



Political Participation of youth, impact on democracy in Nigeria (2015-2022)

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A Ph.D. thesis submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Philosophy of Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.) in Political Science, in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja.

MARCH, 2024

Date of Submission: 24-02-2024

Date of Acceptance: 05-03-2024

ABSTRACT

This research examined political participation of youths, impact on democracy in Nigeria (2015-2022). The objectives of the study include to investigate how has the level of political participation among Nigerian youths changed between 2015 and 2022, and what factors have influenced these changes; to ascertain the challenges faced by Nigerian youths in their efforts to engage in political participation during the period of 2015-2022; to examine the extent to which the increased political participation of Nigerian youths contributed to the democratization process in the country between 2015 and 2022; to find out are the specific forms of political participation that Nigerian youths have engaged in during the period of 2015-2022; to assess how have government policies and initiatives aimed at promoting youth political participation in Nigeria between 2015 and 2022 affected the overall state of democracy in the country. In carrying out the research, qualitative method was used. 25 participants were selected across different youth political groups i.e. PDP New Generation; APC Youth Forum; INNPP Youth Mobilisation for 2003; Labour Party Youth Vanguard, civil society organisations like Advocate Youth Initiative, National Youth Council, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and National Orientation Agency. In gathering the primary data, Focus Group Discussion was used. In analyzing the data gathered, thematic analysis. The result revealed that the number of youths that participated in electioneering process in 2023 was far greater than those in 2015. Social media was found to influence the increased participation of youths, especially leading to the 2023 general elections. It was also

discovered that the level of educational attainment of youths and access to technology affect their participation in politics in Nigeria. The study found further that the not-too-young-to-run law has impacted the political developments in Nigeria. Since the signing of the NTYTR Act, there has been improvement in youths contesting for elective positions, but not as significant to make much difference. Additionally as revealed in the study, a number of the key factors hindering the political participation of youths have included poverty, resulting from the failure of the state to attend to the welfare of the people, which is the primary purpose of government. As such, the lack of adequate social provisioning for education, health, and decent housing has disadvantaged the youth from being fundamentally distracted by existential issues. The research recommends that political parties must increase the current percentage allocated to youths and see to it that the same is filled up during politicking. Ensuring that political parties conduct political processes such as primaries free of any cost for youth seeking political engagement.

Keywords: *Youth, Political participation, Democracy, Government, Activism*

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Practicing democracy in Nigeria has inspired various elections and the adoption of the Westernized system of governance and administration since its inception right into this fourth republic that commenced in 1999. However, the youth, considered the driving force of any societal development, may not have had it so well in this democratic journey so far. Nigeria was colonized by Britain and



propelled by subsequent agitation for self-rule and the practice of democracy, mainly championed by youths through various forms of agitation and scholarly movements. Nigeria eventually had her independence and subsequently self-ruled in 1960 and 1963 respectively.

Having a functional and sustainable democracy in Nigeria demands virile and well-empowered youth participation with viable skills put into use for greater productivity. As Nelsoni(2011) argues, democracy as a system of government is where every adult has equal chances of voting and being voted for without being intimidated or dissuaded by the pecuniary power of his opponents, has access to essential life achievement and fulfillment is based on knowledge and skills acquired not ascribed or allotted as in other systems of governance.

Democracy was and is still greatly admired and considered an ideal model for all nations that aspire towards structural, economic, and political developmental growth, particularly in the 21st century. Despite its challenges, democracy guarantees the popular participation of citizens, periodic free, fair, and credible elections, freedom of the press, independent and unbiased electoral body, proper representation, equality of citizens' rights, tolerant of the opposition, transparency and accountability principles, and the supremacy of the rule of law, which is most cherished values in most climates generally. Democracy should ensure equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to citizens based on merit as citizens freely participate in lawmaking and governance towards the growth and development of the society.

Recent According to studies conducted in the United Kingdom, young people (youth) are as devoted to political processes as their parents' era; nevertheless, they perceive a dearth of meaningful possibilities to participate in political life and feel alienated from formal public institutions and government (Henn & Foard, 2014). This study tends to disabuse most general public opinion that youths in this climate are more in tune with football, social media activities, gambling, and other social ives. However, if enabling empowerment is given, they may be more willing to participate meaningfully in governance, politics, and democracy.

The role played by youths in the electoral processes and the development of modern nation-states dates back to pre-colonial, colonial, independence and post-independence era. We reminisce with joy about how adolescents in their teens and early twenties, many of whom were enrolled in higher education institutions both domestically and abroad, served as the movements' stone tools during colonial Africa. Among these were the late Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikwe of Nigeria, Arnica Calbra of Cape Verde, etc. (Ojo, 2008). Having started so well, the youths of Africa were indeed poised to champion the rapid growth and industrial development of the continent as it is given a level playing ground. The likes of General Yakubu Gowon, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Shehu Shagari, Tafawa Balewa, Anthony Enahoro, Obafemi Awolowo, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Musa Yar'adua, to mention a few, were all opportune to lead at various capacities in their young age given the empowerment by the government at that time even though under a military administration.

As Babalola and Fasiku argued, the population that endures the most in any case of democratic instability and insecurity is the un-empowered youth, who often end up as victims of underemployment, political violence, thuggery, and the rest (Babalola & Fasiku, 2015). As the productive force of the economy, the youth should be a vital segment considered in the governance and policy-making process. This research was motivated by the researcher's passion and interest to see that political participation among the youth is the bedrock for enforcing democracy and good governance.

The majority of 13,000 respondents from 186 countries to a UN IANYD study conducted in August 2012 reported that the youth's most significant problems was that youths weren't given enough chances to actively participate in decision-making processes. Due to a lack of exposure and opportunities where young men and women feel excluded and marginalized in their communities and societies, making it difficult for them to actively participate in inclusive decision-making processes. The importance of capacity building, strengthening youth trust in institutions, and participatory frameworks were also emphasized. (UNDESA 2020)



Many youths desirous of politically participating in politics and wanting to partake in governance consolidation actively are discouraged and not empowered due to the nature and character of the political structure. Youths deserve more than what society offers at the moment in terms of political participation. Most of these young people are either not empowered with the right skills and orientation about politics from school or are not given proper empowerment to thrive and contribute to national development. Given the prevailing insecurity and bad economic situation in the country, this portends danger to the unity and survival of the government, especially when the people are able to consider and make legislative decisions and choose governing bodies (democracy) in a nation like Nigeria, no more than ever, making this study pertinent. Agile youths are readily available and constitute an army ready for recruitment to indulge in various vices ranging from terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, and insurrection, threatening peaceful democratic governance in Nigeria and the toll this might be taking on our democratic experience as it were. This study seeks to reverse this trend if these findings and suggestions are considered. Hopefully, this investigation will avail policymakers, academia, and the general public of knowledge to understand the symbiosis relationship between youth political participation and the democracy of any nation.

This investigation captures the cause-and-effect relationship between the two variables under study: Youth political involvement as an independent variable, which is considered to have an impact positive or negative or cause change to happen to the dependent variable being democracy in Nigeria. Democracy is the dependent variable receiving the effect of the cause of changes in the independent variable of youth political participation.

The research conceives youth political involvement as a related factor that may impact positively or negatively on democracy and the polity of the nation. The position of the youth in any society cannot be underestimated in that this category of the population remains the most energetic despite neglect and under-utilization in the country, in spite of their potential and capacity for positive information (Nweke, 2005). According to Baku, Ashiaagbor, Simon, and Alfredi (2008), chronic

unemployment among university degrees is not only a discouragement to education but may also be a recipe for societal instability if not addressed.

The question of what influences political behaviour and participation is one of the most researched topics in political science, with studies of resources, motivation, and recruitment networks (Verba, 1995; Scholzman, 2012), personality traits (Hibbing, 2013; Mondak & Halperin, 2008), contextual factors such as income inequality, and institutional structures being among the most studied (Hooghe & Oser, 2016; Lister, 2007). Scholars have researched various aspects of youths' political participation and its impact on the economy, youth restiveness and the nation's security, youth empowerment and socio-economic development, youth and democracy, and many more.

Despite the abundance of studies on factors influencing political conduct, empirical studies remain remarkably mute on a crucial topic of theoretical research in political science: the link between democracy, its tenets, and political behavior, and studies of youth political involvement and democracy with this research gap identified, it became necessary to explore political involvement and democracy in Nigeria, dating back to Aristotle's ideas on the political sphere. The contribution of the youth sector to society's human resources, skills, and nationalistic capacity in many elements of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial histories looks vital and pertinent to the development and sustainability of democracy in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The inability of most youths to meaningfully participate in the growth and sustenance of democratic process in the country invariably has hampered the pace of economic and political development of the nation and good governance. The nation's gross domestic product is reduced because of poor workforce development, thereby lowering the nation's per-capita income and gross domestic product.

In formal political processes of elections and voting, institutions like, political parties, elective offices and appointments into parliaments, and public agencies, parastatals, commissions and departments, young people are disproportionately underrepresented. The situation is far more challenging for young women and



women in middle-level decision-making/leadership roles (UNDP 2012).

Okibe (2022) in his write up noted that Nigerian youths face exclusion from political participation due to systemic disjunction, structural discomfort in the economic system, and the monetization of the electoral process, which favors older, wealthier people or people with political sponsors funding them. Although the government has made some efforts to eliminate the disparity in opportunities for political participation, persistent exclusion remains a challenge. *The iNot iToo iYoung iTo iRun* bill illegally opened windows of opportunity for youth, but the cost of party nomination forms remains a barrier to entry (Thisday 2018). How has this impact on democratic process in Nigeria is one of the factors that triggered this research.

Relatively, the involvement of youths in the 2015 and 2023 general elections in Nigeria is a commendable development that could serve as a model for other African nations to follow. However, there are questions about how youth can sustain their quest for inclusion in political parties and to what extent their support for a younger person will remain a decentralized struggle. The contending issues include the absence of internal party democracy, the role of godfathers and moneybags, and the absence of a government platform for youth integration in elective offices (Ayeni, 2023). The significance of the principle of 'one person, one vote' in safeguarding the credibility of an election cannot be overstated, and the participation of young people in formal, institutional political processes is relatively low when compared to older citizens across the globe. This therefore forms another factor that called for this research.

Similarly, the impact of limited youth political participation on democracy in Nigeria from 2015 to 2022 is a critical area of study that requires further exploration. The underrepresentation of youths in the political landscape can lead to a lack of diverse perspectives, innovative ideas, and a disconnect between the government and the younger population (Adeyemi & Adeniyi, 2021). Research has shown that when young people are actively engaged in political processes, they bring fresh energy, new solutions to societal problems, and a sense of accountability to governance (Onyeiwu et al., 2020; Okechukwu

& Ugwueze, 2021). However, the challenges faced by Nigerian youths in participating in politics are multifaceted and require a comprehensive approach to address, as a result, the need for this study is very necessary.

Additionally, studies have indicated that the lack of political education and awareness among young people, coupled with limited access to resources and mentorship, hinders their ability to engage effectively in the political sphere (Emeziem et al., 2021; Oladipo & Adesina, 2021). Also, the prevalence of violence, intimidation, and electoral malpractices in Nigerian politics creates a hostile environment for youth involvement (Ibrahim, 2019; Akinyosoye & Egbokhare, 2020). These factors contribute to a cycle of disenchantment and disengagement among young Nigerians, perpetuating the marginalization of their voices in decision-making processes (Abdulkabir et al., 2021; Okoli & Nwoye, 2021). Despite this, few studies have been conducted to address political participation of youths that have impacted on democracy in Nigeria between the period of 2015-2022.

1.3 Research Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate political participation of youths and its impact on democracy in Nigeria between 2015-2022. The specific objectives are to:

- 1) Investigate how has the level of political participation among Nigerian youths changed between 2015 and 2022, and what factors have influenced these changes.
- 2) To ascertain the challenges faced by Nigerian youths in their efforts to engage in political participation during the period of 2015-2022.
- 3) To examine the extent to which the increased political participation of Nigerian youths contributed to the democratization process in the country between 2015 and 2022.
- 4) To find out are the specific forms of political participation that Nigerian youths have engaged in during the period of 2015-2022.
- 5) To assess how have government policies and initiatives aimed at promoting youth political participation in Nigeria between 2015 and 2022 affected the overall state of democracy in the country.

1.4 Research Questions

The following study questions served as the basis for this analysis to determine the



difficulties and barriers to young people's political involvement in Nigerian democracy:

- 1) How has the level of political participation among Nigerian youths changed between 2015 and 2022, and what factors have influenced these changes?
- 2) What are the challenges faced by Nigerian youths in their efforts to engage in political participation during the period of 2015-2022?
- 3) To what extent has the increased political participation of Nigerian youths contributed to the democratization process in the country between 2015 and 2022?
- 4) What are the specific forms of political participation that Nigerian youths have engaged in during the period of 2015-2022?
- 5) How have government policies and initiatives aimed at promoting youth political participation in Nigeria between 2015 and 2022 affected the overall state of democracy in the country?

1.5 Research Propositions

- 1) The level of political participation among Nigerian youths has changed between 2015 and 2022, influenced by factors such as legislative reforms, youth movements like #EndSARS, and the Not Too Young to Run Act.
- 2) Nigerian youths face barriers such as high costs of party nomination forms, limited access to political spaces, and structural discomfiture in the economic system when attempting to engage in political participation.
- 3) Increased political participation of Nigerian youths has contributed significantly to the democratization process in Nigeria between 2015 and 2022 by challenging traditional power structures and advocating for inclusive governance.
- 4) Nigerian youths have engaged in various forms of political participation such as social media activism, youth-led movements, and contesting for elective offices.
- 5) Government policies and initiatives aimed at promoting youth political participation in Nigeria between 2015 and 2022 have influenced the overall state of democracy by opening up spaces for young voices and challenging existing power dynamics.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this research will be in multiple folds. To policy makers and

government officials: the study can help design effective policies and initiatives to promote youth political participation, thereby enhancing democratic development and inclusion.

To non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups: These entities can use the study's findings to develop targeted programs and campaigns aimed at engaging youths in political processes and advocating for their rights.

To private sector actors: Corporate entities can leverage the study's insights to foster a conducive environment for youth political participation, contributing to a more stable and prosperous society.

To the field of knowledge: the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on youth political participation and democracy in Nigeria, providing valuable insights into the evolving nature of Nigerian democracy. Also, the findings will inform an extension to what have been found out by previous scholars on this topic and similar ones thereby adding to the existing knowledge in the field.

The study adds to the current body of knowledge and continuous research on youth democratic involvement, its indicators, drivers, manifestations, and trends, as well as its potential and influence on Nigerian democratic progress. The study assesses the influence of youth political participation on democracy and development in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study adds to the discussion of available characteristics such as character, educational level, financial feasibility, and non-inclusiveness as barriers to youth political participation. The context and its potential are to contribute to economic, political, and social development, as well as the generation of consciousness and awakening, to promote an elite-driven political economy and democracy-building efforts, as well as the rule of law, which intentionally empowers youths to contribute to our democracies.

The empirical investigation of this work also touches on another contemporary issue of the twenty-first century: the increasing role of the Internet and communication technologies (I.C.T.) in political processes and their effect on youth awareness in all spheres of life. It also offers insights into youth ICT use patterns and how ICT can be utilized by young people as an extra platform and tool for political engagement and economic gain. Industrialization and development can also be used to mobilize



teenagers to make a meaningful contribution, demand, or support for a more democratic state, as witnessed lately in the NOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN law and the End SARS protest. The adolescents who wield this tool have the knowledge and skills required in our evolving democratic setting.

Sociology and Social Work: The study explores sociological aspects of youth political participation, offering valuable insights into the complex relationships between youth, politics, and societal change. **Economics and Development Studies:** The study's findings can inform economic and development policies aimed at promoting youth political participation and addressing the root causes of inequality and marginalization.

Finally, the study advances scholarly debates on youth political participation and democracy in Nigeria, providing a solid foundation for future research in this area.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of a study defines the range of issues the investigation will cover, taking into consideration the Time-Boundary (the time range for the examination of the variables and the reasons why this time is chosen), the Space Boundary (the range of areas or physical limits of the study) and the Content Boundary (the subject matter to be studied). I Firstly, the years of coverage fall within the period the Postgraduate scholarship research investigation is done. The research work was limited by diverse factors ranging from the duration allotted for the programme. Combining this investigation with our office and personal engagements, logistics at our disposal was a Herculean task demanding in that regard.

Fund paucity was another challenge to enable us to carry out more encompassing research. Inaccessible irrelevant materials are classified information from some quarters and sections from government departments, agencies, departments, and ministries due to the security situation in the country and the oath of secrecy.

This research envelops the tenure of the democratic administration under President Mohammed Buhari, giving us an edge to make an empirical comparative analysis with previous administrations in some cases where necessary. Lastly, this will enable respondents to questionnaires and interviews to give a clear opinion of what they know, leading to the

completion of the inquiry within a definite period. The range of areas in the scope covers youths within the age brackets of 18-35 years within the Federal Capital Territory using a convenience sample selection method. Lastly, owing to our inability to study the whole country due to insecurity, vastness, and other constraints, a sample size was chosen for the study as a representation of the total population of the country.

1.8 Research Methods

This research employs solely qualitative methods to explore the intricate dynamics of youth political participation and its influence on democracy in Nigeria during the period of 2015 to 2022. Qualitative data collection techniques include semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis.

1.9 Research Design

The research design adopted is exploratory and descriptive, aiming to understand the dynamics of youth political participation and its influence on democracy in Nigeria. To achieve this goal, a qualitative approach was chosen, focusing on collecting detailed information about individual experiences, perceptions, and opinions related to the topic at hand. Qualitative research methods are chosen due to their capacity to delve deeply into human experiences, behaviors, and interactions, providing nuanced and contextually relevant insights that may not be achievable through quantitative approaches alone (Islam and Faraj, 2022).

1.9.1 Selection of Fields

Supporters of Major Political Parties: Including members of PDP, New Generation, APC, Youth Forum, INNP, Youth Mobilisation for 2023, and Labor Party, Youth Vanguard. These groups represent the core constituencies of the respective political parties and provided valuable insights into the motivations behind their choices and the effectiveness of youth mobilization strategies employed by the parties.

INEC Officials: Members of the Independent National Electoral Commission play a crucial role in conducting free, fair, and transparent elections. By interviewing INEC staff, the researcher gathered perspectives on the challenges faced during the election process and assess the efficacy of measures aimed at enhancing youth participation.



Advocate iYouth iInitiative (AYI): iAYI icontribute isignificantly to iadvocating ifor igood igovernance iand ipromoting icivic iawareness. iEngaging ithwith iAYI ienabled ithe iresearcher ito ilearn iabout ithe iroles iin ifacilitating iyouth ipolitical iparticipation iand itheir irecommendations ifor iimproving ithe ielectoral ilandscape.

1.10 iMethod iof iData iCollection

Secondary idata iwere iobtained ifrom iexisting iliterature, ireports, iand iofficial istatistics ipublished iby ireputable iagencies ilike ithe iNational iBureau iof iStatistics, iIndependent iNational iElectoral iCommission, iand ivarious iacademic ijournals.

In icollecting ithe idata iused ifor ithis iresearch, ionline ifocus igroup idiscussion iwes iconducted ivia iGoogle iMeet. iThe ijustification ifor iusing ithis imethod iinstead iof iinterview iwes ithat ithe

igroup isetting icourages iparticipants ito ibuild ipon ieach iother's iresponses, iexplore idiverse iviewpoints, iand igenerate ia iwider irange iof ithe ideas iand iinsights. iAlso, idue ithe inature iof ithe irespondents ibeing itargeted iwho iwere ilargely isourced ifrom idifferent isocial imedia igroups, it imight ibe idifficult ito iarrange iphysical ifocus igroup ithwith ithem. iThe itarget irespondents iincludes ithe iSpokespersons/Chairman iof iyouths ifrom ithe ifour(4) imajor ipolitical iparties iwhe iparticipated iin iany iform iof ipolitical iactivity iin i2015 iand iin ithe ibuild iup ito i2023 iGeneral iElections iin iNigeria i(i.e. iPeople iDemocratic iParty i(PDP),iAll iProgressive iCongress i(APC), iLabour iParty i(LP) iand iNew iNigerian iPolitical iParty i(NNPP) iaged i18 ito i35 iyears. iThe istudy ialso iincludes iselectd iINEC iofficials, iand iAdvocate iYouth iInitiative. iThis iis ibroken idown ias ifollows:

Table 11: iTargeted iRespondents

S/N	Targeted iSubjects	Total iMembers i	Targeted iRespondents
1.	PDP iNew iGeneration:	2,185	4
2.	APC iYouth iForum	2,911	4
3.	NNPP iYouth iMobilisation ifor i2003:	945	3
4.	Labour iParty iYouth iVanguard	3,012	4
5.	Independent iNational iElectoral iCommission i(INEC)	500	4
6.	Advocate iYouth iInitiative	480	1
7.	National iYouth iCouncil	411	3
8.	National iOrientation iAgency	510	2
	Total	10,954	25

Source: iSocial iMedia iGroups; iINEC iPortal iand iAYI ireport, i2024

1.10.1. Selection iof iRespondents i

From ithe iabove itargeted irespondents, ipurposive isampling iwes iused ito iselect itwenty(20) irespondents ithat ithe iresearcher ibelieved iwll iserve ithe ipurpose iof ithis istudy. i iSnowball isampling iwes ialso iutilized ito iidentify ithe ileaders iof ieach iof ithe ihighlighted iyouth's ipolitical igroups iabove. iPurposive isampling iallows iresearchers ito iselect iindividuals ibased ion ispecific icriteria, iensuring ithat ithe imost iappropriate isubjects iare iincluded iin ithe istudy(iBernard, i2018). iSnowball isampling ihelps iexpand ithe ireach iof ithe istudy ibeyond ithe ioriginal ipool iof iparticipants(iDillman iet al., i2014).

1.11 iMethod iof iData iAnalysis

The imethod iof idata ianalysis iused iin ithis istudy iis ithematic ianalysis. iThematic

ianalysis iis ia iwidely iused iqualitative iresearch imethod ithat iinvolves iidentifying, ianalyzing, iand ireporting ipatterns ior ithemes iwithin idata. i

The iprimary idata icollected ithrough ifocus igroup idiscussions iwere itranscribed iand iorganized iinto imanageable iunits. iThe itranscribed idata iwere iread iseveral itimes ito igain ia icomprehensive iunderstanding iof ithe icontent iand idevelop ian ioverall iimpression iof ithe itopic idiscussed.

A icoding iframework iwes ideveloped ibased ion ithe iresearch iquestions iand iobjectives. iThe idata iwere isystematically icoded iusing ithe icoding iframework, iwth icodes iassigned ito isegments iof itext irather ithan iwhole isentences ior iparagraphs.

The icoded idata iwere iexamined ito iidentify ipatterns iand irelationships ibetween icodes. iSimilar icodes iwere igrouped itogether ito



create subthemes. The themes were given clear names that captured the essence of the theme without oversimplifying its complexity. Definitions were provided to clarify the meaning of each theme. Quotations from the data were selected to illustrate the themes. Sufficient context was provided to enable readers to appreciate the relevance of the quotes to the themes. The interpretations were grounded in the evidence provided by the data.

1.12 Limitations of the Study

The study's focus on specific groups of youths who supported major political parties and key stakeholders like INEC officials and Civil Society Organizations may introduce sampling bias. The perspectives of other youth demographics or individuals not affiliated with these groups may not be fully represented.

The findings of this study may be context-specific to the Nigerian political landscape during the 2015 General Elections and in the build up to 2023 general elections. Extrapolating these findings to other time periods or political contexts should be done cautiously.

Thematic analysis, while a robust qualitative method, is subject to researcher interpretation. Different researchers may identify and interpret themes differently, potentially influencing the results.

Participants may provide responses that align with societal expectations or perceived norms, leading to social desirability bias. This could impact the accuracy of the data collected.

1.13 Organization of the Study

This thesis is segmented into six (6) chapters.

Chapter One provides the background to the study, statement of the research problem, stating the research questions, objectives, hypotheses/propositions, significance of the study, scope of the study, organization of the study problems, limitations, and justification and the research methodology.

Chapter Two explores and analyzes the available studies and material offered in-depth to examine the literature review and theoretical framework for the research. The notion of democracy comprises numerous scholarly interpretations of the term democracy, defines its essential drivers, and explores the indicators utilized so far by

various scholars regarding Democracy, youths, and political involvement—an assessment of democracy and youth participation. The relationship between both variables was considered in discussing the determinants of youth political involvement: a critique for further justification of these scholars' input on the concept under study. In summary, this chapter examines closely the concepts of youth, political participation, and democracy. It takes a theoretical stand upon which discussions are hinged and their relation and role in democratic governance and development.

Chapter Three provides an overview for the researcher to discuss in detail the historical and/or thematic background to the key subject matter of the study, Youth political involvement, and its historical overview. The context for analysis of youth political involvement and its effect on democracy, youth political involvement ratio, and its challenges and opportunities in the future for the country at large. Historical development of the key variables in the investigation.

Chapter Four: To complement and further expand scholarly knowledge on democracy and youth political involvement in Nigeria, this chapter discusses the major issues and challenges with youth participation in Democratic processes and politics, analyzes and establishes concrete facts around the independent variable which constitute the key subject to be discussed in this chapter. With the aid of credible and reliable data, the key issues of the study was thoroughly examined, analyzed, and established.

Chapter Five: This chapter examines the variables' contributions/effects/implications, the independent and independent variables. The researchers aggregate the current state of the independent variable and examine the cause-effect relationships between the variables, considering key issues raised in the research questions. In addition, this chapter focuses on prospects and the conditions to improve the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Therefore, the researcher should also discuss the prospects by examining the inclining conditions for improving the relationships between the variables. Also, the prospect looks at the means by which the study's objectives are systematically met to overcome the identified challenges and make deductions.



Chapter iSix provides the summary, findings, conclusion, and recommendations

II. LITERATURE iREVIEW iAND iTHEORETICAL iFRAMEWORK

2.1 i Introduction i

This chapter centres on various conceptual views from scholars on the key variables under study with a view to support, critique, or identify areas that may be lacking in epistemological analysis. Also, the review of various related literature was done mainly on the key variables of youth political participation and democratic governance to give a rich insight into the understanding of the terms and their relationships.

In 1985, the United Nations General Assembly emphasized the crucial role of youngsters in play globally and urged international youth participation in development and peace. It is worth noting that the assembly approved rules for future planning and proper follow-up in the field of youth, which is unique for their emphasis on young people as a broad category comprised of various sub-groups rather than a single demographic identity (Udeh, 2008). This heavily places the growth and development of any nation on the political participation, empowerment, involvement, and coordination of youths towards gainful endeavors; thus, maximally utilizing positive energy, they will be channeled into harmful vices and criminalities we see evolving in most developing countries.

2.2 Concept of iYouth

Like many social science lexicons, the concept of youth has been one of debate and various interpretations without a universally acceptable definition owing to its variations based on geographical, political, or economic features. According to Atui (2018), according to Wikipedia, youth is the period between childhood and adulthood when one is young (maturity).

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary, the youth are a group of youthful, vivacious people with much energy and a passion for getting things done (Oxford, 2015). According to Carlisle's interpretation of this concept, youth, more than any other population group in any civilization, has the necessary traits to promote that society's growth because of their vigor, intelligence, and talents (Carlisle, 2015). It is also said to

have the aspect, vitality, vigor, and excitement of a young individual. Youth is neither defined as a period of time that falls into one of the designated age categories, nor can the end of youth be linked to any specific set of activities, like engaging in sexual experiences without consent. As a result, the precise definition of the age range varies. It is a situation that can potentially influence someone's level of dependency, which can be expressed in numerous ways depending on cultural perceptions (Atu, 2018).

Every nation has a different definition of youth. The Nigeria National Youth Policy and Plan of Action (NYPPA) posits that a country defines its youth relative to the prevailing objective conditions and realities (Babawale, 2011). Here in Nigeria, youth include all members of the Federal Republic aged 18-35. This age bracket forms the basis for our analysis since our case study lies within the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The period between childhood and adulthood is generally referred to as the young age during which a person prepares him/herself for responsible adulthood. It is the time leading up to the transition from a kid dependent on their family to an autonomous adult who eventually becomes a contributing member of society (Nigerian National Youth Policy, 2001).

The political, economic, social, and religious divisions of the time and location, as well as the people who define them, impact and determine how young are defined. Accordingly, the youngster is characterized as "regardless of age, under diverse conditions, and with little hope for future improvement." These diverse perspectives probably explain why, even in the Nigerian context, the three major official documents on youths define the age of youths differently. Those between the ages of 15 and 35 are considered youth according to the Nigerian National Youth Policy (NYP). The National Youth Service Corps scheme (NYSC) defines youth as anybody below 30, excluding anybody above that age from participating in the mandatory National Youth Service Corp. Specifically, section 2(2) of the NYSC Act, Cap. 184, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (2004) provides that: "If a person is over the age of thirty, he/she is ineligible to serve in the [Nigerian Youth] Service Corps."

According to the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, a



person is considered as "youth" if they are between the ages of 18 and 24. The Commonwealth, to which Nigeria belongs, put the upper age limit of youth at 29 years. In practice, the concept of youth is very nebulous to have a rigid definition. Although the African Youth Charter considers youth or young people to include every person living between the ages of 15 and 35 years (Jega, 2017), the United Nations (UN) defines 'youth' as persons between the ages of 15 and 24. The UN observes that people in

this age bracket make up approximately 18 percent of the world population, and the present generation of youth constitutes the largest ever in the history of youth. The best way to characterize it is as a developmental stage that transitions from reliance in childhood to independence and the realization of our interdependence in maturity. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a United Nations organization, as members of the community. The 38.1

Table 11: Youth Age across the Globe

Organization/Country	Act	Youth Age
United Nations	UNESCO Youth	15-24
Commonwealth	Commonwealth(2013)	15-29
China	UNFPA China	15-29
India	National Youth Policy of India (2014)	15-29
Singapore	National Youth Council Singapore	15-35
Indonesia	The Youth Law of Indonesia (2009)	16-30
Thailand	National Youth Development Policy (1997)	18-25
Malaysia	National Youth Development Policy (1997)	15-40
Uganda	National Youth Council Statue (1993)	18-30
Tanzania		
South Africa	National Youth Policy of South Africa (2009 - 2014)	14-35
Nigeria	Nigerian National Youth Policy	18-35

Source: Compiled by the Author
everyone is treated equally under the law.

Despite the differences in these opinions, it is generally accepted that youth symbolizes the transition from childhood to adulthood on the physical, psychological, and social levels. According to this description, numerous government initiatives take into people aged 13 to 25 years old (Wyn & White, 1997). However, this might be true in some developed climates, but not so in sub-Saharan Africa as the youth or young people are defined as "any human being alive and living between the ages of 15 and 30 years" by Pan-African Youth Charter (2006). This is inconsistent with English practice, which categorizes youth as occurring between the ages of 15 and 30 (Wokocha, 2002). Showing how fluid the boundaries that capture the youth bracket can be, although we perceive this contention in the transient nature of youthfulness.

Shishima correctly grasped this as well. The most incredible resource any country can have is its youth. They are not

only inappropriately considered potential leaders, but they also represent the most significant investment, human capital, in the growth of a nation. This explains why youth make up a significant portion of every social group. In factuality, their significance for every society's origin, maintenance, and growth is historically and culturally anchored. Almost no civilization has ever existed without the essential contribution of young people. Not even Nigeria was an exception. Its youth, the early nationalists, made aggressive efforts directed towards achieving these aims, which led to its emancipation from the apron string of colonialism (Olusanya, 1980). They are a useful indicator of a nation's capacity for self-sufficiency and reproduction. Their level of vitality, moral behavior, and social duties are favorably connected with their nation's progress. It comes with so much energy, exploits, and vigor that it represents, in most cases, the prime of one's existence, and so



many gladly will want to stay youthful as it were. (Shishima S.D).

Chapter 4 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria lays out the rights, obligations, and duties of youth in Nigeria. ⁴² They are covered by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the fundamental human rights of Nigerian people. Nigeria is party to several international charters, treaties, and conventions in addition to the 1999 Constitution which guarantee all the rights that apply to youths. The fundamental rights of youth, as specified in the constitution, must be ensured by the Nigerian state through its administration. Due to uniqueness, social, economic, and class definitions of what constitutes youth have been developed in Nigeria. These definitions define youth as a mental state and, as a result, may admit individuals up to and including the age of 40. Economically, the average young person in Nigeria experiences economic independence much later than is typical due to unemployment or empowerment, which prevents them from leaving the realm of youth until far after age 30 (Isa & Vambe, 2013).

Both recent and historical antecedents in the youth's sociopolitical past have an impact on their political participation. Scholars continue to examine whether and if there are variations in the desire for political participation in different contexts. If so, what distinctions between those with less education, those who belong to ethnic minorities, those who have lower socioeconomic positions, and those who are younger (youth) and their counterparts have restrained or stretched electoral, communal, and pro-activist activities? (Dalton, 2014, Leighley and Nagler, 2013).

Scholars have continually argued that the political participation of youths in contemporary politics in most democracies is faced with contradictions. On the one hand, some believe that much fewer youths are getting involved in politics and present empirical data to substantiate their claims, such as youths being the least likely to vote in general municipal or various elections. On the other hand, youth participation in politics forms a new optimistic paradigm as it is a new form of political participation (Weiss, 2020). Furthermore, the attitudes above or

opinions raise concerns regarding the role of youth in democracies. The two perspectives described are the different ends of a considerably more sophisticated line of research on this topic. Although research in this field can be perplexing, it is obvious that a comprehensive picture of both the extent and mechanisms of young political participation in democracies is inadequate, and urgent attention is required (Weiss, 2020). They argued that the drop in the number of youths registering and joining political parties is generally low, showing less interest in political participation.

Younger people are now given more attention with regard to the effects of globalization, civic education, and online and other social media platforms on their participation in electoral, social, communal, or protest actions that, more often than not, lead to political participation (Dalton, 2009; Milner, 2010). This has considerably piqued our interest in studying young people's political engagement and democratic government in Nigeria.

2.3 Concept of Political Participation

Another controversial idea in the literature is political participation or engagement. The study of political participation or engagement has come a long way in the last several decades. Although the contributions of other disciplines have broadened our understanding of the field, it is less evident what the fundamental meanings and underlying assumptions of the phrase "political participation" are. Below, we will review some scholarly interpretations in this regard. Citizens' engagement in the political process is known as political participation in choosing similar objectives for the community and the most effective means of accomplishing them. According to Akamare (2003), political involvement is a facet of political behaviour that focuses on how individuals interact with politics. This involuntary action might be taken directly or indirectly.

According to Verba and Nie, political engagement also includes "those individual private behaviours that are more or less directly directed at influencing the choice of governmental persons and/or the activities they do" (Verba & Nie, 1972, p. 2). Van Deth (2014) uses a variety of characteristics to characterize the idea. It is an activity that



meets the following criteria: 1) It qualifies as an activity if it meets the following criteria: 2) It is voluntary, not required by law or the ruling class, 3) It relates to individuals in their position as amateurs or non-professionals, and 4) It has something to do with the state, politics, or government.

Numerous surveys conducted in Nigeria indicate that even young people are distrustful of the government and political leaders partly because they lack knowledge about how politics operates and how to participate in it. As a result, there are fewer opportunities to participate in party politics, alliances, and other designated party-political groups (Blanchet-Cohen, Manolson, & Shaw, 2014; Corvalan & Cox, 2013). Participating in various levels of mainstream political activity is typically considered a quantitative study (Vromen, 2003, 2007; Landwehr, 2014; Nicholls, 2013).

According to Farthing (2012), youth political engagement could manifest itself in the following ways: Participation as a practice based on rights; Youth participation as a means of empowering them; Youth participation as a guarantee of effectiveness in services; and Youth participation as a tool for their growth. In addition to the traditional methods of political participation like voting and campaigning, holding a membership card of a political party, performing voluntary work, and taking part in civic responsibility, demonstrations, and community participation (Galsyan, 2019), new forms of participation have been documented in the literature (Peyers & Karbach, 2014). They include:

A. Type of protest called hacking and distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks aims to bring down online servers and limit access to internet services.

B. Slacktivism and clicktivism: These refer to a type of protest called hacking and distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks aims to bring down online servers and limit access to internet services.

C. Slacktivism and clicktivism: These refer to. Calls to click on certain URLs to bolster a particular claim are known as clicktivism and slacktivism. However, it might occasionally be voluntary. Online campaigning: The use of social networks to launch a cause and build a following is growing in popularity.

D. Crowdsourcing and crowdfunding: This method solicits ideas, comments, project designs, and financial assistance from the "crowd."

E. Liquid democracy and feedback: This new technology enables users to decide as a group by giving everyone the opportunity to cast a ballot and "democratically" select a representative and

F. BarCamp: This is an online conference system where participants design the programme and its sessions (Players and Karbach, 2014). The above is evidence that the concept of youth political participation is evolving and is, therefore, worthy of continued research and policymaking. (Akinyetun, 2021).

The contradiction implied that young people are engaged in new techniques of policymaking and conception, not that they are apolitical. This study supported Norris's previous ideas on political participation, which claimed that party politics are restructured through changes to the organization's membership criteria and collecting members (Norris, 2003). Norris looked at techniques of party-politics membership diversification to address the age range using an in-depth sociological analysis (Norris, 2003). According to Norris, lowering youth involvement in party politics to more routine achievements does not show more remarkable indifference toward non-participation but rather an irrational adjustment to the nature of party politics and membership.

According to Norris' hypothesis from 2003, the young are one age group that is moving away from conformist politics of allegiances to organizations and toward "principles of politics and choice." Concerning this study, Norris' theory provided three recommendations, starting with:

1) The pragmatic research of how young people view party politics, as well as the forms of participatory performances in which they are involved;

2) The argument is that the role of government has changed as citizens shift away from political involvement and toward mainstream, self-contained, and charity pursuits and

3) As citizens get more interested in consumerism, there is less of a separation between party politics and social performances (Norris, 2003).



Each person has a different level of involvement in the political system. Faladei(2008) classified political participants into six categories. Which are:

A. People who don't participate in politics are considered inactive.

B. Voting experts are the persons who only become enthusiastically involved in voting. They only care about voting and are unconcerned with other political activity.

C. Parochial participants: these people occasionally engage in politics. Only when it impacts their own interests, do people vote or participate in other political activities.

D. The communalist: These individuals participate in community affairs, including voting irregularly, but do not engage in political campaigning.

E. The campaigners: They take part in political campaigns, but they don't care about other regional or local problems.

F. Complete activists: They are very active in all aspects of politics. They interact with elected authorities and actively participate in voting, political campaigns, and community events. The individual's cultural, economic, political, religious, and educational origins are among the factors influencing political engagement are origins. Citizens' political consciousness and faith in the political system both have an impact on how involved they are in the political process.

Young people are interested in more significant concerns about their locality, nation, and international experiences(Nicholls, 2013; Maxim & Lenta, 2014; Galliot, 2015). Additionally, studies frequently discount the factors that spark young people's interest in topics and the types of engagement they take part in(Catlaw & Treisman, 2014). The writer posited three explanations of politics in our daily endeavors.

The Qualities of Independent and Responsible Citizens The situation in Nigeria has been made possible by empirical research, and autonomous citizens are congregating with connections to personal political interest and connection with the informal concern of families, friendship, associate unions, lifestyle, and identity(Catlaw & Treisman, 2014).

Autonomous citizens participate in ongoing struggles on a local, national, and international scale and address the more enormous implications of individual actions, such as declining to participate in community volunteer

work and promoting a discussion through activities and propaganda(Bennett, 2014).

He believes that because it is primarily issue-focused, autonomous people are oblivious to the values of irresponsible citizenship(Bennett, 2014). Political Engagement as a Project-Based Process Although Bang offers a somewhat different explanation, his narrative is similar to Bennett's introduction to expert citizenship. In the same vein, Bangi(2005) presented it as a response to network or system governance procedures, a feature of old modernity. The deliberate construction of participation that substitutes traditional united and antagonistic interaction is critical to Bang's notions of expert citizenship(Bang, 2010). He views the discussions as:

- i) Politics is becoming more and more intimate and introspective.
- ii) Political networks are increasingly promoting civic engagement rather than placing themselves against hierarchies.
- iii) From a seated perspective, interaction is structured around the options of engagement and disengagement.
- iv) Preferences and awareness of requirements work together to promote participation awareness, and the fundamentals of personal dependability and security are the most important factors in party politics(Bang, 2010).

In contrast to Bennett's Autonomous citizenship is characterized by its organizational structure and decision-making based on individual choices and matters that are both socially and personally meaningful. Expert citizenship is regarded as an ongoing framework for network governance. Additionally, Bang's argument focuses on the benefits of knowledgeable citizenry and the interplay of different new political party identities, such as the Everyday Maker. The Everyday Maker is purpose-driven, and politically motivated, but the process of interconnectedness brings civic events into order. It is project-focused and not focused on collective achievements, such as a social movement favoring individuals or small-party politics(Bang, 2010). Instead of creating new opportunities for the existing political procedures, the potentials of young people engagement or political involvement is observed via everyday activities as they seek to make a difference or affect change.



Everyday makers participate in activities like conventions and developing event schedules.

According to a survey, young people in Nigeria and around Africa are active in various union- and individual-based structures of involvement. It displays behaviours that may be associated with social groups, like creating or signing petitions and attending demonstrations and events (Anyanwu & Reuben, 2016; Menzies, 2015; Henderson, in.d.). Traditional volunteerism (Brown, 2015; Doorenspleet, 2012), informal engagement discussions (Cairney, 2015), and comparative new structures of deliberation, as well as communitarian action, are all activities related to human development (Landwehr, 2014; Miles, 2015; Vromen, 2008). Studies on human development for participation serve as the foundation for understanding particular engagement structures since some teenagers benefit from the ability of human development on engagement.

For instance, Arowosegbe's research in Nigeria studied the connections between young people's political involvement and development while developing a comprehensive definition of engagement (Arowosegbe, 2009). Norris considered the range of participatory activities, which can be carried out either independently or as a supporter of a group that promotes normative both conventional and unconventional engagement using technology to research and debate a topic, organization, or action (Faniran & Adeboyejo, 2004). She found that development enhances the role of establishing possibilities for young people's political engagement and makes detailed information and sharing feasible (Faniran & Adeboyejo, 2004). Accordingly, she defined the goal of e-citizenship initiatives as the normative ideology of thought (Van den Boogaard, 2016), contending that the liberal and communitarian style plays a significant role in bringing out in-depth knowledge and individual-led and group-led communication that youth show and express their political ideologies and become proactive. Norris also comes out as being hesitant to start a discussion on young people's and e-homogenized citizenship thinking. Alternative standards that help to interpret young people's political engagement and behaviours as inadequate will be made possible by the standardized ideology of youth-guided developmental chances as an independent

mainstream environment (Vromen, 2008). Vromen saw it as a study of the variety of ways that young people develop their political voice, engagement, and community-building skills.

Awolowo and Alukoi (2010) argued that the essence of political participation in any society, either civilized or primitive, is to seek control of power, acquire power, and influence decisions. This may be directly when voted in as an elected representative or indirectly as an electorate or a political party member. Invariably, participation in politics is key to the crop of leaders or representatives that eventually emerge in the process.

Getting involved in politics is one way to fulfill one's duty to assist the nation's political system and growth in general, with the opposite being political apathy. One of the essential components of democratic government is political engagement and participation, which may both ensure and invalidate the caliber of leadership that develops during the campaigning process. To further support this point, political engagement, especially during elections, is a prerequisite for representative democracy, according to Appadoria. This is the rationale behind the argument that even in situations when individuals feel free to exercise their other political rights, democracy cannot be claimed to exist because of a climate of fear and coercion (Appadorai, 2004).

The most widely acknowledged behaviours recognized as political participation, in Weiss's opinion, are signing a petition, joining a party, and casting a ballot. But the extent of agreements ends there. One needs to look back a few decades to find the solution to the question of how IPP can be defined (Weiss, 2020). Robert Dahl gave the initial indication of its contents in 1973. He argues in "Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition" that political engagement is necessary for contemporary democracies because it allows people to hold their leaders responsible (Dahl, 1973). Dahl did not, however, formally explain what he meant by participation. His definition only impliedly included behaviours occurring within a nation's predetermined institutional framework, such as consumerism (Stolle, 2005). Robert Dahl gave a sneak preview of what it would entail in 1973. He argues in "Polyarchy: Engagement and Opposition" that political participation is a crucial component of contemporary



democracies because it allows people to keep their governments responsible (Dahl, 1973). Dahl did not, however, describe this idea of involvement in detail. His concept only impliedly included acts within the predetermined institutional framework of a country, so behaviours like consumerism (Stolle, 2005). Also, Dahl's interpretation of political participation did not encapsulate informal activities like protest actions, riots, and strikes that are ways of showing dissatisfaction or non-approval of government policies, as the case might be.

Political engagement, according to some academics, "refers to private citizen activities that are more or less directly designed to influence the selection of political officials and/or the acts they take" (Verba & Nie, 1972, p. 2). In addition to voting and joining political parties, Verba and Nie argue that ordinary people can engage in politics in a variety of ways. Their proposed typology includes campaigning, voting, corresponding with governmental leaders, and engaging in collaborative or group endeavors. This term has opened the door for investigating political participation through non-electoral measures, such as protests, strikes, or petitions (Verba & Nie, 1972, p. 147).

Similar ideas have been put forth by Parry (1992) and Pattie et al. (2004), who, unlike Verba and Nie (1972), emphasize that political involvement need not only target governments but can also target other institutions or even companies (Weiss J). Thus, political engagement can have an impact on both the formulation of policies and the delivery of government services like health and education (Pattie et al., 2004; Fox, 2014). Brady (1998) adds that activities made by private persons must be evident, voluntary, and observable in order to be considered political participation, but he also emphasizes interactions between citizens and political elites.

Authors including Flanagan (2013), Norris (2002), Putnam (2001), Zukin et al. (2006), and Daskalopoulou (2018) have been working on the idea of civic engagement, which has several intersections with Political Participation research, concurrently with innovations in participation research. All types of citizen behaviour haven't always been examined using the notion of civic engagement. Going to a bowling alley is

a crucial sign of engagement, according to Putnam's "bowling alone," for instance. Because the number of indicators is always expanding, there have been claims that the notion is being stretched, making it unsuitable for academics (Berger, 2009).

Three aspects of the majority of authors' conceptions of political participation from the first phase of research are shared by all of them: (1) actions that target governments, institutions, organizations, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs); (2) these actions must be voluntary; and (3) private persons, not politicians and (4) their actions must be directed at these targets.

These three elements are the "hardcore" (Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970) of practically every contemporary definition of political participation. Following the seminal research's publication, Van Deth (2001) skillfully condenses the growth of Voting and campaigning were the main forms of political engagement in the 1940s and 1950s. But the latter, supposedly "conventional" modes of political engagement started to emerge in the early 1960s. Political involvement was then "mostly viewed as actions related with traditional conceptualizations of politics as campaigning by politicians and parties and with well-accepted contacts between individuals and public officials" (van Deth, 2001, p. 15).

These traditional forms were developed throughout the 1970s, while "untraditional" forms that did not adhere to the era's social standards also emerged. Protest, rejection, and fresh social movements like the pacifist or women's movements were some of these unusual manifestations (van Deth, 2001).

The divide between modern society's political and non-political sectors eventually vanished in the 1990s as the political involvement repertoire expanded to encompass "civil" pursuits like volunteering and social engagement (van Deth, 2001). New kinds of evolved political participation currently challenge the study of political participation.

What was once regarded as unusual or elite-challenging behaviours are now typical in the modern modes of political expression that convey political opinions through non-political behaviours. As a result, categorizing different forms of engagement into traditional and unconventional categories is no longer insufficient (Teorell et al., 2007). According to



García-Albacete, recent changes in people's political participation have produced the division of political involvement into institutionalized and non-institutionalized categories (2014). He also noted that these changes characterize today's political participation repertoire.

First, according to García-Albacete (2014), the creation of new community movements and advocacy networks "modified the agencies or institutions through which citizens are mobilized and participate." Second, as ties to political and civic institutions weaken, participation patterns are also becoming more individualized (García-Albacete, 2014). Third, the increasingly popular distinction between institutionalized and non-institutionalized political participation contrasts political engagement within an institutional framework (such as voting or party membership) and outside of it (e.g., protest or boycotting).

For any type of research on youth participation and engagement, the distinction between institutionalized and non-institutionalized forms of political participation is particularly important, as non-institutionalized forms of political participation are disproportionately more common among young adults. It takes time to get used to new types of participation or to be challenged by them. Online participation is one of the more recent innovations in this area. The debate over how and whether internet usage fits existing notions is still ongoing (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013; Dayican, 2014; Halupka, 2014; Kristofferson et al., 2014).

According to Morozovi (2009), it is an illusion of participation; however, Rojas and Puig-i-Abril (2009) regard it as "expressive participation" that constitutes a "sub-dimension" of political engagement (Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009, p. 1907). Because of this heated argument and the different possibilities of incorporating online involvement into current forms of participation, Theocharis (2015) warns that the entire notion of Political Participation may be stretched too far.

Van Deth (2014) has proposed a unique definition of political engagement in order to prevent this outcome. This definition should make it possible for researchers to "recognize a style of participation if [they] see one" (Van Deth, 2014, p. 15). Researchers should search

for participation that has the following characteristics in order to "see one": it is an activity; it is involuntary and not mandated by a ruling class or the law; it refers to individuals in their capacity as amateurs or non-professionals; and it relates to government, politics, or the state (van Deth, 2014). This definition is the very minimum; extra versions are added as follows: "two more variants based on the aim (politics/government/state or problems/community), and two based on circumstantial evidence (contextual and motivating)" (Van Deth & Theocharis, 2018a, p. 181).

This conceptual map yields five clearly analyzed ways to engage in politics (Theocharis & van Deth, 2018a). Thus, whereas instead of depending on the objectives or intentions of the persons, the first form deals with the activities' targets, whereas the second and third types (minimum definition) focus more on the participation arena than the results. The participants' objectives and goals are taken into account to identify a type of political engagement only at the very end. The fourth form is based upon which activities of political nature are carried out in contextual evidence. Thus, the authors demonstrate that "the benefit of applying these decision rules is not simply that we can differentiate between political activities that fit into categories with stricter or looser requirements, but also that we can systematically exclude those who do not meet the definitional requirements" (Theocharis & van Deth, 2018b). Based on this concept, online Political Participation could be recognized as a form of political participation.

This example also demonstrates, as is the case in the current literature, that Political Participation cannot be simply defined. Instead, it begs the question of whether a definition like that of van Deth allows for creating strategies for bringing the current conversation together. In addition, a comprehensive and well-defined definition opens the possibility of classifying recently developed literary genres. This appears to be an essential component of creating a definition of political participation that can be applied in the long run while considering constantly shifting social circumstances and behaviours.

A few academics (Milbrath, 1965) define participation as political activity and regime support. In contrast to the prevalent



Understanding, reading about politics is considered political involvement by these researchers (since it does not have direct effects on others). A topic of definitional disagreement on the subject is the extent to which actions that affect policy without being the actor's goal qualify as political activity. Verba et al. (1995) limit their analysis to voluntary action, which they define as participation that is not required—no one is forced to volunteer—and that receives no money or just minimal financial recompense. This is in line with the more widespread viewpoint.

Huntington and Nelson (1976), on the other hand, clearly mention autonomous participation and mobilized participation, which they describe as "action designed by someone other than the actor to influence governmental decision-making." Under that definition, a worker who attends a protest because his boss threatens to demote him otherwise would be considered a participant, even if the worker has no intention of influencing the government. This analogy perfectly captures the scenario of most aspects of participation recently witnessed in the country's southeastern regions with the imposition of a mandatory sit-at-home order for the release of Nnamdi Kanu, the head of the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), whom the authorities are holding for political reasons. However, distinguishing between a mobilized type of political engagement and activity and a voluntary form of political participation may be difficult, if not empirically impossible, because motives, personal interests, and drive impact human conduct.

Both are comparable when answering questions regarding the impact of participation on political outcomes. However, the distinction is irrelevant when focusing on the motivations for participation or the influence of participation on the system. Furthermore, according to Adekani (2010), individual participation in decisions that affect one's life is a necessary component of democracy in its ideal form. Citizens must be fully active in democratic procedures such as choosing rulers and effectively transmitting public policies and viewpoints in a democratic society. Any claim to a democratic regime or state must embrace a high level of competitive choice, openness, enjoyment of civic and political liberties, and political

participation by all pluralist groups in society (Arowolo & Aluko, 2010).

In a broader sense, political participation is essential to the success of any democratic process and what distinguishes a democracy from an authoritarian regime. However, several other forms of participation are not traditionally considered political participation but have the potential to influence citizens' political participation through various means. "By political involvement, we mean individual citizen behaviour intended to affect policymaking at the federal level" (Huntington & Nelson, 1976, p. 3).

As previously suggested, this could be a normal or unusual way to participate. As stated earlier, "By political engagement, we simply refer to conduct that has the goal or effect of influencing government action—either directly by affecting the drafting or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of persons who create those policies" (Verba, 1995, p. 138). The limitation on private individuals is intended to omit from the idea of action carried out in their official position by those who make a living off of politics and government. However, separating private life from a professional or official life may not be appropriate in actual practice, especially in most climates, while trying to comprehend political engagement. Security officers, those in political office, government representatives, and most recently academics, had all engaged in various forms of political activity.

For example, Verba and other academic publications may have purposefully ignored the political protest, riots, and strike actions, that is, engagement in behaviours outside of recognized conventional norms or irregular engagement, including some deemed unlawful. Given the irregularity of protests and uprisings in the actual world, this reasoning was problematic by the 1970s. A resurgence of interest in relative deprivation resulted from studying political violence and revolution. See (Revolution). However, many protests do not include violence. See (Political Protest & Civil Disobedience).

A combination of academics from Europe as well as the United States started the Political Action Project, a global investigation into protest. In 1973–74, their study was carried out in Austria, West



iGermany, ithe iNetherlands, ithe iUnited iStates, iand iGreat iBritain; itwo iyears ilater, ithey ialso iconducted ithe isame isurvey iin iItaly, iSwitzerland, iand iFinland, iand iin i1979–80, iit iwas irepeated iby ithe isame iteam iin ithe ifirst ithree inations. iThe ifindings iwere ipublished iin iseveral ijournals, iincluding iPolitical iActioni(Barnes, i1979), iContinuities iin iPolitical iAction i(Jennings, i1989), iand iothers.

One iresearch igoal iwasa ito icomprehend ihow itradiation iinvolvement iand iprotest iare irelated. iThe iproject ion iPolitical iAction iunequivocally iestablished ithat iconventional iand iprotest iinvolvement iwere icomplementary irather ithaniinterchangeable ibecause ia isizable ienough inumber iof ipeople iengaged iin iconventional ipolitics iwere ialso iengaging iin iprotest. iIn icontrast ito itheir ipredecessors, ithe iPolitical iAction istudies idemonstrated ithat idifferences iin ivalues iinfluence iboth iwhe iwill iparticipate iin iactivism iand ihow ithey iwill ido iso. iParticularly, ipeople iwhe ihold ipost-materialist iideals iare imore iengaged iand iinclined ito iprotest ithan ipeople iwhe ihave imaterialistic ivalues.

Adelekan(i2010) icited iEakin, iwhe idefined ipolitical iinvolvement ias ithe iaction iby iwhe ia iperson iparticipates iin icommunity ipolitics iand ihas ithe iaauthority ito iestablish ithe isociety's imutual iobjectives iand ithe imost ieffective imeans iof iachieving ithe igoals. iElite iaction, ion ithe iother ihand, ihas ithe ipotential ito isignificantly ialter ithe ilevel iof iparticipation iby iinfluencing iplayer iinvolvement iand ienrollment. iElected ielites iclearly ido ithe ito iget icomplete icontrast iof ithe istate's iapparatus ias iwhe ia icontrast iof ithe ipublic iand, ias ia irest, isupport. iThey iaccomplish ithe iby iproviding itools ito ifacilitate iinvolvementi(such ichild icare, itransportation ito ithe ipolls, ior iguidance ion iwhat issues ito isupport).

Leaders imake idirect ior iindirect icontrast iwhe ifollowers ito irequest iaction, iinfluence, iand imotivate iinvolvement. iBy ielevating ithe ipolitical istakes iin ithe ipublic idiscourse, ipublic iawareness, iand imedia ispin, ithe ielites ican iincrease iengagement. iThey ican ialso isupport icompetition iand iengagements iby icommunicating imessages ito ithe ilisteners iand ielectorates ithat imay ilead ito ilegitimacy ior iinterest iin ivoting iin ia iparticular ipattern. iToday's imass imedia ifills ia iposition istrikingly icomparable ito ia ileader. iThey iframe ichallenges iand ihave ia isignificant iimpact ion iengagement iand irecruiting, isometimes iin ia inegative iway.

iHowever, ithe iobjectives idiffer ifrom ithe iof those iof ileaders isince ithe iact iwhe iregard ifor ithe iconsequences iand iseeke irecognition irather ithan isupport. iMany ipeople iare icompeting ifor ipower iin ipolitics, iand ieach iof ithe irequires ia isizable ifollowing ito isucceed. iOnly ia ifew ipeople iare ieffective iin irecruiting iothers, iand ias iwhe ia already imentioned, istudies ihave inot ibeen iable ito iidentify ior ipinpoint ithe ireasons iwhe. iHowever, ipolitical iengagement iwhe irise iwhe imany ipeople iare iengaged iand isuccessful, iand iit iwhe ibe ihigher ithan iusual ifor ithe iwhe iare ithe itargets iof ithe irefforts.

Participation ientails: iIn igeneral, iess ifocus ihas ibeen ipaced ion idefining iparticipation iin igeneral, iand imuch imore iemphasis ihas ibeen ipaced ion irelatively inew iactivities iwhe iin ieach imajor itype iof iwillingness ito iparticipate i(electoral, icommunal, iand iprotest), ias iwhe ia newer itypes iof iparticipation, isuch ias iboycotting ias ia inewer iprotest iactivity iand ipolitical idiscussion iand isocial imedia iuse ias ia inewer iparticipation itype i(Dalton, i2014.). iHowever, idifferent ilevels iof ipolitical iengagement iare ibeing idemonstrated iand iactivated iat idifferent itimes ibecause iof ithe irise iand iexpansion iof idemocracy ipreceding ithe iend iof ithe iCold iWar iin ithe i1990s iand ithe isubsequent ievents iof ithe iArab iSpring. iWhile ithe ilatter iis iinformal iand, iin isome icircles, idiscouraged iand idenounced, iit iis inonetheless ia imeans iby iwhe icitizens iexpress ithe iridisplesure iwhe ithe icurrent ipolitical, ieconomic, ior isociocultural isystem. iThe iformer iis iregarded ias ia iformal iform iof ipolitical iengagement. iAnother iillustration, iin icomparison ito iother icountries, ithe iUnited iStates ihas ia ihigher ior iequivalent ifrequency iof icommunal iactivities. iVoter iparticipation ihas idropped, iyet iit iis istill ithe imost icommon iform iof ipolitical iactivity. iSigning icomplaints ihas igained ipopularity iand iis inow ithe imost icommon iform iof iprotest; iits ifrequency iis inow iequivalent ito ivoting iattendance iin iseveral icountriesi(Dalton, i2014).

The idesign iof istudies ithat ican/should iprovide ithe idata ineeded ito idetermine iwhe iremultiple idifferent imodels iprovide ithe ibest iinformation ion ielectoral, icommunity, iand/or iprotest iinvolvement ior iwhe ia icohesive, icomposite imodel iproduces ithe ifavorite iunderstanding iis ireferred ito ia ithe istudy iof ipolitical iparticipation. iThe ifollowing itheories istand iout: isocial icapitali(networks itrust), iequitable ifairness i(relative ideprivation), igeneral



motivations (costs-benefits-norms), and cognitive engagement (information interest) (Clarke, 2004, Chapters 7 and 8; Whitley, 2013, pp. 105–108)

People without formal or apex education, members of ethnic minorities, those from lower social and economic backgrounds, and/or those who are considered younger and their associates have seen a decrease or increase in communal riots, uprising, and protest actions (Dalton, 2014, Chapter 4; Leighley and Nagler, 2013). A collection of body of intergenerational guidelines, principles, precepts, ethos, and values that either directly or indirectly influence a population's political behaviors and activities inside the political system, according to Gabriel Almond & Sydney Verba (Almond & Verba, 1963). These values and orientations inform their model of political engagement in the political system. Although Verba and his coworkers emphasized a group of attitudes that should support a democratic polity, such as loyalty to the regime, pride in the political system, and low levels of political engagement as empirically studied in the West, the same cannot be said of the situation in these climates today in light of the recent occupation and invasion of the U.S. Capitol after the presidential elections. The United States and Britain, the two mature and stable democracies in their study, best exhibited the allegiant model Verba and Almond proposed, while other democratizing countries lacked it.

The third and fourth waves of democracy, however, speak to a democratic potential that was frequently disregarded in the academic community, and the modern wave of comparative research in political culture and participation offers a different answer to the question of what citizen beliefs are consistent with democracy (Huntington, 1984). From communist Eastern Europe to sub-Saharan Africa, people's power movements show a widespread yearning for political change that seems at odds with their Civic Cultural paradigm or orientation. The worst mistake any political scientist will make is to ignore the main lesson of the Arab Spring. The Economist recognized this development when it explained why Egyptians protested for political reform against the various authoritarian regimes they encountered, from the Mubarak regime to the generals controlling the government in late 2013. This

is why the average person longs for dignity. They detest being controlled by dishonest autocrats and petty authorities. They object to a police state's machinery. Instead, they desire better lives, respectable jobs, and certain fundamental liberties.

In this sense, a people's behaviour, conduct, approach, and orientation as a whole are referred to as their political culture. This definition includes standard orientation, belief, and perception among those who engage in the political system. The argument made by Almond and Verba that political culture drives people's political involvement behaviours at any given time inside the political system is further supported and substantiated by this.

Therefore, political culture is always at fault for every electoral system's development—or lack thereof—anywhere in the world. This supports Almond's contention that once a population has been exposed to the political model or participatory culture Almond has promoted, they will display political behaviours with the potential to alter the political system in that society significantly. Sidai (2010) considers the younger generation's political participation as young people are going into politics, civic engagement, active citizenship, and policymaking. This could come in a variety of forms, such as participating in the local government budget process, running for office in an election, or sitting on a local government council (Akinyetunt, 2021).

When one considers the factors that shape people's political culture, one can better understand the concept of political engagement. According to Falade, a person's cultural, economic, political, religious, and educational background can influence their probability of participating in politics. The degree to which citizens are aware of and have faith in the leadership hierarchy of the state or country has an impact on how much they participate in politics (Falade, 2014). This assertion is supported by Akamarei (2003) in his contention that political participation is a component of political behaviour and focuses on how individuals interact with politics. This involuntary action might be taken directly or indirectly. People can engage in politics in various ways, including selecting or electing political leaders, formulating policies, and participating in civic engagements and community events.



Given the fact that recent trends show that some non-political forms of participation are expanding while political engagement has dropped (Amn & Ekman, 2014; Dassonneville & Hooghe, 2018; Hooghe & Kern, 2017; McDonald, 2010). It is crucial to consider the implications of this conversation (Dalton, 2015; van Deth et al., 2007; Theocharis & van Deth, 2018). (Bolzendahl & Coffé, 2013; Dalton, 2008; Marien et al., 2010) Research on the variables influencing these distinct forms of involvement has found a new association with idealized ideals of "good" citizenship. However, much can be traced to the connections between citizens' views of what constitutes an effective democracy and their patterns of political action, as well as the mechanism by which ideals and participation behaviour are connected.

2.4 Concept of Democracy

Democracy is a well-known concept that is often used as a synonym for freedom. Although there is not a single, widely recognized meaning of the term "democracy," which in Ancient Greek means "rule by people," it is typically described as a form of government involving the following essential components: i- The rule of law, which states that the law is applied equally to all citizens; i- Periodic regular elections in which people choose those to represent them in a free and fair election process (Diamond, 2004).

Over the past two centuries, several scholars and observers from both domestic and foreign countries have contributed to studying and developing the notion of democracy. This is because the definition of "democracy" has been examined from a variety of perspectives based on the historical period and the objectives of the definition. In general, Abraham Lincoln supplied well-known definitions of democracy that frequently emphasize the legitimizing authority of people or citizens to determine who governs them - a government of, by, and for the people. These concepts are quoted in Andrew (2007). Although the idea of democracy is not new, a consensus definition is difficult to come by. To limit tyranny, democracy is most frequently credited with having originated in the Greek city-state of Athens in the fifth century BC.

A discursive framework of democracy emphasizes discussion, transversal information flows, communication, and the need for reaching an agreement on a topic of shared interest and obtaining legitimacy through citizen involvement of equal citizens. Although some experts recognize the merits of the decision process, they also point out shortcomings. They remark, for example, that deliberative theorists rarely describe decision norms or aid in circumstances where a consensus was not established during the deliberation process and/or a dispute arose as a consequence of controversy (Miller, 1992; Smith, 2009, etc.).

It is argued that deliberation and citizen engagement in decision-making can be a palpable practice on a lesser scale or at the community scale, such as in rural towns or villages. Even while it can be a challenging exercise to organize on a bigger scale, it can also be tremendously powerful for communities to participate in debate and make decisions on topics affecting their lives in all strata and ramifications. Most of the recent empirical research on the subject of how citizens' perceptions of democracy may affect how they interact with the political system focuses on the impact of citizens' discontentment with democracy, with "grievance theory" predicting that this dissatisfaction inspires political engagement and "critical citizens' theory" predicting political inaction or a focus on quasi-activity (Kriesi, 2012; Tarrow, 1994; Webb, 2013). (Dahlberg, 2015; Norris, 1999; Klingemann, 1999)

These techniques are based on the idea that individuals are more likely to behave in ways consistent with the values they personally uphold. Notably, both theories begin with the assumption that most people share the same views of what an ideal democracy should look like, even though their central hypotheses conflict in terms of how they predict political behaviour.

However, there is not much empirical support for the notion that people share the same democratic beliefs. Research frequently uses common inquiries about the state of democracy in the respondent's nation (Ariely, 2015). Certain country-specific research has shown that citizens can distinguish



between several democratic ideals (Schedler & Sarsfeld, 2007). It is evident that more research is necessary before making the presumption that all citizens' conceptions of democracy are the same. This topic has become more important because of the mounting threats to the legitimacy of European political systems since the commencement of the economic crisis in 2008 (Cordero & Simón, 2016; Streeck & Schäfer, 2013). According to the claim, democracy is a peculiar idea that applies to a group of people and a region. People have demonstrated against austerity policies in several European nations (Morlino & Quaranta, 2016), and populist challenger parties have consistently increased their vote share in recent elections (Bermeo & Bartels, 2014; Hooghe & Oser, 2015; Kern, Marien).

The 21st-century democratic system in Nigeria, in this instance, is the system as a whole. In contrast, various segments and subsets in the system include the ruling elites in the executive, legislative, or judiciary, the bureaucratic elites in the civil service across the three strata of government: Federal civil service, State and local governments, those in the informal sectors of the economy either as owners of the means of production or as those rendering their labor power for sale, the youths who form a vast majority of the system, and then the graduate youths who have been certified from various institutions of learning and cannot make a meaningful living due to policies and programmes that are sent into the system, demands of jobs and empowerment from the environment and these segments of the system which is often sent into the processing process to bring about changes in the output and feedbacks appear to be contrary to expectations. This idea has aided researchers in understanding the effects of youth political participation on democracy.

A ideal between the government and the governed defines democracy. The illegitimacy of the government is its claim to uphold the law and act in the public interest, make up this ideal. The next component is the structure which controls the ideal of credibility in each contested political election. The main goal of the agreement is to guarantee involvement in policymaking. Democracies are based on participation, and that is what democracy means. Political engagement and

democracy are interrelated ideas; one cannot exist devoid of the other, to build a democratic process, the populace must actively engage in the process. —2014's Osondu M.O.

Demos, stands for the Greek word "people," and Kratos, another Greek word for "rule," are the roots of the English word "democracy". It literally translates to "government by the people." Democracy, according to Appadorai (2004), is a form of government in which the populace exercises power both directly and through representatives who are freely and routinely elected by the populace. Because all adults in the community could easily participate in decision-making in the Polis in ancient Greece, in the earlier times, direct democracy was imaginable. Direct democracy is no longer feasible in today's political system due to the rise in birth rates, population upward movement, and the consequences of globalization, which could result in population growth and the expansion of political boundaries as nations have grown. This is the rationale behind replacing direct democracy with representative democracy in many places of the world.

The people's representatives hold sovereignty in a representative democracy, which is an indirect form of government. Water Lanqueur, mentioned in Idowui (1998), saw that, notwithstanding the impossibility of all citizens directly participating in the state's leadership due to current state conditions, the concept of democracy nevertheless places a strong emphasis on popular rule. In other words, through a system of representation, the people indirectly exercise sovereign authority, the growth of the so-called "third wave of democracy" (Huntington, 1991). The end of the cold war between the West and the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, as well as the start of democracy-building programmes in gaining independent governments, all helped to a recent surge in the concept's popularity. As democracy gained ground, Fukuyama claims that it began to be considered "the only game in town", even to the point where it was believed that it would herald "History's Final Chapter" (Fukuyama 1989, 1993) or the culmination of intellectual development, meaning the incomplete liberal democracy will triumph over all other forms of government in the world—a rather optimistic statement, as history would later demonstrate.



Based on a survey of the definitions of the term supplied by various scholars, Charles Tilly (2007) grouped their position into four categories: procedural, substantive, constitutional, and process-oriented meanings. Tilly explained that the constitutional approach is primarily employed to distinguish between the ruling regimes or governments, as is the case in various southern nations. As evidenced by the state's legal framework (constitution) and the existence of a parliament, which may be viewed as an extension of the executive branch of government currently in power, a despotic military leader transforms into a civilian dictator, and the military government transforms into a democratic government. The international community recognizes this even though the practice completely violates the idea of free, fair, and credible elections. The substantive approach is the next strategy under consideration. It discusses politics as well as the fundamental rights, values, and requirements that the current system imposes, such as whether the regime fosters individual liberty, welfare, or security. One is still concerned that these theoretical recommendations for democratic ideals and practices are made to states without any means of requiring compliance, aside from a negative international reputation that encourages most ostensibly democratic states to adopt democratic principles based on what serves their interests or aligns with their aspirations.

The procedural method also examines several government activities to determine whether or not the regime qualifies as democratic. This tactic is utilized, for example, by the United States-based think-tank Freedom House, which assigns democracy scores and freedom degrees to nations by looking for a variety of procedural aspects. As lovely as this may seem, as was already mentioned, most third-world countries sponsor groups and counter agencies to defend against the methodology, procedures, and true intentions of the international organizations carrying out these procedural checks on the state. As a result, this procedure's impact on the affected state in most of these countries is quite limited. When such reports are favorable to the government, they are almost always accepted, but when they are not, they are outright disregarded and disputed.

Definitions of process-oriented approaches focus on the requirement that a minimum number of processes be ongoing for the environment to qualify as democratic. All these methods further demonstrate that democracy is a process rather than a goal in and of itself. As a result, nations gradually adopted them to become fully democratic. Most scholars agree that "the democratic process is that institutional structure for reaching political decisions in which people possess the authority to make choices through a competitive contest for the people's vote" is the most fundamental definition of democracy (Schumpeter, 2003). However, Schumpeter's definition focuses primarily on procedural issues. It leaves out other crucial elements that the idea of democracy entails, like the government's responsibility to the people, attention to their needs and preferences, and the provision of channels for the public to participate in the formulation of policy (Diamond, 1997; Kurki, 2010).

Building on the procedural idea, a political scientist Robert Dahl produced the "polyarchal democracy" theory (1971), which essentially suggests that authority is placed in several people. He defined several fundamental components for polyarchies, a term he frequently used to describe contemporary Western democracies. Dahl's pluralist paradigm incorporates crucial democratic components like competition and the importance of participation. A government must have six characteristics in order to be considered "polyarchal," including elected officials, fair and regular elections, freedom of expression, access to alternative media, freedom of association, and universal adult suffrage (inclusive citizenship) (Dahl 1998; 2005). According to several academics, Dahl's thesis is simplified as a previously ambiguous idea and can be used as a checklist to assess whether a nation can be categorized as a democracy (Tilly, 2007). According to others, Dahl's concept of democracy includes fundamental civil liberties that allow people to participate in informed ways (Menocal, 2007).

Consequently, a political system must fulfill the following criteria in order to be called a democracy: (i) Global adult suffrage, (ii) Regular, Free, Competitive, and Fair elections, (iii) the presence of multiple political parties, and (iv) alternative and diverse information sources around the



ilisti(Morlino, i2008). iAccording to iTillyi(2007), ia imore isimplified idefinition iof ia igovernment iis idemocratic to the ilevel ithat ipolitical iconnections iexist ibetween the istate iand iits ipopulation, iincluding iwidespread, iequality, isecured, iand ijointly ibinding idiscussion i(Tilly, i2007). iThe isignificance iof iaccountability iis iemphasized iin the item's imore ispecific idefinitions. iTypically, idemocracy iobservers idistinguish ithree ilevels iof iaccountability: isociocultural iresponsibility, iwhich ialso irefers to the ialleged i"regulatory ibody" ioperations iof the icivil isociety iorganizations; iVertical iaccountability iand ihorizontal iaccountability iare iterms iused to idescribe the ivarious igovernment istructures' iaccountability iprocesses. iCitizens ican ihold itheir igovernment iaccountable ithrough ivertical iaccountability.

Dahli(1971) idistinguished the ifollowing ipolitical isystems ibased ion itheir ilevels iof iinvolvement iand iinclusion iand itheir iright to ichallenge. iHegemonies icome iin ifour idifferentiflavors. iThere iare ifour itypes iof ihegemonies: iI. iclosed ihegemonies, iin iwwhich icitizens ihave ino iright to ioppose; iII. icompetitive ioligarchies, iin iwwhich ionly ia ifew icitizens ihave the iright to ioppose; iIII. iinclusive ihegemonies, iin iwwhich ieveryone iis ipermitted to iparticipate; iand iIV. ipolyarchies, iin iwwhich iall icitizens ihave ian iequal iright to ioppose. iAccording to iDahl's iconcept, ithe ipath to idemocratization ior iliberalization icomprises the iregime igradually ichanging ifrom ia isealed isupremacy to ia irival ioligarchy, ithen to ian iopen ihegemony, iand ifinally to ia ihybrid iregime. iMore iinclusivity iand iopportunities ifor ipublic idiscussion ia id this iprogress.

Dahl iargues ithat iliberalization ithat iis iachieved ithrough the islow iadaptation iand iinterpersonal iinteractions iliberalization ithat iis iaccomplished iby iomitting iany iof the i"rules iof the igame" ileads to ihealthier iand imore istable ipolyarchies ithrough irevolutionary istages iand iarriving iat the idestination i"polyarchy" ivia ia ibrief, iwwhich iis iheavily iburdened iwwith ia igreater irisk ifor the iachieved idemocracy to ibackslide ior ireverse. iSince imost itransitional idemocracies iin iAfrica, iAsia, iand iLatin iAmerica iare iauthoritarian iin inature iand ithrough the iconstitution, irules iand ipolicies iare ienacted ithat ionly ibenefit the ielites iand itheir iconies, imost ipeople ilive iin iutter idestitution iand ipoverly; ithis ipostulate ihas iindeed ifailed imiserably iin ithe iregions. iWithout ia idoubt, ithis iis to iblame ifor the ihigh irates iof icrime,

ivices, iand iother iissues ithat ipose ia ithreat to ithe imaintenance iof idemocratic inorms iin ithe se inations.

Despite ithis, idemocracy ihas iwon imany isupporters iby igiving the isense iof idemocratic idecision-making iand iindividual ifreedom, ibut idemocracy igoes iwell ibeyond itheiaforementioned itheoretical itenets. iTo ipresume ithat the igovernment iof ithe, iby the iand ifor the ipeople ishould ibe itaken ias the ikey ielements ithat iassure isuch ipluralism iand iinclusion ishould ibe iconsidered ifor ia ifunctional idemocracy iis iusually ifalse. iSo, ithis iteaches ius ithat idemocracy iconnects the ipeople iand the igovernment, iand ithat iconnection ican ibe imade iin iseveral iways, iincluding ithrough ia igovernment ithat iis irun iby, ifor, iand ifor the ipeople. iTo ienable ivarious ipluralist igroups to ifully irealize itheir idesired iambitions, idemocracy ishould icare ifor iits icitizens' iwelfare iand ipolitical, ieconomic, iand isocial iaspirations.

Most ithird-world inations iin iAfrica, iAsia, iand iLatin iAmerica ihave iadopted idemocracy ias ia iuniversal ipolitical isolution. iAccording to iGabrielle, iGordon, iLynch, iand iCrawfordi(2011), iall iSub-Saharan iAfrican inations inow ihave ihigher ilevels iof idemocracy ithan ithey idid iin the ilate i1980s. iHowever, iGabrielle, iL. iand iGordon iC. iadvocate ifor imore isubstantial idemocratic iprocesses ithat isek ito iprotect iAfricans' isocioeconomic irights iin iaddition to itheir icivil iand ipolitical irightsi(Gabrielle iet ial., i2011). iAccording to iJohni(2010), ithe idemocratic iprocess ialso ineeds to iprotect iindividual irights iand iensure ieveryone ihas ian iequal ichance iof isuccess.

The iexplanation iprimarily ireflects the itheoretical iside iof the iidea iof idemocracy. iThe iassumption iof icitizens' iequality iduring the iconduct iof ia ifree, ifair, iand icredible ielection iis ivital, ieven iif it idoes inot imention iequity. iSome iof ithe se ielections imerely iserve to iratify ior isupport ipredetermined icandidates to igive the iprocess the iappearance iof ian ielection. iHuman irights imay inot ialways ibe imaintained iequally ibecause, ias iin ia icapitalist idemocracy, iyour irights iare ionly iprotected to ithe itextent iof iyour iaccess to iresources,iwealth, ior iownership iof the imeans iof iproduction. iAs ia iresult, it iis iup to isociety's ieducated iand ibourgeois iclasses to icomprehend iand iput idemocracy iinto ipractice. iDemocracy ialso imeans iself-government iof iequals, iwwhich iis iuseful to iplace ilimits iand icontrol ion iotherwise iunchecked ipoweri(Keane, i2009). iI idisagree iwwith ithis



viewpoint because the system promotes the ruling class, which in turn supports the governing elite in society, as Ralph Miliband and Nicos Poulantzas captured. Miliband provides this viewpoint on how the state works to advance capitalist interests in The State in Capitalist Society. He contends that this is attributable to the government's members' (1) social backgrounds as well as (2) relationships with and influence over groups of the ruling elites.

The nation, as well as the bourgeois class, has an objective relationship. Thus, the direct involvement of the category of the ruling elites in the state machinery is not the issue, but, unfortunately, the outcome of the state's role, in particular the interests of the dominant class and social strata, coincide. The current discussion is focused on whether democracy is the root cause and key enabler of economic progress. Economic development, job creation, empowerment, and all other variables are now dependent on democracy, which has replaced them as the independent variable. The political significance is that all nations can now accept, tolerate, and support democracy, but how have graduate youngsters fared under such a democratic regime? (Adejumbi, 2000) According to Soludo (2005), who made a valid point, a sustainable democracy endures over time, grows in fundamental legitimacy and acceptability regardless of the political party in power, and produces dynamic dividends of justice and equality, good governance, peace, and fundamental freedoms, rapid economic development, and promotion and protection of private enterprise and property rights (Soludo, 2005).

Despite the notion that democracy is the government of the people, government by the people, and government for the people, it has failed in many spheres as seen in some of their attraction in the recent past, but the promise of freedom and equality still holds great appeal for people all around the world, even though most developing nations have not seen much benefit from its application. To increase the popularity and legitimacy of their rule, many authoritarian or semi-authoritarian governments continue to pay mouth service to democracy and democratic values. This may not be unrelated to the peculiarities of some elements, historical divisions, and cultural traditions ingrained in these countries, which

undermine the practice of accountability, transparency, equality, and freedom of expression as fundamental tenets of democracy.

John Keane traces the history of democracy and shows how its definition, along with democratic institutions and values, has changed over time in his 2009 book "Life and Death of Democracy." There are three phases in the development of democracy, according to Keane (2009):

(1) Assembly democracy, when democracy was spatially restricted and based on public forums.

(2) Direct democracy, which he contrasts with representative democracy (starting in 1776), is a system through which citizens choose representatives to represent them and express their preferences "through" them.

(3) Monitory democracy is the actual situation of democracy as we know it, characterized by the existence of numerous "power-monitoring" and "power-controlling" institutions and tools, also referred to as "watch-dogs," "barking dogs," and "guide dogs" — including a variety of forums such as blogs, participatory budgeting, commissions, assemblies, tribunals, courts, citizen juries, and others mechanisms for keeping an eye on and reining in power.

Furthermore, democracy constantly changes, as Keane (2009) notes. It has not yet been completed. No democracy is ever "sufficient enough" or deemed free of the requirement for remodeling, reengineering, and improved performance, as it is debatable whether democracies are "consolidated," "transitional," or "failed" (Keane (2009, p. 1867), one would think that a viral democracy like that of the United States would have a seamless transition free of the protest and contestation of results we recently experienced in the US Capitol. There has been discussion about the phrase "transitional democracy," which first gained popularity at the turn of the 20th century and has since been applied to newly founded democracies that are changing their political structures. The peaceful power transfer from an incumbent president who voluntarily conceded defeat and turned over power to the opposition. This occurred in Nigeria during the general elections in 2015 as a significant turning point in the democracy process.



Carothers (2002) makes the case in a different book that the "transition paradigm" has outgrown its usefulness and the fact that so-called "transitional" nations of the world are more complicated and do not always match the "transition paradigm's" core assumptions. By comparing the political trajectories of transition democracies with each of the five fundamental premises on which the transition paradigm is based, he examined the efficacy and applicability of the transition paradigm. The paradigm's initial premise is that any nation "leaning toward democracy is moving away from authoritarianism." This assumption, according to Carothers, can be false because many Transitioning democracies have chosen a consistent nature that lies within autocracy and democracy. However, they may not be progressing in that direction (Carothers, 2002).

The second presumption is that the process of democratization proceeds through a set order of phases, including democratic openness, breakthrough, transition, and consolidation. However, proponents of democracy argue that the nations can also regress or stagnate on this course as well as move farther in the direction of consolidation (Carothers, 2002). The third presumption is that elections play a crucial and fundamental function in a democracy. As it is generally acknowledged that free and fair elections do not guarantee democracy, Carothers points out that they are nonetheless seen to encourage political involvement and raise public trust in the government. The fourth premise asserts that the present-day circumstances of transitioning nations—such as their financial situation, political histories, institutional legacies, etc.—do not affect the outcomes of democracy. The "no precondition" for democracy theory, which was created to disprove the notion that democracy is not for everyone, is what this is known as. Even though we concur with these carefully considered presumptions, they can be questioned and subject to critiques as we look at different democratic experiences in countries with varying institutional legacies, histories, cultures, and economic growth rates. These diverse democratic experiences are outlined in the prescriptions and recommendations made by international non-governmental institutions.

The paradigm's 5th premise is that the "third wave" of democratic transition occurred

in well-functioning nations that already met all the requirements for becoming democracies. This assertion is also debatable because many transitioning nations are thought to have had states that were essentially non-functional after the dissolution of the Soviet Union; they had to rebuild the political systems from the bottom up (Carothers, 2002; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Despite the challenges and arguments over the term "transitional", many researchers and observers continue to use it informally to refer to other countries in the process of changing from dictatorship to democracy. Along with Singapore, Iran, Venezuela, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, and other nations, Diamond, another analyst, lists Armenia as one of the nations "that inhabit an unclear area between democracy and overt dictatorship." He emphasizes the need that, while these countries have some civil society and hold elections, they also have restricted freedoms of association and elections that are routinely rigged and fraudulent. These countries are sometimes known as "managed democracies," "hybrid regimes," or "elective authoritarian regimes" (Paczynska, 2008:26).

One of the main reasons for the underperformance of the new democracies and the authoritarian backlash, according to many commentators, is the absence of an engaged citizenry or "civic neighborhood" as well as independent and functional democratic institutions in those countries (Putnam 1993, 2000; Diamond 2008). The perspective mentioned above lends credibility to this study since it suggests that democracy may not be practiced well and effectively because graduate youth and other members of the youth section of the population are not included.

2.4.1 Principles of Democracy

The principles of democracy constitute the bedrock upon which democratic governance is built. These fundamental principles encapsulate the core values, norms, and tenets that guide the functioning of democratic societies worldwide. Understanding these principles is essential to grasp the essence of democracy itself, as they define the relationship between the state and its citizens, the protection of individual rights, the mechanisms of decision-making, and the very essence of democratic legitimacy. In this segment, we embark on an in-depth



exploration of the principles of democracy, shedding light on the foundational concepts that underpin democratic governance. By delving into these principles, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the ideals, rights, and values that drive democratic societies, and appreciate the profound impact they have on shaping the political, social, and legal landscape of nations across the globe.

Popular Sovereignty

At the heart of democracy lies the principle of popular sovereignty, which holds that ultimate authority rests with the people (Dahl, 1989). This principle suggests that citizens, collectively and individually, are the main origin of political power in a democracy. Popular sovereignty implies that individuals have the right to participate in the political process, and it forms the basis for democratic legitimacy. Citizens express their will through various means, including voting in elections and engaging in political activities.

Rule of Law

The rule of law is another fundamental principle of democracy, emphasizing that all individuals, including government officials, are subject to and accountable under the law (Dicey, 1885). In a democratic system, no one is above the law, and illegal processes must be fair, impartial, and transparent. The rule of law is essential for safeguarding individual rights and ensuring that government actions are consistent with the established legal framework. It provides a mechanism for addressing grievances and disputes through impartial courts and legal processes.

Individual Rights and Freedoms

A cornerstone of democratic governance is the protection of individual rights and freedoms. In democratic societies, individuals are guaranteed certain inalienable rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the right to a fair trial (Rawls, 2005). These rights ensure that individuals can express their opinions, engage in peaceful assembly, and seek redress for grievances. The protection of individual rights is vital for safeguarding personal autonomy, preventing government overreach, and fostering a pluralistic and open society.

Equality and Non-Discrimination

Democracy places a strong emphasis on equality and non-discrimination, ensuring that all citizens are treated with equal respect and dignity under the law (Dworkin, 2002). This principle encompasses not only legal equality but also social and economic equality. In a democratic society, policies and laws are designed to promote fairness and equal opportunities. This principle is integral to mitigating social disparities and ensuring that all individuals have a voice in the democratic process.

Citizen Participation

Citizen participation is a core democratic principle that encourages individuals to engage in political activities, vote in elections, and be actively involved in decision-making processes (Fung, 2003). Participation in a democracy is not limited to elections but extends to various forms of civic engagement, such as advocacy, community organizing, and participation in public forums. This principle highlights the importance of citizens' involvement in shaping the policies and decisions that affect their lives. A robust democratic system depends on the active participation of an informed and engaged citizenry.

Accountability and Transparency

In democratic governance, accountability and transparency are vital principles. Government officials and institutions are accountable to the public for their actions and decisions (Przeworski, 2010). This accountability is facilitated through mechanisms such as regular elections, the freedom of the press to scrutinize government actions, and public access to government information. Transparency ensures that government operations are open to public scrutiny, enhancing public trust and reducing the potential for corruption and abuse of power.

Pluralism and Tolerance

Democracy thrives on the principles of pluralism and tolerance, acknowledging the diversity of opinions, beliefs, and backgrounds within society (Dahl, 1989). These principles promote the coexistence of differing viewpoints and ensure that minority voices are heard and respected. Pluralism encourages healthy debates, compromise, and the accommodation of diverse perspectives within the democratic process. Tolerance is essential for fostering social cohesion and preventing



discrimination or exclusion based on differences.

Protection of Minority Rights

A democratic society is characterized by its commitment to protecting minority rights (Mill, 1859). This principle ensures that minority groups, whether based on ethnicity, religion, gender, or any other characteristic, are not marginalized or oppressed. Protecting minority rights is a fundamental aspect of upholding the principles of equality and non-discrimination. It demonstrates a democratic commitment to inclusivity and the belief that all individuals, regardless of their background, deserve equal protection under the law.

Peaceful Transition of Power

The peaceful transition of power is a hallmark of democratic governance (Linz & Stepan, 1996). In a democracy, leaders and governments come and go through free and fair elections. The principle emphasizes that political power should change hands without violence, ensuring that the will of the people is respected. This principle distinguishes democratic systems from authoritarian ones and underlines the imperative of following the rule of law and democratic norms.

However, the principles of democracy encompass popular sovereignty, the rule of law, individual rights and freedoms, equality and non-discrimination, citizen participation, accountability and transparency, pluralism and tolerance, the protection of minority rights, and the peaceful transition of power. These principles collectively form the bedrock of democratic governance, guiding the organization of political systems and the protection of individual liberties. Democracy is not a monolithic concept but a dynamic system that adapts to the diverse needs and values of societies while upholding these fundamental principles. Understanding and upholding these principles are crucial for the sustenance and advancement of democratic governance.

Democratic governance, a cornerstone of modern political systems, champions individual rights and freedoms such as freedom of speech, assembly, demonstration, lobbying, and publishing, collectively underpinning the principles of liberal democracy (Diamond, 1997). Liberal democracy, often defined as a political system in which representative democracy operates within the framework of liberal values, underscores the paramount

importance of preserving and safeguarding individual freedoms and liberties (Diamond, 1997). This emphasis on individual rights and freedoms not only characterizes liberal democracy but also serves as a fundamental pillar of the broader democratic landscape.

While the concept of democracy is central to political discourse, reaching a consensus on its precise definition remains a challenging task. The subject is not merely of academic interest; it carries significant practical implications, particularly in the context of democracy promotion and foreign policy. The United States, for instance, places democracy promotion high on its foreign-policy agenda; however, even within the US government, there is no unanimity regarding what it constitutes as democracy. As Horowitz (2006) aptly notes, "The world's only superpower is rhetorically and militarily promoting a political system that remains undefined—and it is staking its credibility and treasure on that pursuit." This underscores the intricate nature of defining democracy, a concept that is pivotal not only in academic circles but also in the practical realm of global politics.

Democracy and freedom, often used interchangeably, are distinct concepts, albeit inherently interconnected. Another way to think of democracy is as a system of norms and values that institutionalize freedom and, in the process, safeguard it. While reaching a consensus on precise definitions of democracy has proven elusive, contemporary observers broadly agree that the preservation of minority rights, free, credible and fair elections, a government anchored on consent from the governed and the majority, and respect for fundamental human rights are all essential components of a democracy. In essence, democracy presupposes equality before the law, due process, and political pluralism, contributing to a multifaceted and comprehensive framework of governance (Diamond, 1997).

One of the pivotal questions that emerges is whether these basic features provide a satisfactory concept of democracy. While the foundational principles are well-established, there is an ongoing debate on the definition of democracy that may be explored to encompass a wider spectrum of characteristics. Some argue that democracy is a binary concept, categorizing states as either democratic or non-democratic, leaving no room for



intermediate or transitional forms. However, an increasing number of scholars and practitioners support a more nuanced perspective, one that recognizes varying degrees of democratic governance. This nuanced approach provides a richer understanding of the democratic landscape, allowing for distinctions between different types and levels of democracy, thus capturing the complexity of real-world political systems.

The measurement of democracy further complicates the understanding of this intricate concept. Various organizations and scholars have developed measures to assess and classify the level of democracy in different countries. One prominent measure, utilized widely in empirical research, is produced by Freedom House, a US-based organization. It employs a scale of 1 to 7 to evaluate political freedom and civil liberties, with the average of these indexes often serving as an indicator of democracy. This measure, spanning back to the early 1970s, offers a comprehensive and widely accepted assessment of democracy, aiding in the analysis of the relationship between democracy and numerous economic and social variables (Freedom House, in.d.).

Another notable measure, known as the Polity Project, offers regime classifications for a more limited set of countries. These classifications are based on minimalist definitions of democracy and stretch back to the 19th century. While not as comprehensive as the Freedom House measure, they provide an important historical perspective on the development of democracy and have been instrumental in various empirical studies (Marshall & Jaggers, 2009).

Freedom House distinguishes between "electoral democracy" and "political freedom," offering two essential concepts for evaluating democracy. An electoral democracy, in its minimal sense, comprises states in which elections between contesting political parties are held that are frequent, free, and fair to determine political power, with the possibility of incumbents being voted out of office. It relies on criteria such as a competitive multi-party system, universal adult suffrage, regularly contested elections based on secret ballots, reasonable ballot security, and public access of major political parties to the electorate through media and open political campaigning (Freedom House, in.d.). In

contrast, the concept of political freedom extends beyond electoral processes and encompasses aspects of political pluralism, the functioning of government, and several facets of participation (Freedom House, in.d.).

As the debate on the dimensions and measurement of democracy continues, there is a crucial distinction to be made between "thin" and "thick" concepts of democracy (Coppedge, 2005). The "thin" concepts align closely with Robert Dahl's concept of polyarchy, which outlines eight institutional requirements that represent key elements of democracy. These requirements encompass universal suffrage, eligibility for public office, the right to compete for votes, free and fair elections, freedom to form political parties, freedom to express opinions on political matters, diverse sources of information, and government responsiveness to voters' preferences (Dahl, 1971).

On the other hand, "thick" concepts of democracy take a broader perspective, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of democratic governance and the numerous components that contribute to a vibrant democracy. These encompass not only electoral processes but also civil liberties, government functionality, political participation, and the broader political culture within a country. The Democracy Index, developed by The Economist Intelligence Unit, illustrates this more comprehensive perspective by categorizing countries into four regime types: "full democracy," "flawed democracy," "hybrid regime," and "authoritarian regime." The index evaluates countries based on electoral processes and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation, and political culture (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019).

The understanding and measurement of democracy represent intricate and evolving aspects of political science. The fundamental principles of democracy, often intertwined with liberal values, form the foundation of modern governance. While a consensus on its precise definition remains elusive, democracy is broadly recognized as a system characterized by minority rights, free and fair elections, consent of the governed, majority rule, and respect for human rights. The measurement of democracy offers a lens through which scholars and policymakers can analyze and categorize different political systems, with



organizations such as the Freedom House and the Polity Project providing valuable tools for this purpose. Furthermore, the distinction between "thin" and "thick" concepts of democracy enriches the discussion, highlighting the multifaceted nature of democratic governance and the diverse components that contribute to its vitality.

2.4.2 Democratic Institutions

Democratic institutions are the bedrock of any democratic society, providing the structural framework through which the principles of democracy are realized. These institutions encompass a wide range of functions, from facilitating free and fair elections to upholding the rule of law, safeguarding individual rights, and promoting government transparency and accountability. Democratic institutions are the building blocks of a system that empowers citizens to participate in the decision-making processes of their nation and ensures that government power is exercised in the public interest. This introduction provides an overview of the vital role played by these institutions in democratic governance, highlighting their significance, the challenges they face, and their evolving nature in the contemporary political landscape.

At the heart of democratic governance are elections and electoral systems, which grant citizens the power to choose their representatives, express their preferences on policy matters, and hold those in power accountable. The integrity and fairness of elections are paramount, ensuring that they remain a true expression of popular will. Legislative bodies, such as parliaments and congresses, are responsible for making laws for good governance, representing the best interests of the people, and providing oversight functions on the executive and other arm of government. Their effectiveness relies on their capacity to engage in robust debates, pass legislation, and hold the executive accountable.

The executive branch, headed by the head of state or government, is tasked with implementing and enforcing laws, making policy decisions, and representing the nation domestically and internationally. The judiciary, through courts and judges, interprets and upholds the law, protecting individual rights and settling legal disputes. The media, often referred to as the "Fourth Estate," serves as a

watchdog, providing information, scrutinizing government actions, and facilitating public discourse. In addition to these foundational institutions, local and subnational governments, civil society organizations, oversight and accountability mechanisms, election management bodies, and international and supranational institutions also contribute to the democratic governance landscape. These institutions address local needs, advocate for social justice, investigate corruption and abuse of power, oversee elections, and promote international cooperation.

While these democratic institutions play crucial roles, they are not without challenges. Threats to the integrity of elections, political polarization, the impact of digital technologies on information dissemination, and the erosion of checks and balances are just a few of the challenges democratic institutions must navigate in the contemporary political landscape. These challenges raise questions about the resilience and adaptability of democratic systems in a rapidly changing world. This exploration of democratic institutions offers a comprehensive understanding of their roles, challenges, and significance in democratic governance. It underscores the crucial role they play in upholding the principles of democracy and empowering citizens to actively participate in shaping the future of their nations. The following sections will provide an in-depth examination of each democratic institution, shedding light on their functions, challenges, and recent developments in the pursuit of a thriving democratic society.

2.4.2.1. Elections and Electoral Systems

Elections stand as the quintessential expression of popular sovereignty in democratic societies. They offer citizens the opportunity to influence the direction of their government by choosing their representatives and expressing their preferences on critical policy matters (Norris, 2014). However, the effectiveness of electoral systems in translating voter preferences into political representation is a topic of considerable debate. Recent years have seen an increasing emphasis on electoral integrity, transparency, and equal access to the voting process. Challenges such as voter suppression, gerrymandering, and the influence of money in politics have raised concerns about the fairness and effectiveness of



electoral systems in various democracies (Magaloni & Kricheli, 2010).

As technology and demographics change, electoral systems must adapt to maintain their legitimacy. Recent discussions have centered on the challenges of ensuring secure and transparent voting processes. This includes addressing issues like voter registration, the security of electronic voting systems, and safeguarding against cyber threats and disinformation campaigns. Innovations in electoral systems have led to debates about online voting, ranked-choice voting, and proportional representation, as nations grapple with the best methods to uphold the principles of fairness and representation in the electoral process (Levin, Morozov, & Vekker, 2016).

Electoral systems also face challenges related to the erosion of public trust in the election process. Perceived irregularities and the influence of disinformation campaigns have fueled skepticism about the integrity of elections in some democracies. Ensuring electoral systems are robust, transparent, and accessible to all citizens remains a vital task for democratic institutions, requiring continued adaptation and vigilance.

2.4.2.2. Legislative Bodies

Legislative bodies, such as parliaments or congresses, are the core institutions responsible for enacting laws, representing the interests of citizens, and overseeing the executive branch of government (Cox & McCubbins, 2005). Their effectiveness is often measured by their capacity to engage in vigorous debates, pass legislation, and hold the executive accountable. However, polarization and gridlock have become prominent issues in many legislative bodies, making it challenging to reach consensus and pass necessary legislation. The polarization of politics has led to an atmosphere where partisan divisions often take precedence over collaborative policymaking, raising questions about the ability of legislative bodies to address pressing issues (McCarty, Poole, & Rosenthal, 2006).

The transparency, ethics, and financing of legislative activities have also come under scrutiny. The role of money in politics has led to concerns about the undue influence of special interest groups, affecting the policy decisions made within legislative bodies. To address these concerns, there have been efforts

to promote transparency, limit campaign contributions, and enhance ethical standards within legislative institutions. Furthermore, legislative bodies must adapt to changes in society, technology, and demographics. Debates about inclusivity, gender representation, and diversity within legislatures have emerged as central concerns. Ensuring that legislative bodies reflect the diversity of the population they serve is an ongoing challenge, with many democracies seeking ways to promote inclusivity in their political institutions.

2.4.2.3. Executive Branch

The executive branch, led by the head of state or government, is responsible for executing and enforcing laws, making policy decisions, and representing the nation domestically and internationally (Cheibub, Przeworski, & Saiegh, 2004). The effectiveness of executive branches depends on their capacity to engage in transparent governance, deliver on campaign promises, and respond to the needs of the population. In recent years, the argument has focused more on the balance of power and responsibilities between the executive arm of government and legislative arm of government. Issues such as executive overreach and the use of executive orders to influence policy have come to the forefront of political discussions (Warber, 2018).

Maintaining the transparency and accountability of the executive branch is a critical challenge. Governments are expected to act in the public interest and be responsive to the needs of the people. Ensuring that executive branches operate transparently, without corruption or undue influence, is a fundamental aspect of democratic governance. Efforts to enhance government transparency, protect whistleblowers, and strengthen mechanisms for holding public officials accountable have been ongoing developments in the realm of executive governance (Doig & Watt, 2004).

The role of the executive branch in the modern world extends to addressing complex challenges such as climate change, public health, and international relations. The ability of executives to navigate these complex issues and work with other nations is central to their effectiveness. Achieving the right balance between executive authority and



accountability remains a central concern in democratic governance.

2.4.2.4. Judicial Institutions

Judicial institutions, including courts and the judiciary, play a fundamental role in interpreting and upholding the law, protecting individual rights, and settling legal disputes (Ginsburg, Hoetker, & Elkins, 2009). An independent and impartial judiciary is essential for safeguarding the rule of law and making sure that acts taken by the government are compliant with the constitution. Recent debates have focused on the appointment and politicization of judges, as well as the challenges of maintaining judicial independence in the face of political pressures (Keith, 2002).

The effectiveness and integrity of judicial institutions are vital to maintaining the balance of power within democratic systems. A well-functioning judiciary ensures that legal disputes are resolved fairly and that government actions are consistent with the law. Recent discussions have included debates about the politicization of judicial appointments, particularly in the context of nominating judges to the highest courts. Maintaining the independence and impartiality of the judiciary is a critical aspect of democratic governance.

Ensuring access to justice for all citizens is another challenge faced by judicial institutions. Questions about the affordability and accessibility of legal representation, especially for marginalized or economically disadvantaged individuals, have been central to discussions surrounding the effectiveness of judicial systems. Adapting to changing legal and societal dynamics is a continuous task for judicial institutions as they strive to uphold the rule of law and protect individual rights.

2.4.2.5. The Fourth Estate

A free and independent media, often referred to as the "Fourth Estate," serves as a watchdog in democratic societies, providing information, scrutinizing government actions, and facilitating public discourse (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). In recent years, the media landscape has undergone significant transformations with the advent of digital technologies and social media. While these developments have expanded access to information, they have also raised concerns

about the spread of disinformation, echo chambers, and the erosion of traditional journalism's credibility (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

The function of the media in informing, educating and constructing public opinion on policies and programmes of government, influencing policy, and engaging in investigative journalism is central to democratic institutions. Maintaining the integrity and credibility of the media in the digital age is an ongoing challenge. Issues of press freedom, media ownership, and the spread of misinformation are significant concerns. Efforts to promote media literacy and combat the spread of false information have become central to discussions surrounding the media's role in democratic governance. Ensuring the media's capacity to hold governments and institutions accountable is another pressing concern. Threats to journalistic independence, including harassment of journalists and restrictions on press freedom, have raised questions about the media's ability to function as a check on government power. These challenges require a continuous effort to safeguard the role of the media as a vital democratic institution.

2.4.2.6. Local and Subnational Governments

Local and subnational governments represent a critical tier of democratic institutions, facilitating governance at the community and regional levels (Elazar, 2008). These institutions play a role in service delivery, urban planning, and responding to local needs. Recent debates about decentralization, local autonomy, and the allocation of resources have gained prominence. As governments seek to address local challenges and promote citizen engagement, questions have arisen about the effectiveness of subnational governments (Melo, 2009).

Local governments must navigate complex issues such as urban planning, infrastructure development, and public services. Ensuring the capability of subnational governments to cater effectively for the needs of their communities is a central challenge. This includes addressing issues like resource allocation, local taxation, and the coordination of services across different levels of government. The effectiveness of local and subnational governments also depends on their capacity to engage citizens in the decision-making process.



Issues of local governance, transparency, and citizen participation are central to discussions about the role of subnational governments in democratic systems. Promoting local democracy and ensuring that local authorities are responsive to the needs of their communities are ongoing challenges.

2.4.2.7. Civil Society Organizations

Civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), advocacy groups, and grassroots movements, serve as a crucial component of democratic institutions (Tarrow, 2011). These organizations represent the interests and voices of citizens, often advocating for specific policy changes or addressing social issues. Recent discussions have centered on the role of civil society in shaping public opinion, influencing policy, and engaging in activism (Keane, 2003). The function of civil society organizations, non-governmental organisations in influencing public opinion and policy outcomes is central to democratic governance. These organizations often provide a platform for marginalized voices and advocate for social justice. Recent developments in civil society activism, such as social movements and advocacy campaigns, have highlighted the capacity of these organizations to shape the political landscape. The relationship between civil society organizations and government is a subject of scrutiny. Balancing the independence of civil society groups with government accountability and transparency is a central challenge. Issues related to funding, transparency, and the regulation of civil society organizations have become central concerns in the discussion of their role in democratic institutions.

2.4.2.8. Oversight and Accountability Mechanisms

Oversight and accountability mechanisms, such as ombudsmen, auditing agencies, and anti-corruption bodies, are essential for ensuring that government officials are held accountable for their actions (Dellavalle, 2014). These institutions provide a means to investigate allegations of corruption, abuse of power, and mismanagement of public resources. Recent developments in the realm of oversight and accountability include efforts to enhance transparency, protect whistleblowers, and strengthen mechanisms for holding public officials accountable (Doig & Watt, 2004).

The ineffectiveness of oversight and accountability mechanisms is central to

upholding the integrity of democratic governance. These institutions play a crucial role in ensuring that government actions are consistent with the law and that public resources are managed responsibly. The role of oversight bodies in promoting transparency, investigating corruption, and protecting whistleblowers has come to the forefront of discussions on government accountability.

Challenges to the integrity and independence of oversight and accountability mechanisms have emerged in recent years. Questions about political interference, funding, and the ability of these institutions to act independently are central concerns. Ensuring the integrity and effectiveness of these mechanisms is vital to maintaining public trust in democratic governance.

2.4.2.9. Election Management Bodies

Election management bodies (EMBs), responsible for organizing and overseeing elections, are critical institutions in democratic systems (Nohlen, 2005). The integrity of elections and public confidence in the electoral process rely on the impartiality and competence of EMBs. Recent discussions have focused on electoral administration, ensuring secure and transparent voting processes, and addressing challenges such as voter registration, cyber threats, and disinformation campaigns (Levin, Morozov, & Vekker, 2016). The role of EMBs in organizing free and fair elections is fundamental to democratic governance. Recent debates have revolved around the challenges of ensuring the security of electronic voting systems, addressing cyber threats, and safeguarding against disinformation campaigns that seek to undermine the integrity of elections. As technology and societal changes shape the electoral landscape, EMBs face the ongoing challenge of adapting and enhancing the security and transparency of electoral processes. Ensuring public confidence in EMBs is central to the legitimacy of electoral outcomes. Transparency, impartiality, and competence are vital attributes of effective election management. Recent developments have included efforts to promote transparency, protect voter data, and secure the electoral process against emerging threats. Safeguarding the integrity of elections remains a continuous task for democratic institutions.

2.4.2.10. International and Supranational Institution



In an increasingly interconnected world, international and supranational institutions play a significant part in democratic governance (Moravcsik, 2000). These institutions deal with global issues, international cooperation, and the promotion of peace and stability. Recent debates have included questions about the effectiveness of international organizations in addressing global challenges, the role of international law, and the tension between national sovereignty and international governance (Waltz, 1993). The role of international and supranational institutions in addressing global challenges is central to democratic governance. These institutions promote international cooperation, address global issues such as climate change, and facilitate diplomatic efforts to prevent conflicts. Recent discussions have focused on the capacity of international organizations to address emerging global challenges, including pandemics and environmental crises.

Debates about the effectiveness of international organizations in upholding international law and norms are central to discussions of international governance. Issues related to the enforcement of international law, the role of international courts, and the challenges of addressing violations of human rights on a global scale have been subjects of scrutiny. Balancing national sovereignty with the need for international cooperation is an ongoing challenge in the realm of international institutions.

2.4.3 Challenges to Democratic Institutions

Democratic institutions face numerous challenges in the contemporary political landscape. Threats to the integrity of elections, the erosion of checks and balances, political polarization, and the impact of digital technologies on information dissemination are just a few of the challenges that democratic institutions must navigate (Diamond, 2015). These challenges raise questions about the resilience and adaptability of democratic systems in a rapidly changing world. Threats to the integrity of elections, such as voter suppression, gerrymandering, and disinformation campaigns, pose significant challenges to the functioning of electoral systems. Safeguarding the fairness and transparency of elections is central to upholding the principles of democratic governance. Efforts to enhance electoral

integrity, protect voter rights, and combat disinformation are ongoing developments in the realm of electoral institutions.

The erosion of checks and balances within democratic systems has raised questions about the concentration of power and the capacity of institutions to hold government officials accountable. Maintaining the separation of powers, ensuring robust oversight and accountability, and addressing concerns about executive overreach are ongoing challenges in democratic governance. Political polarization within legislative bodies has hindered their ability to reach a consensus and pass necessary legislation. The impact of partisan divisions on the legislative process raises questions about the capacity of these institutions to address pressing issues. Efforts to foster bipartisan cooperation, promote deliberative discourse, and enhance the effectiveness of legislative bodies are central to democratic governance. The role of technology and digital platforms in shaping information dissemination and public discourse has had a profound impact on democratic institutions, particularly the media. The spread of disinformation, echo chambers, and the erosion of traditional journalism's credibility pose challenges to the media's role as a watchdog and information source. Navigating the digital age while maintaining the media's credibility and capacity to hold institutions accountable is a central concern.

Ensuring that local and subnational governments effectively address the needs of their communities, promote inclusivity, and engage citizens in decision-making is an ongoing challenge. As the world becomes increasingly urbanized, the role of subnational governments in addressing urban planning, infrastructure development, and service delivery has gained prominence. The relationship between civil society organizations and government presents challenges related to transparency, funding, and the regulation of these organizations. Balancing their independence with government accountability is central to the role of civil society in democratic governance.

Oversight and accountability mechanisms must maintain their integrity and independence to effectively investigate allegations of corruption, abuse of power, and mismanagement of public resources. Ensuring that these mechanisms can operate without political interference and



iprotect iwhistleblowers iis iessential ifor igovernment iaccountability. iThe irole iof ielection imanagement ibodies iin iensuring ithe iintegrity iof ielectoral iprocesses ihas ibecome iincreasingly icomplex iwith ithe iadvent iof itechnology iand ithe ispread iof idisinformation. iEnsuring ithe isecurity iand itransparency iof ielections iin ithe idigital iage iis icentral ito itheir irole iin idemocratic igovernance. iInternational iand isupranational iinstitutions iface ithe ichallenge iof iaddressing iglobal iissues iand iupholding international ilaw iand inorms iin ian iincreasingly iinterconnected iworld. iBalancing inational isovereignty iwith ithe ineed ifor international i cooperation iremains ia icentral iconcern.

Democratic iinstitutions iform ithe ibackbone iof idemocratic igovernance, iplaying ipivotal iroles iin imaking iand ienforcing ilaws, iinterpreting ithe iconstitution, ifacilitating ielections, ioverseeing ithe iexecutive ibranch, iand ishaping ipublic idiscourse. iThese iinstitutions iface inumerous ichallenges, iincluding ithreats ito ithe iintegrity iof ielections, ipolitical ipolarization, ithe iimpact iof idigital itechnologies ion iinformation idissemination, iand ithe ierosion iof ichecks iand ibalances. iOvercoming ithese ichallenges iis iessential ito imaintaining ithe iintegrity iand ivitality iof idemocratic isystems iin ia irapidly ichanging iworld.

2.4.4 Models of iDemocracy

Democracy icomes iin ivarious iforms iand iis inot iconfined ito ia isingle, iuniversal imodel. iUnderstanding ithe idistinct imodels iof idemocracy iis iimperative ito inavigate ithe icomplexities iof igovernance iand ithe idiverse iways iin iwwhich idemocratic iprinciples iare ipracticed iacross idifferent isocieties. iThis isegment idelves iinto ithe ivarious imodels iof idemocracy, ishedding ilight ion itheir iunique icharacteristics, ikey ielements, iand itheir idiffering iemphases ion ipower irelations. iBy icomprehensively iexamining ithese imodels, iwe ican igain ia ideeper iappreciation iof ithe iintricate itapestry iof idemocratic igovernance iin ian iever-evolving iworld.

Democracy iis ia imultifaceted iconcept, iand ischolars ihave imeticulously idistinguished ibetween iseveral idemocratic imodels, ieach iof iwwhich iencapsulates ia idifferent iapproach ito ithe ipractice iof idemocratic iprinciples (Diamond i& iMorlino, i2005). iThese imodels iinclude iliberal idemocracy, isocial idemocracy, iparticipatory idemocracy, iand ideliberative idemocracy. iEach imodel iemphasizes idistinct iaspects iof

igovernance, isuch ias iindividual irights, isocioeconomic iequality, icitizen iparticipation, irational ideliberation, iglobal igovernance, iand igrassroots impowerment. iBy iexploring ithese imodels iin-depth, ithis isegment iaims ito iprovide ia icomprehensive iunderstanding iof ihow idemocracy iis iconceptualized iand ipracticed iin ivarious isettings.

As iwe idelve iinto ithe icharacteristics iand ikey ielements iof ithese idemocratic imodels, it ibecomes ievident ithat ithey iplay ia ivital irole iin ishaping inot ionly ipolitical iinstitutions ibut ialso ithe ibroader isocietal ilandscape. iFurthermore, ieach imodel's iunique iemphasis ion ipower irelations ioffers iprofound iinsights iinto ithe idynamics iof idecision-making, igovernance, iand ithe idistribution iof iauthority iwwithin idemocratic isystems. iThis isegment iwll icritically ianalyze ithese imodels ito iprovide ia ifoundation ifor icomprehending ithe ichallenges, ibenefits, iand inuances iassociated iwwith idifferent iapproaches ito idemocratic igovernance. iIn idoing iso, it icontributes ito ia imore iprofound iunderstanding iof ithe iintricate itapestry iof idemocratic ipractices iworldwide.

2.4.4.1. Liberal iDemocracy

Liberal idemocracy iis ione iof ithe imost iwidely ipracticed iforms iof idemocracy iworldwide, icharacterized iby ia istrong iemphasis ion iindividual irights, icompetitive ielections, iand ithe irule iof ilaw (Diamond i& iMorlino, i2005). iIn iliberal idemocracies, icitizens ienjoy iessential ifreedoms isuch ias ifreedom iof ispeech, iassociation, iand ithe iprotection iof iminority irights (Dahl, i1971). iThe ikey ielements iof iliberal idemocracy iinclude ia iconstitution ithat isafeguards ithese irights, iregular iand ifair ielections, iand ithe iseparation iof ipowers.

Liberal idemocracy iis irooted iin ithe iprotection iof iindividual iliberties. it iplaces ia istrong iemphasis ion ithe ilimitation iof igovernment ipower iand ithe iprevention iof iits iabuse. iThe isystem iis idesigned ito iensure ithat ino isingle ientity ior iindividual ican idominate ior iinfringe upon ithe irights iand ifreedoms iof icitizens (Held, i2006). iThis imodel iunderscores ithe iimportance iof ichecks iand ibalances ias ia iway iof imaintaining ithe iintegrity iof ithe idemocratic isystem. iIn iliberal idemocracies, ithe ipower irelations iare istructured ito iprevent ithe iconcentration iof ipower iin ithe ihands iof ia ifew (Ake, i2000). iThe ifocus iis ion iprotecting ithe ifundamental irights iof iindividuals, iwwhich, iin iturn, iinfluences ithe ibehavior iof ielectd



representatives and government officials. The government's role is not only to ensure the protection of individual rights but also to maintain law and order within the society.

However, it is important to recognize that liberal democracy is not without its challenges. Some critics argue that the protection of individual rights may sometimes come at the expense of addressing social and economic inequalities (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). Furthermore, the system's reliance on competitive elections can sometimes lead to a focus on short-term gains rather than long-term policy solutions (Dahl, 1971).

2.4.4.2. Social Democracy

Social democracy is a model of democracy that combines the principles of liberal democracy with an active state role in economic and social policies (Esping-Andersen, 1990). While it still upholds individual rights and competitive elections, social democracy places a stronger emphasis on addressing socioeconomic inequalities and providing a social safety net. This model often features universal healthcare, strong labor rights, and progressive taxation systems. Key to social democracy is the belief that a just and fair society is one where economic and social inequalities are minimized. The power relations in social democracies are organized around the notion of shared prosperity and solidarity among citizens (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The government is seen as having a responsibility to intervene in the economy to ensure that wealth is more equitably distributed.

In social democracies, the government plays a more active role in regulating and providing social services. This includes investments in healthcare, education, and welfare programs (Peters, 2012). The goal is to achieve a more equitable distribution of resources while maintaining democratic values. As such, social democracy seeks to balance individual rights with the common good. Critics of social democracy argue that a strong state role in the economy may stifle entrepreneurship and innovation (Schumpeter, 1942). Additionally, they contend that the high taxation required to fund social programs can discourage economic growth (Svallfors, 1997). Nevertheless, proponents of social democracy argue that the benefits in terms of reducing inequality and ensuring social welfare

outweigh these concerns (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

2.4.4.3. Participatory Democracy

Participatory democracy is a model that places a significant emphasis on citizen involvement in decision-making processes (Fung & Wright, 2003). This approach seeks to empower individuals and communities to actively participate in the political system, including local governance. Key elements of participatory democracy include direct citizen participation in policy decisions, participatory budgeting, and community organizing (Pateman, 1970).

In participatory democracies, power relations are decentralized, and authority is shared between citizens and elected representatives (Cohen, 1985). The focus is on giving citizens a direct say in shaping policies that affect their lives, thereby enhancing the accountability of government institutions. This model places trust in the wisdom and judgment of the people. In this model, participation is not limited to voting in elections but extends to direct involvement in shaping policies and decisions (Fung & Wright, 2003). Participatory democracy prioritizes open and direct engagement, where citizens are encouraged to actively contribute to the political process. This can take the form of citizens' assemblies, community meetings, or other forums where individuals have a direct role in shaping policies and decisions.

Participatory democracy is often celebrated for its potential to deepen democratic engagement and improve government accountability (Fishkin, 2018). When citizens actively engage or contribute in decision-making, they are most likely to be informed about issues, hold officials accountable, and trust in the democratic process. However, critics argue that participatory democracy can be time-consuming and may lead to decision-making gridlock in complex policy issues (Elster, 1998).

2.4.4.4. Deliberative Democracy

Deliberative democracy underscores the importance of rational and inclusive public deliberation in decision-making (Dryzek, 2000). This model emphasizes open and informed discussion among citizens, aiming to achieve consensus or rational agreement on policy issues. Key elements include public forums,



deliberative polls, and inclusive discussions (Habermas, 1984). In this model, power relations are influenced by the quality of public discourse and the ability of citizens to engage in reasoned debate (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). The emphasis is on fostering a well-informed and deliberative citizenry, with power distributed among those who can present the most persuasive arguments. Deliberative democracy seeks to reconcile diverse viewpoints and enhance the quality of decision-making.

Deliberative democracy strives to ensure that public policy is arrived at through rational and informed discussion rather than mere bargaining or political maneuvering (Dryzek, 2000). This approach is designed to address the limitations of simple majority rule and promote the search for common ground among citizens with different perspectives. Critics of deliberative democracy argue that it may be overly idealistic and that achieving consensus on many issues is often impractical (Bohman, 1996). Nevertheless, proponents argue that the model encourages public engagement and enhances the quality of decision-making (Fishkin, 2018).

2.4.4.5. Cosmopolitan Democracy

Cosmopolitan democracy extends the principles of democracy to the global level, emphasizing the need for international institutions and processes (Archibugi, 2008). This model calls for a system in which citizens and nations have a say in global governance through institutions like the United Nations or regional organizations. Key elements include a focus on global justice, human rights, and supranational governance (Held, 2004). Cosmopolitan democracy seeks to address global challenges and ensure that global decisions are made through democratic processes. Power relations in this model are reconfigured to take into account global issues and the interests of humanity as a whole. This approach recognizes that many of today's challenges, such as climate change or human rights, cannot be adequately addressed solely at the national level (Held, 2004).

In cosmopolitan democracy, the focus is on balancing the power of nation-states with the interests of humanity (Archibugi, 2008). It acknowledges that decisions made by powerful nations can have a profound impact on the rest of the world. Thus, the model seeks to ensure that the global community has a whole

has a say in shaping international policy (Held, 2004). Critics of cosmopolitan democracy argue that it may undermine the principle of national sovereignty and may not adequately represent the interests of all nations (Nardin, 2008). Nevertheless, proponents argue that it is necessary to address global challenges and promote a more just and equitable world order (Held, 2004).

2.4.4.6. Radical Democracy

Radical democracy challenges traditional power structures and seeks to decentralize authority (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). This model emphasizes the importance of grassroots movements, direct action, and challenging established hierarchies. Key elements include community organizing, consensus decision-making, and the recognition of multiple perspectives (Mouffe, 2000).

In radical democracies, power relations are characterized by a rejection of established norms and hierarchies. The model seeks to empower marginalized groups and challenge systems of domination (Wood, 2010). The emphasis is on fostering a more inclusive and participatory democracy that empowers those who have been historically marginalized. Radical democracy challenges traditional power structures and encourages the active participation of individuals in shaping political decisions (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). It often involves practices such as direct democracy, civil disobedience, and grassroots organizing. The intention is to provide a voice to people who have traditionally been left out of the political system and to foster a more inclusive and equitable society.

Critics argue that radical democracy can lead to instability and the breakdown of established institutions (Cohen, 1989). However, proponents contend that it is necessary to challenge systems of oppression and promote a more inclusive and just society (Mouffe, 2000). These various models of democracy offer valuable insights into the diverse ways in which democratic principles are implemented across different societies. Each model emphasizes distinct aspects of governance, from the protection of individual rights and the reduction of socioeconomic inequalities to citizen participation and global governance. As the world continues to evolve, the ongoing discussion and development of these models provide a rich foundation for exploring the complexities of contemporary governance.



2.5 Theoretical iFramework

Many theories can be used to study and understand the relationship between youth political participation and democracy. The systems theory approach, group pluralist theory, political economy theory, and other neo-radical theories provide a broad understanding of the nature and character of youth political participation in democracies. The group pluralist approach also provides a strong grasp of understudied teenagers', women's, and men's political participation and how these groups are mobilized as important social groups during elections but are not supported or provided for afterward.

2.5.1 Elite iTheory

Elite theory, grounded in contemporary works by scholars such as Hoffman and Centeno (2015) and Hindess (2015), postulates that societies are inherently led by a relatively small and influential segment of the population. These individuals or organizations, known as the elite, wield significant political power and resources. Elite theory posits that political decisions are largely shaped by this select few, typically hailing from economic and social upper echelons. Consequently, societies develop hierarchical power structures that reflect the dominance of these elites. Elite theory offers a lens through which to examine the intricate interplay of power, influence, and control within the political landscape. It underscores the idea that the majority of individuals within a society are not actively engaged in the decision-making process and that political elites hold disproportionate sway over the formulation and execution of policies.

Elite theory, a fundamental concept in the field of political sociology, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate dynamics of political power within societies (Hoffman & Centeno, 2015; Hindess, 2015). This theoretical paradigm posits that power is primarily concentrated within a select group, commonly referred to as the elite, who wield significant influence and control over political processes. In the context of the Ph.D. study titled "Political Participation of Youth, Impact on Democracy in Nigeria," an in-depth exploration of elite theory is paramount. The purpose of this study is to clarify the nuances of youth political participation in Nigeria and, more

importantly, its implications for democratic practices. By leveraging the principles of elite theory, this research seeks to unravel the multifaceted influence of political elites on the extent and nature of youth engagement in the democratic process.

To better understand Nigerian democracy, we looked at the elite thesis as a theoretical foundation. These political elites, who make up a small percentage of the population, are coercive, cohesive, and coherent in their quest for resources that they exploit essentially to their advantage. According to Mosca (1939), there are two kinds of people in any society: an elite class that rules and a class that is mostly governed by the elite (youths). The minority elite class, which always rules over the majority of the population, monopolizes power, performs all state political and governing functions, and enjoys the exclusive right to impose coercion through the machinery of state agencies. In contrast, the second class, which comprises most of the population, is managed, directed, and, in this instance, thought for by the minority elite class (Mosca, 1939). James Burnham, Robert Michels, Vilfredo Pareto, and Gaetano Mosca were the leading proponents of the elite idea.

These authors criticized Aristotle and Karl Marx's traditional democratic philosophy. They contend that majority rule is unattainable. This invalidates the idea that democracy is a system of governance run by and for the people. Every society comprises two groups: the governed and the ruled, with the ruled making up a relatively small minority in every society. This idea of "elites" is founded on the idea that every society has a ruling minority—a collection of people who possess and distribute the most significant power sources. In addition to distributing power, elites also use various methods of elite recruiting to bring in new elites to the fray. Elite theory is based on the idea that understanding elite conduct, elite interaction, elite transformation, and ultimately the connection between those events and state outcomes is essential.

Elite theory may have developed as a response to the writings of philosophers like Aristotle, who divided society into three political systems or types (rule by one, rule by a few, and rule by the many). Aristotle believed states would be a pure form of state when rulers focused on the community's good.



When the state's officials began acting egotistically, they would be referred to as twisted. Aristotle described a monarchy as a system in which one person has all the authority. Tyranny is its warped form. Aristocracy is the small minority of society in which sovereignty rests. If this tiny minority misuses its influence for their own benefit, it is an oligarchy. Politics is involved if a significant portion of the populace controls the sovereign power. Democracy is a twisted version of it. Since no man can rule by himself and the majority also lacks the capacity to rule, this argument does not sit well with elite theory experts.

Traditional and contemporary elite theorists aim to explain state outcomes and governance behaviour through elite behaviours. Since political sociology is concerned with the interaction between the state and society, elite theory is predicated on the idea that elite behaviour influences this interaction causally. (Botelho, 2011) As a result, many other political phenomena, such as regime types, regime changes, liberalization, the state, secularization, and many others, fall under the purview of elite theory. This hypothesis might explain why, despite the practice of democracy, the empowerment of graduate young continues to be a difficult challenge for most democratic regimes. This strategy reflects Mills's 1956 elite thesis, which received much flak. According to elite theory, the values and preferences of the ruling elite are assumed to be reflected in public policy (Anyebe, 2018).

The main tenet of the elite theory is that the ruling elites, whose opinions are upheld by political figures and institutions, shape public policy rather than the demands and actions of the general populace or the masses. In other words, the elites hold the view that they alone would uphold and carry out the policies that were pushed for the welfare of the people. As a result, policies are passed from the elite to the general public. The elites' policies reflect their own views and favor maintaining the status quo over radical change. This assumption results in the majority of people being apathetic and ignorant, and they do not support or influence policy by their demands or actions. This viewpoint is being challenged more frequently because of the intrinsic difficulties the public sector faces. Interventions with the best intentions frequently have unintended

repercussions in complex systems like Nigeria (Shergold, 2015). Design thinking is what results from this.

2.5.1.1 The Elite Theory and Political Participation of Youth in Nigerian Democracy

In the Nigerian context, understanding elite theory is pivotal when examining the multifaceted nature of political participation among youth. Nigeria, a nation characterized by a rich tapestry of sociopolitical diversity, grapples with significant challenges concerning political engagement, particularly among the youth demographic. Elite theory provides a valuable lens through which to discern the barriers faced by young Nigerians in their attempts to actively participate in the political landscape.

One of the key insights from elite theory is that other groups' opinions and interests may be marginalized as a result of a small number of political elites holding the majority of the country's authority. This dynamic is particularly pertinent in the Nigerian context, where political elites wield considerable power and influence, which often translates into the marginalization of youth voices in political processes.

Nigeria's political landscape is marked by the dominance of political elites who, in many cases, have been in power for extended periods. These elites often have a vested interest in preserving the status quo, which may not always align with the aspirations and concerns of the youth. Consequently, the political agency of young Nigerians may be curtailed due to the overwhelming influence of established elites who control the levers of power.

Furthermore, elite theory underscores the notion that political elites have access to and control over essential resources in the political sphere, including financial resources, media platforms, and organizational networks. This resource advantage positions them to maintain a firm grip on the political landscape, often at the expense of less privileged groups, such as the youth.

2.5.1.2 The Elite Theory: Relevance and Implications to Political Participation of Youth and Impact on Democracy in Nigeria

The implications of limited youth participation on democracy in Nigeria are profound.



Democracy thrives when it is characterized by inclusivity, diverse voices, and equitable representation (Dahl, 2015; Woodward, 2016). The underrepresentation or marginalization of the youth demographic, as elucidated by elite theory, fundamentally hampers the ideals of democracy. The quality of Nigerian democracy is directly impacted when youth are excluded from meaningful political engagement. When a significant portion of the population is disenfranchised or disengaged, it erodes the democratic principles of representation, accountability, and responsiveness. Political elites, who often maintain the status quo, may not be incentivized to address the specific needs and concerns of the youth, further exacerbating the divide between the political elite and the broader population.

Democracy depends on the active engagement of a diverse range of stakeholders. When a substantial portion of the population, in this case, the youth, is effectively silenced or excluded from the political discourse, the democratic process becomes distorted. Inequities in access to political resources and opportunities for civic engagement can perpetuate a system where the elites' interests take precedence, potentially undermining the democratic principles of equality and fairness. Moreover, the exclusion of the youth from political participation can hinder the process of generational change and renewal within the political system. Elite theory highlights that political elites often resist relinquishing power and may actively work to maintain their dominance. This can stifle the emergence of fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and diverse leadership, which are crucial for the sustained health and vitality of a democratic system.

2.5.1.3 Relevance of Elite Theory to the Study

The application of elite theory in the study titled "Political Participation of Youth, Impact on Democracy in Nigeria" serves several crucial purposes:

Exploring the Power Dynamics: Elite theory enables an exploration of the power dynamics within Nigeria's political landscape. By identifying and analyzing the key players and the sources of their power, the study can uncover the mechanisms through which political elites influence the political participation of youth.

Understanding the Barriers to Youth Participation: The theory helps in comprehending the barriers faced by young Nigerians in their attempts to actively participate in the political system. This includes examining how political elites, with their entrenched power and resources, may hinder or discourage youth participation.

Assessing the Implications for Democracy: The study, through the lens of elite theory, can assess the implications of limited youth participation on democracy in Nigeria. It allows for an in-depth analysis of how elite dominance impacts democratic principles such as representation, accountability, and responsiveness.

Highlighting Potential Avenues for Change: By understanding the mechanisms of elite influence, the study can identify potential avenues for change and democratization. This may include policy recommendations, advocacy strategies, and reforms aimed at increasing youth participation and ensuring a more inclusive democratic system.

In conclusion, the elite theory, grounded in recent scholarly works, is an indispensable theoretical framework for the study titled "Political Participation of Youth, Impact on Democracy in Nigeria." By delving into the dynamics of political power and influence, this research contributes to a more profound understanding of the intricate relationship between political elites and youth participation in the democratic process. The findings of the study hold the potential to offer valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing youth engagement, promoting democratic inclusivity, and bolstering democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

2.5.2 System Theory

The system theory, as advanced by contemporary scholars like Easton (2015) and Luhmann (2017), emphasizes the idea that political systems are not isolated entities but are part of a broader network of interconnected systems. It recognizes that these systems continuously interact and adapt to maintain equilibrium. This framework underscores the importance of feedback mechanisms and the interplay of various components within the system. In the context of the study, system theory offers insights into the web of relationships within the Nigerian political landscape and how they



influence and are influenced by the participation of the youth.

The system theory is a holistic concept often applied in various disciplines, provides a valuable framework for comprehending the intricate dynamics of political systems and their influence on political participation (Easton, 2015; Luhmann, 2017). This theoretical paradigm posits that societies and political systems are complex, interconnected, and interdependent structures. In the context of this study titled "Political Participation of Youth, Impact on Democracy in Nigeria," the system theory proves to be a powerful lens. This research explores the complexities of political participation among Nigerian youth and its implications for democratic practices through the systems perspective, revealing how the entire political system shapes and is shaped by youth engagement.

As it uses its input-output conversion model to comprehend society and the numerous segments that must work in harmony for the development and formulation of policies and programmes to materialize, systems theory offers a constructive approach to this subject. The environment provides input in the form of demands and support, and the society (system) then receives output in the form of laws, programmes, and policies that are intended to change the environment.

The Systems theory is the analytical framework chosen for this investigation. Every society, in general, can be thought of as an organic system with various components that work together to form the whole. This investigation draws on systems theory, a field of study that was created in the 1950s because of the work of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Anatol Rapoport, Kenneth E. Boulding, William Ross Ashby, Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, C. West Churchman, and others, and which was developed after the World Wars. System theory is the multidisciplinary study of systems. A cohesive group of either intentionally or naturally produced components is called a system. All systems have limits that define their space and time; they are surrounded by and affected by their environment; they are characterized by their structure and nature; and they are expressed in the ways in which they operate. A system can produce results that are greater

than the sum of its parts if it exhibits emergent behavior or synergy.

Modifying one system component usually has unpredictable knock-on consequences on the other components and the system as a whole. For self-learning, self-adapting systems, growth and adaptation are contingent upon the degree to which the system is fitted to its environment. Certain systems mainly assist other systems by keeping them maintained so that failures don't occur. Systems theory aims to systematically identify the dynamics, limitations, and circumstances of a system and clarify principles (i.e., a system's purpose, measure, techniques, and tools) that can be identified and applied to systems at every level of nesting. Dynamic or active systems are distinguished from static or passive systems (Paolo, 2000).

The system here becomes active when youths exercise their constitutional rights to ensure that everything runs smoothly and passive when youths give up on their societal obligations to play vandalism, throwing rocks at automobile windows and glasshouses, arm-twisting, gambling, fraud, intoxication, embezzlement, and persona destruction in the fight for survival or a better tomorrow. Nigeria's future depends entirely on what we, as young people, do or do not do. Because there are not enough opportunities for young people to participate, a system component is broken.

In his speech, Saraki argued that the secret to creating peaceful communities is youth inclusivity, which is a key component of "good governance development." Political participation and young inclusion, however, will have little to no effect in areas where poverty, injustice, and a lack of political will for change are the main concerns. According to statistics, youth make up more than 60% of the voting population in Nigeria, and they should be fairly represented in local, state, and federal administration. Unfortunately, this is not the case because practically all of President Muhammadu Buhari's cabinet picks are senior citizens. The fact that younger generations were not fairly represented in the board nominations made public by President Buhari was also upsetting.

According to Makinde (2011), the system theory is a perspective that views an organization or an entire society, in this case, the Nigerian society, as a dynamic complex



open system or as an entity made up of various sublets or sub-units of elements interacting and cooperating with one another to be able to maintain itself in a state of relatively stable equilibrium by experiencing a dynamic and constant exchange of energy and information with its environment (Makinde, 2011). As a result, programmes are created and put into action utilizing the system's theory's input, process, and output analysis, which is utilized to examine Nigerian policymaking as well as social sciences in general.

According to the systems theory, society consists of a complicated web of dynamically entangled and interrelated elements. According to David Easton's input-output processing process system theory, every system consists of inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback, as well as the surroundings it functions in and interacts with on a regular basis. This theory may not be appropriate to explain the dynamics of youths' political participation and democratic governance because, in most cases, policies and programmes are decided by the elites or those in positions of authority, not necessarily the youth as it were. This is true even though this theory seems to be a viable explanation for society and how policies and programmes are received from society and processed.

Even if it appears that these teenagers are contributing to the system, their demands never come to fruition because of the pluralist interest groups vying for dominance over other groups' interests in the system. Furthermore, because the interests of the contending groups are not uniform regarding age and social status, the group pluralist theory may not be a good fit for explaining this occurrence. Instead, members of the ruling class or those with the authority to enforce conformity and sway decisions will hold the dominant positions. To ensure this, systems theory rises to prominence. "A system is fundamentally an aggregation of interrelated or independent entities to constitute a complex unity," claim systems theorists (Koontz in Ezeani, 2006). Government and policymakers, as well as their environment (political, social, economic, ethical, technological, etc.), interact with and impact all systems, including the university, and in turn, impact the environment. The systems approach's emphasis

on input-output analysis is crucial (Ezeani, 2006).

It is important to remember that a system needs help from its surroundings to survive. As a result, it receives support inputs such as tax payments, following norms and regulations, etc. Equally significant is the fact that certain new inputs are produced because of the outputs and fed back into the system via the feedback mechanism. These are once more processed and outputted. Consequently, the system's strategy is cyclical (Ezeani, 2006).

The democratic system is a component of a broader society that receives input from the outside world in the form of citizen demands, the upkeep of law and order, and the supply of beneficial policies, opportunities for empowerment, and services. Within the sphere of governmental administration, the polity processes these requests. When processing is incomplete, the outcomes are collectively viewed as the outputs that are sent out to society. These outputs may have a beneficial or harmful influence, as evidenced by the ineffective execution of youth empowerment programmes and initiatives to reduce poverty. The relative orderliness of society or the amount, quality, and promptness of the goods and services provided to graduates may be some of the effects of the conversion process. The system's approach mandates that when making plans, decision-makers consider the needs of society as a whole, environmental factors that affect the caliber of graduates, and other impediments, such as political, social, economic, technological, ethical, etc., that may prevent the desired outcome. In other words, it needs elements that constantly interact with internal and external contexts (Ezeani, 2006).

The systems theory approach focuses on the policy directive from the government and policymakers towards:

1. the development and implementation of comprehensive policies for political participation can be used to elucidate the link between youths' political participation and democracy in Nigeria;
2. the legal framework for encouraging young people to participate fully in democratic and governmental processes;
3. creating an enabling environment for skills and genuine initiative to thrive in society.

According to Ezeani (2006), the systems theory is used in public administration for analysis



and evaluation. Independent of its content, type, or existence on a spatial or temporal scale, abstract organizations or phenomena are studied using the systems theory or systems approach, which is trans-disciplinary in nature. The models can be used to describe complex entities, and the theory is utilized to investigate universal principles shared by all complex phenomena. Ross Ashby advanced the idea first by biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1940) and Bertalanffy not only opposed reductionism but also attempted to bring science back together. In addition to being open to and interacting with their surroundings, genuine systems might develop with qualitatively new traits, leading to continuous evolution, he emphasized. Instead of limiting, the system theory is concerned with the arrangement and relationship between the parts of an entity (such as the human body) and the characteristics of its constituent parts or elements (such as organs or cells). (cf. holism).

This every organization establishes a system unrelated to the elements' actual composition (e.g., particles, cells, transistors, people, etc.). As a result, the many disciplines are founded on the same organizational concepts and principles, which serve as a foundation for their fusion. System-environment border, input, output, process, state, hierarchy, goal-oriented, and information are examples of systems concepts. There have been several advancements in systems theory. The disclosure of the systems approach to public administration research reveals that nearly all processes can be divided into three categories: input, process, and output. The identical is true of public administration.

2.5.2.1 The System Theory and Political Participation of Youth in Nigerian Democracy

Applying system theory to the Nigerian context helps uncover the nuanced dynamics of political participation among youth. Nigeria, a nation with a diverse sociopolitical fabric, experiences significant challenges related to youth engagement in the political system. System theory provides a valuable lens through which to examine the interconnections between different components of the political system and how these components influence youth participation.

One key insight from system theory is that political systems adapt and respond to changes

and feedback. The participation of youth in the political system acts as a feedback mechanism, potentially prompting changes within the broader system (Easton, 2015). This can lead to shifts in policies, practices, and opportunities for youth to engage in political processes.

Nigeria's political landscape comprises various subsystems, including government institutions, political parties, civil society, and the media. System theory underscores how these subsystems interact and affect one another. When youth participation is limited, the entire political system may be impacted, affecting the system's ability to adapt, represent diverse voices, and maintain stability (Luhmann, 2017). Furthermore, system theory highlights the importance of external influences on political systems. These external forces, including international organizations, economic factors, and global trends, shape the system's behavior and responses. In the Nigerian context, these external influences can either facilitate or hinder youth participation. Understanding how these external forces interact with the political system is essential for comprehending the challenges and opportunities for youth engagement.

2.5.2.2 The System Theory: Relevance and Implication to Political Participation of Youth and Impact on Democracy in Nigeria

The implications of limited youth participation on democracy in Nigeria, as viewed through the lens of system theory, are multifaceted. Democracy thrives when it functions as a complex system where various elements work together to ensure accountability, representation, and responsiveness (Easton, 2015). The participation of youth, as a critical component of the political system, affects the overall functioning of democracy.

When youth participation is limited, the system's ability to adapt to changing societal needs and preferences may be compromised. System theory emphasizes that political systems should be responsive to feedback to maintain equilibrium (Luhmann, 2017). The exclusion of youth voices can disrupt this equilibrium, leading to a democracy that is less representative and less adaptable to evolving challenges.

Furthermore, the interconnected nature of political systems, as highlighted by system theory, underscores that the consequences of limited youth participation are not isolated. It



can trigger a cascade of effects, impacting other subsystems and ultimately affecting the entire political system. This may result in a lack of diversity in decision-making, reduced legitimacy of political institutions, and a diminished capacity to address the needs and concerns of all citizens.

Democracy, as a complex system, relies on various components working in harmony. System theory underscores that a system's functioning depends on the interplay of its elements (Easton, 2015). In the context of Nigeria, limited youth participation disrupts this interplay, potentially leading to imbalances, inefficiencies, and a democratic system that falls short of its potential.

2.5.2.3 Relevance of System Theory to the Study

The application of system theory in the study titled "Political Participation of Youth, Impact on Democracy in Nigeria" serves several crucial purposes:

Exploring the Interconnectedness of Political Systems: System theory enables an exploration of the interconnectedness of political systems in Nigeria. By understanding how various subsystems interact and influence one another, the study can reveal the complexities of the political landscape and how it impacts youth participation (Luhmann, 2017).

Analyzing Feedback Mechanisms: The theory provides insights into feedback mechanisms within the political system. It allows for an examination of how youth participation provides feedback that can lead to adaptations and changes within the system (Easton, 2015).

Assessing External Influences: System theory underscores the impact of external influences on political systems. The study can analyze how international factors, economic conditions, and global trends shape the Nigerian political system and influence youth engagement.

Understanding the Broader Implications: By considering the holistic nature of political systems, the study can assess the broader implications of limited youth participation on democracy, including effects on representation, accountability, and adaptability.

In conclusion, system theory, as presented by contemporary scholars, serves as a robust theoretical framework for this study on the Political Participation of Youth, Impact on Democracy in Nigeria. By delving into the interconnected and interdependent nature of political systems, this research contributes to a

deeper understanding of how the entire system shapes and is shaped by youth engagement. The findings of the study hold the potential to offer valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing youth participation, promoting a more responsive and adaptable political system, and bolstering democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

2.5.3 The Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory, as articulated by leading scholars such as Perkins and Zimmermann (2000) and Rappaport (1987), posits that individuals and communities should be equipped with the resources, knowledge, and agency to assert their rights, make informed choices, and influence their environment positively. This theory underscores the importance of enhancing self-efficacy, building skills, and expanding access to resources as essential components of empowerment.

Empowerment theory also emphasizes the interconnectedness of personal, organizational, and societal factors that contribute to the empowerment of individuals and communities. It underscores the role of context and structural constraints in either enabling or limiting empowerment processes (Zimmerman, 2000).

As a multifaceted and dynamic framework, the Empowerment theory offers an in-depth understanding of power dynamics, autonomy, and participation within societies (Perkins & Zimmerman, 2015; Rappaport, 1987). This theoretical framework highlights the significance of empowering individuals and communities to exercise control over their lives and, subsequently, actively engage in decision-making processes. In the context of the Ph.D. study titled "Political Participation of Youth, Impact on Democracy in Nigeria," a thorough review of empowerment theory is essential. This research seeks to explore the complexities of political participation among Nigerian youth and its consequences for democratic practices. By applying empowerment theory, the study aims to uncover the potential for empowering youth to participate in politics and its impact on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Zimmermann (2000), one of the leading proponents of this theoretical orientation, argues that empowerment needs to be linked to each person's well-being within the context of the broader political and social environment



to improve people's lives, organizations, and communities. Every area of life requires opportunities for growth and development. Opportunities can come in a supportive business climate, advantageous government regulations, and a loan from the government, banks, or generous individuals. According to some advocates of youth empowerment and political engagement, youth have the zeal to spur positive change. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2014) asserted that the youth empowerment theory holds that young people have the ability and capability to be effective factors of "change" who can contribute to addressing and resolving the issues facing the planet now and soon. The likelihood of being a force for social change appears to be positively correlated with young empowerment. This suggests that younger people can be agents of positive change if given the tools and resources they need to build their own futures, including opportunities and systemic support.

Although this approach promotes a fair playing field for everyone to develop naturally, a fish and a monkey cannot coexist in a river on an equal footing. The fish unquestionably has the advantage over the monkey. Similarly, policies and initiatives for empowerment developed by elites and policymakers cannot create an equal playing field in which empowerment should be built. Youths should be empowered into government and made vital aspects of advancing governance and crucial decision-making.

These complaints may result from broken political promises and unhappiness with the government's policies and programmes. Due to an increasing lack of infrastructure, services, and basic amenities in Nigeria, many young people fall into this category, contributing to political apathy. Overall, there have not been many empirical examinations of these citizenship ideas (Bulmer & Reese 1996). Despite Marshall's theory's emphasis that all three of these rights should be maintained comprehensively, Ariely (2011) claims that current research typically focuses on only a select group of civic rights (Lister, 2005; Revi, 2014). In order to understand how much the general public views the idea of their view social and/or political rights as fundamental to their notion of a democracy and the ways in which these democratic

values impact citizens' political engagement, it is critical to examine the dearth of comprehensive empirical research. How political engagement has affected democracy is a better way to state the central question of this research project.

The "critical citizens' hypothesis" predicts political passivity or a focus on not institutionalized activities (Dahlberg, 2015; Klingemann, 1999; Norris, 1999). These strategies are based on the idea that people are more inclined to behave in a manner incompatible with the values they cherish. Although the main claims of these two theories conflict concerning how they predict political behaviour about political participation, it is interesting to note that both theories begin from the premise that, on average, citizens have a similar knowledge and understanding of what constitutes an ideal democracy.

However, there is little empirical support for the supposition that citizens share identical democratic goals. Research frequently uses common inquiries about the state of democracy in the respondent's nation (Ariely, 2015). However, certain country-specific research has shown that citizens can distinguish between several democratic ideals (Schedler & Sarsfeld, 2007). It is evident that more research is necessary before making the presumption that all citizens' conceptions of democracy are the same. This topic has become more critical because of the mounting threats to the legitimacy of European political systems since the economic crisis in 2008 (Cordero & Simón 2016; Streeck & Schäfer 2013). In various European countries, protests against austerity measures have taken place on the streets (Morlino & Quaranta, 2016; Quaranta, 2016), and nationalist opposition parties have continuously increased their vote share in recent elections (Bermeo & Bartels, 2014; Hooghe & Oser, 2015; Kern, Marien). The primary motivation behind such intense political engagement is many wonderings.

Another democratic theory that offers a good understanding of the relationship between electorates, in this case, particularly adolescents and democratic activity, may be found in an essay on citizenship concepts by Marshall (1950). He has been a critical participant in the discussion of the rights that are essential for citizens' full democratic



ipolitical involvement. In this essay, he looked at the evolution of three main sorts of rights throughout history: civil rights, which are the cornerstones of human freedom; political rights, which cover the right to political participation and fundamental economic stability; and social rights.

According to Listeri(2005) and Miller & Skaaning i(2010), the final stage of this three-part transition in terms of social rights was regarded as having the most impact on concepts of citizenship and democracy. The extent to which the general people in contemporary democracies accept any or all these citizenship rights as democratic principles is another key factor to consider. Marshall saw these three citizenship rights as stages in modern welfare states' social and political growth. Even though the fundamental it is unclear to what degree the other two types of citizenship rights—political and social—are completely realized in democratic countries. While the civil rights Marshall addressed, like property rights, are usually taken for granted in modern democracies. Marshall's focus on the idea of social rights—that establishing social rights is not only a matter of ideological preference but must be recognized as fundamental to achieving basic rights for citizens in contemporary democracies—made it a fundamental advance in his framework i(Connell, i2012).

This theory, closely related to the political economy theory, explains the relationship between young people's political engagement and democracy and governance. Building on Marshall's theoretical framework, we focus on the two kinds of citizenship rights—the "political rights" and "social rights" conceptions as democratic ideals—that are particularly pertinent for the current political discussions. Researchers are inquisitive about how people who uphold these varied democratic ideals will participate in politics and other political processes. We seek to determine whether distinctive democratic ideals may serve as a driving force for forms of political participation. This study expands on recent research showing how democratic ideas and norms, such as civic obligation, can influence conventional political conduct, like voting i(Galais & Blais, i2016). Based on the idea that normative standards can influence behaviour and that young people's political

engagement can have an impact on democratic governance.

We can make connections between the larger body of theoretical and normative literature on ideal conceptions of democracy and the more empirically oriented study on political involvement. One straightforward expectation is that persons who accept both sorts of democratic beliefs regarding what they think to be important for democracy will be politically active, as opposed to those who have no solid democratic principles.

Another significant theoretical issue is how to compare the notions of "political rights" and "social rights" regarding how much they differ from one another in terms of engaging in different political behaviours. Focusing on citizens' political participation and responses in the most recent elections held and their aftermath, the literature will suggest that if these groups behave differently in terms of political activities, they engage directly toward established democratic institutions compared to their non-institutionalized political behaviour. More specifically, because of their innate concern for political institutions and practices, we anticipate that individuals who prioritize traditional political rights, such as free, credible, and fair elections, will engage in institutionalized political conduct more actively than other citizens. The logic supporting this anticipation is, therefore, that those motivated by social rights concerns will explicitly engage in non-institutionalized political activity and direct their political voice to factors like labor unions, social movements, and civic organizations.

The democratic principles battery, which covers both social and political rights-related topics like ensuring free and fair elections and protecting citizens from poverty, enables us to evaluate Marshall's theories. The IESS 2012 module on democratic views is unique. It examines these topics as part of a respondent's comprehensive vision of an ideal democracy, even though generic preferences on social rights-related themes have been extensively researched by public opinion researchers i(Reeskens & van Oorschot i2013).

The phrase "democracy in general" was used in the question's wording to prevent respondents from interpreting it as a query about the workings of their own political system. In the current study, we extend past research that examines various aspects of



these principles (Hooghe et al., 2017; Oser & Hooghe, 2018) to show a connection between democratic beliefs and political behaviour. We investigate these political activities using a common conceptual and empirical distinction between institutionalized and non-institutionalized political activity from the literature. This ESS module also includes common and well-known questions on a range of political actions that have appeared in the ESS and related surveys (Barnes & Kaase 1979; Marien et al. 2010).

2.5.3.1 The Empowerment Theory and Political Participation of Youth in Nigeria

In the Nigerian context, empowerment theory offers a powerful lens through which to examine the factors that affect youth engagement in political processes. Nigeria, a nation characterized by diverse socio-political challenges, experiences significant obstacles to youth participation. Empowerment theory posits that enhancing the empowerment of young Nigerians is crucial to promoting their active engagement in the political sphere.

One key insight from empowerment theory is that it highlights the role of personal and psychological empowerment (Perkins & Zimmerman, 2015). This form of empowerment emphasizes the development of self-efficacy, motivation, and self-confidence. In the context of youth participation, personal empowerment can empower young individuals to overcome challenges, take initiatives, and develop a sense of political agency.

Moreover, empowerment theory underscores that individuals need access to resources, information, and opportunities to fully participate in society (Zimmerman, 2000). In Nigeria, where youth often face economic and educational barriers, access to these resources is crucial. Empowerment interventions that provide resources and information can enhance the capacity of young Nigerians to engage effectively in the political process.

Empowerment theory also highlights the importance of organizational and community empowerment (Perkins & Zimmerman, 2015). Within Nigeria, community organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society groups play a critical role in facilitating youth engagement. Empowerment within these organizations can amplify the impact of youth participation and foster a sense of belonging and influence.

2.5.3.2 The Empowerment Theory: Relevance and Implications for Political Participation of Youth and Impact on Democracy in Nigeria

The implications of empowerment theory for democracy in Nigeria are substantial. Democracy thrives when individuals and communities are empowered to participate actively, voice their concerns, and influence policy decisions (Zimmerman, 2000; Perkins & Zimmerman, 2015). Empowering young Nigerians to engage in politics holds the potential to enhance the quality and sustainability of democracy in the nation. Empowerment theory underscores that individuals who feel a sense of empowerment are more likely to engage in political activities and civic participation (Perkins & Zimmerman, 2015). When youth are empowered, they are more likely to exercise their rights to vote, join political movements, and advocate for their interests, thus contributing to a more vibrant and representative democracy.

Moreover, empowerment theory acknowledges that participation in democratic processes is not limited to voting alone; it includes engaging in policy debates, community organizing, and advocacy (Zimmerman, 2000). Empowered youth are more likely to engage in these forms of participation, contributing to a more informed and participatory democracy. Empowerment theory also emphasizes the potential for democratic consolidation through increased political engagement. A consolidated democracy requires the active involvement of diverse segments of the population, including youth. When young Nigerians are empowered to participate in politics, the democratic system becomes more robust, responsive, and representative, which contributes to the consolidation of democratic norms and institutions.

2.5.3.3 The Role of Empowerment Theory in Addressing the Research Questions

The application of empowerment theory in the study titled "Political Participation of Youth, Impact on Democracy in Nigeria" serves several critical purposes:

Examining the Components of Empowerment: Empowerment theory allows for an in-depth examination of the various components of empowerment, including personal, organizational, and community empowerment (Perkins & Zimmerman, 2015).



The study can explore how these different forms of empowerment influence youth participation.

Analyzing the Impact of Empowerment on Youth Participation: The theory provides a framework for assessing how empowerment processes and interventions affect the political engagement of young Nigerians. It allows for an exploration of the causal links between empowerment and increased political participation.

Identifying Empowerment Strategies: Empowerment theory can assist in identifying effective strategies and interventions that empower youth to participate in politics. This includes examining best practices in education, skill-building, and resource access that enhance empowerment (Zimmerman, 2000).

Evaluating the Impact on Democracy: The study can assess the implications of empowered youth participation for democracy in Nigeria. It can examine how increased political engagement among youth influences democratic norms, representation, and responsiveness.

In conclusion, empowerment theory, as presented by leading scholars, serves as a robust theoretical framework for the Ph.D. study titled "Political Participation of Youth, Impact on Democracy in Nigeria." By delving into the multifaceted nature of empowerment, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how empowering young Nigerians to participate in politics can have far-reaching implications for democratic consolidation. The findings of the study hold the potential to offer valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing youth participation, promoting a more vibrant and responsive political system, and contributing to the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria.

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

3.1 Introduction

The importance of youths to the development and sustenance of any democracy cannot be over-emphasized, as seen in the past. Hence, the investigation into youth's political participation and democratic development in Nigeria could not have come at a better time than this. The historical context of the study's

independent and dependent variables will be covered in detail in the following chapter, which serves as an overview. Nigeria's political system is marked by gerontocracy, corruption in political appointments, and the exclusion of young Nigerians from decision-making and governance processes in public offices. Most African presidents who reach the apex political office in their respective countries do so after turning 70, a sign of the gerontocracy practice that characterizes African politics (YIAGA Africa, Wiki contributor, 2021).

Adelekan (2010) underlined that, in an ideal world, democracy entails citizens taking part in decisions that affect their lives and, by extension, their country. A democratic system requires that the populace participate entirely in the democratic processes of selecting leaders and effectively disseminating public policies and attitudes. Any government or state that aspires to be democratic fundamentally accepts a high degree of political engagement, openness, enjoyment of civic and political liberty, and competitive choice. However, there are several ways to engage in politics; all are rightly captured.

3.2 Historical background to youths' political participation and democracy in Nigeria

In any community, whether civilized or agricultural, Awolowo and Aluko (2010) assert that the pursuit of control for power, the acquisition of authority, and the capacity to influence decision-making are the primary aims of political participation. Participating in politics is a crucial method to give something back to the political system and the nation's overall development. Political engagement is one of the fundamental necessities of every democratic administration. The admirable role performed by Nigerian youths in terms of mobilization of defense as palace guards, dissemination of information as town criers, messengers, and crucial stakeholder's decisions making in some societies, pre-colonial and colonial politics began at the very grassroots level.

She experienced several crises in her search for democratic sustainability and consolidation, as we will see later. These upheavals concerned youth political inclusion and engagement. When this youthful energy is not properly funneled and used for societal



advancement and growth, it will unavoidably be investigated for ives like violent protests, wanton property destruction and murder of people believed to be political rivals, electoral violence, do-or-die relationships, and other political corruptions committed by most of the Nigerian youth at the grassroots level (Whyte, 2013; Omosho, 2007).

3.2.1 Youth political participation and democracy in the Pre-Colonial era in Nigeria

Despite the absence of formal democratic government institutions like those in the modern era, there were some in the pre-colonial era. Some organizations carried out the functions of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government either together or independently. The young played a prominent role in the administrative body and, in some circumstances, the legislative when it came to passing legislation for the communities.

Ajose concurred with the submission, but he claimed that historically, the majority of scholarly works of this kind have tended to overlook this period using the argument that as there was no state system or officially recognized form of governance at the time, youth involvement in local politics was not permitted. Indigenous state and political systems were established to manage the people's affairs long before colonialism started, even though there may not have been a legally recognized government in place at the time (Ajose, 2003). Even though they were not visible or acknowledged in the constitutional form as it is today, pre-colonial administrative systems were, in fact, well-established and well-organized, with a central chain of command and a division of roles and responsibilities among various social groups.

The cabinet council of the emir, chiefs, obas, or kings included youth leaders who were effectively represented and involved in significant decision-making processes that affected the entire country. During pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria, imaginative, Traditional leaders such as Oba Kosoko, Nana of Olomu, and King Jaja of Opobo are youthful and dynamic, and Usman Dan Fodio reigned over their respective territories with dignity. The modern democratic regime was established by people who had selflessness and good morals,

including Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello, Tafawa Balewa, and Chief Anthony Enahoro, who all were key proponents of the cause of Nigeria's freedom with every drop of their sweat when colonialism was at its height (Olawale & Bolaji, 2020).

According to Crowder, they were traditional institutions handed down by the people, which is in accordance with their customs, to rule/run the society (Crowder, 1978; Falola et al., 1991). The young had a significant impact on these traditional political organizations as well as the pre-colonial Nigerian political order. In times of foreign aggression, the teenagers were visible, manning positions of security, defense, and warriors. The youngsters were palace guards, town criers, and in charge of public information transmission. The council of law-making elders and chiefs observed and supervised youth in such processes.

Even though there were then and still are more than 200 different ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo traditional systems are important. It should be noted that the decision to focus on these three traditional systems was motivated by the fact that this essay cannot completely investigate all these ethnicities. Therefore, this extent is necessary to adequately portray all pre-colonial administrative communities. Under the guise of holding the position of Mia-gida, young people served as community representatives in the Hausa traditional system. Families are considered in political and public debates and at the ward, district, and emirate levels. The Mai-gida was frequently the oldest male adult in the previous governmental system, the Compoundi (Crowder, 1978). The role of youth in pre-colonial Nigerian politics was not limited to the Hausa traditional system, as previously mentioned; Using the Age Grade website, it was also deeply embedded in the traditional Igbo system. The youth engaged in the Igbo traditional system through the Association and the General Assembly. According to Leo Dare's study from 1983 that "In the Igbo traditional system, Government of the community was by direct democracy which requires the participation of Adult males." While the men are religiously forbidden to bow or accept orders from women, and the Hausa's dominant religion opposed the idea of women participating in the administration and politics



of the community, the Igbo and Yoruba traditional systems both gave women a significant amount of participation, the Hausa traditional system did not (Abdullahi, 1979).

Youths were, nonetheless, prominently displayed in this traditional governance. Youth were also involved through "Egbe Odo," the youth wing of the Yoruba traditional system. Its objective was to advance youth interests collectively by expressing their opinions on societal issues (Crowder, 1978). However, the available data make it clear that youth involvement in politics, government, and the socioeconomic system is a lifelong undertaking.

The birth of what is now known as "Nigeria" and her governance is thought to be as old as Nigeria's youth political engagement and governance. It is equally vital to note that, even before pre-colonial Nigeria fell into the powerful hands of colonialism, their contribution to the country's political order was not only constructive but also crucial to its survival. These energetic young people actively worked in mining, agriculture, and other useful endeavors while also assisting the elderly in running their respective lands. In some circumstances, when the heir is to inherit the throne, they are taught, trained, and guided as youths to fulfill such roles and obligations efficiently. Youths were town criers, emissaries, palace protocol, and guards. Evidently, the political culture and values prevalent among young people during this time influenced the proper political attitudes and behaviours displayed by the youths in the political sphere, such as tolerance, patience, patriotism, a sense of unity, and general good behaviour. These characteristics characterized the political engagement of young Nigerians prior to colonialism. This gives us faith that young people are essential in the relationship between political participation by Nigerian youth before colonialism and democratic governance. As we later discovered in this historical presentation, youths' positive role in grassroots politics in pre-colonial Nigeria persisted into the colonial era with increased political participation and consciousness motivated by the desire for freedom and self-actualization.

3.2.2 Youth Political Participation and Democracy in the Colonial Era in Nigeria

Objectively, the colonial era saw the height of youth and student achievements in the struggle for Nigeria's independence and long-term political development, particularly at the grassroots level (Olusanya, 1980). The pre-colonial centuries' youthful vitality and political knowledge clashed with the nationalistic zeal that ruled among young people throughout the colonial times. This ambition undoubtedly represented the ideal political culture that the young people of this age were socialized into. As a result, it impacted their roles, conducts, and behaviours in the colonial political order.

Before Herbert Macaulay and other non-professionals like C.C. Adeniyi-Jones, Eric Moore, J.C. Zizier, and T.A. Doherty created the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), there was no anti-colonial Nigerian organization that could articulate the people's wishes for self-government and independence. Their political participation, tenacious fight against the British imperialists, formidable organization, rhetorical finesse, hard effort, agitation, and protest against offensive and antiquated colonial laws produced an odd amalgam of ferocious nationalism and political activism. Members with both radical and conservative leanings could come together and demand liberation thanks to them (Ogunna, Ibezim, Adelola, and Ofondu, 2017).

The Nigerian Youth Movement was another influential political participation vehicle supported by the youth in this regard during the colonial era. The movement was actively led by Ernest Ikoli, Sir, and included Kofo A. Abayomi, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Davies H.O., Vaughan J.C., and Samuel Akinsanya. Sir Azikiwe later created the National Council of Nigeria after leaving the Nigerian Youth Movement for various obvious reasons. Indisputable proof of the value of the founding of the West African Students Union (WASU), which was historically formed, was one example of the grassroots youth and student participation in the colonial Nigerian political order. ready to advocate for the plight of not only Nigerian students but the students in West Africa as a whole and to sensitize the West African people to the ills of imperialism. In their own countries and overseas, well-known people like Julius Ojo-Cole, Herbert Macaulay, and others



ifought iagainst ioppressive icolonial ieducational irules iaffecting iWest iAfrican istudents.

To iits icredit, iit istopped ithe ipredatory iAfrican iVillage ishow iin iNewcastle idirected iat iWest iAfrican istudents istudying iin iBritain. iIn iits ifight iagainst iimperialism iand iall itypes iof iprejudice iand iexploitation iagainst iWest iAfrican istudents, ithe iWest iAfrican iStudents iUnion i(WASU) ifounded isome ibranches iin iGhana, ithe iSierra iLeone, ithe iCongo, iNigeria, iand ithe iGold iCoast. iLater, ithese ibranches ihad ian iimpact ion ithe iGold iCoast iYouth iConference iin iGhana iand ithe iNigerian iYouth iMovement iin iNigeria. iThese iyouth imovements iwere iat ithe iforefront iof ithe igrassroots istruggle iagainst ithe iills iof iimperialism iin ian iendeavor ito ifree itheir ilocal icommunities ifrom icolonialismi(Olusanya, i1980).

Nevertheless, iafterward, iin iAugust i1944, iChief iNnamdi iAzikiwe isplit ifrom ithe iNational iYouth iMovement iand iestablished ithe iNational iCouncil iof iNigeria iCitizens. iOrganizations, igroups, iand iassociations ilinked ito ivarious iforms iof ipolitical iengagement iand iconssciousness iwere inot ipermitted ito ijoin. iTrade iUnions, iPolitical iParties(iDemocratic iParty iand iYoung iDemocrats iParty), iliterary isocieties, iprofessional iassociations, isocialiclubs, iand itribal iunions iwere isome iof ithe iaaffiliated iorganizations ito iNCNC imembers iwho iwere iall iactively iinvolved ibecause ithey ihad ia iwell-organized istructure iand ilevels iof iorganizations ifrom ithe ilocal, idivisional, iregional, iand inational ilevel. iThese idivisionaliorganizing isecretaries icordinated ithe ipolitical iactivities iof ithe iparty. iDr. iNamdi iAzikiwe iplayed ia idominant irole iin ithe iNCNC, imuch ilike iChief iAwolowo idid iin ithe iAction iGroup i(AG), iby iusing iincisive ipublic ispeeches iand iferocious ijournalism iin itheir ichain iof inewspapers, iparticularly ithe iNigerian iPILOT iand imagazines, ifor iactivism iand ito ifight ithe inationalist icause iand idemand ifor ifreedomi(Ogunna, iIbezim, iAdelola, iand iOfondu, i2017).

Similarly, ithe iAction iGroup iis iassociated iwith ithe iNigerian iYouth imovement. iIts ifounding imembers, iBode iThomas, iFRA iWilliams, iM.A. iOgun, iand iSamuel iL. iAkintola, iwere iprimarily iyouth ipeople iwith ithe izeal iand ivigor ito iengage iin ipolitical iengagement iand iother iforms iof iactivism. iThe iparty iwad idedicated ito iensuring iit iprotects iand iupholds ifundamental ihuman irights, ifreedom iof ispeech, ithe irule iof ilaw, iextending ithe ivote ito iwomen iin ithe

iNorth, iand ipolitical iactivism iin igeneral. iThis iwad iin iaddition ito iits iprimary igoal iof iadvancing ithe iethnic iand icultural iinterests iof ithe iYoruba. iChief iAwolowo, ithe ihed iof ithe iAG, ifirmly ibelieved iin ia itechnocrat-run igovernment. iAs ia iresult, iexperts isuch ias ibureaucrats, iacademics, iand iprofessionals ishould ioversee ithe ieconomy iand ipolitics iin isociety ibecause, ias istated iin iPlato's iRepublic, itheese iindividuals iare imeant ito irule. iThe ipublic iand iother igroups iof icitizens iought ito ibe igood ifollowers iand icompelled ito icomply. iChief iAwolowo iput iforth ithis iidea iin ihis i1947 ibook iPath iToward iNigerians iFreedom. iAs ia iresult, ithe iAG ihad ia istrong ileadership iteam ithat iactively iparticipated iin ipolitics. iThe iNational iUnion iof iNigerian iStudents iwad ifirst iprominent iin iNigeria iin i1956, ibut iinternal istrife iamong iits inumerous iexecutives icaued ithis imovement ito icease iabruptly.

The iNational iAssociation iof iNigerian iStudents i(NANS), iin icontrast ito ithe iWest iAfrican iStudents iUnion i(WASU), iwad iexclusively idedicated ito iNigerian istudents' iwelfare. iThrough ithis ivenue, iNigerian iadolescents iactively iraised ipolitical iconssciousness iamong ithemselves, iparticularly ifrom ithe igrassroots ilevel, iin ithe ibattle iagainst ioppressive iand iexploitative ipolicies ithat ithe icolonial iadministration iof iNigeria itargeted iat iNigerian istudents. iEveniin ithe iearly iyears iof iNigeria's iindependence, iit icontinued iits iactivities, iand iNigerian iyouth iinvolvement iin ianti-colonialist iefforts iwad iseen iat ithe ilocal ilevel.

In igeneral, iit iis isignificant ito inote ithat ithe ielevated ilevels iof iactivism, inationalism, ithe iNigerian iyouth iduring ithe icolonial iera, idisplayed ipatriotism, iunity iof ipurpose, iconstructive icriticism, iand ia ifeeling iof icivic iand isocietal iresponsibility ithat iultimately icontributed ito iNigeria's iindependence. iessentially ireflections iof ithe ipolitical iculture iand ivalue iof iself-government, inationalism, iselfless, iand idisciplined ipolitics ithat ithe iyouth iwere iindoctrinated iwithin. iIt iis ienough ito isay ihere ithat ithis iculture iimpacted ithe inationalistic iroles ithat iyouth ipeople iin iNigeria iplayed iduring ithe idecolonization iprocess ias iforces ifor iliberation iand ichange, ias iwell ias iresistance ito ithe ipolitical iwrongdoings iof ithe icolonial ipower.



3.2.3 i Youth iPolitical iParticipation iand iDemocracy iof ithe iPost-Colonial iEra iin iNigeria

Most iNigerian istudents iengaged iin ithe iStruggle ifor iindependence iduring ithe iearly iyears iof ithe icountry's iindependence; ithis ienabled ithe idissemination iof ithe iideal ipolitical iculture ithat iencouraged ithe iyoung igeneration ito iengage iin inationalistic ibehaviour ithroughout ithe icolonial iera. iAmong ithem iwere irenowned iindividuals ilike iErnest iOkoli, iChief iAnthony iEnahoro, iChief iObafemi iAwolowo, iDr. iNnamdi iAzikwe, iand imany iothers. iThey ifought ifor iNigeria's iindependence iwhile ibeing iinvolved iin ilocal iand inational ipolitics iin iNigeria. iYouth ishould ihave ibeen iactively iinvolved iin ipolitics ithrough ivoting, iselection ifor ielecting ipolitical ileaders, irunning ifor ielective ioffice, icreating ipolicies, icommunity iactivism, iand iother icivic iengagements, ito iname ijust ia ifew ioptions.

i However, ias iMenocal icorrectly inoted, iyouths, iparticularly iin ithis iadministration, iare ia idemographic igroup ithat ihas ibeen ilargely iexcluded, ineglected, iand imarginalized iin ipolicy iformulations, ipolitics, iand icivic iengagements. iTherefore, iensuring ithey ihave ithe ifreedom ito ivoice iand iexercise itheir ipinions iis iessential ito icreating ia idemocratic isociety ithat iis iinclusive, iresponsive, itransparent, iand iresponsible (Menocal, i2014). iYoung ipeople icomprised ia isizable iportion iof ithe iNigerian ileaders iwho itook iover ifrom ithe iBritish iin i1960 iand iruled ithe icountry iuntil i1966. iGeneral iYakubu iGowon itook iover ias iNigeria's iruler iafter iGeneral iJ.T.U. iIrons'i ipassing iwasa only i32 iyears iold iat ithe itime, iand imany iNigerians iwere ipleased iwith ihow iarduously ihe ifought ifor iour ination's iunification iand iunity. iFamous iNigerian istudents ilike i"Wole iSoyinka, iG.T.G. iToby, iand iall iNigerian istudents" icollectively ihave itheir ipolitical iperspectives iinfluenced iby ithis istill-iviable ipolitical iculture. iIn ifact, ifrom ithe iFirst iRepublic ito ithe iThird iRepublic, iNigerian istudents' ifervent iresolve iand iconsciousness iwere iregarded ias iinsatiable.

To irid ithe icountry's ipolity iof ithe iethnic ipolitics, ipolitical iviolence, iand ipoor iresource imanagement ithat iplagued iit, iyouth iofficers ilead iby iMajor iChukwuemeka iNzeogwu iand iother iEastern ielements istaged ithe ifirst icoup id'état ion iJanuary i15, i1966. iThis iwasa ievent, iif idebatable, iin itheir iZeali (Carlisle, i2015). iThe iNorthern iArmy idivisions, iwho isuffered ithe

iheaviest ilosses, imistook ithis iand iresponded iwith ireprisal iunder ithe ijustification ithat ithe icoup iwasa imotivated iby ia itribal ipurpose; ithe idamaging iconsequences ican ibe ia itopic iof iits iown. iLike ithis, ithe iAli iMust iGo iSaga iaccurately iportrayed ithe irole iperformed iat ithis itime iby iNigerian iadolescents iand istudents (Carlisle, i2015).

The iNigerian iyouths iand istudents isuccessfully ihad iAli iMuhammad, ithe ithen iminister ifor iEducation iunder iShehu iShagari's iregime, idismissed idue ito ihis ipoor imanagement iof ithe ieducation isector. iThis idismissal iand ithe idetermination ito isee ithat iChief iM.K.O. iAbiola, ithe ilegitimate iwinner iof ithe iJune i12, i1993, ipresidential ielection, iwasa isworn iin ias ithe ination's ileader iunder ithe iauspices iof ithe iNANS, ispeaks ivolumes iaabout itheir irole, iconduct, ibehaviour, iand iwhat ithey iwere iknown ifor iat ithe itime (Almond i& iVerba, i1963). iThis ifurther isupports itheir icrucial irole iin iNigeria's icontinuous ieffort ito iestablish igrassroots ipolitics isustainably. iEven ithough ithe imajority iof ipolitical ileaders iat ithe itime iwho ihad iaccess ito ieducation iand ithe ichance ito ipursue ipolitical icareers iwere iyouth ipeople, ithe iexclusivity iissue iwasa inot ias iblatant ias iit iis itoday iin ithe ipolitical isphere.

In iaddition, ithe ination iwasa ialready idivided ialong ireligious, iethnic, iand itribal ilines ifollowing ithe ipost-election iviolence ithat ibroke iout iand iculminated iin ithe ifirst icoup id'état iin i1967. iIn icontrast ito ithe isoutherners iand iChristians iwho iruled ithe inorth iand iwere iattacked, islaughtered, iand isaw imany ichurches iburned, ithe inorthern isection iof iNigeria iwasa idominated iby iMuslims. iIn iNigeria, ipolitics, iaccording ito iFaladei (2007), iis iviewed ias ia ifilthy igame iplayed iwith ianimosity, ihatred, irancor, iand iother irelated iills. iAs ia ireult, iNigeria iis icought iin ia ivicious icycle iof ipolitical iunrest iand iinstability.

However, irecords ireveal ithat ithroughout ithe iearly iyears iof iindependence, iNigerian iyouths iwere ivalued iparticipants iin ithe icountry's ibody ipolitic, iparticularly igrassroots ipolitics, iboth iindividually iand icollectively (Carlisle, i2015). iWhyte (2013) iemphasized ithat iwhe iit icomes ito imobilization ioperations iagainst isocietal ievils, imilitary ityranny, inational idifficulties, icapacity ibuilding, iand iretention imeasures, iNigerian iyouths iin itheir ivarious iformations iare ia iforce ito ibe ireckoned iwith. iWhen iNigerian ipupils iget isick, ithe ientire icountry idoes itoo, ihe icontinues (Carlisle, i2015). iThis ireflects ithe



iculture and identity of Nigerian students and youth in the formative years of their country. A culture free from nationalistic tendencies, economic motives, or discrimination based on religion or ethnicity.

However, the Fourth Republic's youth's position, conduct, behaviour, and method of political participation readily raise concerns about the trajectory of Nigeria's current political system. This is especially true compared to the pre-colonial, colonial, and early independent eras. In the modern political structure and processes, the activism by political activists, political savviness, and consciousness for which Nigerian youngsters were renowned now appear to have never existed and to be nonexistent. Political behaviours like hooliganism, blatant political indifference, protest, and easily exploited tools are displayed.

It is possible to argue that many other forms of involvement are detrimental to the evolution of our democracy, including violence, the desire to get rich quickly, constant manipulation and exploitation by politicians to win elections at all costs, and many more.

As a result, Nigeria's political ship has reached the unfavorable point of youth marginalization from mainstream governance and important decision-making. Youths, therefore, lack the justification to constructively engage the promoters and factors of these horrific deceptive deeds and to play their part as the forces driving societal growth. Of course, this implies that the Youths are involved in these harmful political involvement behaviours head-on or in bed with them. However, it is essential to carefully consider the causes and factors that led to the change from their ideal role to the unfavorable one they are currently playing at the grassroots level in the context of analysis and in light of recent events that have happened since the study period and are still irrelevant to this discussion.

According to Shishima, Nigerian youth are eager to make a significant contribution to the advancement of the Nigerian state, just as youths in other areas of the world are essential to the growth of their respective countries. As a result, many views about how youth contributed to the development of Nigeria's Fourth Republic are becoming more popular in political economy discourse. (Itodo, 2017). In our research, we have focused on

the rising interest in political engagement and the favorable effects of this trend on Nigerian civil rule and democracy. However, given that progress is not always easy, this can only occur if the young people of Nigeria are sufficiently empowered, educated, and provided with an enabling environment. Contrary to what we observe in this context, where youths are not seen as key participants in the development process, the youth is essential and ought to be supported and included in every political decision-making by the government and the most powerful political factors.

However, no conclusive proof exists of deliberate initiatives or regulations aimed at young empowerment through education, inclusion, or value reorientation. According to Children and young people have a right to have their opinions heard and taken into consideration when making decisions that will impact them, according to Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Another version quotes the late Kofi Annan as saying, "A society that locks itself off from its youth severs its lifeline; it is going to bleed to death." The persistently high unemployment rate, which has questioned the value of our 21st-century educational curriculum, is another sign that most young people are not equipped or employed to do effectively in their numerous sectors or disciplines, as observed in other climates.

Graduates of 21st-century education should be prepared to generate jobs and contribute to society rather than going out into the world hunting for opportunities that have already been created. The persistent incompetence of Nigerian graduates has a number of negative effects on the nation and its citizens, some of which are now being felt and others of which may manifest if the issue remains (Amina et al., 2016). Fundamentally, the most crucial issue to emphasize here is one reiterated by Isa & Vambe on the significance of the youth as a fundamental framework upon which the success and development of any nation, particularly the graduate youths, are dependent. The state that holds them is solely responsible for fostering societal growth through their development. Without this segment of the population, any civilization would struggle to function.

Nwafori (2006) states plainly that most young people not employed in a job that pays a



living iturn iinto iagents iof ithuggery, isocial iunrest, iand ieconomic isabotage. iThis iarticle isummarizes isome iresearchers' iadditional iagreement ion ithe inotion ithat ithe ieconomic iconsequences iof ithis iunfavorable iclimate icould ibe isevere. iThe ienormous inumbers iof iadolescents iwho iare iemployed ior iempowered ihave ithe ipotential ito iundermine idemocratic iprocedures ibecause ithey ipose ia isevere ithreat iif ithe ipolitical ielite iuses ithem iin icoverit iactions ithat iwill ibring iabout ithe iend iof ithe icountryi(Olatunji i& iAbioye, i2011; iAdepegba, i2011; iIbrahim, i2011; iLartey, i2011). iOne iof ithe ifoundations ifor ithis istudy's iinquiry iinto ithe irelationship ibetween igraduate iyouth iand iNigeria's idemocratic iprocesses iis iits ifocus ion ithis iissue.

Due ito iits isize, istrength, ivibrancy, iand ireach, iyouth icomprise ia isignificant iportion iof ithe ipopulation iin ideveloped iand ideveloping idemocracies. iYouth iand itheir icapacity ito ihelp isociety itransform ihave idrawn imore iattention iin ithe iage iof iinventions iand iadvancements. iYoung ipeople iwith iextensive inetworks iand ihigh ilevels iof iknowledge iare ithe iagents ithat isupport imovements iand icauses ithat ihave ichanged ithe ipolitical iand ieconomic ilandscape iof inations. iNigeria ihas inevery ibeen ishort iof ienergetic iyouth iwho ican iengage iin ipositive icivic iparticipation. iYouths iwere ihelpful iduring itimes iof inationaliemergency, iparticularly ibefore iand iright iafter ithe iemergence iof icivil irule iin i1999.i(Muheeb, i2015)

Other icharacteristics iof iyouth ipeople, iaccording ito iOnwunah, iinclude iinventiveness, iexcitement, ihard ieffort, icourage, iand iadventure; iyouth ipeople iare ivery iadventurous iand ieager ito itest iand ivalidate inovel itheories. iIt iis irequired iof iyouth ipeople ito iparticipate iin idecision-making iprocesses ithat iimpact itheir iwellbeing. iand ithose iof iothers iwithin ithe isociety, isuch ias ithe icreation iof ithe iempowerment iprogrammes ilaunched iby ithe igovernment iat iall ilevels, ibecause ithey iare ipragmatic iin ipursuing iany iaction ithey ibelieve iin, iunlike iolder ipeople iwho itake itime ito istudy, ireflect, iand ithen iact.

Onwumahi(2011:66) istates ithat iyouth imay ibe ieffectively irepresented iand iempowered ifor isustainable idevelopment ithrough ithis. iMore icrucially, iyouth-oriented itheory's iprimary igoal iis ito icreate ieffective isupport isystems ifor imarginalized iand iat-risk iadolescents iby iemphasizing iyouth iparticipation, igrowth, iand iempowerment, ias iappropriatei(Blanchet-Cohen

iand iSalazar, i2009). iYouths iall iover ithe iworld iare imaking itheir imark iin ibusiness, itrade, iscience iand itechnology, iinformation, iand icommunication itechnology, iand ivia icollective iaction, ithey ihave iforced ichanges iin igovernmental istructures ifrom iEurope ito iAmerica, iAsia ito iAfrica. iGenerational ichanges iin ipolitical ileadership ihave ilately ioccurred iin inations ilike iFrance, iIreland, iCanada, iand, iup iuntil irecently, ithe iUK iand ithe iUSA. iHowever, ithe iworst iflaw iin icontemporary idemocracy icontinues ito ibe ithe iyouth's iunderrepresentation, imisrepresentation, iand ifrequent ihelplessness. iYouth ihave ibeen iclaimed ito ibe iunderserved iand ilimited ito iinsignificant iminoritiesi(Cresci, i2016).

This isituation ihas igreatly iencouraged iyouth ipeople, iespecially ieducated iones, ito icampaign ifor ia ichange iin ithe istatus iquo iregarding ithe icountry's iage irestriction ifor ielective ipolitical ioffices. iThei“not itoo iyouth ito irun” ibill, iwhich iwass ieventually iratified iby ithe icountry's ilegislative iand iexecutive ibranches, iarticulated iand ireflected ithe imovement ifor iinclusivity iand igreater ipolitical iinvolvement. iThere iwere istill inumerous idifficulties ialong ithe iway, ias imay ibe iseen ihere.

According ito ithe iglobal imovement ifori“Not iToo iYoung ito iRun”, iIn iformal ipolitical iinstitutions iincluding iparliaments, ipolitical iparties, iand igovernmental iadministrations, iyouth ier generations iare iunderrepresented i(2016). iBecause iof ithis, ia ilot iof ipeople ithink ithat ionly ielites ineed ito ihold ipositions iof iauthority iand idecide ion imatters iof ipolicy. iAdditionally, iit iwass inoted ithat ielection irights, inot ivoting irights, iare iwhat iconstitute ipolitical iinvolvement. iYoung ipeople imust ihave ithe ifundamental iright ito iparticipate iin ipolitics iand ihold ileadership ipositions. iIf ithe iexclusion iof iyouth ipeople iis inot iconsidered, iit iwill iresult iin imarginalization, iundermine ithe irepresentativeness iof iinstitutions, iand iaffect ithe ifundamental inature iof idemocratic iadministration. iThey iare inot itoo iyouth ito irun ifor ielective ipositions iif ithey iare inot itoo iyouth ito iget imarried, ienlist iin ithe imilitary, ior ielect iwith itheir iballots ithe ilawmakers iwho iwill irepresent ithem.

Young iNigerians iwho iadvocate iinclusivity iby idecreasing ithe iage ibarrier ifor ipublic ioffices ihave ipushed ithe i"Age iReduction iBill," ialso iknown ias ithe i"Not iToo iYoung ito iRun iBill." iThe ibill iintends ito idecrease ithe iconstitutional ithreshold ion iage irequirements ifor irunning ior



electoral seats in Nigeria to provide a range that will encourage youths to engage in politics more actively. The law was created in May 2016 by YIAGA Africa, a civil society organization. Samson Ito, an advocate for good government and a human rights activist with YIAGA Africa, is the organization's leader. Tony Nwulu, a member of the Nigerian House of Representatives, and Abdulaziz Nyako, a member of the Nigerian Senate, all actively sponsored the legislation. The proposed legislation would change Sections 65, 106, 131, and 177 of the Nigerian Constitution to lower the eligibility age for running for elective office in each of the Houses of Assembly and Representatives and the Senate from 30 to 25 years old, the Governorship from 35 to 30, and the Presidency from 40 to 30 years old, respectively. Another is backing an independent candidate in Nigerian politics (YIAGA, 2018). The legislation's overarching objective is to encourage more participation of young people in electoral processes. The campaign strongly emphasizes young people's rights to engage fully in the democratic process, including their right to run for office. Not Too Youth To Run's bill was first read in the Nigerian House of Representatives and was approved by the Senate on July 26, 2017, by a vote of (86–10), and by the House of Representatives on 27 July, 2017, by a vote of (26–123) (Daily Trust, 2017). The measure was submitted to the Committee on Constitutional Review panel after passing both the first and second readings in the Nigerian parliament. Any proposed constitutional modifications in Nigeria must be presented to the House of Assemblies of all 36 member states of the federation and receive the support of at least 24 of those states in order to become law. Thirty-three of Nigeria's states reportedly voted "yes," except for the Zamfara, Lagos, and Kano delegates. The Taraba State Assembly first rejected the law. However, after the organization issued a press release transforming the Taraba State House of Assembly into the Hall of Shame (Asadu, 2018), the decision was changed (Ironuasi & Josiah, 2018). But on February 16, 2018, the conveners handed Nigeria's president and parliaments a 30-day deadline to complete the processes of passing and enacting the bill (Atabo, 2018).

Finally, Nigeria's President Buhari announced his intention to sign the bill into law in his "democracy day" national address on May 29, 2018. On May 31, 2018, Muhammadu Buhari formally signed the Not Too Young to Run Bill into law. The passage of the Not Too Young to Run bill in Nigeria is viewed as a significant win for the participation of young people in politics. It also represents a step toward consolidating democracy and sustaining economic progress. In order to remove institutional barriers and disenchantment that prohibit certain young people from running for office, Ito (2017) launched the "Not Too Young To Run" campaign, which has now been made into law (Adebayo, 2018; Aioli, 2018).

Age restriction does not appear to be the only obstacle most Nigerian youngsters encounter in engaging in active engagement and inclusivity in politics, as it was far beyond the enactment of the Not Too Young to Run Act. According to studies, other influencing elements are to blame for young people's exclusion from and lack of participation in the country's political system and democratic institutions. These factors include, however, not limited to political consciousness or illiteracy, self-worth or class of these youths, character and immaturity, traditional stereotypes, ethnic and religious influence, the monetization of the process, the electorate's mindset, the socioeconomic factors, and the culture of godfathers rather than mentor's influence.

A research published in 2011, Henn and Foard collected a variety of ways in which younger people in society are distinguished from their elder counterparts. They claim that young people consistently vote at a far lower rate than the elderly during elections. They also mentioned how this generation of young people has been labeled as disenchanted with and alienated from the political process, that many have limited political education, and that some have a pronounced lack of interest in "formal" politics. Accordingly, Adedoyin and Isai (2017) provided recommendations for enhancing young participation in the areas of social justice, mobilization, enlightenment, and education. The study also indicated that addressing god-father political issues may encourage young people to engage politically. There is no question that this will revive their less strong political involvement commitments.



Adeyemo made the case that the current circumstances in many developing countries, particularly in Nigeria, have significantly diminished the capacity of young people to be agents of social change. These difficulties include cultural, societal, and economic issues. Generally speaking, wealth, class, ethnicity, religion, and creed have all impacted Nigerian politics. These are elements that severely disadvantage young people. Religious and ethnic politics have dominated electioneering since the country's 1960 declaration of independence. For this reason, Albert Legogie, a former deputy Senate President, noted that the election's trend showed a stark divide between Christians and Muslims, as well as between the north and the south (Adeyemo, 2011). In our next chapter, we'll go into more depth about these problems and obstacles as we assess their impact on Nigerian young political involvement and democracy.

3.2.4 Youth Political Participation and Democracy in the Fourth Republic

There is hardly any argument against the fact that young people have been integral parts of Nigerian society's political and social structures for a long time, spanning from historical to contemporary periods. These roles have straddled the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods, with continuities and variations to different extents. The various indigenous systems of governance in place through traditional institutions, while differently constructed from the more modern constitutionally recognized governmental structures, were principally utilized in the administration of people in earlier times (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020). These established and made possible prominent responsibilities for the young people who, within the Hausa community as a representative sample, carried them out in accordance with the decisions made by the ward, district, and emirate level authority systems (e.g., the Mai Gida). Similar roles were carried out through different age grade associations, the general assemblies in Igbo communities, and the Egbe Odo for youth wings in the Yoruba system (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020).

A large portion of the nationalism that drove several actors' and institutions' campaigns and struggles against imperialism and in favor of decolonization throughout the ensuing colonial

era found expression in the actions of youngsters. These, in turn, led to the rally of youths, which dovetailed into political mobilization and organization, the formation of movements, and the quest for political power in the newly independent country.

Some of the youth movements formed leveraged on the political insights available to African youths who had gone to seek the Golden Fleece in a place like England, who then came together to establish an omnibus West African Students Union (WASU) in August 1925 (Afolayan, 2018). Students from several nations in the sub-region were served by this union. It acted as a pressure group to defend their interests while educating them about the dangers of imperialism. It had in its membership such notable Nigerians as Herbert Macaulay and Julius Ojo-Cole, alongside the Ghanaian J.B. Danquah. WASU subsequently succumbed to the forces of attrition and dispersal, yielding to the formation of other groups, such as the Gold Coast Youth Conference in Ghana and the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in Lagos. As possibly the most prominent youth group of its time responding to anti-colonial nationalism, the NYM was founded in 1934 and had as leading lights the likes of Samuel Akinsanya, Eyo Ita, Adeyemo Alakija, and Kofo Abayomi, who was once its president. Also, Ernest Ikoli, who became its vice president; and H.O. Davies, its secretary; Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, and Samuel Ladoke Akintola were also members of the NYM at overlapping points. While it was crucial to its objective of fostering political advancement and enhancing the social and economic well-being of Nigerians, it was equally reputed as a multi-ethnic group with a highly national outlook (Afolayan, 2018).

As it transmuted into a political party that contested the 1938 elections into the Lagos Town Council, upsetting the dominance of Herbert Macaulay's National Democratic Party in that election, the NYM served as a forerunner for the emergence of other youth movements into political parties in the country (Ibezim, 2019). These included the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) in 1950, the Action Group (AG) in 1950, the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in 1944, and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) in 1949. Because of this, the majority of pre-Independence political



igroups that supported figures like Ahmadu Bello, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Anthony Enahoro, and Obafemi Awolowo were all former youth movements active in the fight against colonialism. And the young people listed above, along with a great number of others, were crucial to the development of what became independent Nigeria.

For instance, Anthony Enahoro was only 30 when he moved to the United Kingdom for the independence of Nigeria in 1953. Also, Aminu Kano was 30 when he founded NEPU, like Isaac Adaka Boro, who was in his late 20s when he formed the Niger Delta Volunteer Force to fight for the right of his people in 1966. As the country moves closer to the 2023 general elections, the force of the youths, as seen during the recent INEC permanent voters' card registration, may just be reborn (Ibezim, 2019).

Since the advent of Independence, youths within the political and governance space have had reasonably complex, if not contradictory, roles that were progressive and less than fortunate (Ibezim, 2019). They occupied both a messianic and destructive continuum. The youths took over the government from the colonial powers, and not only did they drive huge national advancement in terms of human and infrastructural development, it was equally a youth, aged 29, Major Kaduna Nzeogwu, who led the first military coup on January 15, 1966. This became construed across a section of the country as some form of ethnic cleansing of Northern leaders, thereby setting loose the tide of recriminations that motivated the counter-coup of July 1966. This accentuated the slippery slide of Nigerian politics into the ethnic cauldron. It was also youths who initially led the transition from civilian to military rule in the coup immediately following the actions of Nzeogwu and his cohorts in January 1966. Power had then temporarily come into the hands of General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi till July of that year. Emergent upon the counter-coup of July 1966, it was a Nigerian youth, Major General Yakubu Gowon, in his early 30s, who became the Head of State and led the country through a three-year civil war with the forces of the Republic of Biafra. Equally, governments headed by the youthful Generals Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo emphasized the uniqueness and greatness of

Nigeria in the international scene (Omoju & Abraham, 2014).

In this period, many youths were more on the frontlines of radical politics in the country through the students' union movement across many of Nigeria's tertiary education institutions. Whereas the era of activism of Nigerian students had commenced in 1956 with the founding of the National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS), which also came after the unraveling of the West Africa Students Union (WASU), the unprecedented activist role of NUNS in the Ali-Must-Go protests of 1978, its subsequent banishment, and the setting up of the successor National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), positioned the country's youths in the vanguard of progressive social action. Yet, it was during the Second Republic, starting in 1979, that the frontline public roles of youths began to diminish as the era of sit-tight leaders, who ironically arose to power in the First Republic as youths, began. After that, youths were consigned to the "youth wings" of political parties (Amzat & Abdullahi, 2016).

From then, the roles of Nigerian youths transformed into those of tools in the hands of the political elite, who have been using them as thugs and enforcers during violent electoral campaigns and as agents of destabilization through political violence, etc., ever since. Similarly, due to the angst that has surrounded the existence of many youths due to numerous failings of the state, they have also been associated with restiveness in areas such as Northern Nigeria, the Niger Delta, and the South-East, while further distorted into the constructs of 'area boys', 'agberos', the 'Yan Daba' in other zones of the country. It has been pointed out that, essentially, it was the deployment of youths as vectors of violence that led to the termination of the First and Second Republics (Amzat & Abdullahi, 2016). Despite the preceding, some of the noblest roles played by Nigerian youths were those in the trenches as pushback against authoritarian military rule and the siege to freedom and human rights during the years of the locust. From the activities of youth activists in the students' union movement, civil society and professional groups, the media, etc., the Nigerian youths positioned themselves as a



endurable bulwark against oppression in spite of the numerous consequences they bore for this. There are expectations that the 2023 general elections will experience an overwhelming increase in youth participation due to their outing during the permanent voters' card registration that ended in July 2022. In order to increase youth registration, PVC collection, and voter turnout for the 2023 elections, civil society organizations like Yiaga Africa organized the #YouthVoteCountNG iMega iConcerts in Lagos and Abuja, #SixtyPercentOfUs, and #RunToWinNG iProjects. Additionally, initiatives by ABENOL, TASCK, #YVoteNaija, and #GoNigeria helped raise awareness of the significance of the electoral process. A cocktail of these factors contributed to the surge of young Nigerians who continued to throng the voter registration centres to register so they could participate in the 2023 Elections by voting for their choice of candidates (Faruk, 2022).

3.3 Not Too Young To iRun and the iProspect of iPolitical iParticipation

An influential case study illustrating the efforts being undertaken to bring back masculine political engagement among Nigerian youths is the Not Too Young To iRun (NTYTR) campaign and the 1999 iFederal iRepublic of iNigeria iConstitutional iAmendment that it sparked and succeeded in enacting. This has been prefigured in the prior section but will be elucidated upon presently (YIAGA Africa, 2019a).

The Not Too Young To iRun movement is a coalition of over 100 youth and civil society groups seeking to mainstream youths into the process of electoral politics in Nigeria. Described as "Nigeria's largest and most successful youth movement in recent times" as the age requirements for seeking elective offices in Nigeria are being lowered to encourage greater inclusion, the movement is seen as a crucial starting point for a renewed youth participation in electoral politics because of its extremely meticulous, methodical, and organized rally of political stakeholders and institutions of governance towards the achievement of its goal. Preceding 2016, when it commenced its advocacy, the age requirements for candidates to the office of the President was 40 years; for governorship, 40 years; membership of the Senate, 40 years; the federal House of Representatives, 30 years; and for the state Houses of Assembly,

30 years also. For the movement, the acceptable age of candidacy, allowing for better inclusion of the country's youths in the political process and structures of decision-making, needed to be: for President, 30 years; State governor, 30 years; Senate, 30 years; the federal and state Houses of Assembly, 25 years. Crucial to the NTYTR movement's argument is that youths have not only played a very significant role in the democratic development of Nigeria, but that if the Constitution recognizes the age of eligibility to vote as 18 years, and then the age requirement to be voted for into elective office is 40 years, what the illegal ground norm has enabled is a partial franchise of the youths. And this could only be discriminatory and unjust (Bamidele, 2021).

Greater youth involvement in the electoral process, according to the NTYTR, is a sign of the nation's democracy developing. It is no longer only about facilitating others' electoral victories; instead, it is about having the ability to run for office and win, giving them representation in decision-making structures. The journey towards the renegotiation of the space for the broader participation of youths in the Nigerian political process started with the sponsorship of a constitutional amendment bill in May 2016 to remove the age restriction by YIAGA Africa, a civil society platform run by the redoubtable duo of Samson Itodo and Cynthia Mbamalu, which was subsequently expanded into a mass youth movement, the NTYTRi (Bamidele, 2021).

The age reduction law was enacted by the National Assembly in July 2017 following a campaign by various actors and stakeholders in the national and state parliaments as well as a march on the NTYTR iNational iDay of iAction. 24 of the 36 state houses of Assembly were affected by this. (a requirement for a constitutional amendment in Nigeria) passed the bill on February 15, 2018. By March 11 of that same year, the constitutional amendments of 34 state houses of Assembly had been transmitted to the National Assembly for onward transmission to the President for the last final stage of the constitutional amendment. On May 31, 2018, President Muhammadu Buhari signed the bill into law. Thereafter, the movement gave rise to another campaign, the Ready to iRun, to inspire Nigerian youths to seek elective offices going forward (Bamidele, 2021).



3.4 EndSARS: A Future Insight of Youth Involvement in Democratic Mobilization

The #EndSARS movement gained traction as a series of nationwide public demonstrations in response to a combination of young people's experiences in Nigeria who were subjected to abuse by the Nigerian police's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) unit; indicating that the youths will no longer stay complacent in the face of governmental abuse and dysfunction, as they are aware that change is what has to be struggled for, as it never comes around by mere wish-making or simple rhetoric. SARS was a unit of the Nigeria Police Force tasked with launching undercover operations against violent crimes, including kidnapping, armed robbery, etc., but whose operatives arbitrarily resorted to using their force of coercion to profile those, mainly young people they considered as looking unorthodox – whether in terms of the clothes, hairstyles or tattoos they wore; or even the luxurious car models they drove; or the expensive iPhones, they used, etc. When someone is detained by this unit for undue suspicion, they typically end up being extorted by the police, who should be protecting them, or, in the worst situations, they are physically abused, raped, or even killed. The rights group Amnesty International has been documenting the several hundreds of cases of violation by this Police unit since 2016 (Amnesty International, 2017).

This protest against Police brutality started in 2017 as a Twitter campaign, which attracted the hashtag #EndSARS, calling for the disbandment of the unit due to its atrocious notoriety, and it gained enormous traction from early October 2020, spilling into protests across major cities and on social media. In addition, there were solidarity rallies for the youths' efforts in the protests across major world capitals. As the protests spread across the country, the anticipated crackdown on protesters by the security forces started, leading to the arrests of many of the activists, who were locked up in Police cells in several states of the federation. While the protests persisted, they began to profoundly affect economic activities in many urban centres, inviting the brokerage of negotiations with the #EndSARS movement by concerned citizens and civil society actors (Bamidele, 2021).

The movement then went on to draft the 15-for-5 Charter of Demands, which stated that the protests would end if the government agreed to them. The five demands were as follows: (1) Freeing detained protestors; (2) Equitable treatment for victims of police abuse; (3) Charges against "bad eggs" in the police; (4) Retraining of former SARS personnel; and (5) Raising police pay. While the government, through its negotiation team, the Presidential Panel on Police Reform, quickly consented to the demands of the youth as a way of bringing the protests to an end, it, however, seemed that the youths had gone through a re-think, anchored on two primary reasons: First, the history of government dishonesty in earlier negotiations, whereby after protests are called off, the authorities either back-tracked on the agreements or never did anything to implement the understandings reached. For instance, that was the fourth time the government was making pretenses to ban the Police unit, as this never happened in the real sense.

Secondly, having realized the potential of the mass action embarked upon, the youths who were generally and deeply disenchanting with the government, and more so the Buhari administration at this point, due to its numerous failings in creating pathways out of widespread unemployment, hunger, misery, and the absence of social provisioning, embraced the #EndSARS protests further as a platform for pressing for the real address of their concerns. Even a section of while some of the young people participated called for President Buhari to step down from office due to his inability to carry out the people's mandate, others called for the protests to become a political movement that would fight for their rights. Hence, the first Charter of demands was added to a broader demand for good governance and public accountability. However, the seemingly long-drawn protest now facing an indeterminate end was brought to a tragic dénouement with the well-documented shootings at the Lekki Tollgate on the evening of Tuesday, October 20, 2020, when the Nigerian Army was unleashed on the protesters, leading to a bloodbath, the casualties or lack of, of which is still creating contestations between the government and many in the public and civil society (Bamidele, 2021).



The #EndSARS protests have demonstrated the capacity and capability of youths' participation and involvement if properly channeled. Nigerian youths' have capacity to organize for change in society in more resilient ways. It shows that the youths will no longer stay complacent in the face of governmental abuse and dysfunction, as they know that change has to be struggled for, as it never comes around by mere wish-making or simple rhetoric. It is also hoped that the 2023 general elections will experience the level of commitment the youths showed during the EndSARS protest (Bamidele, 2021).

3.5 Measures for Enhancing Youth Political Participation

Youth political participation is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by a myriad of factors, including political structures, social dynamics, economic conditions, and cultural contexts. As a result, the task of enhancing youth political engagement necessitates a multifaceted approach that acknowledges the unique challenges faced by young Nigerians. The potential for positive change lies in addressing these challenges and creating an enabling environment that empowers youth to actively contribute to the democratic process.

This section embarks on a journey to explore measures and strategies that can bolster youth political participation in Nigeria. It aims to provide a roadmap for policymakers, civil society organizations, community leaders, and other stakeholders interested in fostering a more inclusive and participatory democracy (Maton, 2018). The discussion that follows delves into practical, actionable recommendations that take into account the nuanced nature of youth engagement in Nigeria's political landscape.

The pursuit of effective measures for enhancing youth political participation is guided by the fundamental belief that a thriving democracy depends on the active involvement of all segments of the population, including its youth. By empowering young Nigerians to become informed, engaged, and influential participants in the political process, Nigeria can advance democratic principles of representation, accountability, and responsiveness. Furthermore, it can harness the energy, creativity, and diversity that the youth bring to the table, ensuring that their voices

are not only heard but also actively shape the nation's political destiny.

This section is structured to provide a comprehensive overview of key areas for intervention, acknowledging the contributions of empirical research, international best practices, and the expertise of local actors who are actively engaged in the realm of youth political participation in Nigeria. It explores recommendations for policy reform, educational initiatives, community mobilization, and empowerment programmes that, when implemented in a coordinated and strategic manner, can have a transformative impact on the political engagement of Nigerian youth.

In this endeavor, we acknowledge the challenges and complexities that exist, but we also emphasize the agency and potential of young Nigerians. By adopting and adapting the measures outlined in this section, we can take significant strides toward building a more inclusive, vibrant, and resilient democratic system that reflects the diverse voices and aspirations of the nation's youth. Ultimately, the success of these measures depends on the commitment and collaboration of all stakeholders, united in their dedication to the democratic ideals that underpin the political future of Nigeria.

3.5.1 Collaborative and Deliberative Projects

States that engage teenagers with collaborative and deliberative projects can help them become better political participants. They can help governments hire a more diverse group of young people. They are particularly effective at forging bonds with those who belong to more marginalized groups and may not feel comfortable participating in formal structures like youth councils or having easy access to online engagement tools (Liebenberg, 2017). Such initiatives depend on young people and government representatives who have the requisite aptitudes and capacities to foster reciprocal trust, frequently in association with civil society organizations. Governments should conduct a preliminary study before initiating such programmes to ensure that the planned projects represent a genuine need on the part of the targeted group and that sufficient resources are available to run the project efficiently.

The structure of projects should then be meaningful for youth involvement; young



people must feel at ease working with facilitators, such as government officials, academic researchers, or representatives of civil society organizations, and they must be assured that their opinions will be heard and taken seriously. This can be accomplished by working with dependable community partners who have experience working directly with young people, are aware of the value of getting quality input, and make sure that involvement and engagement are continued. These initiatives should include educational components and offer participants ongoing training and assistance. Clear, open, and timely feedback is crucial to the success of these projects because it helps participants understand why they are being asked to engage and the significance of their contributions to the decision-making process. This could entail a promise to invite participants to launch events, acknowledging their contribution in published reports, maintaining a regularly updated news and updates section on project websites, and scheduling follow-up meetings to present results and findings in the weeks or months following the project's conclusion, or asking participants to mentor or share their experiences with participants in future projects (Liebenberg, 2017).

Finally, research from various nations highlights the significance of framing youth-adult programmes in terms of partnerships; adults should collaborate closely with young people on shared goals and responsibilities rather than merely participating in facilitating youth engagement (Zeldin et al., 2017). Young people can take charge of a project and make changes they feel are necessary when they participate in it. This type of dynamics not only assists marginalized youth in developing their relationships and abilities but also fosters trust between these communities and authorities and gives governments crucial information about how to more effectively target different social groups.

3.5.2 Digital and Social Interaction

Digital communication tools can effectively reach many young people, collect feedback on topics that affect young people, and foster a more democratic political culture. The idea that today's youth are less politically engaged than previous generations is actually refuted by social media and digital engagement:

campaigns, protests, and boycotts frequently spread quickly through blogs and social networks like Twitter and Facebook and have shown to be successful at directing activity toward particular outcomes, like boycotts. According to research, alternative networks—those molded less by conventional social ties like neighborhood or school and more by internet-created and nurtured affinities like identities and beliefs—often dominate online participation. Young people who fit the description of "networked young citizens" frequently take the lead in this type of involvement, according to Loader et al. (2014). These connected young people are less concerned with the traditional civic duties of voting, giving back to the community, and joining political organizations. Instead, they look for new, less hierarchical, and more individualized horizontal networks through which to make their voices known. These alternative political activities ought to be seen as equally legitimate kinds of political participation.

It should be recognized, too, that inequality and inclusion issues are present in digital networks. Social media promotes both exclusive and inclusive behaviours. Additionally, access to computers and smartphones reflects larger socioeconomic patterns of financial inequality. For example, rural communities frequently have poor internet connectivity. Access to online tools and networks is unevenly distributed. Additionally, social media is particularly susceptible to manipulation, such as when misinformation or hate speeches are broadcast. For these reasons, it should only be utilized when enough devoted staff is available to monitor conversations and detect and de-escalate problem areas, such as by requesting that offensive or deceptive content be removed from social media networks. Indeed, government campaigns can be utilized to highlight these issues, instruct children on how to spot false information, and teach the public about the reporting methods available to flag hatred.

Social media can still be considered a potential tool for reducing political inequality because it can engage underrepresented groups that are difficult to reach through formal programmes and offer a safe space for participation without the risk of stigmatization, such as



through the availability of anonymous reporting tools on online platforms.

3.5.3 Social Media

Facebook is a popular social networking platform that young people use to share information, express their personal identities and ideals, and organize their peers. According to research, some young people view Facebook as a platform for political participation in and of itself rather than merely a conduit for offline forms of interaction (Vromen, 2016).

Twitter provides a similar platform for political commentary and interaction, and it has developed into a potent medium for political participation, for instance, through sharing experiences and tales related to popular hashtags. Other social media platforms, like YouTube and Instagram, are less commonly used for political engagement. However, young people are increasingly likely to follow YouTube commentators, and these "vloggers" can significantly impact young audiences, even though their content tends to be more lifestyle-focused (fashion, health and fitness, video games, etc.).

Young people frequently get their news through social media, which also serves as a sign of youth togetherness by encouraging sharing and enjoying certain articles. As a result, it can assist in disseminating information about the significance of open government strategies and initiatives, as well as about the many policies being implemented that engage young people. Many young people, however, have mixed feelings about the function of Facebook and Twitter and may be leery of online political activity, especially in light of worries about privacy and sharing personal information by organizations like Facebook. Young people may limit the uploading or sharing of anything because of Facebook's social significance if they worry that it may offend or alienate their friends; official government statements and communications may frequently fall into this category (Crowley & Dan, 2017). Due to these factors, social media may be valuable for spreading information on open government changes, but it is not currently a vital tool for direct engagement. Youth councils, however, and the kinds of collaborative and deliberative projects described above may potentially decide to use Facebook

sites to inform their members and publicize their activities. In fact, encouraging young people interested in open government projects to promote their actions on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter can be a particularly effective way to propagate trustworthy messaging about reform programmes. Such user-generated video helps young people tell their own tales and feel like participating actively in public life. It is also seen as more authentic and motivating than official messaging (Vromen et al., 2016). However, there are more restrictions on the creation of messages and the selection of channels, which makes it difficult for government institutions to adapt to these new forms of communication. While controversial, it can be a valuable tool for campaign groups to broadcast their message broadly, governments must maintain overall control over the campaigns and acts they advocate to avoid the risk of being identified with potentially harmful material (Crowley & Dan, 2017).

3.5.4 Youth Political Education and Civic Literacy

Another crucial measure to enhance youth political participation in Nigeria is to invest in comprehensive political education and civic literacy programmes (Carr, 2019). Many young Nigerians may not have access to quality civic education, leaving them unaware of their rights, the political process, and the role they can play in shaping the country's future. Civic education should encompass a broad spectrum of knowledge, including the structure of government, the electoral process, the functions of political institutions, and the significance of civic engagement.

Fostering Informed Participation: A well-informed youth population is more likely to engage actively in politics, make informed decisions during elections, and hold political leaders accountable for their actions (Youth and Civic Education, 2020). Civic education equips young Nigerians with the knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to participate effectively.

Promoting a Culture of Democracy: Civic education can instill democratic values, such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and the importance of peaceful and constructive political participation. These values are essential for building a democratic society that



accommodates differing opinions and perspectives (Osaghae, 2016).

However, the implementation of civic education must be strategic and ongoing (Omotola, 2009). It should extend beyond schools to reach out to young people who may not have formal education. Community-based programmes, partnerships with civil society organizations, and the integration of civic education into extracurricular activities can help make this measure more effective.

3.5.5. Youth Inclusion in Decision-Making Processes

Actively involving young people in decision-making processes at various levels of governance is another key measure to enhance youth political participation. This includes creating opportunities for youth to contribute to policy development, community initiatives, and governance structures (Akpan & Christopher, 2016). Youth advisory boards or councils can be established to provide a platform for youth to voice their concerns, ideas, and perspectives.

Fostering a Sense of Ownership: When young people are given the chance to shape decisions that have an impact on their life, they grow to feel a feeling of accountability and ownership for their communities and the country. This can motivate them to participate more actively in political processes (Akpan & Christopher, 2016).

Harnessing Fresh Perspectives: Young people bring innovative ideas, energy, and a fresh perspective to governance and policy development. Their participation can lead to creative solutions to longstanding challenges and enhance the responsiveness of public policies (Omorogbe, 2013). However, to make this measure effective, it is essential to ensure that youth advisory boards or similar structures are not symbolic but have genuine influence on decision-making (Mkandawire, 2015). Moreover, creating spaces for youth engagement should be accompanied by a commitment to act on their recommendations.

3.5.6 Youth Empowerment and Skill-Building Programmes

Empowerment initiatives that provide young Nigerians with the necessary skills, resources, and opportunities to engage in politics and civic activities are vital. These programmes can include leadership training, communication skills development, advocacy training, and

opportunities for internships in political offices or civil society organizations (Ogundipe & Ojo, 2016).

Enhancing Political Efficacy: Empowering young people with the skills and knowledge to navigate the political landscape boosts their political efficacy. When youth feel capable of making a difference, they are more likely to engage in political activities (Cilliers et al., 2016).

Building a Network of Young Leaders: Skill-building programmes create a network of capable and committed young leaders who can collaborate on political initiatives and mentor the next generation of youth leaders. This network can have a multiplier effect on youth political participation (Adeosun & Bakare, 2020).

To maximize the impact of empowerment programmes, they should be tailored to address the specific needs and challenges faced by young Nigerians. They should also be designed to reach those who may have limited access to traditional educational and political resources (Ogundipe & Ojo, 2016).

In conclusion, enhancing youth political participation in Nigeria requires concerted efforts that encompass education, inclusion, and empowerment. These measures can help young Nigerians become more informed, engaged, and effective participants in the democratic process, ultimately strengthening democracy in the country. However, the success of these measures depends on their effective implementation, stakeholder commitment, and sustained support for youth political engagement.

IV. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview for us to discuss in detail the various issues and challenges discovered through responses obtained from the focus group discussion conducted with twenty (20) participants using virtual Google Meet. This participants include: PDP New Generation (4); APC Youth Forum (4); INNPP Youth Mobilisation for 2003 (3); Labour Party Youth Vanguard (4); Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (4) and Advocate Youth Initiative (1).



At the end of the interview process, the following themes emerged:

Theme 1: Level of participation and factors that have influenced these participation.

Theme 2: Challenges faced by Nigerian youths in their efforts to engage in political participation

Theme 3: Increased political participation of Nigerian youths and democratization process in the country.

Theme 4: Forms of political participation that Nigerian youths have engaged in during the period of 2015-2022?

Theme 5: Effect of policies and initiatives aimed at promoting youth political participation in Nigeria.

4.2 i Level of iParticipation and iFactors that have iInfluenced these iParticipation

The first theme of the study revealed the level of political participation of youths and the factors that have influenced these participation between the periods of 2015-2022. The study observed that social media influenced the increased participation of youths, especially leading to the 2023 general elections. Also, resulting from the EndSars protest and the mobilization of youths towards voter card registration, social media through internet technology was seen to have played a significant role in upturning the previous non-participation in politics among youths. One of the group members stated thus:

The upsurge in political participation and the pumped-up energies you see among the youths all over the country is spontaneous. Social media, I will say, is really doing the magic. You see, for some time now, youths have relied on and have been mobilized through social media like EndSars and the push for voter card registration, all happened through social media, and we are seeing the difference. These have not always been like this as youths are connecting, discussing, and sensitizing themselves, creating awareness through the use of technology and social media, which is now a variable tool to hold the government to account and mobilize for youth participation (FGD Participant 3)

Another member corroborated the responses of the 3rd participant:

Frankly, social media is the game changer if youth participation in politics is concerned. We have experienced a huge turnaround, increasing interest, and desire to have the

elections come; it seems like, as youths, we are now ready to make a difference with our numbers (FGD: Participant 4)

Participant 1 from the second group stated: *Well, from what I've observed, the level of political participation among Nigerian youths has increased significantly over the years. I agree. There has been a noticeable rise in political engagement among young people, although it may vary in different regions or communities (FGD: Participant 1).*

From the above, it is seen that young political participation varies and differentiates. While some young people are willing and excited to participate, others may lack the necessary assistance or information about how to join. Basically, youth become more aware and conscientious when decisions affecting them are made with their interests in mind and when they plan social actions on their own

Talking about the factors that influence the level of participation, Participant 3 stated: *The major factors affecting the political participation of youths include the age limit for political office holders, educational qualification and awareness, poverty, political participation processes, the role of money in political participation, 'Godfatherism' and poor leadership recruitment process, structures of political parties, religion, class, and cultural barriers and mentorship and cabal endorsement*

Participant Nigeria in his opinion stated: *Access to social media and online platforms has played a significant role in encouraging political engagement among youths. It has provided a platform for sharing ideas, mobilizing support, and raising awareness about political issues (FGD: Participant 3).*

Participant 15 in his response stated: *Ethnic and religious affiliations affect youths' participation in politics in Nigeria. The religion or ethnic background of youths and their political leaders and mentors often affect their choices and patterns of participation. This situation has impacted over time the level of growth of Nigeria's democracy.*

Emphasizing on the factors, participant 4 added:

The influence of youth-led movements and advocacy groups cannot be underestimated. They have been instrumental in inspiring and



immobilizing young people to participate in politics(FGD: **iParticipant i4**).

Still on the factors, iParticipant i5 said:

Educational attainment of youths and access to technology affect their participation in politics in Nigeria.

Several studies in the literature support the findings on the role of technology and youths' political participation. iSocial media use has been found to be adopted more quickly by younger users first – although, in the iWest, social media has been shown to be inferior as a news source than attention to news outlets (Kaufhold, i2014; iShehata i& iStröbäck, i2018). iNewspaper consumption is waning in Nigeria much as it is in the iWest. iHowever, it exacerbates factors that contribute to the weakness of newspapers in Nigeria compared to broadcast and online sources: cost and the lack of a single dominant national paper, like iThe iGuardian in the iUK (iNigeria iBureau of iStatistics, i2021). iFinally, eight in i10 Nigerians (83%) have smartphones, which are overwhelmingly the primary way Nigerians access the iInternet, accounting for more than nine out of i10 (92.4%) website visits (iAkinpelu, i2020; iOyelola, i2021).

4.3 The iChallenges iFaced by iNigerian iYouths in iPolitical iParticipation

On the challenges affecting youth political participation in Nigeria over the years. iThe study found that several factors, including funding and political party marginalization, all affect the level of participation of youths in politics. iOne of the interviewed respondents stated that, on the issue of funding the political process, the respondent affirmed that Nigeria's political structure is too expensive and beyond the financial reach of most young people. iFrom the funds needed to purchase a ticket from a political party to forming and maintaining a political team and to the campaigns requires a massive chunk of funds for a sponsor that comes in the form of "godfather". i

A leader of a civil society organization based in iAbuja, tagged as iParticipant i1, stated that: *Going by the inflated costs of running a political campaign for any elections in Nigeria, with figures reported to be as high as one billion in iNaira, connected individuals, many of whom fall into the older age demographic are majority of those running for elections in Nigeria. It should be obvious why*

elections and running for elected office are mostly seen as the domain of the more affluent and well-connected, many of whom are older in age. In Nigeria, contesting for office is not inexpensive by any means.(FGD: **iParticipant i1**)

This finding is supported by pieces of literature. iAdejoro (2022) stated that Nigerian youths are economically disenfranchised to afford the absurd cost of running for any office during elections in Nigeria. iThis is supported by the fact that in the recent i2023 elections, the iAll-Progressive Congress (iAPC) pegged its presidential nomination form at one hundred million iNaira (iNGN100 million), ultimately pushing the youths out of the presidential race.

A second participant from the iINEC collaborated with the above and stated: i

The political space has not been liberalized towards youth's inclusiveness as even those political parties giving out free forms to youths and women know they can not clinch such positions as there is no level playing ground for these segments to compete and be properly included.(FGD: **iParticipant i9**)

On the other hand, iIbezimi (2019) stated that the commercialization of politics, which is now regarded as a business with anticipated returns and no longer primarily about public service, has put the political selection process at the discretion of merchants of power, the godfathers, who wield near absolute control over political party machinery and processes. iThis has been an enduring form of restriction, requiring aspirants to toe the line of approval of these godfathers as the main route to endorsement and political participation. iGodfatherism controls the outcome of our public elections, thereby undermining the entire democratization process; as a result, we are faced with what can be described as money-based politics and administration, thereby resulting in young people being unable to challenge this order in terms of having lower financial resources and lower networking capacities to challenge the big wigs during elections. iAll these have resulted in the vast looting and wastage of the financial resources of Nigeria and Nigerians (Ibezim, i2019).

The study also found that youth political participation is hampered by marginalization by political parties and leaders. It was observed from the responses of the interview



respondents that political leaders and party leaders reward loyalty in Nigeria based on financial inputs during electioneering periods, the level of friendship, and other primordial factors that often relegate the youths. Political appointments are given to older politicians who have amassed so much wealth over the years. This finding is also supported by the views of various scholars who argued that Nigerian youths are marginalized from the scheme of political decision positions. Afolayan (2018) found that the marginalization and limited political participation of the Nigerian youth is evident in the facts that since the return of democracy to the country in 1999, referred to as the beginning of the Fourth Republic, the cabinets at the federal level have not been "youth-friendly." Most of

the members of the Federal Executive Councils have been older politicians who have served in government in one form or another since the 1970s. The average age in the cabinets has been 50, with other members in their 60s and some in their 70s. Also, it has been noted that from 1999 to 2016, no Minister for Youth has been a youth (Amzat & Abdullahi, 2016). In spite of having a National Youth Policy that lays out a very bold vision for harnessing the potentials of youths and signposts how the strategy could be built for empowering the demography to make far-reaching contributions to national development, no concrete role has been designed for youths to attain political power (Afolayan, 2018).



4.4 The increased political participation of youths contributed to the democratization process in Nigeria

The second theme of the study brought to fore the increased political participation of Nigerian youths and democratization process. In a recent report by United Nations



It was reported that globally, less than 2 percent of parliamentarians are under 30 years old. The average age in parliament is 53 years old. Only 1.65% of parliamentarians around the world are in their 20's and for a third of countries, eligibility for national parliament starts at 25 years old. Voter turnout among 18-25 year olds continues to be lower than other age groups. 2 out of 3

countries do NOT consult young people as a part of the process of preparing poverty reduction strategies or national development plans (UNDP, 2021). Relatively in Nigeria the INEC Chairman while presenting the demography of the eligible voters in the commissions voters register. He gave the following records:

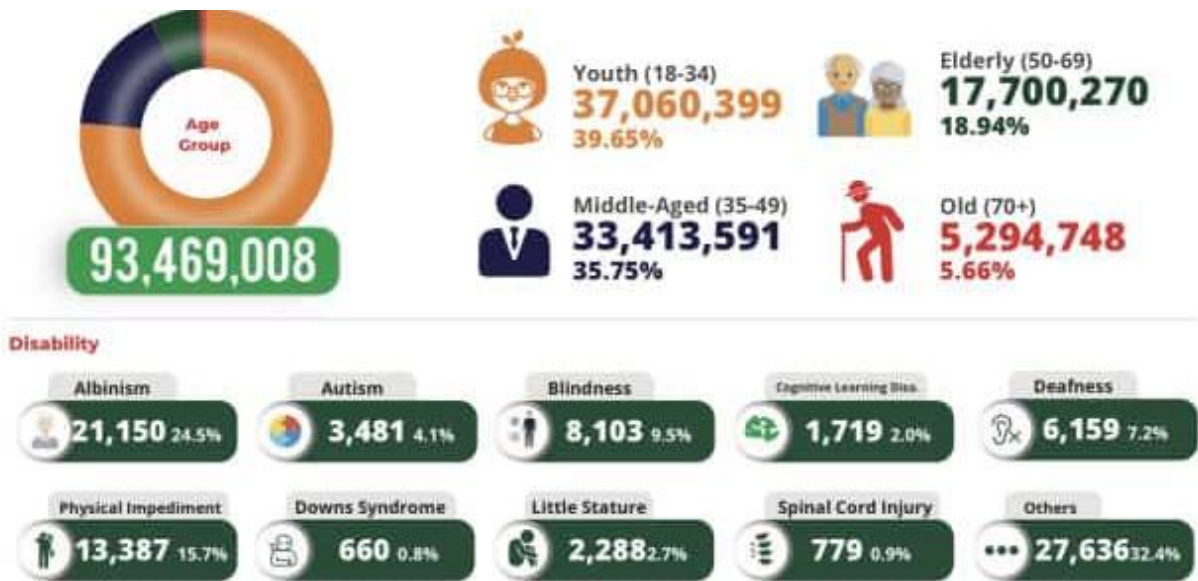


Figure i1: iVoters iDistribution
Source: iPremium iTimes iNovember, i2022.

49,054,162 or i52.5 per cent iof the itotal ivoters iare imale iwhile the iremaining i44,414,846 ior i47.5 per cent iare ifemale ivoters. i37,060,399 ior i39.65 per cent iof ivoters iare ibetween the iages iof i18 iand i34; iwhile i33,413,591 ior i35.75 per cent iare imiddle-aged ipersons ibetween the iages iof i35 iand i49. i17,700,270 ior i18.94 per cent iof the itotal iregistered ivoters iare ielderly ivoters ibetween the iages iof i50 iand i69, ijust ias the iremaining i5,294,748 ior i5.66 per cent iare isenior icitizens iabove the iage iof i70i(Premium iTimes, iNovember i2022).

Echoing ihow ipolitical iparticipation iof iNigerian iyouths icontributed ito the idemocratization iprocess iin iNigeria, iParticipant i6 istated:

Nigerian iyouths ihave ibrought ifresh iperspectives iand iideas ito the itable, ichallenging ipolitical ipolitical istructures iand ipractices. iThis ihas ilead ito ia imore iinclusive iand idiverse ipolitical ilandscape. iYouth-led imovements ilike i#EndSars ihave iplayed ia icrucial irole iin iadvocating ifor idemocratic ireforms iand isocial ijustice iissues. iThey ihave ibeen iinstrumental iin iholding igovernment iofficials iaccountable iand ipushing ifor ipositive ichangei(FGD: iParticipant i6).

Honestly, the i#EndSars iprotest iexposed iso imuch iand iignited iour idesire ito iparticipate iin the i2023 ielections. iThe ipolitical ileaders iwho, ito ithis iday, ifailed ito irespond ito iour irequests iduring the iprotest iasked ius ito itake iour iagitations ito the ipolls. iThat imotivated ius, iand iwe idid iexactly ithat iby imassively isensitizing iyouths ito iregister iand icollect itheir iPVCs ias

iwell ias iget into the ithick iof ithings iby icontesting iin the ielectionsi(FGD: iParticipant i4).

Literature iprovided isignificant isupport ion ihow the iEndSars iprotest iinfluenced iyouths' ipolitical iparticipation iduring the iregistration iof ivoters' icards iand the icampaign iperiods. iBamidele(i2021) iaverred ithat iissuing ifrom the iEndSars iprotest, ia iCharter iof iDemands, iknown ias the i5-for-5, iwasa idrawn iup iby the imovement, iwhich, iif the igovernment iaccepted ito, the iprotests iwould ibe iterminated. iThe i5-points iraised iin the iDemands iwere:i(1.) iRelease iof iarrested iprotesters; i(2.) iJustice ifor ivictims iof ipolice iabuse; i(3.) iProsecution iof ipolice i'bad ieggs'; i(4.) iRetraining iof iex-SARS imembers; i(5.) iPolice isalary iincrease. iWhile the igovernment, ithrough iits inegotiation iteam, the iPresidential iPanel ion iPolice iReform, iquickly iconsented ito the idemands iof the iyouth ias ia iway iof ibringing the iprotests ito an iend, iit, ihowever, iseemed ithat the iyouths ihad igone ithrough ia ire-think, ianchored ion itwo iprimary ireasons: iFirst, the ihistory iof igovernment idishonesty iin iearlier inegotiations, iwhereby iafter iprotests iare icalled ioff, the iaauthoritiesieither iback-tracked ion the iagreements ior inever idid ianything ito iimplement the iunderstandings ireached. iFor iinstance, ithat iwasa the ifourth itime the igovernment iwasa imaking ipretenses ito iban the iPolice iunit, ias ithis inever ihappened iin the ireal isense. iSecondly, ihaving irealized the ipotential



of the mass action embarked upon, the youths who were generally and deeply disenfranchised with the government, and more so the Buhari administration at this point, due to its numerous failings in creating pathways out of widespread unemployment, hunger, misery, and the absence of social provisioning, embraced the #EndSARS protests further as a platform for pressing for the real address of their concerns. Even a section of the involved youths was already calling for a transformation of the protests into a political movement that would seek power on behalf of the youths, as others were calling for President Buhari to resign from office for being unable to execute the mandate given him by the people. Hence, the first Charter of demands was added to a broader demand for good governance and public accountability. However, the seemingly long-drawn protest faced an indeterminate end was brought to a tragic dénouement with the well-documented shootings at the Lekki Tollgate on the evening of Tuesday, October 20, 2020, when the Nigerian Army was unleashed on the protesters, leading to a bloodbath, the casualties or lack of, of which is still creating contestations between the government and many in the public and civil society (Bamidele, 2021).

We youths are better informed and well prepared now than ever to take our destinies and future into our own hands as the older generation has failed us in all spheres. Being a youth in this part of the world puts you at a total disadvantage and keeps you excluded from governance, policy-making process, and participation where votes don't count, and the cost of participating in politics is far beyond the reach of many of us youths. (Interview Respondent: iParticipant i6).

The #EndSARS protests have shown the Nigerian youths' incapacity to organize for change in society in more resilient ways. It shows that the youths will no longer stay complacent in the face of governmental abuse and dysfunction, as they know that change has to be struggled for, as it never comes around by mere wish-making or simple rhetoric (Bamidele, 2021).

4.5 Specific forms of political participation that Nigerian youths have engaged in during 2015-2022

On the specific forms of political participation that Nigerian youths have engaged in during this period. It is important to note that the right to political participation is globally recognised as an inalienable right for citizens of a particular country. People are encouraged to take advantage of these rights, enabling them to influence and control political and economic development in their climates.

Participant i10 in her response quoted the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended which recognises and outlines the right to political participation in different forms. Such as:

1. The right to vote and right to contest for public office.

SECTION i7 SUB-SECTION i4 OF THE i1999 iCONSTITUTION provides that:

“The Government of a State shall ensure that every person who is entitled to vote or be voted for at an election to the House of Assembly shall have the right to vote or be voted for at an election to a local government council”.

“This constitutional provision ensures the participation of every citizen in political activities which includes right to vote and right to contest for public office at the Chairmanship and Councillorship elections at every Local Government in Nigeria”.

2. The right to take part freely in choosing people up for election.

SECTION i14 SUB-SECTION i2 and iPARAGRAPH i(C) OF THE i1999 iCONSTITUTION further provides:

“The participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution”.

“The use of the word “shall” in this section implies an obligation which must be fulfilled by the government. A country like Nigeria being a democratic state must recognize her citizen's right to participate freely in choosing people that will represent her in power”.

So taking advantage of those provisions of the law, many young people have actively participated in elections by voting and supporting political candidates they believe in. Additionally, social media activism and online political discussions have provided platforms for young people to express their opinions,



raise awareness, and mobilize support for various causes.

4.6 Government policies and initiatives aimed at promoting youth political participation in Nigeria

Aside government policies and initiatives aimed at promoting youth political participation, the participants were asked to suggest ways to promote youths' participation and improve the general state of democracy in the country. Addressing the challenges of youth participation in politics in Nigeria, some of the respondents suggested that recognizing the potential of youths and instituting the social inclusion of youths through political parties and political appointments will help close the gap in youths' political participation. The respondents argued that the challenges youths face that hinder participation, such as financial inequality, may continue to prevent them from reaching higher heights and can only be eroded or addressed through inclusion and waivers.

More institutional strategies were advocated to improve the youths' participation in politics in Nigeria. Some of the most significant areas emphasized were mobilizing the youths through social media and getting them interested in politics by consistently engaging them through topical political discussions. This was buttressed by one of the respondents:

Young people spend a lot of time on social media; political parties and the government can, during and after electioneering periods, engage the youths on social media with discussions on the happenings of government and governance. This will keep them glued and interested in politics such that they will then develop the needed interest in politics (FGD: iParticipant i22)

Another participant emphasized the need for direct conversations with the youths. According to the respondent, these conversations should be done in the form of town hall political engagements and maintained throughout the year. Once this is done, both during and after elections, young people will remain interested in the events and activities of the country's politics. In the words of the respondent, he stated thus:

Consistent and all-year town hall meetings or engagements will do the magic. You see, the current wave and momentum of interest of youths must be maintained; to do so, governments must find a way to

hold engagements with the youths, and civil society organizations and political parties must also follow suit. This will not only give the young people a sense of inclusion but will certainly bring them into the picture as decision-makers (FGD i25: iParticipant i3)

The findings and responses on leveraging social media, which is a core interest of the youths, and inconsistent political engagements and political engagements are inconsistent in the literature. Vromeni (2016) noted that young people frequently get their news through social media, which also serves as a sign of youth togetherness by encouraging the sharing and enjoying particular articles. As a result, it can assist in disseminating information about the significance of open government strategies and initiatives, as well as about the many policies being implemented that engage young people. Based on the assertions of Vromeni (2016), young people can be caught up in the political mix and be attracted to politics when social media becomes an enabling tool. On the other hand, Loader et al. (2014) affirmed that young people are less concerned with the traditional civic duties of voting, giving back to the community, and joining political organizations. Instead, they look for new, less hierarchical, and more individualized horizontal networks through which to make their voices known. These alternative political activities ought to be seen as equally legitimate kinds of political participation. Based on Loader et al. (2014) view, it is safe to say that town hall meetings for youths can help bridge the gap in political participation.

Other suggestions for addressing the lack of interest of youths in politics will be through empowerment and improving the economic strength and well-being of young people. One of the interview respondents affirmed that:

Unless you empower the youths to have the financial muscle to battle it out with the political gladiators, they may never have the capacity. You know, it costs so much to run for elections, and these young people cannot afford it. They must get to a level financially before they can achieve that. So it would inconveniently say the foundational issues of poverty among young people must be addressed, and then with a follow-up on mentorship, only then can we say we are



getting there (Interview Respondent: Participant 7, INEC Official)

Like the views of Participant 5 (INEC Commissioner), another Respondent emphasized the need for mentorship for the youths and adopting a legal framework that will ensure that all political parties, as well as national and state leaders, are compelled to reserve certain positions or describe a certain number of positions to the youths as the panacea to the problems of youth participation in politics in Nigeria. The respondent said:

If we don't reserve some positions strictly for the youths and you do not compel leaders by law to leave out certain positions for the youths, then the journey towards having youths take their place will continue to be a mirage. As a political party, we have taken steps towards youth inclusiveness, but the system needs resources to keep running. The challenges of finance for youths can be addressed through mentorship of the elderly and grooming those with character into active participation and appointments (Interview Respondent: Participant 8)

The findings of this study support Luhrmann's (2013) assertion that youth are helpful in acting as active researchers who could help identify their community's needs while also developing their capacities under the direction of adult mentors and leaders in order to address these needs. This should start with recognizing current youth leaders and developing new ones by encouraging networks of parents, teachers, and other adults supporting youth leadership capacity and agency development.

On the prospect of youths' inclusion and its impact on democracy, the study revealed that the youths hold lots of potential to deepen Nigeria's democracy. This is due to the actions and achievements of youths over the years, most of whom have continued to be shining lights and representing Nigeria well both locally and internationally. The respondents emphasized the need for the Nigerian state to put up institutional frameworks and strategies as quickly as possible that will harness the youths' potential. One of the interview respondents stated thus:

Nigerian youths are highly industrious. We all know this. They have continued to be great ambassadors of our great country; they have the potential to strengthen Nigeria's democracy if given the right support and

conditions. But they must first overcome the problem of impatience, all this get-rich-quick syndrome, desperation, and all that must be destroyed. Nigeria must build a system where youths are mentored and empowered to begin to actualize their leadership potential (FGD: Participant 19)

The findings on the potential for youth involvement in politics in Nigeria are inconsistent with those of Zohdy (2017), who argued that young people have undoubtedly demonstrated their ability to make a positive difference in the world through their dedication to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressing some of the most pressing issues facing their generation, such as inequality and climate change. Youth-led initiatives frequently provide positive results because they are enthusiastic and innovative. The goal of youth political engagement should be full inclusion (political, economic, and social inclusion). Education or employment of youth alone will not keep them from engaging in risky behaviors. Rather than being less educated or unemployed, a significant proportion of the uncommon youth who commit acts of political violence do so as a result of injustices they have personally experienced (feelings of political exclusion). To effectively reduce adolescent involvement in violence, programmes must carefully explore how to encourage youth membership in politics, the economy, and society (Zohdy 2017). In general, young people must be seen as active contributors to democratic norms and procedures. Participation of youth in political and governing processes is a vital democratic right. It is also crucial to remember that youth political engagement extends beyond voting and entails a range of physical and online political actions.

The major problem we have in this country is that the people who have intellect and leadership capability don't have the financial capacity to contest or be inclusive in politics; those who don't have intellect are those actively participating because they have the financial power to buy their way through the process at the level of political parties that obviously lack internal party democracy and inclusiveness. We observe the activities of political parties and see how these actors do all within their power to circumvent the process of true democratic process. How many youths can afford the money for political



iparties?(Interview iRespondent: iParticipant i10,)

Political involvement is having the means and chance to influence decisions, act, and engage in activities that help create a better society. By supporting political causes and accomplishing significant progress, young people have demonstrated their importance, influence, and participation in government, as shown by sufficient evidence from throughout the globe. By challenging the current quo and supporting governing institutions that attempt to develop democratic norms, young people are leaving their imprints on history (Dougherty et al. 2016). The claim by Dougherty et al. (2016) sheds light on Nigerian youths' potential, particularly in governance, democratic consolidation, and inclusivity.

V. FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings gathered in the course of the research and those findings contributed to the existing knowledge. The presentation was done in line with the objectives the research sets out to achieve.

5.1 Level of participation and Factors that have influenced these Participation

The study observed that the number of youths that participated in electioneering process in 2023 was far greater than those in 2015. Social media was found to influence the increased participation of youths, especially leading to the 2023 general elections. Despite what appears to be an improvement in youth participation in Nigeria's political process, one of the study's key conclusions is that there is a low degree of political participation among Nigerian youths. This result supports Pontes, Henn, and Griffiths' (2019) assertion that citizens across several countries have shied away from democratic involvement in the new millennium. Young people have traditionally shown less political engagement than the overall population.

The major factors affecting the political participation of youths include the age limit for political office holders, educational qualification and awareness, poverty, political participation processes, the role of money in political participation, 'Godfatherism' and poor leadership recruitment process, structures of

political parties, religion, class, and cultural barriers and mentorship and cabal endorsement. This finding is in line with the opinions of Adejoro (2022), who believes that the commercialization of politics—which is now seen as a business with anticipated returns and is no longer primarily about public service—has left the political selection process up to the power merchants, or godfathers, who have near-total control over the machinery and procedures of political parties.

It was also discovered that the level of educational attainment of youths and access to technology affect their participation in politics in Nigeria. The study concludes that education and awareness plays a level of unconsciousness in the youths, thereby giving them greater chances of meaningful engagement and participation in political processes and governance. Their tendency to participate in politics because become more with their exposure through ICT, social media and information Technology to greater awareness of the requirements necessary to participate at varying degrees. Also, the harmful use of youths to cause disruption of electoral processes for political godfathers can thrive when the youths are less educated or have nothing to hope for the future. This finding is also consistent with the views expressed in the National Youth Policy (2019), stating that Nigerian youth are faced with a myriad of challenges, including poverty, multidimensional discrimination, unemployment, barriers to education, and limited opportunities that constitute a bane to their political participation and inclusion, thus leading to a lower percentage of youth that hold political and leadership positions.

The study also found that ethnic and religious affiliations affect youths' participation in Politics in Nigeria. It was discovered that the religion or ethnic background of youths and their political leaders and mentors often affect their choices and patterns of participation. This situation has impacted over time the level of growth of Nigeria's democracy.

This is why Offiong (2018) argued that Nigerian youths' efforts at leadership are futile because they are generally too divided along ethnic lines to clamor for national integration. The study also observed that political party structures favor elites and discourage youth political participation. Political structures in



party information play a vital role in politics and further perpetuate elite dominance to the detriment of younger persons.

Youths are discouraged from participating in politics because they do not have or possess the networking strength and control of the party machinery, giving the elites consistent influence of party information and activities. Among other challenges affecting youths' participation in politics, the study discovered that the lack of inclusion by political parties significantly affects their participation.

Despite this position, the youths remain a relevant group in the political process. The study discovered that most respondents believed that Nigeria's need for sound leadership and democracy could and would be addressed with the inclusion of youth participation in politics. Participation by youth is crucial since they make up most population groups and are seen as the future decision-makers. Therefore, they are one of the population groups that each governmental body must prioritize.

Findings from the study also indicated that there are youths in elective positions going by the higher number of responses from the survey; however, there is a tendency that the number of youths in elective positions is very low, the number of respondents who are unaware of youths in elective positions. However, it was found that bad leadership in Nigeria is fueled by the exclusion of youths in the democratic system; because youths are excluded in democracy, corrupt leaders continue to be comfortable, and lousy leadership continues to thrive unabated, which is why political development in Nigeria is hinged on youth participation in politics which makes it a very significant necessity for youths to embrace politics and become active participants which will guarantee progression of Nigeria's democratic growth.

The study found further that the not-too-young-to-run law has impacted the political developments in Nigeria. Since the signing of the NTYTR Act, there has been improvement in youths contesting for elective positions, but not as significant to make much difference. This is because the NTYTR Act has not resolved the problem of youth exclusion in governance, as more still needs to be done to improve youth inclusion in governance and politics beyond the NTYTR Act.

To improve elections in Nigeria, this study revealed that if electronic voting is introduced into the election process in Nigeria, it will indeed promote political participation of youths in Nigeria's political process. This is because of youths' high level of inclination to modern technologies, including new media.

While youths have been observed as being the dominant demography in the Nigerian electoral process, constituting over 50 percent of registered voters in the country (YIAGA Africa, 2018) and being highly instrumental to political change, various factors have restricted their political participation in the past decades. Aside from being a sizeable voting bloc, they are still largely precluded from participating directly in the decision-making processes that come with political representation in a democracy. They are the voters whom the system in place does not allow to be voted for due to various restrictions they have encountered from illegal and political structures. In addition, they are excluded as significant beneficiaries of political decision-making, as their concerns are never the primary considerations of the political elite after being voted into power.

The marginalization and limited political participation of the Nigerian youth is evident in the fact that since the return of democracy to the country in 1999, referred to as the beginning of the Fourth Republic, the cabinets at the federal level have not been "youth-friendly". Most of the members of the Federal Executive Councils have been older politicians who have served in government in one form or another since the 1970s. The average age in the cabinets has been 50, with other members being in their 60s and some in their 70s. Also, it has been noted that from 1999 to 2016, no Minister for Youth has been a youth (Amzat & Abdullahi, 2016). In spite of having a National Youth Policy that lays out a very bold vision for harnessing the potentials of youths and signposts how the strategy could be built for empowering the demography to make far-reaching contributions to national development, no concrete role has been designed for youths to attain political power.

A number of the key factors hindering the political participation of youths have included poverty, resulting from the failure of the state to attend to the welfare of the people, which is the primary purpose of government. As



isuch, ithe ilack iof iadequate isocial iprovisioning ifor ieducation, ihealth, iand idecent ihousing ihas idisadvantaged ithe iyouth ifrom ibeing ifundamentally idistracted iby iexistential iissues. iHowever, iwhen iprogrammes iand ischemes iare iput itogether ito itackle ipoverty, ithe ipersistence iof icorruption idetracts ithe iprogrammes ifrom iworking ioptimally iin iachieving itheir idesired iobjectives. iLinked ito ipoverty iis ithe iunfortunate isituation iof iyouth iunemployment, iseeing imany ilacking iaccess ito iopportunities ifor iproviding imeaningfully ifor ithemselves iand itheose iwho idepend ion ithem. iAs imuch ias imany iyouths iare inot itrained ienough ito ihave iskills ithat imake ithem iemployable, iothers iare iroutinely ioffloaded ifrom itertiary iinstitutions iinto inon-existent ilabor imarkets, iwhich iwere idestroyed iby ithe igovernment's ipoor ieconomic ipolicies. iThis ihas iserved ias ithe ibasis ifor imany iin ithe ipolitical ielite ito iconsider iyouths ias ionly ibeing isuitable ifor iroles ias ipolitical ienforcers, ipurveyors iof iviolence, iand iother inefarious ipurposesi(Amzat i& iAbdullahi, i2016). iThe iyouths ipeople iin iNigeria ilack ithe ifinancial imeans ito ipay ithe iexorbitant iexpenses iassociated iwith icontesting ifor iany iposition iduring inational ielections. iThe iAll-Progressive iCongress i(APC) irecently iset ithe iprice iof iits ipresidential inomination iform iat ione ihundred imillion iNaira(iNGN100 imillion). iThis idecision iwasa made iin ilight iof ithe iinflated iexpenses iassociated iwith iconducting ia ipolitical icampaign iin iNigeria, iwhich ican ireach iup ito ione ibillion iNaira ifor ia imoderate icampaign. iObviously, ithe is is ithe ireason iwwhy ielections iand irunning ifor ipublic ioffice iare iprimarily iseen ias ithe idomain iof ithe imore ia affluent iand iwwell-connected, imany iof iw whom iare iolder ifolks. iRunning ifor ielections iin iNigeria iis inot icheap, inot iby ia ilong istretchi(Adejoro, i2022) iMoreover, ithe icommercialization iof ipolitics, iwwhich iis inow iregarded ias ia ibusiness iwwith ianticipated ireturns iand ino ilonger iprimarily iabout ipublic iservice, ihas iput ithe ipolitical iselection iprocess iat ithe idiscretion iof imerchants iof ipower, ithe igodfathers, iw who iwield inear iabsolute icontrol iover ipolitical iparty imachinery iand iprocesses. iThis ihas ibeen ian ienduring irestriction, irequiring iaspirants ito itoe ithe iline iof iapproval iof ithe igodfathers ias ithe imain iroute ito iendorsement iand ipolitical iparticipation. iGodfatherism icontrols ithe ioutcome iof iour ipublic ielections, ithereby iundermining ithe ientire idemocratization iprocess. iAs ia ire sult, iwe iare ifaced iwwith iw what ican ibe

idescribed ias imoney-based ipolitics iand iadministration, ithereby iresulting iin iyouths ipeople ibeing iunable ito ichallenge ithe iorder iin iterms iof ihaving ilower ifinancial iresources iand ilower inetworking icapacities ito ichallenge ithe ibig iwigs iduring ielections. iAll ithe se ihave iresulted iin ithe ivast ilooting iand iwastage iof ithe ifinancial iresources iof iNigeria iand iNigerians. i

Youths iare ialso iprohibited ifrom iengaging iin ithe ipolitical iprocesses iof ithe ination idue ito ieligibility iconstraints. iA iportion iof ithe iyouths iin iNigeria ihad iseen ithe is essentially irestricting ithe irability ito irun ifor ipolitical ioffice idue ito ithe ir age. iBefore ithe iamendment iof ithe iNigerian iconstitution iin i2018, and ithe ipassage iof ithe inot itoo iyouths ito irun iact iinto ilaw, i the ir age irequirement ifor itheose ivyng ifor ithe ioffice iof ithe iPresident iwasa i40 iyears; ithat iof ithe igovernor iwasa i40 iyears; isenator, i40 iyears; imembership iof ithe ifederal iHouse iof iRepresentatives, i30 iyears; iand ithe istate iHouses iof iAssembly, i30 iyears. iThe icontention ihere iwasa ithat iif ithe iyouths iconstituted ithe ilargest ivoting ibloc iin ithe icountry, iand ithat iaccording ito ithe iConstitution, ithe ivoting ir age iis iput iat i18 iyears, isignifying ienough imental icapacity iand imaturity ifor ithat idecision-making, iw why ithe n ishould ithe ieligibility ir age ifor icontesting ipolitical ioffice ibe imuch idifferent, iappealing ito idifferent icriteria iand isignposting idiscrimination? iEssentially, ias ialready ireiterated, ithe iyouths ican ibe ia icreative iforce ichampioning iinnovation iin ipolitics iand igovernance iin isociety, ibut iw when ithey iare ialienated ifrom ipolitics iand ithe idecision-making iprocess, ithey ican iequally ibe imade ito ilend ithe ir skills iand ienergies ito illicit iacts, isuch ias ielectoral ibribe and iaganda iand iviolence i(YIAGA iAfrica, i2019a) i

The ifindings ifrom ithe istudy iare iconsistent iwwith ithe iviews iof iseveral iother ia authors. iAccording ito iTekindali(2017), iyouth ipolitical iparticipation ican ipositively iimpact ia isociety iand ieven ian iorganization. iAccording ito iCheckoway i& iSchusteri(2013), iyouth ipolitical iengagement iw will iprovide ithe iknowledge ito ifully iexercise ithe ir political irights, iassist iin ithe ir idemocratization, iand ipermit iintegrated iinclusion. iArcher iand iFlemingi(2016) ialso ipointed ithat ipolitical iparticipation iw will igrant iyouth ithe ir skills ito ibecome iactive icitizens iand icontribute imeaningfully ito igovernance iand idevelopment. iOf icourse, iw when isocially



included, youth have the potential to bring about entrepreneurship, innovation, and advancement, which is particularly needed in the political sector – an area that has been neglected by youth.

The study is also consistent with and supported by the empowerment theory used, which was advanced by Zimmermann (2000) and claimed that when people are given the chance to participate actively in society, they can have a significant impact on the process of development. Policies and economic hardships have marginalized youths in Nigeria; consequently, if given employment opportunities and a favorable business climate, they can actively engage in politics because the central issue of poverty would have been resolved.

5.2 The Challenges Faced by Nigerian Youths in Political Participation

The findings show that young political participation varies and differentiates. While some young people are willing and excited to participate, others may lack the necessary assistance or information about how to join. Basically, youth become more aware and conscientious when decisions affecting them are made with their interests in mind and when they plan social actions on their own. Youth engagement will broaden their participation experience, give them the opportunity to exercise their political rights, aid in their democratization, and enable active participation.

However, as the study's findings show, young people in Nigeria struggle with issues like poverty, homelessness, impediments to education, various forms of discrimination, and a lack of job possibilities. These have acted as roadblocks to the bulk of Nigerian youngsters' physical and mental development, turning them into simple political pawns in the hands of the country's ruling class. Examples of youth organizations whose influence has been negatively diverted toward the devastation of the country instead of creating it include the Niger Delta Militants, Boko Haram, and others.

Because of their propensity for thuggery, violence, and similar behaviours—which are reportedly fueled by poverty, unemployment, and the self-serving intentions of those who exploit them—youths have typically been adversely mobilized by the political elite. It is

highly counterproductive for politicians, chiefs, and businesspeople to arm young people with lethal weapons and pay them for intimidating people. Nigeria's youth must be inspired to engage constructively and actively in political processes. Building the required social structures and creating an environment that supports the development of each person's unique talents, personality, and group survival could be examples of such encouragement.

According to the Nigerian youth policy, "youths" are defined as those between 18 and 35 years old. They are the most active and productive sector of societal development, serving as the society's growth engine. Their contributions to maintaining Nigeria's democracy are crucial. Youths, frequently referred to as "leaders of tomorrow," must make significant contributions to the sustainability of the developing democracy since it is necessary for it to serve as the cornerstone for tomorrow's foundation.

This contribution, though, ought to be constructive. It is a sad fact that Nigeria's political scene is one of a negative narrative surrounding the role of the youth. This results from the politicians' bad treatment of them, including their negative use and treatment as trash. The argument is that democracy hasn't historically produced any positive results for young people; instead, they've been used as thugs to advance the interests of the political establishment (Abubakar, 2019).

The future of Nigeria's democratic evolution is ensured by youth involvement in politics, according to this conclusion. Youths should undoubtedly play more significant roles in Nigeria's democratic growth than just participating in elections; they should engage in honest and active politics. According to this concept, young people should have a voice in the (free) selection of individuals who will represent them, participate actively in the formulation and execution of decisions, and openly express their opinions (e.g., evaluate, applaud, or criticize) on governmental initiatives. Different definitions of political participation include the active engagement of citizens in matters of political concern, such as the formulation and implementation of public policies, voting, running for office, supporting a political party, assisting with community projects, advocating for government initiatives, organizing protests, and even using violence to air



grievances (Oddih & Emeka, 2016; Guaba, 2013).

Young people engage in politics in a variety of ways. Voting is only one aspect of engagement in democracies. There are several signs of young people's societal obligations. These characteristics include political process knowledge and comprehension, critical thinking skills, information technology proficiency, media participation, interpersonal communication abilities, and involvement in volunteer activities (Schusler & Krasny, 2018). The involvement of young people is crucial for democratic societies today. It is highlighted that social inclusion policies cannot be successful unless they ensure youth engagement, as social exclusion and youth participation are thought to be two opposed notions (Edwards, 2018). The term "social inclusion" refers to assuring the involvement of those who find it challenging to participate in social life for many reasons, including poverty, illiteracy, religion, language, and race. Young people are thus included among the disadvantaged groups that social inclusion encompasses (Zer, 2017).

5.3 Youth Political Participation and Democratization Process in Nigeria

The level of monetization of Nigerian politics where only the rich participate by paying for elective posts places a very high hurdle before the Nigerian youth as far as contesting political posts in the country is concerned. With the rate of unemployment and the state of the Nigerian economy, where many youths hardly find jobs after school, it becomes very hard for them to fit into the political arena. The result is that before they could get enough money to participate, they must have grown out of the youth age bracket.

Also, the youth in Nigeria have been psychologically and sociologically twisted into believing that leadership in Nigeria is not meant for them but for adults. The perception and address of the youth as "leaders of tomorrow" is the case in question here. This has made the youth totally disengage from active participation in politics at the gladiatorial level. According to Kukahi (1999), "youth everywhere are occasionally lulled by such concepts as leaders of tomorrow, reassures/owners of the future, as a means of firing them to higher dreams and idealism, but here in Nigeria, cynicism has become so

deep that they seem to have also disengaged from the nation-state. Talk of the need for the cultivation of keen interest in such aspects of national life like politics, civics, governance, leadership, which should serve as the forum for some form of training for our youth, only draws a skeptical yawn from them". According to Kakwagh and Kwubai (2010) the traditional slogan of "youth are the future" fails to take into account that youth are very active contributors to their societies today.

No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death". Young exclusion from governance and policy process is fundamentally a human rights violation (UNESCO (2010) this is also in congruence with the liberal democratic principle of human freedom and the right to participation. Again, the World Youth Report, 2005 states that "youth inclusion strengthens their commitment to and understanding of human rights and democracy." Thus, when the youth are involved and allowed the freedom to exercise their rights, they in turn, knowing that such a principle exists and is implementable, will also thread such a part when they rise to positions of authority. But when this is neglected, a society should expect to produce youth who are in no respect of human rights.

Basically, the older politicians neglect the contribution of youth in decision making and nation-building (Agbaje & Adejumbi, 2006; Forbrig, 2005b; O'Donoghue et al., 2002) this can have adverse effects on the polity in the long run if adequate steps are not taken to correct this phenomenon.

5.4 Forms of Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

There are, therefore, primarily two ways for young people to get involved in or contribute to the political development of their society. It can be done in logical or morally just ways, such as voting, contesting, and expressing a collective opinion, or it can be done in other ways, including through nonviolent protests. The type and orientation of the political system impact how and in what ways people choose to engage in



ipolitics. iThe iyouth isould iopt ifor irational/conventional itactics, iwhich iare ithe imost ifavored ifor ithe iconcontinuation iof idemocracy iin iNigeria.

According ito istudies ion iyouth iengagement, ipolitical iissues iare ithe imost isignificant iones iin idaily ilife; iyoung ipeople igive ieconomic, isocial, iand ieducational iissues iprecedence iover ipolitical ionesi(Aras, i2016). iAdditionally, ithere iare itthree itypes iof iparticipation: iindividual, icommunal, iand iofficiali(Pavlidis i& iBaker, i2020).

It iis iasserted ithat ibusinesses ichoose itheir iorganizational istructures ito iinclude ichildren ias iwell. iThe iInternational iPlanned iParenthood iFederation i(IPPF), i2004: i13–15, ilists iseveral iobstacles ito iinvolvement, iincluding ipeople's idisapproving iattitudes itoward iyoung iwomen iparticipating, iorganizational ipolicies iand ibureaucracy, iand icultural ibeliefs irequiring iyoungsters ito ibe iquiet iand ipeaceful.

Youth iinvolvement iin idecision-making ihas ithe ipower ito ichange ia iperson's, ia isociety's, ior ian iorganization's iculture. iAt ithis ipoint, iparticipation iculture istarts ito iemerge. iThe imost isignificant iinfluence ion iparticipation iis iinvolvement iculture, iwhich iis ialso ithe imost ichallenging ito ialter. iIn igeneral, iyouth iengagement ihappens iat ithe iintersection iof ipersonal, iorganizational, iand icultural ifactors. iChannels ifor iengagement iwill iincrease ito ithe iextent ithat itheese iqualities iallow iyouth iparticipationi(Ozer, i2017).

It isould ibe inoted ithat idifferent iyouth iparticipate iat idifferent ilevels. iWhile isome iyoung ipeople iare iwilling ito iparticipate, iothers imight inot ihave iaccess ito isupport ior imight inot ihave ithe inecessary iknowledge iof ihow ito ijoin. iBasically, iwhen idecisions iaffecting ithem iare imade iwith itheir iinvolvement, iand ithey iorganize isocial iactions ion itheir iown, iyouth iawareness iand igenuine iconsciousness idevelop. iEngagement iof iyouth iwill iincrease itheir ilevel iof iparticipation, iallowing ithem ito iexercise itheir ipolitical irights, icontribute ito idemocratization, iand iengage iin iactive iparticipation. iFor itheese ipositive itraits ito ibe ipracticed, iboth iadults iand ichildren ineed ito ibe iawarei(Checkoway i& iSchuster, i2013).

It iis, itherefore, irecognized ithat iyouth imust ifirst iand iforemost ibe iinformed ito iensure iinvolvement. iIn iorder ifor iyoung ipeople ito ibe iimportant iand iinvolved icitizens, ithey imust iacquire iand iuse idecision-making iand

iparticipation iskillsi(Arches i& iFleming, i2016). iThis istrengthens idemocracy.

5.5 Gaps and iContribution ito iKnowledge

5.5.1 Gaps

Limited iResearch ion iYouth iPolitical iParticipation iImpact: iThere iis ia ilack iof icomprehensive istudies ithat ispecifically ianalyze ithe idirect iimpact iof iyouth ipolitical iparticipation ion idemocracy iin iNigeria. iExisting iresearch ioften ifocuses ion igeneral itrends ior ibarriers ito iyouth iinvolvement irather ithan ithe ispecific ioutcomes iand ieffects iof itheir iengagement ion idemocratic iprocesses.

Inadequate iUnderstanding iof iYouth iPerspectives: iResearch ioften ifails ito icapture ithe idiverse iperspectives, imotivations, iand ichallenges ifaced iby iNigerian iyouth iregarding ipolitical iparticipation. iA ideeper iexploration iof ithe iattitudes, ibeliefs, iand iaspirations iof iyoung ipeople itowards idemocracy iand igovernance iis iessential ito iinform itargeted iinterventions.

Insufficient iEvaluation iof iPolicy iInterventions: iWhile iinitiatives ilike ithe iNot iToo iYoung ito iRun ibill ihave iaimeed ito ienhance iyouth iinclusion iin ipolitics, ithere iis ia ilack iof irigorous ievaluation iof ithe ieffectiveness iof isuch ipolicies. iUnderstanding ithe iimplementation ichallenges, isuccesses, iand ishortcomings iof itheese iinterventions iis icrucial ifor irefining istrategies ito ipromote iyouth ipolitical iengagement.

Limited iLongitudinal iStudies: iLong-term istudies itracking ithe ipolitical itrajectories iof iyouth iparticipants ifrom itheir iinitial iengagement ito isustained iinvolvement iare iscarce. iLongitudinal iresearch icould iprovide ivaluabe iinsights iinto ithe ifactors ithat icontribute ito ithe icontinuity ior idiscontinuity iof iyouth iparticipation iin ipolitics iover itime.

Neglect iof iIntersectional iAnalysis: iThere iis ia igap iin iresearch ithat iexamines ihow ifactors isuch ias igender, iethnicity, isocio-economic istatus, iand ig Geographic ilocation iintersect iwith iyouth ipolitical iparticipation iin iNigeria. iAn iintersectional iapproach iis icrucial ifor iunderstanding ithe iunique ichallenges ifaced iby idifferent igroups iof iyoung ipeople iin iaccessing iand iinfluencing ipolitical iprocesses.

Scarcity iof iComparative iStudies: iComparative istudies ithat ibenchmark iNigeria's iyouth ipolitical iparticipation iagainst iothier icountries ior iregions iare ilimited. iSuch icomparative ianalyses icould offer ivaluabe ilessons iand ibest ipractices ifor



enhancing youth engagement in democracy based on successful experiences elsewhere.

5.5.2 Contribution to Knowledge

Theoretical Synthesis of Youth Political Participation: By synthesizing theoretical perspectives on youth political participation in Nigeria, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics and challenges that shape youth engagement in democratic processes. It provides a theoretical framework for analyzing the effects of direct democracy on representative participation and sheds light on the complexities of political involvement among Nigerian youth.

Knowledge and Support for Political Restructuring: Research exploring ethnic and religious differences in knowledge and support for political restructuring among Nigerian youth offers insights into the diverse perspectives within this demographic group. This study contributes to understanding the factors influencing youth attitudes towards political reform and governance structures, highlighting the nuances that shape their engagement with political processes.

Historical Analysis of Youth Political Participation: The examination of the historical development, legality, trends, dilemmas, and opportunities related to youth participation in Nigerian politics contributes valuable insights into the evolution of youth involvement in governance. By tracing the historical contributions of Nigerian youth to political movements and independence, this research contextualizes contemporary challenges and opportunities for youth engagement in democratic processes.

Youth Agenda on Political Participation: Initiatives such as the Nigerian Youth Agenda on Political Participation play a crucial role in fostering youth involvement in governance. By developing strategies to enhance youth participation, these agendas contribute to shaping more inclusive and participatory political landscapes in Nigeria. They provide practical recommendations for promoting youth empowerment, knowledge-building, and active involvement in decision-making processes.

Empirical Evidence on Youth Political Participation: Studies examining the relationship between youth political participation, good governance, and social inclusion in Nigeria offer empirical evidence of the positive correlation between youth

engagement and democratic governance. By highlighting the impact of youth involvement on transparency, accountability, and development, these research findings underscore the importance of integrating young voices into political decision-making processes for creating more equitable and inclusive societies.

VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

This study on political participation of youth: impact on democracy in Nigeria (2015-2021) was conducted within a six-chapter research process. This study examined youth political participation in democracy in Nigeria. It was achieved through the collection of primary data, which put into consideration the challenges and prospects of youths' participation in politics in Nigeria. The background knowledge on the level, pattern, and obstacles to youth participation in politics in Nigeria was effectively stated.

The secondary data through the reviews of extant literature provided insight and direction on the study and revealed the gaps in literature requiring the current study to bridge the gaps. The methodology of survey designs was adopted to enable the researcher to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The data collected showed clearly that youth political participation is still highly lagging and requires more efforts to address the challenges, including improving on efforts such as the "Not Too Young to Run" Act. This is because other factors, such as the financial cost of running elections, party structures disfavoring the youths, etc., contribute to limiting youths' participation in politics in Nigeria.

6.3 Conclusions

Although youths have been noted as the dominant demographic in the Nigerian electoral process, making up more than 50% of the country's registered voters (YIAGA Africa, 2018) and being extremely important to political change, several factors have limited their political participation. Even though they make up a sizable voting bloc, they are nevertheless mainly excluded from participating in the decision-making processes that come with political representation in a democracy. They are the voters who have



been subjected to several limitations by governmental and political structures, which prevent them from exercising their right to vote under the current system. Additionally, because their issues are never the top priorities of the political elite once they take power, they are not included as substantial benefactors of political decision-making.

Since the return of democracy to the nation in 1999, known as the start of the Fourth Republic, the federal cabinets have not been "youth-friendly," which speaks volumes about the marginalization and restricted political engagement of Nigerian youths. Most of the Federal Executive Council members were senior citizens who had worked in government since the 1970s in some capacity.

The age of the cabinets has been 50 on average, with some members being in their 70s. Economically disadvantaged Nigerian youngsters cannot afford the outrageous cost of standing for any office during elections in Nigeria. The All-Progressive Congress (APC) recently set the price of their presidential nomination form at one hundred million Naira (NGN100 million), citing the exorbitant expenses of mounting a political campaign in Nigeria, where costs have been estimated to reach one billion Naira for a modest campaign.

It should come as no surprise that elections and running for public office are usually viewed as the exclusive domain of the more affluent and well-connected, often older, population. Election campaigning in Nigeria is not inexpensive by any means (Adejoro, 2022). Furthermore, in Nigeria's democracy, the "godfathers," who have near-total control over the machinery and procedures of political parties, decide who will run for office. This type of constraint has persisted over time, necessitating candidates to follow their godfathers' lead to receive support and participate in political activities. Godfatherism controls elections in Nigeria, thereby undermining the entire democratization process. As a result, Nigeria's political process is now money-based politics and administration, thereby resulting in young people being unable to challenge this order in terms of having lower financial resources and lower networking capacities to challenge the big wigs during elections.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Despite what appears to be an improvement in teenagers' knowledge of the importance of political involvement to the survival of democracy, thanks to their "not too young..." many youths still find themselves unable to participate fully either by choice or some imitating challenges. Therefore, the researcher suggests that the government and all involved should make conscious efforts and policy changes, like the "not too young to run," to ensure that youngsters have the chance and the conditions necessary to participate in political and democratic processes. Political parties must not be allowed to cross the line on financial spending when it comes to youth seeking any political position. We also recommend that the government increase youth participation awareness from the grassroots level, and if possible, political education (youth participation) should be added to the pre-secondary education curriculum and above.

2. Political parties have only made provisions encouraging youth political participation, especially in their memorandum of association binding the party for the sake of documentation; beyond that, the party only favors the rich and old with so-called antecedents or assumes a candidate that will be of interest to the party. The study recommends that the government should make it a constitutional right.

a) The minimum for a set price for any youth seeking to obtain a nomination form for a political position from any political party in Nigeria,

b) Political parties must increase the current percentage allocated to youths and see to it that the same is filled up during politicking.

c) Ensuring that political parties conduct political processes such as primaries free of any cost for youth seeking political engagement.

d) Parties must be made to publicly declare funds set aside as cushions for inspiring youths in the democratic processes.

3. The age reduction bill by the government raised political consciousness among youths. However, more ought to be done to encourage citizen of that age bracket since they seem not ready or convinced of



the iprocesses ithat ibring iabout ithe irepresentatives. iWe iare irecommending, ias ia imatter iof ifact, ithat ithe igovernment ishould ilook iinto imaking ia ibill ifor ithe iemancipation iof iyouths iat ithe iage iof i18 ifrom itheir iparents. iThis iis ibecause ithe iAfrican iapproach ito iparenting iand iattachment ihas imade iit idifficult ifor isome icitizens ito iactivate itheir imaturity imentality iat ithe iright iage, iwhich iis iexpected ito ibe iproductive iin ithe ipolitical ieuphoria. iAlso, ithe igovernment ishould ilook ibeyond iage ireduction iand, irather ithan iallocate ia icertain ipercentage iof ipolitical iparticipation ito ithe iyouths, imust iconsciously iensure isuch ipositions iare icontested ifor iand ioccupied ifor iadministrative ipurposes. i

4. The iintroduction iof ielectronic ivoting iw as ithe ibest ithing ithat ihas iever ihappened ito iNigeria's ipolitical iprocess iin ia ilong iwhile. iThis iis ibecause ian iaverage i21st-century iyoung iperson ispends iover i80 ipercent iof ihis/her idaily i24 ihours ion ian ielectronic. iThis isingle iaction imakes ithem iexceptionally igood iat iit; itherefore, iif ithe igovernment isincerely iand ihonestly iimplements ithe itotal iusage iof ielectronic ivoting isuch ithat ian ielectorate ican ivote ifrom ithe icomfort iof itheir ihomes, ithe ilack iof iyouth ipolitical iparticipation iw ill ibe ia ithing iof ithe ipast. iWe ihence irecommend ithat.

a. The igovernment ishould iinvest ithe iright iamount iinto iachieving ian ielectronic ivoting isystem iin iNigeria, iand iit imust ibe idone iw ith iall isincerity iof ipurpose iw ithout iselfish iinterest, ias ithe icase imostly iin ithis ipart iof ithe iw orld iw here iall ipoliticians ihave ido-or-die iattitudes. i

b. The igovernment ishould iattract ithe iyouth iinto ipolitical iparticipation ithrough ithe ifull iimplementation iof ielectronic iprocesses iin iour ivoting. iThis ican ibe iachieved iby igetting ithe iyouth ito iparticipate iby ivoting ielectronically ior iby igetting ithem ito ioperate ipolitical ielectronic iequipment ifor ithe isuccess iof ian ielection. i

5. Finance ihas iremained ithe isignificant ichallenge ifor iyouth ipolitical iinclusiveness iin iNigeria. iThe iclutches ito ipower iand ithe icontinuous idesire ito istay ias isuch iby ithe icurrent iruling iclass ihave iled ito itheir iaccumulation iof iwealth iand isubsequent ispending iduring icampaigns iand ipoliticking. iUnfortunately, ithe iyouths iare iyet ito ibe iexposed ito isuch ihuge isums ias idemanded iby ipolitical iparties. iFor iexample, ithe icurrent iruling iparties idemanded i100 imillion ifor ithe ipresidential iticket, ieven ithough ithey iw ere

iready ito i go ias ilow ias ihalf iof ithe iasking iprice ifor iany iyouth. iHowever, isuch iis istill ia istiff iprice ifor ian iaverage iNigerian iyouth iw ith ipolitical iinterest iand ileadership iqualities. iThe istudy irecommends ithat ithe igovernment ishould, ias ia imatter iof iurgency, imake ilaws ito ieradicate imoney ifrom ithe ipolitical isystem isince iit ihas ibecome ia imeans ito ian iend. iCandidates iemerge inot iinterested iin iserving ithe imasses ibut irather iin ilooting ifrom ithe inational icake.

6. The iinvolvement iof iyouth iin ipolitics ishould i go ibeyond ithe iperiphery ithat iis, ivoting ionly iand iserving ias ipolitical ithugs.

7. The igovernment ishould ialso icontinuously igive isubversions ito iyouth ibodies iespecially inational iones ilike ithe iNational iYouth iCouncil iso ithat ithey ican icarry iout idevelopment iand icapacitybuilding iprograms ifor iits imembers. iIt iw ill ialso ireduce ithe ivulnerability iof ithe iyouth iand itheir ileaders iand idiscourage ithem ifrom ibeing ieasily ibought iover iby ipoliticians.

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APPENDIX II INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.

The ifollowing iinterview iquestions ishould iguide ithis iinvestigation ito iunderstand ithe ichallenges and iobstacles ito ithe ipolitical iparticipation iof iyouths iin iNigerian idemocracy.

1. Good iday; iplease ikindly iintroduce iyourself.
2. Could ithe iparticipation iof iyouths iin iour idemocracy ibe iseen ias ia istrength ior ia iweakness?
3. Is ithere ia irelationship ibetween ieducational iattainment and ipolitical iparticipation iin iNigeria?
4. Could illiteracy ibe isaid ito iaffect iyouths' ipolitical iparticipation iin iNigeria?
5. What irole idoes ifinance iplay iin iyouths' iparticipation iin iour idemocracy? i
6. Can ia iyouth iwithout isponsorship and ifinancial iability iparticipate iin idemocracy iin iNigeria?
7. Does ithe icharacter and idisposition iof iyouths iaffect itheir iparticipation iin ipolitics?
8. What iprocess icould icourage imore iyouth iparticipation iin ipolitics iafter ithe ipassage iof ithe iNOT iTOO iYOUNG iTORUN iACT?
9. What iimpacts ihave iyouth iagitation igroups ilike i#ENDSARS icontributed ito ienhancing iour i democracy.
10. Do iyou ithink ipolitical iparties ipromote iyouth iinclusiveness iin ielective ipositions, and ihow?
11. What iare ithe ichallenges ito iyouths' iparticipation iin ielective ipositions iin iNigeria? i
12. iDo iyou ithink itraditional and ireligious ibeliefs iaffect iyouths' iparticipation?
13. What iis iyour iopinion ion ithe ipossible iintroduction iof ian ielectronic ivoting isystem? iCould ithis iendear imore iyouths ito ipolitical iparticipation? i

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APPENDIX III FGD QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

The ifollowing iinterview iquestions ishould iguide ithis iinvestigation ito iunderstand ithe ichallenges and iobstacles ito ithe ipolitical iparticipation iof iyouths iin iNigerian idemocracy.

1. Good iday; iplease ikindly iintroduce iyourself.

I iam ia ifamily iman iliving iin iAbuja, and ii will ilike ito ibe ianonymous.

2. Could ithe iparticipation iof iyouths iin iour idemocracy ibe iseen ias ia istrength ior ia iweakness?



The active participation/inclusion of many illegitimate groups eligible to vote in our democracy is a strength, so yes, I do consider the participation of youths in our democracy as a strength.

3. Is there a relationship between educational attainment and political participation in Nigeria? I

It is difficult to say, but I think to some extent, yes. Some argue that the best brains are not actively involved in running for elective office because of the varied issues in our electoral system like rigging, vote buying, and lack of internal democracy within political parties; others say key positions or political appointments (e.g., CBN Governor) require technocrats and so education to some extent is necessary to perform well and deliver on the quality of governance. However, basic education is necessary.

4. Could illiteracy be said to affect youths' political participation in Nigeria? I

think it does. Illiteracy limits their level of participation. It limits their level of organization and political strategy. It limits how self-empowered they are to resist selling their votes and vote their conscience, and it limits their belief in what they can aspire to be.

5. What role does finance play in youths' participation in our democracy? I

It plays a big role. As we recently experienced the sale of forms for different elective positions, the price to purchase these forms has automatically cut off some aspirants from participating or running for certain positions. Also, sometimes, it limits them to just being followers and not attaining positions of power and influence to make an impact in society. They have to rely on the hope that a leader emerges who takes the youth seriously and acknowledges the role of youths in the development of nations through, for example, innovation and technology.

6. Can a youth without sponsorship and financial ability participate in democracy in Nigeria? I

think they can because they have the numbers, and politics is about numbers. The key for youths to make an impactful participation in democracy is to have the willpower and the focus to organize their group and push their agenda. Organizing themselves into a homogenous group with consensus solves the other issues of

sponsorship and finance because of their numbers. They can pull funds or crowdfund with their numbers.

7. Does the character and disposition of youths affect their participation in politics? I

There have been criticisms of youths' lack of participation in actual voting compared to their actual numbers. They seem more interested in venting their frustrations on social media than organizing themselves and voting to determine their leaders. I also think youths can be easily swayed and divided. Putting the interest of all before the self is a character that needs to be built.

8. What process could encourage more youth political participation after the passage of the INOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN ACT? I

think the electoral process needs to be sanitized.

Electronic voting would help a great deal.

Electronic transfer of live results.

Regulating the price of expression of interest forms for different elective positions.

9. What impacts have youth agitation groups like #ENDSARS contributed to enhancing our democracy? I

It has helped reduce police brutality and impunity and led to wider police reform.

It has also shown that when they come together and organize themselves, they can make a meaningful impact on the nation. I

10. Do you think political parties promote youth inclusiveness in elective positions, and how? I

No, I don't think political parties are doing enough with regard to elective positions. Even the positions of Youth Leader are usually not occupied by youths or young people. I

11. What are the challenges to youths' participation in elective positions in Nigeria? I

The Elderly Party Leaders are not ready to hand over power to the youths regarding elective positions.

Financial constraints to be able to run for elective office are also an issue.

12. Do you think traditional and religious beliefs affect youths' participation? I

Beliefs like politics are a dirty game and that no one participates in it and remains clean are some of the beliefs that limit youth participation.

13. What is your opinion on the possible introduction of an electronic voting system? I

Could this endear more youths to political participation?



I think it is a step in the right direction. The beginning of several reforms youths want to see to minimize rigging in the electoral system and give confidence to the process. In my response to question 8, you will see that

if I think it will aid political participation. Hopefully, we will get to the stage where we can all vote from our iPhones in our homes. Yes, electronic voting will endear youths to political participation.



APPENDIX iTWO



Figure i2: iPresident iBuhari iin iMay isigned ithe ibill ireducing ithe iage ilimit ito isEEK ipolitical ioffice