DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL RECRUITMENT: 
THE STUDY OF PARTY SYSTEM AND PRESSURE GROUPS IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract
Democracy is all about popular participation in deciding which party, group(s) and programmes influence government. Consequently, political parties and pressure groups have a most crucial role to play in any democracy. It has been argues that there can be no meaningful democracy without a properly functioning party system and pressure groups. Any imputation to the contrary opinion is misleading and artificial. It is like trying to pass brown water as tea. Political party and pressure groups constitute the heart of democracy. Finally, at the centre of the democratic idea is the notion of participation and recruitment which describes the extent to which individual members of society share, take part, or get involved in the life of that society. The aim of this paper therefore is to explain the factors and variables that makes democracy work. The objective is to analyze the importance of political participation and recruitment, focusing comprehensively on party system and pressure groups. The method adopted is structural functional approach. The paper recommends that it is only if we can conceive of democracy without people that we can overlook the relative role of participation and recruitment in democratic process.

Background to the Study
No doubt, nature has placed man under the governance of two sovereign masters; pain and pleasure. It was this situation that fires the imagination of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) when he wrote that, man's life in the state of nature is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". The insecurity of the state of nature arises from the quest by each individual for his own selfish interest. Consequently, man lived in constant fear of death. His desire for power and glory may tempt him to break his pledge. Since he is move to action by passion, desire and appetite and not intellect, reason and wisdom, a superior authority is therefore needed to restrain him. Such authority is found only in the state. And since the modern state is a welfare state, citizens must participate in decision making. But on the contrary, we found that every citizen cannot sit together at the same place to deliberate for the collective welfare. A system was introduced. That system is called democracy. The concept implies among other things, collective participation for collective benefit and interests. This could be achieved through direct participation or indirect participation. The latter is also known as representative democracy. Again, we found that the system requires participation and recruitment. Political participation and recruitment revolves around so many areas but this paper focuses on party system and pressure groups.

Introduction
Rhetorically, the paper ask: Can the electorates hold politicians responsible through election even though we have been told in practice and in belief that periodic elections are political ritual? No academic definition is needed. It is imperative to note that over half of governmental officials in any democratic regime are chosen through the ballot. This is
political participation and recruitment. However, the extent of popular control of
government through elections is seriously undermined challenged by so many factors and
variables. Although, voters help to select the men/women who occupy prominent
positions in government, voters do not order troops to Odi in Bayelsa State in 2001,
Zakibiam in Benue State in 2003 or regulate petroleum pump price. These are done by
other citizens who act as either politician or activist.

In order for the electorate to serve as mandates and for voters to exercise influence
over public policy through elections, Egwu and Jibrin (2005) outlines four conditions that
would need to be fulfilled.

1. Competing candidates would offer clear policy alternatives
2. Voters would be concerned with policy questions;
3. Majority preferences on those questions would be ascertained in election results;
4. Elected officials would be bound by the positions they assumed during the
campaign.

The papers holds a pessimistic opinion and contend that none of these conditions
are fulfilled neither in Nigeria nor elsewhere in politics and, consequently, that voters
cannot exercise direct control over public policy. The reason is predicted upon the
assumption that first of all, the parties do not offer clear policy alternatives. Both parties
agree on the major direction of public policy. They disagree over the means of
implementing public policy. No wonder the democrats and the republican parties in the
United States of American are describe as “like bottles with different labels but equally
empty” (McCormick, 1997). The US 2004 elections focus on issue such as homosexual,
abortion right or pro-life, terrorism, domestic security and the Iraq war. A more accurate
response is that while there is no philosophical principle or policy preferences that all
Democrats hold that are sharply different from what all Republicans hold. This paper
notes that voters decisions are not motivated to be valid, Egwu and Jibrin (2006)
recommends that the electorate must make informed policy oriented choices. This can
only be achieved through political party system and pressure groups. Dye and Zeigler
(1971) warns that even this has a limitation. The fundamental flaw is located in traditional
party. Traditional party lies, and candidate personalities are more influential in most
voting decision than any other questions. The result is that, when voters cast their ballot
because traditional party lies, their party loyalty dilutes their influence over policy.
Secondly, victory for the party of a candidate does not necessary mean that the voters
support that party's programmes. For instance, the Republican in the US over Iraq war, the
labour in Britain over Iraq war, the PDP in Nigeria over the incessant petroleum pump
price increase and the party's intra-party crisis. The summary therefore is that, voters are
inconsistent in their policy preferences and they frequently misinterpret, misunderstand
or pay less attention to policy preferences of a candidate. Consequently, an overview of
political participation and recruitment is needed for us to have an objective, balance and
constructive view of what democracy is all about.

In conclusion, if we are to make sound judgments in politics, we need to be able to
place political systems in their environments, recognizing how these environments both
set limits on and provide opportunities for political choices (Anifowose and Enemuo,
1999). This approach keeps us from reaching quick and biased political judgment.
Political Participation and Recruitment in Nigeria.

Historical variation of governments overtime, is a political regime (Almond et al, 2002). Consequently, the political regime is the structural-functional policy configuration governments take on at different times. We can generate and test hypothesis about the causes and consequences of political change by comparing countries at different historical periods just as we can compare the institutions of different countries in our search for political theories. The paper focuses on socialization, participation and recruitment with emphasis on political parties and pressure groups in Nigeria.

Structural-functionalism has been found particularly useful in the comparison of political systems. (Almond and Powell, 1996) argue that, every political system performs certain functions. Taking Easton's system analysis as a starting point, Almond and Powell looks for the functions which could be included among the input and output functions of all political systems. On the input side are the functions of (1) interest articulation, and (2) interest aggregation. On the output side are the functions of (3) rule making (4) rule-application and (5) rule adjudication. The function of (6) political communication is undertaken to inform all within the political system and outside of these diverse activities. Additionally, every system performs (7) system maintenance and adaptation functions through political socialization and recruitment of people (Almond et al, 2000).

Finally, the functioning of any political system may also be viewed in terms of its capabilities defined as “the way it performs a unit in its environment. The concepts of regulative, extractive, distributive and responsive capability are employed as criteria to assess how a system is performing within its environment, how it is shaping its environment and how it is being shaped by it (Anifowose and Enemuo, 1999). See annexure 1.

The three functions listed at the top of the figure socialization, recruitment and communication are not directly involved in making and implementing public policy but are of fundamental importance to the political system. We refer to these three functions as system functions, because they determine whether or not the system will be maintained or changed- for example- whether policy making will continue to be dominated by a single authoritarian party or military council, or whether competitive parties and a legislature will replace them. The arrows leading from these three functions to all parts of the political process suggest their crucial role in underpinning and permeating the political process. Political socialization involves families, schools, communications media, churches and all the various political structures that develop, reinforce, and transform attitudes of political significance in the society, (Lymman, 1999). Political recruitment refers to the selection of people for political activity and government offices. Political communication refers to the flow of information through the society and through the various structures that make up the political system.

The third set of functions, listed at the right of the figure, treats the outputs-the implementations of the political process. We call these the policy functions, the substantive impacts on the society, the economy, and the culture. These functions include the various forms of regulation of behaviour, extractions of resources in the form of taxes and the like, and distribution of benefits and services to various groups in the population. The outcomes of all these political activities, in a cyclical fashion, result in new inputs, in new demands for legislation or for administrative action, and in increase or decrease in the
amount of support given to the political system and incumbent office holders. These functional concepts describe the activities carried on in any society regardless of how its political system is organized, or what kinds of policies it produces. Using these functional categories, we can determine how institutions in different countries combine in the making and implementation of different kinds of public policy. All these translate into real political participation and recruitment.

Every political system has some way for citizens and social groups to express their needs and demands to the government. This process of interest articulation can take many forms. The most basic might be an individual making a request to a city council member or other government official, or, in a more traditional system, to the village head or tribal chieftain (Almond and Powell, 2000:66). Collective action by groups of citizens is also an essential part of the articulation process. In larger political systems individuals working together as a formal interest group are prime tools in promoting political interest. This is where political parties and pressure groups are useful. During the last hundred years or so, as societies have become internally more complex and the scope of government activity has widened, the quantity and variety of different forms of interest articulation have grown proportionately. Citizens work together to address local and national needs, ranging from the provision of clear water in a village to the passage of national clean water standards. However, before political institutions and political processes come into play, we are first members of a society. We interact with family and friends throughout our lives, we express our interests and needs, and we work with others to achieve our goals. These human patterns of social interaction carry over to politics. The forms include, voting in elections, informal group, social movement, direct contact and finally, protest activity.

If political participation is defined as paying taxes and drawing benefits from public programmes, then everyone is involved, for public policies provide benefits at every stage of life, from maternity allowance to mothers through education, employment and unemployment benefits, health care, and pensions in old age (Rose and McAllister, 1997). An election is the one opportunity people have to influence government policy directly. Every citizen aged 18 or above is eligible to vote. The wider the definition of politics participation, the greater the number who can be said to be involved in politics, at least indirectly. An estimated 64 percent of the population belongs to at least one organization that can act as an interest group. We can view recruitment into politics in two distinct ways: deductively and inductively. The deductive approach defines the job to be done and individuals are recruited with skills appropriate to the task; this is the route favoured by management consultants, (Rose, 2000). Alternatively, we can inductively examine the influences that lead people into politics and ask: Given their skills and motives, what can such people do? The constraints of history, institutions, and socialization make the inductive approach more realistic. The paper examines the significance of interest aggregation.

Political Parties and Pressure Groups in Nigeria

Democracies cannot function without political parties. Parties are expected to reflect the concerns of citizens, aggregate and mediate diverse interest, project a vision of a society and develop policy options accordingly (Egwu and Jibrin, 2006). They are supposed to inspire and attract supporters to their cause, their membership being of key...
importance in their claim to represent citizens. However, parties may well not live up to expectations regarding their services to citizens or quality of leadership (Fogg, 2003). They nevertheless continue to be entrusted with what is perhaps the most strategic responsibility of modern democracy-to prepare and select candidate for parliamentary and presidential elections and then to support them into positions of leadership and government.

Pressure group on the other hands, sponsor candidate irrespective of party affiliation and ideology. Consequently, modern political systems face a major and persistent problem: ensuring that ethnic, religious and other socially and economically distinct parts of their societies enjoy an equal opportunity to participate in the political processes and decisions which affect their well being and status. This problem can result in conflict, and undermines the democratic and peaceful management of social contradictions (Reginald and Maja, 2003). The harsh reality is that it is often the lack of financial resources which prevents the leaders and supporters of such groups (political party and pressure groups) from achieving political participation and recruitment through representation which would foster the democratic protection of their interests. Reginald and Maja (2003) argue the achievement of sustainable democracy demands that particular attention must be paid to the issue of political finance, or the financing of politics. This contradiction makes political parties and pressure groups imperative.

In Nigeria, political parties are organized and occasionally spread across the state of the federation. The structure of the bigger political parties includes; National, State, Local and Ward levels. Elections are held to elect their principal officers who run the party secretariat. However, this paper has a minority opinion as regards the issue of whether our political parties are vibrant. The reason is because, a vibrant political system has a free, and fair elections, a free press, and a variety of interest groups. Apart from this, political corruption and voters' intimidation and occasional vote rigging is a near absence. Our national election results generally does not reflect the preference of voters, whose political awareness make them easy virtue to manipulate political activity and literacy is high among rural areas, yet, turn-out at elections is high (Ekeh, 1989). The party system is more fluid than in many liberal democracies, with parties coming and going. (Egwu and Jibrin, 2006).

Apart from the aforementioned flaws, the paper notes that the Nigerian society has become more politicized, so more people have been drawn into the political process and the variety of their needs and demands has increased. Yet, parties and pressure groups are less dominant in Nigeria than in Europe and American mainly because there is much less party loyalty and because they tend to be based more on personality than ideology (McCormick, 1998). While the Nigerian electorates appeared to becoming issues-based, there were no signs that a real multiparty system was emerging.

This makes it difficult for our President, Governor, Senators, Honourable Members, Local Chairmen and Ministers to distrust the system. Without fear or prejudice to any legal court or institution, all our politicians lack unity and ideological coherence. One of such examples is that Nigerian politicians only prepare victory speech when they are preparing for an election, (Ojo, 2006). Worse still, interest groups have been formed in response, but they are weaker than their American or European counterpart. Consequently, Nigerian political leaders tend to see interest or pressure groups as disruptive and too narrowly
focused, (Egwu, 2005). Remember when the Vice President Atiku Abubakar described the NLC strike as a terrorist attempt. However, some of the pressure groups like (NLC, ASUU, PENGASON, NURTW) have responded with demonstrations, strikes and civil disobedience. It must be stated that political leaders, are particularly alarmed by groups representing class, religious or regional issues, seeing them as a threat to national unity. Consider the arrest of MOSSOB leader, the death of Ken Saro Wiwa, Dele Giwa, the arrest of Dokubo Asari, and OPC leader. The paper notes that in spite of all these, the pressure groups may actually offer the best hope of crossing Nigeria's social divisions, providing links between the masses and the elites, between the traditional and modern sectors. For instance, when the NLC went on strike over petroleum pump price increased, it was slightly reduced. Since some political, social and religious conflict regularly leads to physical violence, perhaps groups might dilute the tension making them moderate and focused thereby removing the structural violence. Structural violence in Nigeria refers to the invisible effects of poverty, inequality, and class oppression which have a psychological impact on the way Nigerians relate to their political participation and recruitment.

Significance of Interest Aggregation

How interests are aggregated is an important determinant of what a country's government does for and to its citizens. The factors that most interest us about government and politics-stability, revolution, participation, welfare, equality, liberty, security-are very much consequences of the pattern of interest aggregation. Through interest aggregation, the desires and demands of citizens are converted into a few policy alternatives. The consequence is that many possible policies have been eliminated and only a few remain. In addition, this means that political resources have been accumulated in the hands of the relatively few political actors who decide policy. The policy alternatives that reach this stage are serious matters for political consideration because they have the backing of significance sectors of society. A policy alternative such as the government taking over the steel industry production in the United States has never been "serious," because no group of leaders with major political resources ha favoured it, even though such policies have been implemented elsewhere (Reginald and Maja, 2003).

Narrowing and combining policy preference is easily seen in the working of competitive party systems. Of the many possible policy preference, only a few are backed by parties after the parties choose leaders and establish election platforms. In the elections, voters support some of these parties and thus shape the strength of party representation in the legislature. Even at the legislative stage, some further consolidation and coalition building takes place between party factions or party groups. At some point, however, most policy options have been eliminated from consideration. Either they were never backed by parties or the parties supporting them did badly in the elections (Almond and Powell, 1996).

In noncompetitive party systems, military governments, and monarchies, aggregation works differently, but with the similar effect of narrowing policy options (Ekeh, 1989). It may be that on some issues, aggregation will virtually determine policy, as when a military government or a faction of an authoritarian party can decide the government's program. In other cases the legislative assembly, military council, or party
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Politburo may contain several factions of similar strength that negotiate to determine policy outcomes.

One characteristic of interest aggregation in all systems is its degree of polarization. There exist consensual and conflictual political cultures. For examples the United States, Germany, and Britain were consensual, with most citizens preferring moderate positions. Italy, France, and Russia were more polarized cultures, with larger concentrations of citizens on the left and fewer in the center.

Ordinarily, we expect polarization in the policy-making body to resemble polarization in the political culture. In a relatively consensual society like Germany, the parliament is made up of mainly moderate and tolerant parties. In more conflictual Italy, the stalemate parliament was long dominated by two parties very distant from each other—the communists and the Christian Democrats (Almond and Powell, 1966).

But politics shapes its environment as well as reflecting it. Interest aggregation often alters the amount of polarization that the political culture projects into policy making. That is one reason why politics is so fascinating. Well-organized and well-led political parties might, at least for a while, be able to dominate politics and limit the strength of extremist groups in the legislature, as in the consociation model we mentioned earlier. Conversely, well-organized extremists might be able to appeal to the fears and prejudices of some groups and get their support at the polls, thus gaining more legislative strength in an otherwise consensual country.

Of course, authoritarian interest aggregation tends to create political power structures that do not reflect popular opinion. In a highly divided and conflict ridden society, such un-representative may be viewed as a great virtue. Leaders of military coups in many nations justify their overthrow of party governments by claiming to depolarize politics and rid the nation of conflict it cannot afford. Similarly, heads of authorization parties typically claim that their nation must concentrate all its energies and resources on common purposes and that party competition would be too polarizing.

One justification for democracy is that it leads political leaders to act as the people wish. In a polarized political culture, the cost of interest aggregation that reflects division and uncertainty may be seen as too high a price to pay for citizen control. As the frequent instability in authoritarian and military governments indicates, however, it may be easier to do away with the appearance of polarization than the reality. Cultural divisions may end up being reflected through military factions or intra party groups, instead of through party competition, and the citizens may end up without either freedom and participation or stability (Duvenger, 1987). To know when a political system is developed, underdeveloped or developing, Ake (1979) suggested two concepts. These were cultural secularization and structural differentiation. While the former describes a particular type of change in political culture, the later refers to a form of change in a political structure.

Consequently, the paper notes that the near absence of political participation and recruitment promotes and encourages dictatorial tendencies always exhibited by third world leaders. Bull (1999) described a tyrant in the following words:

"The tyrant terrifies his subjects. Spying balefully on the world from his strongly fortified palace, as sensitive to approaching prey or predators as a spider delicately balanced at the centre of a web, he dominates the life of all around him. He takes credit for the achievements of noble men who spend their substance on civic projects, like great churches
and other fine buildings. Entertaining the ambassadors of foreign powers at his own table, he makes decisions that affect the well-being of all of his subjects without consulting anyone except his favorites. He turns his entire state into a machine for his own profit and that of a few friends. And he does not shrink from robbing wealthy men of their possessions or pure young women of their virtue. All threats to his sole authority he resist with absolute ferocity”.

To avoid the aforementioned preposition, vibrant, resilient and ideological political participation and recruitment needs attention. This can be achieved through subtle campaign for political culture and socialization. This is predicated upon the assumption that in the battle of ideas, you can win unless you dialogue.

Possible Limitations to Participation and Recruitment

Every political institution is a complex of the relations of man to his fellows (Appadorai, 2003). It consists of the complicated network of groups and institutions expressing human association. Yet, it does not influence social life, but which owe neither their origin nor their inspiration to the state. Consequently, possible limitations to political participation and recruitment are a logical theory. While this notion is not motivated by the spirit of contraction, it pressure purposes such political consciousness in a people who are merely living in a state of nature as could only be possible in individual without democratic principles and values system (Appadorai, 2003).

Nigeria has been a highly politicized country, ever since independence, although alienation and frustration with the failure to develop stable, honest and responsive institutions are increasing evident. The paper welfare examines certain intrinsic variables that might impede the smooth and speedy acceleration of political participation and recruitment. Poverty is identified as the root causes of these possibilities that might confront and challenge the process. Other attributes, such as economic, social and political inequality are inclusively linked to poverty. The concept has a multipliers effects, one of such is structural violence and deep seated psychological debasement and illusions (Tawney, 1952).

World summit for social development programme of action (1995) emphasis that absolute poverty is a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs including food, safe, education and information. The report further argues that it depend not only on income but also on access to social services. This paper examines the various manifestations of poverty which includes lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods, hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited access or lack of access to other basic needs. Furthermore, it is characterized by a lack of participation and recruitment in decision-making and civil, social and cultural life. For instance, social discrimination exclusion or prejudice. It occurs in all countries a comparative study of Indian class system reveals that the caste system classified some citizens as untouchable. Their job includes washing dead bodies as a source of livelihood. The social mobility in India is not fluid but stagnant. The USA has the most robust class system as there exist social mobility. For instance, one can move from one class to another because of wealth and education, England has a unique but very conservative yet appropriate. The school attended (public or private), the kind of newspaper one read, the values preferences for political party and of course, asset qualities and differentiate one
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class from another. In Nigeria, money and patron-clientelism and access to political power makes the differences, (for a detailed analysis, see McCormick 2000, and Almond et al, 2000) no doubt, this is a serious and severe problem against participation and recruitment.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The process by which political decisions are made is at the centre of any study of political system. by analyzing the process constructively, objectively and carefully, one can identify the key individuals and institutions and see the way in which they exercise their political power and influence as regards.

Interest articulation, interest aggregation, rule making, rule application, rule adjudication, political communication, system maintenance and function. All these are described as political participation and recruitment (Ojo, 2006). However, the general level of participation in a society is the extent of which the people as a whole are active in politics, the number of active people multiplied by the amount of their action, to put it arithmetically (Mclean and McMillan, 2003). But the question of what is to take part in politics is massively complex and ultimately ambiguous. It raises the question of what constituted politics. The paper would, for example, assume that activity within a political party or an organization which regarded itself as a pressure group should count as political participation. Mclean and McMillan (2003) further argue that, there is an opposition problem about political losers. This implies that politicians must accept defeat with faith and when they do this, it is an aspect of participation recruitment.

There are at least, two aspects of influence in Nigeria, first is the effect of organized interest groups such as unions and trade associations and religious bodies (Mundt and Aborisade, 2000:76). The second describes the more informal channels of involvement through individual relationships that are often described by the term “clientelism”. These groups mentioned above according to Mundt and Aborisade, (2000) are especially durable and resilient for two reasons

(a) When political activity is repressed, they remain organized around denominational objectives.

(b) When an ethnic association might have to play a less obvious role. In addition, as in many other countries, religious institutions and associations have played an important part in Nigeria politics. The paper examines few contradictions.

Firstly, given that most of Nigeria's labour force is in agriculture, one would expect to find strong associational activity among farmers. However, the ethnic divisions in the country have prevented the formation of any national level farm organization (Richard, et al, 1987). Those groups that do exist are usually engaged in cooperative activities at the local level and have never been active beyond the regional level. More commonly, the interest articulation activities of farmers have been of the anomic protest variety that is spontaneous and organized or have the form of clientelism. The summation is an organization that is neither with cohesive interest nor inclusive. The paper recommends that for an effective, efficient, resilient and vibrant political participation and recruitment in any polity, there is a great need for the following:

- Democratic principles and values system should be vibrant and sustained;
- Political parties and pressure groups should be ideologically rooted, focused and devoid of ethnicity and religious correlation;
Economic development should form the central core of government policy thrust. This would eliminate poverty and other forms of underdevelopment;

Education should be given a top priority so as to enable citizen know their fundamental rights. This would fire their imagination to participate and give them psychological lift to recruit people into the arena of decision making;

Finally, citizens' inputs in form of supports and demands should not be subjective.

References


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