second term, bought vehicles for the party leaders. He lost. He has since asked that his cars should be returned.

In a similar direction, Sahara reporters³⁰ revealed that each delegate of opposition Party, PDP got over \$50,000 bribe as Atiku, Wike, others compete in corruption-ridden presidential primary. According to the report, former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, among other

²⁸ Nigerian Daily. "After losing primary, senator attacks delegate, asks for \$5600 refund, Lexus return." Newspaper, May 27, 2022.

²⁹ Reuben Abati., "Echoes from party primaries," Premium Times, May 31, 2022." Newspaper, May 31, 2022.

³⁰Sahara Reporters,. "EXCLUSIVE: Each Delegate Of Opposition Party, PDP Gets Over \$50,000 Bribe As Atiku, Wike, Others Compete In Corruption-ridden Presidential Primary." Newspaper, May 27, 2022.

presidential aspirants of the Peoples Democratic Party were in a battle of dollars splash on delegates, voting during their party's crucial presidential primary in Abuja. Sahara Reporters therein stated that top sources informed the news agency that on Saturday that Atiku, Wike, former Senate President, Bukola Saraki and Sokoto State Governor, Aminu Tambuwal, were competing in the splash of thousands of dollars on the delegates and it was only a matter of highest bidder. Thus: "Each of the PDP delegates has got \$50,000 for now; Wike, 15,000 dollars; Atiku, 20,000 dollars; Saraki, 10,000 dollars and Tambuwal, 10,000 dollars," one of the sources said.

The implication of the foregoing postulation of commercialization and monitisation of the process of political party primaries underscores the gravity of the impact of the delegates created new horizon in Nigeria's politics. Therefore, Abati's 31 approach is chiefly poignant to be stated. He proceeded to recommend that:

All the delegates who took part in the current primary process should be probed. They have made too much money and are beginning to misbehave, eyeing other people's women, and disturbing neighbourhoods; some have even bought new cars, and thrown celebratory parties. Their bank accounts should be scrutinized. The aspirants should be probed too.

In a seeming confirmation of the above stance³², it is observed that on Saturday, May 28,2022 officials of the Nigeria's anti-corruption agency known as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) stormed the MKO Abiola Velodrome – venue of the PDP Presidential Convention in search of suspicious distribution of money to induce delegates. What may be admitted, however, is that the presence of the EFCC at the PDP Presidential Convention as he observed has sent a strong signal that the current electoral process is corrupt.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper has been to unravel the perceived appeal, charm and attraction of the concept of delegate in electoral process of Nigeria as a nation and underscore the implications as an emerged perspective of the concept of democracy. To a large extent, it is demonstrated in this paper that democracy with all its variations as is practiced with particular reference to the horizon of political party primaries, makes it not too far to lend credence to the fact that delegates and their roles in the political parties primaries poses a democracy question and significantly is not - nor seem to be moving toward representative democracy in a which it presents the form of democracy through delegates.

The reality of democracy, however, is that all often, the range and magnitude of the problems confronted by democracy in Nigeria through party delegates are such that will necessitate measures that are likely to run contrary to the interest of representative democracy. The aforementioned concern essentially stems

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³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

from consideration of the traditional conceptual definition of democracy as postulated by Lincoln which asserts that democracy as "the government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is brought to the fore and emphasized however that in spite of the predominance of the traditional view of 'people' as been epicentral in the workings of democracy, Nigeria's experience as discussed in this paper points to the fact that the horizon projected by delegates through political party participation has vitiated the people content of democracy. Thus, the crux of the matter lies no longer on the matrix of "the government of the people, by the people and for the people but that of 'WITHOUT' the people.

In the light of the foregoing, this paper follows the footsteps of Lijphart Arend³³ to explain the delegate dilemma situated around John Stuart Mill's majority-rule criterion with the following words:

What at first sight may seem a remedy, is, in reality, a poison. To give a minority a negative upon the majority (which is always the case where more than a majority is requisite to a decision), is, in its tendency, to subject the sense of the greater number to that of the lesser. . . . Hence, tedious delays; continual negotiation and intrigue; contemptible compromises of the public good

Thus, what is immediately striking about "delegates" as featured in practice of electing candidates by political parties for elections portrays a seeming delegate democracy which is different in some regards from the "representative" democracy that has been upheld by dominant approaches to the study of democracy.

What emerges from the analysis of this paper is as encapsulated in Lijphart's held view. His view is that the principal worry is the fact, that minority (party delegates) veto power through what may be called negative minority power. To such end, delegates who are in minority as may be compared to whole citizens of Nigeria driven by primordial sentiments are negatively empaneled to make decisions against the wishes of majorities. It obviously in the light of the fore going becomes imperative to emphasize that considerations and re—considerations of delegate and their roles must assume the possibility and (sometimes, if not all times), of force in defense of those principles, values and institutions that are deemed essential to the survival of democracy in Nigeria

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