

The Remilitarization of Nigerian Politics

by
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Introduction

Now, when there is martial music heralding the arrival of another military government, there is a yawn from the populace, a yawn that says; "We have heard it before". Such cynicism is a product of experience and a sad commentary on the avowed purity and inviolability of the military¹

The military take-over of the Nigerian government in November 1993 finally marked the end of a futile eight year transition to civil rule begun under the Ibrahim Babangida administration. Under the new dispensation, announced by the head of the military junta, General Sanni Abacha, all democratic institutions, and other forms of political associations, including the activities of the two government-created political parties and the National Electoral Commission, were outlawed. Striking workers were ordered back to work, and the government threatened to deal ruthlessly with anyone who would try to test the will of the new regime.² In addition, with the suspension of the 1989 constitution, the regime undertook a plan to convene a future national conference to fashion out "a new and acceptable" constitution. The new administration, it seems, attempted to lay to rest the ghost of the still - born third republic, and its success in accomplishing that task is another issue.

But to most keen observers of the Nigerian political scene, the latest military incursion was not unexpected,³ because of turmoil, distrust, animosity that characterized relations between its different sub-units in the few months preceding the take-over. The fear of war and disintegration was rife, prompting an open call in some quarters for military intervention. However, if intervention was seen as a partial relief, the subsequent act of dismantling all existing representative institutions might not have been envisaged by advocates of the military establishment.

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This work is not concerned with the theory of military intervention. That, we believe, has been extensively covered elsewhere.⁴ Our objective is to analyze the events that led to this latest seizure of power and to examine, in that light, the place and role of the Nigerian military as an arbiter in political disputes, as well as the implications for the future of democratization and permanent military disengagement in Nigerian politics.

This work is divided into three sections. The first section examines the controversial June 12, 1993 presidential election as a precipitate of the army take-over. The second section discusses the Interim National Government (ING), and popular reaction to its implementation. It can be argued that the annulment of that election served as a catalyst to the violence that engulfed the country in the period immediately before the military intervention. We, however believe that the fundamental and structural defects of the entire transition to a civil rule program, both in its conception and implementation, eventually led to its collapse. The third section analyzes the "messianic instincts" of the new military junta, particularly given the prominent and influential role of its leadership in the past administration, and the events that led to the failure of the third republic. While we may not have answered all of the questions raised in the work, we hope that suggestions offered herein will help in achieving the goal of a sustainable democratic political culture in Nigeria.

The Controversial 1993 Presidential Election:

The Hidden Agenda

The ascendancy of General Ibrahim Babangida to power in August 1985 as Nigeria's ninth president followed a palace coup that ousted General Mohammadu Buhari. The latter had sacked the four year old Shehu Shagari administration twenty months earlier following the widespread decadence, corruption, mismanagement, and general lack of direction which characterized the second republic. The 1983 military putsch was widely received by the people because of the massive electoral malpractice which characterized that year's general election in favour of the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN). Its "landslide" victory in all the election, achieved by inflation of votes and intimidation of electoral officers, was largely a precipitate of violence. The desire for change by the people was also born out of their declining social and economic conditions, to which the government seemed not to have any immediate solution.

The goodwill and support which ushered in the new regime were, however, frittered away following an unprecedented display of authoritarianism, abuse of power, and disrespect for fundamental human rights bodies, student organizations, labor unions, and other professional bodies, became victims of government highhandedness and autocratic rules. Several draconian decrees were promulgated to coerce and domesticate civil society. Examples included Decrees 1 and 43, which suspended the jurisdiction of the courts in matters pertaining to all laws enacted by the regime, and curtailed the freedom of the press, respectively. A number of tribunals were set up to exercise substantial judicial power and to impose exceptionally heavy punishments, including the death penalty.⁵ Economically, the regime counter trade program merely compounded the sordid state of the nation's economy. In the midst of the gloomy relations between the state and civil society, the prospect of a return to a democratic rule was highly jeopardized. In fact, when the government gained control, it issued a decree banning all forms of political discussion relating to future civil rule in the country.

General Ibrahim Babangida not only capitalized on these inadequacies to legitimize his regime, but also offered a new approach to governing based on consultation, respect for freedom, and human rights. As a gesture of his ideology, he repealed the controversial Decree No. 4 (which drastically curtailed the freedom of the press), he released the two journalists jailed under the Decree, and he set free politicians detained without trial. In addition some of those convicted had their sentences reduced. He also promised a new program for economic recovery to revitalize the country's sordid economic situation. There was a promise for an early return to civil rule, which culminated in the formation of the Political Bureau in 1986. The body was charged with the responsibility of developing an acceptable political culture devoid of "problems of the past", notably, ethnic and religious politics, violence, election rigging and excessive monetary influence on the electoral process.⁶ With the completion of the bureau assignment, the ban on political activities was lifted in 1989. But following its refusal to register any of the emerging political associations as political parties, the government created the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Apart from funding the parties, the government also designed their manifestos and selected their administrative officers. Thus, the initial phase of the transition program was completed as scheduled despite numerous factors that militated against it. These included

two attempted coups in 1987 and 1990, several religious riots, numerous strike actions by workers, and political opposition to the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP).⁷

Elections for the local government councils, gubernatorial positions and national assembly raised hope for a return to civil rule in 1992. But instead, what occurred was the indiscriminate shift of the presidential election date. Initially planned for 1989, it was changed to October 1992, later to January 1993, and again to August 1993. The cancellation of the June 12 1993 election led to a renewed pessimism before the November 1993 coup. Also the use of the discretionary power (to ban candidates seeking elective posts) by the president and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) significantly helped to engender a culture of cynicism and apathy toward the entire transition program.

In addition, the winner-takes-all attitude of the political class is reflected in the massive rigging of votes at the party conventions, violence, blatant appeals to primordial sentiments, and the inducement of voters with money. This combined elements gave the government enough power to further manipulate the political process to suit its objectives. For instance, following the 1992 and 1993 abortive conventions of the two political parties, a new selection process known as "option A4" was implemented. This required that a person's candidature be ratified from the ward through the local government, state, and the national congresses of the party. Even when the method eventually produced the two candidates in the botched election, it was not without the malpractice of the previous methods. For example, while commenting on the 1990 conventions, Babafemi Ojuda said:

In both parties, it appeared the two major factors for victory or defeat in the elections were money and ethnic considerations. Some delegates owed allegiance to some candidates because they were ferried to the convention, housed and fed by some candidates. In spite of the N2,000 allowance doled out to each delegate by the federal government, most delegates were still beholden to wealthy delegates from whom they could make some money.⁸

Thus, soon after these conventions, a new law was enacted which empowered NEC to investigate the candidature of the two aspirants, disqualify them, and postpone the election "if necessary". Negative public opinion against the motive and timing of the decree led to its inapplicability

and the decision by NEC to conduct the election on the stipulated date. For instance, many saw the legislation as not only a ploy to stop the election, but also to terminate the transition program and thereby prolong the tenure of the military administration. The promulgation of the decree a few weeks before the election date gave no room for the selection of alternative candidates, and this tended to reinforce the above fear.

The legality of the election was to become a matter for adjudication following a suit institute against NEC by the "Association for Better Nigeria" (ADN), whose declared objective was to seek the extension of the Babangida's administration "by at least four years." The court stopped the election in its ruling, but that did not prevent the NEC from conducting it. In a televised national broadcast on June 11 1993, the chairman of the electoral body explained that the Presidential election Basic Constitutional and Transitional Provisional Decree No. 13 of 1993 had ousted the jurisdiction of the courts in matters relating to the conduct of the election. The successful conduct of the election led to another court injunction, obtained by the ABN, prohibiting the electoral body from announcing the results. The NEC's decision to comply with the latter order, after it had earlier ignored a similar one, ignited a nation-wide protest and legal battle which resulted in several counter-judicial pronouncements mandating it to release the poll results. In the midst of the uncertainty following this controversy the Babangida government announced at a meeting of the National Security and Defence Council (NDSC), (the supreme legislative and executive organ of the state) on June 23, 1993, its decision to annul the election.

Reasons for the Cancellation:

An Appraisal

The nullification has been attributed to several factors. In its first statement on the crisis, the government pointed at what it referred to as the state of "judicial anarchy", from which the country needed to be salvaged. This "new found desire" to guarantee the sanctity and integrity of the nation's judiciary, ostensibly, came out of the conflicting court decisions discussed above. However, events before and after the election tended to suggest otherwise. For instance, in the eight years of Babangida's ruler, there were several cases of gross violation of human rights and freedom, even in the face of contrary court decisions. Numerous decrees promulgated under the regime were known to have severed the constitutional rights of the courts to arbitrate on matters brought before them. Retroactive laws were

promulgated in total disregard for the principle of natural justice. At this time, the judiciary suffered its worst manipulation and desecration at the hands of the agencies of the state.¹⁰

In addition, even if the above reason is taken for its face value, the manner and timing of the decision raise other fundamental issues. For example, why was the annulment made on the same day that the appeal by NEC on the judgement of the lower court was slated for hearing at the Federal Appeal Court? Why did the government have to enact a new law prohibiting the courts from further interference in the crisis? More importantly, what is the role of NEC? Why did the commission suddenly decide to accept a court decision it had earlier rejected? This question needed to be considered against the background that the commission had relied on the same Decree 13 to conduct previous elections, even in the face of conflicting court judgements. Answers to these questions will help us to appreciate better the nature of the political crisis and the government's position in its resolution.

Thus, from the initial excuse of saving the nation from "judicial anarchy", the list of reasons for cancelling the election was further expanded. In a televised broadcast, the president outlined the following:

- (1) A 2.1 billion Naira campaign expenditure by the two presidential candidates.
- (2) A conflict of interest between the government and the two presidential candidates.
- (3) Election malpractice in virtually all the states of the federation.
- (4) Malpractice involving NEC officials, party agents and electorate.
- (5) That one of the two presidential candidates had "strong neo-colonial ties".
- (6) Proof as well as documented evidence of widespread use of money during the primaries as well as the presidential election.
- (7) Evidence of manipulation through the offering and acceptance of money and other forms of inducement against officials of the NEC and members of the electorate.
- (8) Conflict in the process of authentication and clearance of presidential candidates.

- (9) That the conduct of the election was against the interest of the National Defence and Security Council (NDSC), "which favoured a postponement by at least one week", to enable NEC to reach all the voters, following the confusion and uncertainty that followed the court injunction stopping the election.¹¹

One deduction that can be made from these reasons is that the government seemed to hold a predetermined notion about the poll, especially that its opinion seemed to be at variance with reports of local and international agencies involved in monitoring the election. For instance, the international Observer Team (IOT), in its report, did not only "commend NEC, the security agencies, electorate, the political parties", but also their candidates "for the maturity and decency" with which the campaigns were conducted.¹² Sir John Wheeler, a member of the IOT had this to say: "I have no reason to suppose that any part of the administration of the election was wrong, dishonest and in any way interfered with."¹³ The Nigerian Election Monitoring Team (NEMG), formed by the government, affirmed that, "NEC officials administered the ritual of voting with meticulous precision. These included, the authentication of ballot boxes, the actual voting process, the counting, announcement, and recording of results." More importantly the group commended NEC for the "orderly conduct of the election", and for "being diligent, dutiful and in the main, patriotic". The election, it further noted, "substantially minimized the pathologies of the previous electoral commissions", which it said, "augur well for the future of elections in Nigeria."¹⁴

Such diametrically different opinions on the election by independent bodies further open government condemnation of the exercise in question. We agree with Wande Abimbola that the issues raised by the president were "an afterthought",¹⁵ given the fact that the electoral tribunal set up by the government was not alerted, if indeed there were alleged violations of the electoral laws. In the words of Bukar Mustapha, "if anybody is contesting any results, it is not for the presidency to intervene. It is those who are aggrieved who should go to the tribunal and challenge the result."¹⁶ But in this case the government gave to itself the role of the prosecutor, jury and judge, which no doubt, casts aspersions on the fairness of its decision.

Concerning the allegations of huge campaign expenses, the offering on money, and other forms of inducement during the election, two issues readily come to mind. The first is that at no point was there any regulation limiting the campaign expenses of candidates. Secondly, the regime, more than any other entity spent more money by deciding to take the place of money and the place of the bourgeoisie in the political transition process. For instance, it cost the government N811.5 million to construct party headquarters in all the 21 state capitals and the 453 local government headquarters in the country. This figure increased with the creation of additional states and local government; in 1991. A total of N100 million was spent on the party headquarters in Abuja, the new Federal Capital. The 5,876 delegates to the national conventions of the parties were sponsored by the government, with each receiving a transport allowance of N2000. The government spent N44 million on registration of members into the two parties.¹⁷

These figure exclude monies spent on staff salaries, furniture, campaign expenses, a new registration of party members, the presidential election, and other institutions connected with the transition program, such as the Political Bureau, Mamser, National Population Commission, and the Constitution Drafting Committee. In fact, by preventing labour, students, radical intellectuals, and other popular organizations from participating in the political process, according to Ihonvbere, the regime succeeded in strengthening, rather than excluding the elite from the political process.¹⁸

The charge of "neo-colonial" ties against "one of the presidential candidates" is equally reflective of the contradictory nature of the regime. While it is true that both presidential candidates are part of the same bourgeois class, the Babangida regime, like every other military administration in Nigeria, represented the military wing of that same class, which has constantly intervened in politics on behalf of its civilian counterparts to stabilize and advance the long term interest of the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, we believe that even though the Nigerian armed forces have since the end of the civil experienced major structural and other transformation, their composition, in terms of power, privileges, and ideas, clearly reflects the class structure of the Nigerian society. The new class of millionaires in the military which emerged under the Babangida regime attests to the above fact. The Nigerian economy is essentially neo-colonial. The regime's Structural Adjustment Program, which is a design of the IMF

and the World Bank, has deepened the country's peripheral role in the international capitalist system. Its choice of the presidential constitution and the two party system were in line with the American model. In the same vein, the country's educational system has continued along that line.

Therefore, the cancellation of the election result seems unjustified as a struggle against the same neo-colonial forces and institutions that have conditioned the objectives and practices of the regime. Rather, we believe that the action can best be understood as part of an intra-bourgeois class struggle for control of the state. The personal animosity inherent in the decision is reflected in the press statement of the vice president that the military would not relinquish power if "a president-elect not wanted by the military" (See below). At a meeting with the diplomatic corps on July 6, 1993, the vice president elaborated further that, "government could not hand over to a candidate whose business organizations are creditors to the federal government", even though it was not part of the original electoral rules.¹⁹

This declaration further strengthens the argument that "the August 27 group", a powerful clique in the regime whose coup put General Babangida in power, and whose members have held important positions in the administration, "are sensitive about who succeeds the president".²⁰ The general idea is that having built a solid financial empire around themselves, they are conscious of their need to consolidate this financial base, so power must be transferred to someone who will guarantee their hegemonic status. The fear of the 'cabal' was further reinforced by the realization that the apparent winner of the botched election, Moshood Abiola of the SDP, with his equally vast financial empire and international affiliation with powerful multinationals and foreign governments, would not subsume his authority to the military class's whims and caprices.²¹ The Guardian, a British newspaper, once wrote that, "Brigadier-General Akilu, former head of Nigerian military intelligence, had sworn that "Abiola would only become president over his dead body" (See below). The paper further reported that "many officers indeed had cause to panic that an unfriendly successor could probe the military, expose corruption and ridicule the army".²²

Such conflicts, whether between the politician and the military, among politicians, or within the military, are primarily related to the control of the state which represents the dominant means of production. But the critical control which the military exercise over the means of coercion, and

the advantages arising from its organizational structure and resources have consistently enabled it to present itself as a more disciplined alternative to its corrupt, decadent, inefficient and disorganized civilian factions. This intra-bourgeois struggle, according to Pita Agbese, has eroded the fragile consensus of the class, because such specific policies as indigenization, privatization, and contract awards that materially benefit the class have allowed them to form formidable linkages among themselves and have also torn them apart.²³

Another significant aspect of the crisis was the ethnic dimension of the intrabourgeois struggle. The point has often been made that the cancellation of the election was necessitated by the desire to sustain the hegemonic power structure in favour of the Hausa-Fulani tribe.²⁴ The argument is based on the presumption that the election, if upheld, would have marked the displacement of this group, and the first ever enthronement of a democratically elected northern president". Austin Lyashere, for instance, believes that "there are some of these people and few players in the north who see government as big business both for them and their families", and that, "such people might have found it difficult to accommodate the potentials of presidential election that produced a president outside the area of their political influence"²⁵

While it is true that the two-party system helped to merge divergent interests and personalities across religious and ethnic groupings, it did not completely eradicate ethnic, religious and tribal factionalization, factionalization, jealousies or conflicts which have been the bane of politics. Of particular importance is the fact that the role of the Sokoto caliphate cannot be ignored in the political equation. In fact, one of the reasons advanced by the organizers of the 1990 attempted coup, and which informed their decision to "excise" the five dominant Hausa-Fulani states from the federation, was "the deliberate impoverishment of the people of the middle belt and the south... and the collusion (of the Babangida administration) with a corrupt, aristocratic, and dictatorial powerful clique".²⁶ But ironically, the attendant effect of the coup and the increasing fear of domination "hardened and toughened" the caliphate, making what Okey Ekeocha referred to as, "the possibility of its relinquishing power very remote".²⁷ The fact that the Muslim SDP candidate scored the least votes in the three dominant Hausa state-Sokoto, Kebbi and Katsina - which are traditionally regarded as the

seat of the caliphate, has been attributed to this hardliner posture of a group committed to retaining power in the north.

The late Abubakar Gimi, a renowned Islamic scholar, one declared that since the south controls economic power, it was only imperative that political power belong to the north.²⁸ It was in the same vein that Saleh Michika, former governor of one of the northern states, proclaimed shortly before the election that, as much as he personally admired Mooshood Abiola as an individual, the idea of a southern president was unrealistic.²⁹ Feelings that such pronouncements actually represented the opinion of the caliphate were reinforced by the positions of both the Northern Consultative Group (an assembly of some northern political and business elites) and the Sultan of Sokoto (the aristocratic head of the Hausa-Fulani), who called on the winner "to forget about the election".³⁰ The position of the "northern caucus" of the national assembly on the botched election is illustrative here too. For instance, on the day the House of Representatives was scheduled to pass a motion urging the federal government to declare the election results, and a winner, northern traditional rulers were allegedly "dispatched to speak to northern legislators in both parties of the need to prevent Abiola, a Yoruba man from getting the presidency".³¹ The fact that the House could not form a quorum to debate the issue added more weight to the allegation, and even more so when it is considered against the background that the SDO, which apparently won the election, also had majority control in the national assembly.

The tendency to perceive party politics in terms of office sharing is the dominant feature in intra-bourgeois struggle in Nigeria. For example, at their July 1990 national conventions, the parties had carved out party and potential governmental positions, among their members. The presidency, vice presidency, senate presidency, ambassadorial positions, national party chairman, etc., were in the words of Agbese, "parcelled out to particular areas in the country".³² But as events later showed, this power sharing arrangement, which was replicated in 1992, was to become the "Achilles heel" of the parties. For instance, in the SDP, the emergence of Abiola as the presidential candidate automatically meant the need to select the vice presidential candidate from the north. The resulting struggle between two leading contenders, Baba Gana Kingibe and Abubakar Atiku, both of who were former presidential aspirants, was eventually resolved in favour of the former. Kingibe's choice was however unsatisfactory to his rival camp led by

Shehu Musa Yar Adua, a former Chief of Staff under the Obasanjo regime. They argued that the interest of the Hausa would not be fully guaranteed under Kingibe, a northern Kanuri minority. Yar Adua's opposition was widely expressed, and many saw the group apathy toward the party's presidential campaign as a fallout of this.³³

Aside from the ethnic factor, the group resentment of Kingibe's choice was also attributed to the latter's alleged conspiratorial role (as the national chairman of the party) in the events that led to the disqualification of Yar Adua from the presidential race by the federal government. Also, Abiola's campaign pledge to choose the Secretary to the Federal Government (SFG), (generally considered as the "number three position"), from the eastern part of the country was seen by this group as the final act of marginalization of the north in an emerging new political order. The position of the SFG was meant to "compensate" the east which had earlier lost the national chairmanship seat to the "southern minorities".

The above events, more than anything else, demonstrate the narrow-mindedness of the Nigerian political elite on what democracy and democratization entail. In a situation where politics is rarely focused on issues, the tendency is to interpret it purely in terms of the distribution of political offices or a so called "national cake". The dominant position of the state as an instrument of both inter-and intra-class struggle, as has been pointed out by Ohiorhenuan,³⁴ not only makes the struggle for its control brutal and dirty, but it also transforms such primordial considerations as tribe and religion to issues of national significance.

The Interim National Government and Popular Reaction

If the cancellation of the results was envisaged to achieve any positive result, the aftermath was to prove its architects wrong. Initial reactions to the cancellation took the form of a mass outcry across the nation and beyond. They included pro-democracy movements, civil liberty organizations, market women, students, religious leaders, labour organizations and traditional institutions, all of whom urged the administration to reverse the results of the election. While the international community tended to differ in their reaction, US and British condemnation of the cancellation helped to reinforce local opposition and agitation.

This initial subtle response of the citizenry was based on the assumption that resorting to violence would merely prolong the military stay in office. The belief that the cancellation of the election results was stage-managed to provoke a violent public reaction, upon which state of emergency would be declared, was very prominent.³⁵ As pointed out earlier, incessant government ticketing with the transition program helped in no small measure to erode whatever confidence the people might have had in the administration. Allegations of a "hidden agenda" were reinforced by government insistence that conducting a new presidential election was the only basis for relinquishing power, given the limited time of less than three months until the proposed hand-over. This was considered not only an unrealistic amount of time for the parties to choose the new presidential candidates (since the two previous contestants were banned), but also to conduct their campaigns. But while the National Republican Convention (NRC) understandably supported the call for new polls, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) opposed it.

In the ensuing stalemate, an agreement was reached between the two parties to set upon a "national government", composed of their representatives, but with a proviso by the SDP that such an arrangement would be under the leadership of its presidential candidate and vice president. This agreement was contained in a joint representation made by the parties to the government.³⁶ Assurance that such a measure would help to diffuse the growing tension in the society was followed by the formation of the Augustus Aikhomu - led tripartite committee, which was composed of representatives of the government and the two parties and charged with the responsibility of working out the composition, tenure, and *modus operandi* of the new political arrangement. The committee's report was never made public, but feelings that the compromise between the government and the two parties was actually a failure became widespread. Shortly after a meeting of the Armed Forces Consultative Assembly, a group of senior military officers, the government announced its rejection of any arrangement that precluded a new election. Its argument was centred on a supposedly anticipated conflict of interest between an unselected executive coexisting with an elected legislature. Consequently, a new National Electoral Commission was mandated to set the guidelines for the conduct of the new poll in July 1993.

It must, however, be emphasized that there were pockets of resistance to the idea of national government in the two parties. Abiola, whose victory was annulled consistently opposed every attempt to jettison his "sacred mandate". This led to his diplomatic shuttle in Europe and the United States to seek comprehensive sanctions, including oil boycotts against the Nigerian government. Also, the "South-Western" (Abiola tribal base) caucus of the SDP was not only angered by the "trading away the mandate" attitude of the party, but it also felt betrayed by its (party) leadership, which was dominated by the Yar Adua faction.³⁷ The latter's position on the Abiula/Kingibe candidature had been pointed out earlier, and his support for a new election was largely interpreted as a ploy to facilitate his re-entry into the presidential race.³⁸

With the increasing tension and instability in the country, which was further fuelled by the seemingly successful attempts by the political class at localizing the conflict, it became apparent that a new election was not only impossible but also unrealistic. The questions of integration and cohesion assumed prominent positions on the national agenda. This prompted an "open air" letter to the president by the Arch-Bishop of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Reverend Abiodun Adetiloye, warning that, "history could pronounce that while a Gowon fought for Nigerian unity, a Babangida fought for its disintegration".³⁹ Chukwuemeka Ezeife, a former state governor, put it more bluntly: "We cannot abort June 12 (1993) without reverting Nigeria to a geographical expression, without reinvigorating the shackles of our underdevelopment, and without fanning the embers of our national disintegration."⁴⁰

In the same vein, agitation for a national conference to debate the future of "Nigerian federalism", which to some is the root of social injustice, inequality, and the domination of one group by another, gained wider prominence. While some specifically called for the dismantling of the federal arrangement, others echoed the need for a confederation that would give each ethnic group autonomous power and jurisdiction.⁴¹ The Governors of the NRC-controlled states threatened to secede if the stalemate was not resolved in the manner suitable to them.⁴² An aftermath of these primordial sentiments include the mass movement of people across the country "to their native homes for safety as the entire political landscape became awash with rumours and fears of war".⁴³ The open call for secession highlighted a new provision in the electoral law which required presidential aspirants to

demonstrate an unflinching belief in the "corporate existence of Nigeria." It also led to the introduction of a new law specifying the death penalty for endorsers of such ideas, all of which were reflections of a growing discontentment among the various components of the federation. In *The Tempo*, an editorial captured the mood:

The reaction the absurd act triggered, the social insecurity it created for the Nigerian people, the mass movement to primordial bases, the rise of ethnic distrust... are only frightening reminders of the mid-1960s. Whether these series of reactions to the poll annulment would breed a civil war of its own, whether it would lead to the dismemberment of Nigeria cannot be easily predicted for now. The mournful reality, however, is that our nation perches at the edge of a precipice from which extrication is difficult unless there is a readiness to confront basic truths and a readiness to talk with ourselves.⁴⁴

Coupled with the perilous economic situation of the society, reflected in an ever depreciating value of the local currency, a rise in inflation, unemployment, disinvestment, capital flight, and scarcity of basic amenities of life, political discontentment and frustration soon paved way to anarchy and disorder. Strikes, demonstrations, riots, arson, and mass destruction of lives and property became the order of the day. It was in the midst of this gloomy state that General Babangida announced his resignation and the formation of the Ernest Shonekan-led Interim National Government (ING) on August 26, 1993. It was a move the former described as his "personal sacrifice" towards the resolution of the political crisis.⁴⁵

If the ING, through the choice of Shonekan (who comes from Abiola's home base) as its Head was designed to placate any group, then it failed. Instead, it was confronted with a new crisis of legitimacy. While some state governors, especially those of the SDP controlled "South Western" states, specifically declared their non-recognition of the council, the Osun state legislature announced its own decision with a resolution.⁴⁶ Opposition to the new government centred mainly on the public's perception of it as a surrogate of the Babangida regime. Protest stemmed from the retention in the new council of some key members of the old administration whose role in the events before and after the annuler election have remained controversial. They included: General Sanni Abacha, defense secretary; Clement Akpbamgo, Attorney General; and Uche Chukwumerije, information secretary. The fear was that this hand-picked body would deny the council

freedom of action it needed to chart a new pattern of governance. Shonekan's chairmanship of the defunct transitional council merely reinforced this negative perception.

To the masses, the change of baton from the military to the civilian wing of the same bourgeois class merely complied with their characteristic marginalization in the mainstream of government and the pattern of "hijacking" of the popular movements by the bourgeoisie. For example, it is not by accident that in the 32-member interim administration, there was no single representative of labour, human rights groups or other similar non-governmental organisations. This was true even though protests against the political excesses of the military were spearheaded by these groups. Shonekan's attempts to win public support by freeing political prisoners, opening closed universities, setting up the Justice Maman Nasir Commission to probe the cancelled election, and promising to lift press restrictions turned out to be grossly inadequate. Popular destruct of the council was summarized in the following words of Gani Fawehinmi: "...political stability is rooted in confidence. The confidence of the people was lacking in the administration of shonekan, as it was lacking in the administration of Babangida... If the people have no confidence in the leadership, they cannot participate in the leadership's program."⁴⁷

In addition to a mounting internal opposition, there was an inherited international hostility spearheaded by the United States of America and Britain. For instance, in addition to suspending all flights to and from Nigeria. The US also suspended all forms of military assistance, including visa permits to government functionaries. The European Community (EC) also applied similar sanctions, including a review of aid programs, totalling N1.5 billion, and other forms of bilateral assistance.⁴⁸

One major by-product of the political crisis, one that changed the pattern of state-civil society relations in Nigeria, was the emergence of various groups and organizations with different leanings and persuasions, that were set to resolve the imbroglio in different ways. The hasty retirement of General Babangida was no doubt facilitated by the combined force of workers, students, and such pro-democracy movements as the Civil Liberty Organization (CLO), the Women in Nigeria (WIN), the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADL). In addition to these groups were the roles of

such professional bodies as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASSU), the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), and The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA).

Several popular organisations also emerged to support the crusade for democracy, and this was unprecedented in the history of the country. Some of these organizations include Ken Saro-Wiwa's Movement of the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Mike Ozekhome's Universal Defenders of Democracy (UDD), Ebenezer Babatope's People's committee for Liberty (PCL), and Olusegun Obasanjo's Association to Democratic and Good Governance (ADGN). Others included the Anthony Enahoro's Movement for National Reformation (MNR), Edataen Ojo's Media Rights Agenda (MRA), Ayo Opadokun's Committee for Unity and Understanding (CUU), and Pat Utomi's Concerned Professionals (CP). There are also Felix Adenaike's Association for Democracy (AD), the Ethnic Minority Rights Organization of Africa (EMIROAF), the Eastern Forum, the Northern Forum, the Western Forum, the June 12 Movement for National Unity and Democracy, the Revolutionary Army Council (RAC), Hizbollah Movement (Nigerian wing) the Middle-Belt Forum, the National Prayer Movement, the Committee to Total Freedom and Democracy, the Movement to Liberate Nigeria from Military Rule, and the Movement for the Advancement of Democracy (MAD). The last group, MAD, hijacked a Nigerian Airways plane in November 1993 and demanded, among other things "a probe into the finances of several elites, the resignation of the Interim Government, and the restoration of full democracy in Nigeria".⁴⁹

The MAD hijack operation was particularly reflective of an increasingly sophisticated culture of societal violence since the advent of military rule in Nigeria, which according to Dele Omotunde, the country has been forced to live with since 1985 when Babangida "quick-marched to the centre stage of Nigerian politics with his populist militocracy".⁵⁰ For while the regime promised a "new dawn of grassroots democracy", Omotunde further maintains, "a new culture of urban kleptocracy ably assisted by the ever present vultures of fortune" was bequeathed to the nation. It is this form of structural violence that engenders, within the populace, more sophisticated methods of conflict resolution. Baba Omojola articulated this view when he stated:

When the in-built principles which "check" and "balance" the interaction of the citizens and institutions within the polity are

ignored; when individuals inscribe their whims on a piece of paper and parade it as law; when the citizens cannot have their wrongs redressed according to accepted norms; and when the institutions of state are bastardized and vandalized, then people will look for more unconventional and pointedly forceful or violent means of making themselves relevant.⁵¹

Thus, in addition to the MAD episode, the RAC also circulated a leaflet in July 1993 outlining its plans of a revolution against the government to achieve the overriding objective of "entrenching sustainable democracy" and salvaging the nation from a "small powerful military political class".⁵² This goal of "eradicating the cancer in the society and its henchmen", the organization further maintained, was to be accomplished with "a bit of sacrifice for the shortest possible period of time". In the same vein the Hizbollah (Nigerian wing), which was fashioned along the lines of the Lebanon-based Middle East fundamentalist group, claimed that it had "fashioned its own way out of the political problem", and that "Nigerians would be shocked when it (Hizbollah) begins its own operation".⁵³

Also, a "rift" and "restlessness" were reported within the armed forces, as expressed by rumours of coups, killings, and dismissals. There is no doubt that over the years, politicization of the Nigerian military had resulted in the loss of the *-esprit de corp*, order, discipline and cohesion. General Garba Duba, the former Chief of Operations in the Army Defence Headquarters, conceded that, "the image of the Nigerian Army has been soiled by its prolonged romance with politics at the expense of professionalism".⁵⁴ Thus shortly after Babangida's resignation, General Abacha removed "close Babangida allies" from key positions, which led to widespread dissension and the voluntary retirement of some officers, including the former Chief of Defence Staff, General Dogonyaro.⁵⁵ The latter, in his resignation letter, threw a lot of swipes at (Abacha's) "malfeasant act" and personal "ambition" to perpetuate the military in power.⁵⁶ The state of acrimony and insubordination in the military reached an all time low with the purported formation of a clandestine organization, the Association of Nigerian Army Young Officers and Soldiers (ANAYOS). While warning that its "refusal to intervene" in the political crisis should not be "construed as a sign of weakness", the body threatened mayhem, which it code named - "Operation Aso Rock", against those it described as "emergency millionaire officers". While another group was canvassing for the reinstatement of General Babangida, a third was said to be rooting for an Abacha

presidency.⁵⁷ The head of the ING, whose purported resignation preceded the military take-over acknowledged in a valedictory press statement, "a great deal of restiveness in the military and instability in the country", and the military "believe that Nigeria deserve better"⁵⁸ This scenario, which Ihonvbere aptly described as "political irrationality, economic confusion and social decay",⁵⁹ provided the basis upon which General Abacha seized control of the government and assumed the mantle of head of state.

Between Babangida and Abacha:

Nationalism versus Opportunism

While one may be tempted to believe that the current military intervention in Nigeria derived from "the weak and ineffective political instruments for mediating conflicts and resolving social contradiction"⁶⁰ or "a proof that the society is as yet politically immature and unfit for representative institutions"⁶¹ the personal interests of the military officers has contributed significantly to this political atrophy. As was clearly articulated by S.E. Finer, military intervention (like Abacha's), is nothing but "an attempt upon feeble but nevertheless operative civilian institutions by a small group of wilful men armed with lethal weapons, nurtured in arrogance, and pricked on by pride, ambition, self interest and revenge".⁶² This assessment is predicated on the belief that as much as the "highly disturbed political situation" in Nigeria provided the basis for the new junta, other alternatives existed for the military to have resolved the political impasse. These include, either providing support to the interim administration, or aligning with the opposition forces for the installation of the democratically elected president. By promoting its interest above other contending forces in the society, and halting in the process the country's constitutional evaluation, the short-term gain (if any) is likely to be consumed by a longer-term catastrophe.

The general failure of the twenty-three years of military rule in Nigeria to generate a much-needed social change, in keeping with Claude Welch's assessment, has done a great deal to dispel whatever notions might have existed within the establishment that "their professional training, discipline, devotion, managerial skill, and incorruptibility gave them the ability, duty and even the moral right to save their (country) from the bickering and self centred politicians".⁶³ Their intervention, in Tony Okonedo's view, is "like the good health bequeathed an ailing by a quack physician who himself has a deadly infectious disease"⁶⁴ More than any other group, the

Nigerian military has contributed to the social, economic, and political plundering of the country. During General Babangida's eight years in office, Nigeria experienced its sharpest drop in living standards in recent history due to gross mismanagement, corruption, embezzlement of public funds, lack of accountability, and the development of a spoil system, which emphasized patronage to military men and their closest associates.⁶⁵ Apart from siphoning hundreds of millions of Naira (local currency) from the country's oil reserves, military men enjoyed a wide range of material gifts, monetary rewards, and questionable promotions.⁶⁶ Under the regime, the "art of settlement", a euphemism for manipulation, intimidation, domestication, incorporation, and bribery of opponents, became an attribute of statecraft. The moral decadence and profligacy that characterize his reign recently earned him the appellation, "Nigeria's Mobutu". This is a reference to Zaire's president, Mobutu Sese Seko, whose high level corruption, enormous wealth and dictatorial tendencies are notorious.⁶⁸

In the midst of these massive appropriations, urban squalor and rural decay remained significant features of the Nigerian society. Real income plummeted ten times since 1985 when Babangida took over the government, and wages are crawling behind. Amenities have deteriorated, though their costs increase daily. Agriculture is in a state of abject neglect, and imports are increasing, while exports are faltering.⁶⁸ In the words of Ray Ekpu, "the socio-economic triangle is getting narrower at the apex, denoting a small, fabulously rich minority, and the broader at the base denoting a greater pauperization of the masses and the systematic elimination of the middle class, the engine room of any nation's development."⁶⁹ The 1988 World Bank report indicated that Nigerians who lived in 1968 were better off than those who lived in 1988. The Bank also, recently listed the country as one of the 13 poorest nations in the world.

The decline in the economy has been further attenuated by a military imposed Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), recently described as "one of the most poorly run programs in Africa"⁷⁰ Currently, about 1/3 of the country's export earnings are spent on servicing its \$28 billion debt, and there is little left for any meaningful development projects.⁷¹ Other side effects of SAP are its attendant policies of privatization, commercialization, devaluation, desubsidization and deregulation, which have caused a growing inflationary rate (following the massive devaluation of the Naira), retrenchment of workers and an attendant upsurge in the crime rate,

particularly in currency trafficking and drug pushing. Hospitals are without drugs. Educational institutions are decaying because teachers and students miss classes to protest against a poor working environment, while illiteracy, hunger, disease, prostitution, and mental illness have reached an all time high level. The nightmare of incessant fuel (gas) shortage has become a reality as well.⁷²

The manufacturing sector also paints a bleak picture of a low capacity utilization, which dropped from 37 percent in 1991 to 36.36 in 1992. This is described by the World Bank as being below historical level.⁷³ The implications are that about 64 percent of the fixed assets of the various industries remain idle. The devaluation of the local currency and its attendant high cost of foreign exchange, have made souring raw materials, which are rarely available locally, problematic for the sector. This had made investment in the sector unattractive. In 1981 the total investment in manufacturing was N17 billion. This shrank to N2.6 billion in 1988, and it went down to less than N17 billion in 1990.⁷⁴ The nation's highly unstable political climate only complicated the problem of disinvestment as willing investors were not only scared, but repatriated their capital home.⁷⁵

Yet, the transition to a third republic, a most tortuous and expensive process, with the cost estimated at over N50 billion, did not only fail to engender the much touted "grassroots democracy" but also succeeded in "rolling the country to the cliff of disintegration and toad despair"⁷⁶ If political development is defined in terms of "popular participation and the building of legitimized political institutions",⁷⁷ it will be safe to conclude that Babangida's eight years of "socio-political economic engineering" was sterile in so far as political development is concerned. As it has been observed by Talukder Maniruzzamani, "military intervention creates a vicious circle that perpetrates the conditions of political underdevelopment"⁷⁸ "The period" he further maintains, "is usually a total waste as far as the development of political skill is concerned, for it restricts the flow of the political process and force would be politicians into a long period of hibernation"⁷⁹ Like Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser⁸⁰, Babangida experimented with some populist programs by inaugurating the Mass Mobilization for Economic Recovery and Social Justice (MAMSER), the Directorate of Food and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), and the movement for National Reformation. All of these programs, in the words of Ruth First, "were intrinsically unable to stir vitality in villages, factories and neighbourhood communities."⁸¹ Their

fascinating appellations aside, the programs turned out to be a monumental waste of public funds, particularly because of dubious and inflated contract award.⁸²

Also, the regime's human rights record further cast aspersions on whatever pretensions the military might have had about their salvaging mission. Taking advantage of the disorganization, greed, opportunism, and weaknesses of the political class, Babangida proceeded with a two-pronged project: populism and repression. His open commitment to human rights, release of political detainees, opening of prisons, and fraternization with the press and known critics became a mere integument for legitimacy. He proscribed the Nigerian Labour congress, and threw its leaders into jail. The Academic Staff Union of Universities was banned, and all professors were relieved of their jobs.⁸³ Newspaper houses were closed at the slightest provocation, and not a few lost their freedom and rights to Decree No. 2 which empowered the state to detain persons for a long time without trial.⁸⁴ At a time, the president was the head of the State Security Service, the Ministry of Defense, the Police Commission and the entire armed forces. He created, against public opposition, the National Guard, and he initiated several other programs to strengthen and consolidate the power and place of the military in the political equation.

The prospect of any significant change under the present situation looks very bleak. It is not only because the *dramatis personae* have remained the same, but also, there has been no shift in the socio-political and economic orientation of the predecessors. As aptly observed in a recent New York Times report, "This (intervention) was not about ideology or preserving civil order; it was about power and greed". General Sanni Abacha as noted in that same report, "has been too close to successive military governments which were corrupt, inept and truncated Nigeria's march to democracy."⁸⁵ He was part of the Babangida's eight years of misrule, serving in various capacities as the Chief of Army Staff, Defence Minister, Chairman Joint Chief of Staff, and Secretary of Defence. He played an equally prominent role in sustaining the regime to its end. Firstly, he had announced in a radio broadcast in December 1993 the overthrow of the four-year old Shehu Shagari administration, and the installation of Mohammedu Buhari as head of state. In 1985, Buhari's tenure was terminated in a palace coup, and Abacha also announced the installation of General Babangida as the first Nigeria military president. His third nationwide broadcast came in 1990

when he led loyalist troops against the major Gideon Orkar-led coup against the Babangida regime.⁸⁶ This active involvement in the decadence of the Babangida era negates whatever altruistic motives might have been attributed to Abacha's latest incursion into Nigerian politics. Rather his coming to power can be understood within the context of elite circulation in Nigerian government and politics.

Firstly, the new regime has not initiated any economic blue print different from those of its predecessor. In addition, there has not been any indication of its intention to deviate from the IMF imposed Structural Adjustment Program of its predecessor. The pattern of political recruitment and administrative style have also remained the same. For instance, Idika Kalu, whose role as both the Finance and National Planning Minister was pivotal to the Babangida's economic program, has been assigned the Finance portfolio under the current dispensation. Politicians, whose mismanagement of the second republic facilitated the 1993 Abacha-led army take-over, are also holding important ministerial appointments as ministers.⁸⁷ That the same discredited political class, some of whom were convicted and jailed, now constitute the "Think tank" of supposedly "corrective" and "salvaging" regime suggests that their initial overthrow and subsequent incarceration were either unjustified, or that there is a complete lack of genuine direction on the part of the government.

Also, following General Babangida's pattern, Abacha has re-opened media channels that the establishment closed in the wake of the crisis that attended the presidential election. In addition, Abacha appointed some known critics to important governmental positions, reduced the price of fuel, and reversed other similar unpopular policies enacted by his predecessor. For instance, Baba Gana Kingibe, apparently elected Vice President in the June 12 election was appointed a member of the ruling council and foreign minister. Olu Onagoruwa, the new Attorney-General, was a known anti-government lawyer, and had consistently been part of the radical opposition to all forms of military dictatorship in Nigeria. His appointment could therefore be seen as a move to placate the various pro-democracy organizations. Also, Iyiorcha Ayu, a former radical university teacher and immediate past senate president was in the Education Ministry. He was expected to bridge the ever-widening gap between the government and the radical Academic Staff Union of Universities.

All these are clear reminders of the various praetorian tactics of manipulation, intimidation, diversion, incorporation and domestication perfected under the Babangida administration. Furthermore, they are reflective of the greed, opportunism, sycophancy, and ideological bankruptcy which have been the dominant features of the Nigeria elites since political independence. Lastly, they point to a cardinal weakness of every military regime long recognized by S.E. Finer, namely that force does not automatically create right. Coups, he says, pave way for a series of counter coups, and to legitimize the regime, its leaders often devise a political formula or create a world view that tend to support a (false) sense of identity.⁸⁸ But as is clearly stated by Edward Fiet, it is in formulating ideology that military politicians fail most often. The reason is that, by believing that fundamental problems of underdevelopment can be reduced to simple and mundane solutions (such as the distribution of political offices,) military politicians "fail to espouse imaginative doctrines that will set men's minds on fire."⁸⁹

While it may seem too early to assess the performance of the the new regime, historical realities of military adventurism in Nigeria inform us that there is certainly "no light at the end of the tunnel" For instance, while promising a future democratic government in his maiden broadcast, General Abacha gave no specific commitment for such a transition. The press was cautioned "to be careful about what they report", and while pledging to run a "firm, humane and decisive" administration, Abacha promised to "deal decisively" with "any attempt to test his will."⁹⁰ These statements, if nothing else, are certainly reflections of darker days ahead.

Conclusion

While Nigeria, like most developing nations, seems confined to the whims of military dictators, the increasing wave of democratization in the world today is becoming a direct challenge to "every claim to rule by virtue of superior force". Rule by force, or the threat of such force, has proved to be inadequate as the Nigerian experience has clearly demonstrate. One point successive military adventurers in Nigeria have been forced to appreciate is that the political arena is not a huge barrack governed by a questionable command. They have learned, as Fawehinmi has noted, that "military might or decrees do not create jobs, but persuasiveness, hard thoughts, well-articulated and well-accentuated economic and political programs."⁹¹ The Nigerian military has been discredited, and as Kola Animashaun rightly pointed out, they

cannot remain "arbiters in the quarrel they overtly engineered."⁹² To him, democracy must not only be "allowed to make mistakes"; it must be opportuned to "correct itself, to learn, to totter and to finally work."⁹³

The fact must, however be stressed that disengagement of the armed forces from direct political roles, though necessary, is not a sufficient step in the process of democratization. Eric Nordlinger tried to distinguish between civilian rule and political democracy.⁹⁴ While military disengagement may lead to some kind of civilian participation in the policy making process, he argues that democracy is not a mere governmental system to be imposed. In most developing countries, such disengagement has come to represent the enthronement of Western-styled liberal democracy characterized by universal adult suffrage, regular elections, and partisan competition. We must, however, emphasize that the historical peculiarities of these countries suggest that democratization must go beyond these measures for it to be relevant to the masses. It must address the critical issues of the redistribution of power, politics, privileges, opportunities, and exchange in these societies. Democratization, according to Kenneth Banzon, is a "total process that integrates all aspects relevant to the improvement of the human condition", namely, "environmental condition, population growth, and its attendant food situation, the distribution of scarce resources, both within and between countries, human rights, the responsibility and accountability of international institutions, both public and private, and underlying ethical and moral criteria in gauging public performance by both individuals and institutions."⁹⁵ The ability of the various pro-democracy organizations in Nigeria to sustain their current crusade against militarization will go a long way in determining the attainment of these objectives. The international community, especially the developed countries and the numerous non-governmental organizations, must also move beyond cosmetic and half-hearted measures toward ending all forms of dictatorship in the world. This includes the imposition of enforceable political, diplomatic, and economic sanctions against such regimes. Nigeria's former External Affairs minister, Bolaji Akinyemi, has clearly noted that "the developed world must recognize the correlation between world peace and democracy, for peace and stability can only reign where democracy exists."⁹⁶

More importantly, demilitarization must have as its ultimate objective the economic transformation of the society, by focusing on the fundamental problem of underdevelopment. Political stability, as it was

further confirmed by the failure of Babangida's "political engineering", is not a function of the number of political parties. Neither is it guaranteed by the method of voting. It can only flourish within a context of mass mobilization, education, and economic security. These can only be accomplished when the government commits itself to the provision of the basic needs of the majority of the society. But the picture of the Nigerian economy can only be a recipe for further crisis and military intervention, given its monopoly of the means of coercion. As Okwudiba Nnoli correctly predicted:

"...The Nigerian economy will reach the inevitable dead-end of expansion. This has been the experience of the Latin American countries, India, Egypt and other Third World nations which have a longer history of peripheral capitalist development than Nigeria. Regional integration will only delay the time of arrival to the dead-end, but will not be able to bypass it... Only a development strategy that is fundamentally antagonist to economic dependence - (mass poverty, unemployment, food shortages and other forms of deprivation) and external control will break the grip of this inevitable stagnation."⁹⁷

This is the greatest challenge before the present set of military rulers, and in it lie the prospects for a viable democratic political order in Nigeria.

Notes

1. Ray Ekpu, "With Feet of Clay", *Newswatch*, May 7, 1990
2. See "Nigeria's Latest Military Ruler Bans Political Activity" *The New York Times*, November 19, 1993, p.A3.
3. See Pita Agbese, "The Impending Demise of Nigeria's Third Republic", *Africa Today*, 37 (3) pp. 401-430.
4. See for example, the works of S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, New York, Praeger, 1962; Constantine P. Danopoulos (ed), *The Decline of Military Regime; The Civilian Influence*. Boulder & London, Westview Press, 1988; Christopher Clapman & George Philip (ed), *The Political Dilemmas of Military Regimes*, London & Sydney, Croom Helm 1985; and A.O. Sanda, O. Ojo & V. Ayeni (ed), *The Impact of Military Rule of Nigeria's Administration*. Ife, Faculty of Administration, 1987.
5. See Rotimi Ajayi, "The State and Civil Society in Nigeria", *Philosophy and Social*

Action, 19 (4) 1993 (Forthcoming).

6. See *The Report of the Political Bureau*, Lagos, Federal Ministry of Information, 1987.
7. Julius Ihonvbere, "The Military and Political Engineering Under Structural Adjustment: The Nigerian Experience Since 1985", *Journal of Military and Political Sociology*, 1991, Vol. 20 p.122.
8. Babafemi Ojudu, "As in the Beginning... Money and Ethnic Loyalties Manifest in Third Republic", *African Concord*, 6 August, 1990.
9. Apart from newspaper advertisements, the ABN went further to paste General Babangida's porters on the streets of major towns asking him to rule for four more years.
10. For example, Decrees No. 2 of 1985; and 41 of 1993 clearly ousted the jurisdiction of the courts in matters addressed by the laws. Examples of retroactive laws includes: the Offensive Publication (Proscription) Decree 35 of 1993, backdated to January, 1 1993, and used to proscribe *The News Magazine*; the News etc. (Proscription of Prohibition from Circulation Decree 48 of 1993) through which five newspaper houses, *The Concord*, *Sketch*, *Observer*, *Punch* and *Tempo* were proscribed.
11. See *The Guardian*, 23 June 1993.
12. See Fred Gusha, "Uneasy lies the Head" *Point*, July 12, 1993.
13. Ibid.
14. See "A Vite for NEC", *Point*, July 12, 1993.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. See Ihonvbere, op. cit.; *Tempo*, August, 9 1993; and *The News*, February, 1993.
18. Ibid.
19. See "Government Meets Envoys Today", *The Punch*, 15 July 1993
20. See "M.K.O. A Step by Step to Capture Presidency", *Today's Choice*. Vol. 3 No. 44 August 25-31, 1993.
21. Apart from the numerous investment of the SDP candidate in the newspaper, shipping, banking and oil industries, he was a vice chairman (Africa and the Middle-East zone) of ITT, a powerful American multinational.

22. Quoted in "Nigeria's Military Resigns, Appoints Interim Government", *The Washington Post*, August 27, 1993.
23. Pita Agbese, op. cit.
24. See "Results Cancelled Due to Group Pressure", *Nigerian Tribune*, 2 July 1993.
25. Austin Iyashere, "Farewell to Peace", *Viva Weekly*, July 5, 1993.
26. See "The Voice of Rebellion", *NewsWatch*. May 7, 1990; "Sunday Coup: The Unanswered Question", *The African Guardian*, 14 May 1990.
27. Okey Ekeocha, "The Portrait of a Movement", *The African Guardian*, September 24, 1990.
28. *New Nigerian*, March 1, 1992.
29. See Festus Eriye, "The Mystery of Michika", *Viva Weekly*, July 5, 1993.
30. *Tempo*, September 6 1993; and *Vanguard*, August 16, 1993
31. See *Tempo*, September 6, 1993.
32. Agbese, op.cit
33. At the convention, Atiku had been allegedly "pressurized" by this Hausa-Fulani caucus to withdraw from the final balloting when it became apparent that he would lose the election. The game plan was to support Abiola, who in turn would "reciprocate" by choosing Atiku as the vice presidential candidate. His choice of Kingibe was therefore seen as an act of betrayal. See *Today's Choice*. vol.3 No. 44, August 25-31 1993, p.8.
34. John Ohiorhenuan, *Capital and State in Nigeria*, New York, Greenwood, 1989.
35. General Sanni Abacha, as the Defence Secretary actually threatened all state governors who fail to maintain law and order in their areas of jurisdiction with this measure.
36. See Amos B. Idakula, Idakula, "Facts About the Role of the National Executive Committee of the SDP on the Decision to go for an Interim National Government", *The Guardian on Sunday*, August 87, 1993, p.4.
37. See "Abiola Reveals His Dream for Nigeria, Promises to Guard Mandate", *The Guardian*, July 28 1993; and Abiola, "I Cannot Surrender My Mandate", *Viva Weekly*, July 5, 1993.
38. It is also noteworthy that part of the fall-out of the cancellation of the June 12,

- election was the lifting of the ban earlier placed on the former 23 presidential candidates, including Yar Adua, for their role in the allegedly widespread irregularities that characterized the November 1992 presidential primaries.
39. *Tempo*, 26 July, 1993.
40. See "Goodbye to All that", *The African Guardian*, September, 6 1993.
41. Edwin Madunagu, "Transition Snaps: National conference", *The African Guardian*, July, 29 1991; and Otegbeye, "Time for National Conference", *The Punch*, July 29, 1993.
42. The governors had in a statement titled, "Nigeria is greater", stressed that the annulment of the June 12 election was a coup, and as such must not be revisited. They argued that any revisiting would be in the form of asking Shehu Shagari, who was overthrown in December 1993, to come back and rule. For details, see *The African Guardian*, October 11, 1993.
43. See "To Thy Tents O! Israel", *Tell*, August 23, 1993; "Families Flee to Home State", *Sunday Champion*, July 25, 1993; Dan Agbese, "Cruel Hand of Faith", *NewsWatch*, September 13, 1993; and *The African Guardian*, September 13, 1993.
44. "The Way Forwarded" *Tempo* September 13, 1993.
45. The president Address to the joint Session of the National Assembly, August, 1993.
46. *The Guardian on Sunday*, September 5, 1993.
47. Fawehinmi, "The Future of Nigeria Hangs on June 12", *The African Guardian*, September 13, 1993.
48. See "America Maintains Sanctions", *The Guardian*, September 4, 1993; and *The Punch*, July 12, 1993.
49. Sylvester Olumhense, "Terror in the Sky" *Tell*, November 8, 1993.
50. Dele Omotunde, "Before the Fire Next Time" *Tell*, November 8, 1993 p.6.
51. Baba Omojola, "Colonial Economy Was Better Run", *Vanguard*, November 10, 1993.
52. See Adegbenro Adebajo, "In Their Own Ways", *Tell*, November 8, 1993 p.22.
53. Ibid.
54. See *The Guardian*, November 6, 1993 p.4
55. For example, the head of military intelligence, Brigadier Halilu Akiku, the Chief of

Defence staff, General Joshua Dongoyaro, the Chief of Air Staff, and some commanders of mechanised divisions were removed and replaced by suspected Abacha loyalists. The commander of the controversial National Guard, Colonel Abdul Mumuni was also removed.

56. Wale Akin-Aina, "Rumblings in the Military", *Newswatch*, September 27, 1993.
57. See *The Guardian*, November 6, 1993. p.4; Ade, ola Oyinlola, "Operation Aso rock", *Tell*, November 8, 1993 p. 13. Although the military denied the existence of ANAYOS many interpreted it as a device to save the badly damaged image of the establishment.
58. See "Coup Ousts Nigerian Leader" *The Daily Texan*, The University of Texas, austin, Texas November 18, 1993; and *The New York Times* November 18, 1993.
59. Julius O. Ihonvbere, "Political Irrationality, Economic Confusion and Social Decay: The Evolution and Prospect of Nigeria's political Economy" Keynote Lecture to the Aniona Association, Austin, Texas, September 25, 1993.
60. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, Cambridge, Havard University press, 1967.
61. S.E. Finer, *The man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, New York, Praeger, 1962 pp. 241-242.
62. Ibid.
63. Clause E. Welch, "Obstacles to Disengagement and Democratization: Military Regimes in Benin and Burkina Faso" in constantine P. Danopoulos(ed), *The Decline of military Regimes: The Civilian Influence*, Boulder & London Westvlew press, 1988, pp.25-44.
64. Tony Okonedo. "The Senate and political Death Warrant" *Sunday Vanguard*, November 7, 1993.
65. See *The New York Times*. December 2, 1993 p.A2.
66. For Instance the regime spent over N500 million in purchasing peugeot sedans and executive jets to some categories of military and police officers. See the Doff Okon, "Loan Gift or Bribe"? *Tell*, March 23, 1993.
67. *The New York Times*, December 2, 1993. The paper also reported that apart from a 50-room villa he built in his home town, the general is reported to have bought a luxurious home on the French Riviera.
68. *Newswatch*, October 4, 1993

69. Ibid.
70. Ihonvbere, op.cit. p.16.
71. See "Economy Grinds to a Halt" *National Concord* July 19, 1993.
72. See Chijioke Odom & Emeka Nwadioke "Hard Times, the Progeny of Political Impasse", *The Guardian* August 27, 1993; *The Punch* July 16, 1993; and *Tempo*, August 9, 1993.
73. "SAP Sucks Them Dry", *Newswatch* (Special Edition), October 4, 1993 p. 26.
74. Ibid. p. 28.
75. See "Business is Grinding to Zero" *The Guardian*, August 31, 1993; "Financial Institutions: a Boom gone Bust", *Tell* August 16, 1993.
76. Abraham Ogbodo, "What a Frightful Mess", *The African Guardian* (Special; Feature), October 11, 1993.
77. Thomas Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone: A Case Study African Solders in Politics* Cambridge Massachusetta, Havard University Press, 1976; Claude Welch Jr., *Solders and State in Africa, A Comparative analysis of Military Intervention and Political Change*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1970.
78. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Military Withdrawal from Politics: A Comparative Study* Cambridge Massachesetts, Ballingar, 1987 p.7.
79. Ibid.
80. Nasser (1952-1970) launched the three political movements for political mobilization, namely, the National liberation Rally, the National Union, and the Arab Socialists Union in 1953, 1957 and 1961 respectively. Non of these was however able to engender an enduring political institution. Like Nasser, Babangida also adopted the title "president", and insited on being addressed as such.
81. Ruth First, *The Barrel of a Gun, The role of Military in Politics*, London, Penguin, 1970.
82. See "The Food Crisis", *Newswatch*, March 13, 1989; and "Nigeria: Oil Rich, Poor people", *African Concord* Vol. 2 No. 18 August 2, 1993
83. He later rescinded the sack order on the university teachers when the futility of such an action became apparent.
84. Details of these human rights violation have been treated elsewhere. See Rotimi Ajayi op. cit.

85. See Kenneth Noble, "In Nigeria, Change - More of Same (i.e., Military)" *The New York Times*, December 2, 1993 p. A2.
86. See "Abacha's Third Coming" In "Coup that Failed: The Storming of Dodan Barracks" *NewsWatch*, May 7, 1993.
87. For instance, Samuel Ogbemudia, Melford Okilo, Bamanga tukur, members of the new cabinet have at one point or another been indicted for corrupt practices.
88. S.E. Finer, op cit, p. 17-18.
89. Edward Fiet, "Pen, Word and People; Military Regimes in the Formation of Political Institutions", *World Politics*, 25 (2) January 1973, p.251-55.
90. *The New York Times*, November 19, 1993. p.A3.
91. Fawehinmi. Op. cit, p.19.
92. Kola Animashaun, "Slowly, Slowly Please", *Sunday Vanguard*, November 7, 1993, p.7.
93. Ibid.
94. Eric Nordlinger, "Soldiers in Mufti, The impact of Military Rule Upon Economic and Social Change in Non-Western States", *American Political Science Review*, 64 (4) December 1970, p. 1131-48.
95. Kenneth E. Banzon, "Democratization: Myth or Reality", in his *Development and Democratization in the Third World, Myths, Hopes and Realities*, Washington, Taylor & Francis, 1992 p. 16.
96. See "Ainyemi Joins the Army", *The African Guardian*, October 4, 1993 p.8.
97. Okwudiba Nnoli (ed), "Path to Nigerian Development: Conclusion", in his *Path to Nigerian Development*, Dakar, Cordesria, 1981 p. 252.

Women's Access to Credit and Finance in the 1990s

by
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Abstract

This article is concerned with identifying some of the major factors that militate against African women's access to credit and finance for productive use. It is based on a research sponsored by the Ford Foundation through the Social Science Council of Nigeria. The research was conducted with the help of questionnaires and additional qualitative information was obtained from credit institutions through personal interviews. A purposive sample of 782 credit-seeking women was carried out at near urban locations in Anambra State of Nigeria, to assess their accessibility to formal sources of credit and finance.

The economic, social and cultural factors that mostly militated against women's access to credit and finance included high rates of interest, inadequate information about alternative sources of credit, illiteracy and cultural restrictions on women's interaction with largely male bank officials. These factors imposed a limit on women's investment activities and, in turn, constituted a constraint on their production potentials.

Introduction

Women in Africa are conceptualized as bad investment risks since they lack control over land and other properties which are traditional forms of collateral securities in support of bank borrowing. This inadequacy of their collaterals raises doubts about the viability of women's ventures. Women show awareness of those doubts by saving their money in a keg in the home for their personal expenditure profiles which depict frivolous and ostentatious spending. They accord low priorities to investment or bank overdrafts and, thus, have a poor bankable image. These environmental circumstances have put women in a position of relative economic disadvantage.

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