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**State, Civil Society and Political Change:
The Dialectics of Democratisation in Nigeria**

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Abstract

This thesis is a dialectical¹ analysis of democratisation in Nigeria focusing especially on the dynamics of social forces operating within the terrains of state and civil society. It revisits the structural link between state and civil society and explores the processes of interaction in these sites between agents contesting the project of democratisation. The study critiques the dominant liberal democracy epistemology and proceeds on the assumption that democracy is a continuing project whose development depends on the outcome of struggles between contesting social forces in the political field. Grounding the mutual penetration between state and civil society in a dialectical perspective, the study links the interactions of political agents with the divergent norms and practices which they struggle to embed in society. More concretely, the work empirically explores the trajectories of struggles to achieve conditions of democratic citizenship in Nigeria and the setbacks to these efforts. In particular, examination of this struggle focuses on political engagements in the contexts of the press, organised labour struggles and organised engagements by political activist groups that pursue dichotomous aims around democratisation. The work tries to find out how these dialectical struggles generate progresses and reverses to democracy in Nigeria's colonial and post-colonial history.

Using qualitative analysis the thesis proceeds from a theoretical plane and pulls together some theories of dialectical relations to construct a neo-Gramscian conceptual tool, which is applied to study Nigeria as a concrete historical instance. Applying the analytical concept of 'relations of forces' as a specific use of the dialectical approach, the work explores authoritarian domination in the Nigerian state as a function of the alliance of dominant forces in the integral state (government and civil society) and the relations of these dominant forces with contending social forces within the same terrains. It investigates the strategy of the ruling forces towards the political, civil and social rights that define democratic citizenship and how counterforces engage the state in various contexts for the emergence of a fully democratised civil society. The study also examines the challenges of democratisation

¹ Used here to refer to polemics which is applied for the analysis of the engagement between contrasting forces and their mutual impacts on one another and the society.

connected with its confinement to the attainment of the minimalists' empirical referents of democracy. Falling back on historical materials, the study focuses on the struggles for democracy in Nigeria's colonial and post-colonial epochs in relation to the experiences of journalistic actors, organised labour and other organised activists in the political field vis a vis the alliance of forces that controls the Nigerian state. The analysis draws materials mostly from both primary documents and secondary interpretive ones to illustrate the dialectics of democratic struggles in Nigeria.

The study reveals that the continuing suspension of democracy in Nigeria draws from the tendency of the ruling forces to subdue democratic forces with coercion. Also, forces controlling the state penetrate the space of civil society with the use of sponsored agents to undermine genuine democratic movements. In addition, in the mediation of crises, the state apparatuses are sometimes applied in a partisan manner to create repressive institutions that undermine democratic progress. In that connection, the encounter of political forces in the executive state and civil society has yet to result in a net movement towards democratisation. Thus democratic forces located in state and civil society are not able to embed and extend democratic institutions, norms and outcomes because the coalition of the ruling forces in Nigeria undermine these outcomes and continues to maintain a superior margin of power over the democratic forces.

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Preface

Witnessing the Nigerian public show some relief at the end of 1983 when some military officers removed an elected government through a coup, did not mean more than a political event to me at the time. The general election held earlier that year was fraught with irregularities. In the four years which the elected regime had been in power, corruption was rife among the political elite, while the economy was declining. The intervening military regime was quick to become repressive and had no agenda of democratisation. Thus another forceful change of power by military coup took place in less than two years. Once more, mass expectations were raised by a practice of power change that was becoming a vicious circle. Like its predecessor, the new military regime eventually became dictatorial. It turned repressive on the press, ignored a popular consensus and took an IMF loan and implemented its neoliberal principles of economic management. The unfolding struggle led to tensions when the Structural Adjustment Programme caused increasing economic hardship and led to mass demonstrations in several parts of Nigeria. The need to return the country to an elective democracy became urgent. As a result, some sections of the press became highly critical of the military government. In turn, the government became more repressive against the opposition. Democracy activist groups also began to emerge. As a young boy then, I can recall being drawn to both the opinions of critical adults who read publications of the oppositional press and the readership of such materials. While it was obvious to me at the time that the overall struggles of the opposition were aimed at achieving democracy, I hardly had the maturity to think about the process in terms of the theoretical principles underpinning the engagements between forces in the sites of government and civil society. This study aims at a theoretical interpretation of the struggles for Nigeria's democratization.

Demands for return to an elective civil rule involved struggles between democratic rights groups and undemocratic forces in the military and civil society that undermined progress in this regard. Ultimately, a transition to civil rule process took place and ended with a presidential election which the ruling forces nullified. The

outcome of this electoral nullification was an increased tension in the political terrain. Rights groups, activist press, organised labour groups, ethnic associations, environmental and other social movements became part of the struggles for democracy. Nigeria's return to an elective civil rule was followed by an increasing growth of various interest groups as civil society organisations including service-based NGOs seeking to make policy input into governance. Most of the groups and coalitions claim to organise around democracy. Others have communal or religious interests. Sometimes, the interests of some of these groups have questionable convergence with democracy. Hence, one is drawn into the puzzle of what civil society really means, in relation to the state and democracy. Thus at the theoretical level, this study is driven by an effort to contribute to the meaning of civil society and its intersection with state and democracy. At the practical level, the study's motivation is to apply the theoretical connection between state, civil society and democracy to an analysis of the Nigeria's democratisation.

The theoretical motivation took the investigation to major theories of civil society from Hegel through Marx, Gramsci and supplemented with works that focus the discursive dimensions of democracy and power including Habermas and Foucault. The ideas of these theorists focus non-African experiences but share a unifying dialectical principle which was abstracted and applied in a neo-Gramscian manner to suit an interpretation of the Nigerian situation. The analysis led me to more broadly locate the unfolding of political change in Nigeria in a theoretical perspective. These events are historicized from the colonial times from 1900 which marks the official commencement of colonial administration in Nigeria to the country's recent past [2013]. Ultimately, the dialectics of the engagements in state and civil society more clearly shows how the ruling forces in government suppress the demands of the labouring population, suppress press criticisms against authoritarian rule, repress social movements that demand several aspects of democratic rights including free elections, environmental justice, free association, free speech and development of citizens within the scope of state's capacity. It also explains the ideological contestations between contrasting notions of democratic theory and why the dominant theory places material well-being on the side lines of democratic discourse. In the end, the

repeating cycles of military coups have come to mean more than mere political events and the general suspension of democracy by the ruling group and their strategies is better illuminated from a theoretical perspective. The study has also shown the gap in the struggles for democratisation and this is the point from which democratic struggles can be advanced.

Introduction

This study examines the relational dynamics of state and civil society in the struggle between democratic and authoritarian forces in Nigeria. The challenges associated with state-building in Nigeria which leads to ethnic strife and other forms of tension could lead some to question the relevance of a civil society discourse in such a formation. Nonetheless, these crises are part of the setbacks to democratic forces that are robustly operating within the Nigerian political field. Indeed an empirical work by Bailer et al (2013) supports the robustness of the space of civil society in Nigeria. This finding is considered important here because it addresses the question about the presence of civil society in Nigeria. Also it is rooted on a conceptual approach which views civil society from a spatial point of view. In that regard Bailer and his colleagues define civil society as “the sphere of autonomous citizen action that lies outside the state and market” (2013, p. 290). The spatial approach is also applied here for the definition of civil society although the conceptual nuance in this work reflects meaning of civil society as a space of contestation for democratic and other forces in relation to the development of democracy. The term democratic forces is taken to mean entities that struggle for the generalisation of a democratised civil society defined by the political, civil and social rights of citizenship or aspects of these rights. The study will inter-changeably use ‘authoritarian’ forces and ‘de-democratising’ or ‘undemocratic forces’ to describe entities which undermine political, civil and social rights or their aspects. The idea of political change focuses on the outcome of struggle between the forces of democratisation and de-democratisation.

The development of the study progresses from theory to practice. The early sections on theoretical reviews begin with the works of Hegel and Marx which lay a background for the introduction of Gramsci. The conceptual tools of analysis which draw from the works of Gramsci, go back to the intellectual backgrounds of Hegel and Marx. Hence the earlier sections raise the important question of the applicability of Hegel to Nigeria. In later sections this issue is addressed by the application of Hegel-Marx synthesis in Gramsci’s theorization to Nigeria’s political history.

Gramsci's theories as demonstrated in later chapters permit a broad scope for application in transitional societies. Thus, a neo-Gramscian tool of analysis is applied in this work. Other works like Habermas and Foucault provide supplementary materials for the illustration of the various dimensions of dialectics in democratic struggles. In short, the thesis interprets theory around praxis and locates a specific instance of praxis (Nigeria) in theoretical formulations.

The literature on democratisation is replete with interpretive endeavour about the mutual impacts of the spheres of state and civil society in relation to democratic transition as shown by the works of Osaghae (2005), Fatton (1995), Lewis (2002), Orvis (2001), Hearn (2001). In addition, there is a rich corpus of works spanning over two centuries on theories of civil society such as Ferguson's (1980) work, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* first published in 1767, Hegel (2001a), Tocqueville (2002), Gramsci (1971), Shils (1992), Barber (1998), Deakin (2001), Alexander (1998). In most of these works, European and American political transformations are historicised in theoretical narratives that account for their democratisation trajectory. Adam Ferguson's narrative was a systematic account of the rise of civil society in Western civilization. Hegel's dialectical work offered a theoretical account of the stages of development of the modern state. This process of development in which the alienated spirit searches for actualization in a dialectical progression could be related in concrete terms as the struggles for democratic freedom. Marx, Gramsci and Tocqueville among other earlier contributors to the intellectual history of the relations between state and civil society were concerned with European and American histories of social and political transformation. Their basic thrust was the development of theoretical templates from the logic of transformations in the concrete history of the societies of their interests. Though there was no specific reference to dialectics in some of the works, the subject of their ideas are all underpinned by an internal logic of contradictions and self-development. In recent history, the struggle for democratisation in Africa and the role of civil society actors in the process raises the need to explore the relevance of these meta-narratives which mostly interpret state and civil society in Europe and North America to the analysis of Africa. Accordingly, this study focuses on Nigeria.

Groups already dominant or competing to assert themselves in state and civil society try to embed values that frame political rule in their favour. At the same time, the contending groups struggle to alter the structure of power and institutionalise alternative norms. Basically, the process is about constellations of forces struggling for maintenance or change in the architecture of public power. This form of struggle contextualizes the discourse on dialectics. The works of Hegel and Marx show that the state civil society nexus is central to framing the order of society. They draw attention to how the state is conditioned by activities in civil society on the one hand and how the state determines outcomes in civil society on the other hand. This logic obtains in the process of political change in which state and civil society are the crucial terrains of engagement by political forces. The return to Hegel and Marx by this study is occasioned by the continuing relevance of dialectics which they raised to a level of modern theoretical importance. They provide the necessary take off point for the interrogation of other works that explore power relations by mutually opposed forces of self-assertion in the process of political development. The blending of these theories provides the basis for the construction of a framework to explain Nigeria's experience of democratisation.

Power relations was also a major theme in the work of Gramsci (1971) where he applied the metaphor of 'war of position'² to represent the contests between competing social forces³ to establish or maintain domination in the political field. Hence Gramsci opened a new vista for the use of dialectics in theorizing political change. Continuing in the Gramscian path of dialectical thought, Althusser (1966) viewed engagement of forces in terms of social practices. The major moments of these social practices are economic, political, ideological and theoretical. These moments come into play in every instance of social change, though one may be most

² War of position is the tactical and strategic political manoeuvres in the integral state between contrary forces that may combine elements of war of movement (frontal attack) with techniques of passive revolution and underground warfare all aimed at the construction, consolidation or displacement of hegemony (cf Gramsci, 1971). In war of position, each group seeks to embed and consolidate its social projects while undermining contrary social projects. The nature of this process means that the phenomenon of dialectical development offers an illuminating framework for looking at democracy struggle since it works itself out in the manner of 'war of position'.

³ This term as applied here, refers to social groups or elements usually engaged in dynamic interactions that can cause social changes.

pronounced at each particular time. Althusserian discourse represents an important progress in the contemporary application of dialectics in social analysis. Althusser's works bring further clarification to the ideas of Hegel and Marx regarding the interconnectedness and reciprocal determinations of social structures on one another. Thus, it is logical to relate economic struggles with theory, ideology and the political levels of relations. Democratisation falls within the political moment of social practices but also involves other aspects like struggles for economic well-being that are often bound up with demands for political democracy. The contemporary struggle also embraces the contest to popularize one among various epistemologies of democracy such as welfare-based democracy or neoliberal democracy or different forms of post-capitalist democracies. This latter dimension of struggles represents the theoretical and ideological levels of engagement for democratisation. Other writers that addressed the theme of power and change like Habermas and Foucault do not directly treat dialectics but offer important theoretical applications of dynamics of struggles that frame society.

Since the political level of social struggle is in the final analysis, the point in which interests of dominant forces are most visible, each of these dialectical discourses have implications for the political form of society either as a democracy or its alternatives. Drawing from the broad principles of these discourses, this work sets out to create a new level of application for dialectics with the analysis of a concrete historical instance. In Nigeria, beginning from the agitations for political independence which is the provenance of democratic struggle in the country to the present time, forces in civil society and state engage in complex struggles. These engagements are between forces for the legitimization of authoritarian form of government or counter movements for the authoritarian type to democratize. These struggles for democratization in Nigeria both in the colonial and postcolonial period are theoretically underpinned by the logic of dialectics. Hence, there is a challenge to search for the patterns of interpenetration of forces in the political field and the consequences of such interpenetration for political change.

Problematic of State, Civil Society and Political Change

To address the broad theme of state and civil society in relation to political change in Nigeria, a focus on the historical source of the character of the modern state in Africa offers a useful beginning. Mamdani's (2002) study of colonial governance of Africa distinguished between citizens and subjects. During colonial rule, citizenship and its corresponding civil and political rights were restricted privileges to a minor section of the population while the majority were regarded as subjects. The subject status is one that falls short of the entitlements of citizenship especially full participation in the political life of the community. Participation theorists rightly identify the citizenship principle as being the core of the concept of democracy (Cohen & Arato, 1992). This principle underpins the importance of the sphere of civil society normally associated with rights in a democracy.

Marshall divided citizenship into three core elements:

The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom – liberty of the person, freedom of speech thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts and the right to justice. The last is of a different order from the others, because it is the right to defend and assert all one's rights on terms of equality with others and by due process of law.... By the political element, I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body. The corresponding institutions are parliament and councils of local government. By the social element, I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standard prevailing in the society. The institutions most connected with it are the educational system and the social services (Marshall, 1997, p. 294).

These three dimensions of citizenship rights constitute what Marshall would consider to be the institutional and normative conditions of a fully democratized civil society. However, the struggle for the actualization of these aspects of citizenship occurs on a terrain in which dynamics of power suppress their realization.

Marshall's citizenship embodies the duties and guarantees of the political community to the individual member. It tends to represent a pact upon which the political community draws legitimation and loyalty of its members and also a basis of demands by such members upon the community. Civil society provides a context within which citizens engage the state for these necessary guarantees of citizenship. Democracy is attained when there is a sufficient unity of forces in the political arena that lead to the prevalence of these elements of democratic citizenship. It must be noted however that the social element of citizenship is not generally accepted by scholars. Pierson (1996) for instance, critiques Marshall for constructing a theory of dependent citizenship that places burdens of social rights on the state. He confines the legitimate rights of citizenship to political and civil rights. However, Pierson's critique appears not to reckon with the fact that when members of a political community form clusters of action, they do not limit their claims on the state to political and civil rights. Movements for democratic change usually anticipate the fulfillment of social rights alongside the civil and political rights. Hence the fulfillment of political and civil rights of citizenship cannot fully establish a democracy if social rights are ignored.

While the dimensions of citizenship based on Marshall's idea were rare in colonial times, the limited range of rights in Nigeria at the time was a privilege not common to all individuals in the political community. The colonized were regarded and treated as subjects not citizens. The subject in a political sense is essentially an object of political power and bears no claim to rights of democratic citizenship. Hence the colonial state was one bifurcated between rights-bearing citizens and non-rights-bearing subjects. The non-generalization of citizenship rights robs the colonial state of the necessary conditions for democracy. Where these rights do not exist as a conscious creation of political rule, there exists a narrow scope for civil society. The outcome may be the emergence of groups that oppose the state and its basis of domination. The point is that institutional conditions of democratic citizenship foster the norms and values of democratic civil society whereas their lack promotes tension in the political field.

The postcolonial state in Nigeria like the colonial state, has failed to create conditions that foster the generalisation of political, civil and social rights necessary for democracy. This situation is occasioned by the dominant role of authoritarian forces in framing the existing structure of state and civil society. The conflicting interests of these dominant forces and those of groups expressing democratic interests form the basis of tension within the political field.

Relations in the political field were important thrusts in Hegelian and Marxian theories of state and civil society. Approaching state and civil society from the perspective of Hegel, Mamdani noted that civil society is a:

historical product of a two-dimensional process. On one hand, the spread of commodity relations diminished the weight of extra-economic coercion, and in doing so, it freed the economy – and broadly, society – from the sphere of politics. On the other hand, the centralization of means of violence within the modern state went alongside the settlement of differences within society without direct recourse to violence. With an end to extra-economic coercion, force ceased to be a direct arbiter in day-to-day life. Contractual relationships among free and autonomous individuals were henceforth regulated by civil law. Bounded by law, the modern state recognized the rights of citizens. The rule of law meant that law-governed behaviour was the rule. It is in this sense that civil society was understood as the civilized society (Mamdani, 2002, p. 14).

This is the sense of civil society which is also portrayed by Ferguson (1980) when he historicised human transformation from uncivilized to civil standards of behaviour as evolving from the growth in economic or commercial interaction. These interactions led to the evolution of contractual rights and duties and eventually extended to politics. But these relations of rights were only applied to those associated by citizenship with the colonial state in Nigeria which at the same time did not include the colonial people. This citizen-subject dichotomy was a system of differentiation of political, social and economic rights in the colonial state (Mamdani, 2002).

Differential distribution of rights was the style of domination which the colonial regimes used in creating what Mamdani refers to as the bifurcated state.

Within this bifurcated state, the sphere of citizens was characterised by political, social and economic inclusiveness while that of subjects was bereft of these opportunities. The mass of the majority of the population were colonial subjects. In the end, the absence of general conditions for democratic citizenship created the impetus for a democracy movement in the country. The form of this contest in the colonial era was anti-colonial struggle. Its new form in the post-colonial era is the contest for transformation of authoritarian political rule to democracy. For the political elites in the process, the struggle has been for political inclusion, for the masses it is against economic exclusion (Ake, 2003). Contemporary democratic struggles in the post-independence period are the results of the expectations of the democratic struggles that led to political independence not coming to fruition. In the colonial era the “struggle for national liberation meant not only freedom from colonial rule, but also and more importantly a better standard of living and more secure future for their children” (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1997, p. 4). The inability of political rule in the post-colonial period to create these material conditions coupled with their actual worsening led to new agitations against entrenched, corrupt, authoritarian rule and demands for democratisation. These are the concerns around which the democratic forces in civil society engage the executive state.

On the terrains of state and civil society, social forces project their interests as the values they deem fit for society. Undemocratic social forces incline towards the defence or fostering of an undemocratic social order, while democratic interests contest such order and agitate for a democratised political field. Beckman and Jega (1995) demonstrate this by noting that the democratic credentials of civil society arise when organizations within civil society struggle against relations of domination within their own sphere of operation and link their own agenda to democratic struggles (cited in Sjorgren, 1998). In a similar vein, Mamdani argued that “forces within civil society penetrate the state differentially, just as the state power reinforces certain social interests and undermines others. Not only is the struggle between social

forces found within society and telescoped inside the state, it shapes the very character of state power” (Sjorgren, 1998, p. 9). Undermining certain interests may sometimes translate to authoritarianism while certain forms of resistance to government by social groups may also not hold a clear promise of democratic outcomes. This reflection prepares the ground for the exploration of deeper questions pertaining to civil society and state in Nigeria’s democratisation.

It is common for scholars to think that authoritarian political rule places the state over and above civil society resulting in inertia or slow movement towards democratisation. But this notion creates an issue regarding what constitutes the state and what constitutes civil society. Basically civil society may not be separated easily from the outcomes that reflect in the state. These outcomes play out in the interaction of forces in state and civil society to constitute the form of society in either democratic or other forms. Thus, this study will treat the two categories as important terrains of political action and then focus on what happens between forces of varying interest as they interact on these terrains within the context of democratisation.

The complex dialectics of contesting social forces in state and civil society prompts the need of this study to explore how different forms of their penetration and interaction generate different forms of political change. The study also tries to find out the contingent conditions under which this process may give rise to either democratic or authoritarian outcomes. Each of the outcomes is a product of relations between social forces. However, the extant literature like Dahl (2003), Huntington (1993), Przeworski (2003), Schumpeter (1976), mostly belabour the formal political process and gloss over the aspect related to social relations and struggles especially social welfare needs of citizens. These works give thrust to questions related to the struggle for democratic institutions such as the mechanics of elections and formal political institutions. But the existence of these institutions does not always translate to democracy. Indeed, sometimes, such institutions are appropriated to serve the interests of undemocratic forces in some states transitioning to democracy. Therefore, there is a need for dialectical interrogation of the processes and logic of democratisation and de-democratisation as a contingent struggle between social

forces in state and civil society. In the light of this problem, this thesis focuses on the following core propositions:

1. If the dominant forces controlling the executive state subjugate democratic forces in civil society, then authoritarian political change is likely to occur.
2. If the state fails to manage the crisis arising from conflicts in civil society about democracy, then de-democratisation is likely to result.
3. If democratic forces located in state and civil society become dominant in relation to undemocratic forces and are able to embed and extend democratic institutions, norms and outcomes, then democratisation occurs.

The above propositions are all possible scenarios depending on the contingent political history and struggles of a particular country. Each assumes an alternate hypothesis and a reversal of outcomes given a reversal of conditions. In simple terms, outcomes of the process may either swing towards democratic or authoritarian tendencies. The propositions may appear to suggest self-evident answers. However, an assumption of a straight-forward and self-evident outcome may not add up, since the process is on-going and involves complex dialectical processes.

Significance and justification for theoretical interpretation

Dialectical struggle characterizes all histories of political change. Here, this logic is expressed in the contest of social forces around democratisation. State and civil society shape this struggle's terrain and their form defines the struggle's objectives. This means that within each formation, the role of actors in these terrains is determined by the level of development of democracy. One level of democratisation is the struggle for and establishment of institutions of democratic rule while the other level has to do with proper embedding of democratic values in the processes related to the institutions. In recent history, these processes are more obvious in societies transitioning to democratic rule. For instance civil society was a key site of struggle in the transitions that took place in Eastern Europe in the 1990s. By mobilizing a force which Havel (1985) refers to as the 'power of the powerless', undemocratic regimes were brought down in Eastern Europe. Ake (2003), Osaghae (2005) and Nzungola-Ntalaja (1997) also demonstrated how second national liberation struggles

in Africa represented important moments in the push from civil society for democracy. The Arab Spring that commenced in Tunisia in late 2010 and spread to other parts of the Arab world represents another moment of relations in which people asserted their preference for a long suppressed democratic way of life over authoritarian rule (See Kandil, 2011). Nonetheless, it is ironic that the fall of Weimer Germany and rise of the Hitler era was also reinforced by drawing on the energy of forces in civil society (see Berman, 1997; Carothers & Barndt, 1999). Also high levels of associational participation in post-1918 Italy correlate very closely with support for Mussolini's fascist state (Chambers & Kopstein, 2001). In a persuasive review of Dylan Riley's *Civil Foundations of Fascism in Europe*, Paxton (2012) agreed that rich associational life could be infiltrated or appropriated by fascists and deployed as conveyor belts for the progress of fascism. He also noted that a counter hegemony can block a fascist outcome as in Hungary and Scandinavia. These instances point to the contingent nature of struggles in civil society between contesting social movements for determining political outcomes. On this note it becomes imperative to seek a broad framework for defining state and civil society and interpreting how they interact in political praxis.

The take-off points of this study, which are Hegel and Marx, raise an initial curiosity as to whether they have any place in discussing the politics of an African state. Essentially, their writings concentrated on European societies. In the case of Hegel his few remarks on Africa are rather disparaging. Indeed he denied that both history and capacity for organised political form applied to Africa. Hegel distinguished four historical worlds moving from East to West – Oriental, Greek, Roman and German worlds (Hegel, 2001b). Africa was not part of the four civilizations or cultures that were considered in this evolution of the spirit of nations or *Zeitgeist*.

For Africa proper, Hegel noted that

as far as history has remained – for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world has remained shut up...it is the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of Night (Hegel, 2001b, p. 109).

This seems like a more vulgar rendition of an earlier writing by Adam Ferguson (whom Hegel is noted to have read). Ferguson had referred to Africa as a torrid zone which has

furnished few materials for history and though in many places supplied with arts of life, in no contemptible degree has nowhere matured the more important project of political wisdom nor inspired the virtues which are connected with freedom and required in the conduct of civil affairs (Ferguson, 1980, p. 69).

In further depiction of Africa, Hegel noted that:

The African character is difficult to comprehend, for the very reason that in reference to it, we must quite give up the principle which naturally accompanies all our ideas – the category of Universality. In Negro life, the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained realisation of any substantial objective existence – as for example, God or law – in which the interest of man’s volition is involved and in which he realises his own being. This distinction between himself as an individual and the universality of his essential being, the African in the uniform, undeveloped oneness of his existence has not yet attained.... The Negro... exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state...if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character (Hegel, 2001b, p. 111).

Ferguson and Hegel were simply trying to understand Africa from the point of view of Western civilization. Unable to find material transformations similar to those of the Western societies, they speculated about the continent and people, and made conclusions which fail to conform with reality. Their accounts connect the emergence of civil society with the rise of codified laws such as contract rights which regulate the economic process and social relations of a commercial civilization. They did not consider the concept of civil society as a contingent concept that could take forms outside of the Western experience. They also did not consider that institutional conditions that are linked with civil society could exist formally but not lead to the embedding of democratic values. Indeed many newly democratising states of Africa

have such formal institutions including elections, yet are not democratic (see Adebawwi & Obadare, 2011; Bartlett, 2000; Daddieh, 2001; Lynch & Crawford, 2011; Whitaker, 2005). In spite of the limited usefulness of institutions in extending democracy in some transitional societies, the aspect of the ideas of Hegel and Ferguson that prescribe the institutionalization of legal norms to spell out rights and guide conducts in social relations in the modern state is an essential element of democracy.

The historical logic of Ferguson and Hegel clearly portray civil society as an artefact of European civilization. Thus writers like Callaghy (1994) , Kunz (1995) think that the concept need not apply to Africa. On the contrary, Mamdani (2002, p. 13) contends that “civil society exists as a fully formed construct in Africa as in Europe.” This view is supported by the works of Makumbe (1998) and Orvis (2001) who have shown internally democratic civil society that is tailored differently from the Western patterns. LeVan (2011) also discovered a high level of democracy among many Home Town Associations (an important form of associational life in Nigeria and some other parts of Africa). Standing on the premise of the reality of civil society in Africa, the poor representation of Africa in Hegel’s *Philosophy of History*, may be debunked as has been done by Camara (1993a). Nonetheless, for the study of civil society, the dialectic logic in Hegelian epistemology⁴ commands continuing interest and can be useful for approaching the study of political change everywhere including in Africa.

Hegelian dialectics is deemed an important theoretical landmark in approaching an understanding of the interaction of social forces. According to Lukacs, Hegel is

the first man to conceive of the history of philosophy as something more than a mere collection of anecdotes and biographies of metaphysical assertions about the validity or otherwise of particular views and to elevate it to the status of an authentic historical science (Lukacs, 1975, p. xiv).

⁴ In this work, the interest in Hegel is only the dialectic principle not his application of it which is confined to European history. The principle of dialectics provides scope for the development of the neo-Gramscian conceptual framework which is applied in this study for the analysis of the Nigerian experience.

The primary object of Hegel's dialectic method is

to establish the existence of a logical connection between the various categories which are involved in the constitution of experience. He teaches that this connection is of such a kind that if scrutinized with sufficient care and attention, is found to lead on to another, and to involve it, in such a manner that an attempt to use the first of any subject while we refuse the second of the same subject results in a contradiction (McTaggart, 2000, p. 8).

Applied to civil society, Hegel sees the relatedness of the structures of state and society in terms of the state creating civil society to fulfil certain roles or needs in society. While it is not a settled argument as to whether it is the state that preceded civil society or vice versa, Hegel gave the earliest insight to the connection between them and grounds the development of civil society in the development of the state. Even though he made false speculations and conclusions about Africa due to poor knowledge of the continent, it is possible to throw away his erroneous sense of Africa and deploy the structure of his philosophic system in thinking about state and society in Africa. In this case, the structure is his dialectical framework of state civil society relations.

Marx's engagement with Hegel on state theory is within the general framework of dialectics. His theory of mode of production is a ground breaking approach in the analysis of society. For Marx, society is a totality with interconnected structures and agencies. The economic, the political and other social structures comprise mutual relations that shape the form of society. In effect, he was engaging in the analysis of the substance of democracy despite the salience of the economic aspect in his thesis. Mostov (1989) argued that Marx was a democracy theorist even though he did not write directly about democracy. Also, Psychopedis (1999), makes a persuasive case about the democratic thrust of Marx's works by suggesting that his critique of Hegel's state and the modern constitutional state is a rejection of the existing formalistic democracy in which "the 'democratic element' participates only 'in abstraction' in an 'abstract political state' divorced from 'universal affairs' of the actual society" (cited in Daremas, 2009, p. 91). Thus it is correct to sum that the overall import of Marxian theory for democracy is that political democracy is not

possible in the absence of economic justice. He believed that this can only be remedied through a socialisation of mode of production.

For Hegel, civil society must be reconciled to the higher reality embodied in the state. Progressing from its historic movement the, *Zeitgeist* evolved the concrete forms of corporation, administration of justice and police duties in the space of civil society (see Sabine & Thorson, 1973). Thus the site of civil society is like the concrete reality of the abstract essence of the state. But Marx made a major break from this thesis by most concretely dissecting the state in relation to political economy. He posited that the anatomy of civil society “has to be sought in political economy” (Marx, 1993a, p. 3). Marx political economy is considered by some to be based on economic determinism. However, to clearly understand him in the context of discourses on state, civil society and democracy, it is his dialectical approach that needs to be placed in focus. This will become clearer as the work progresses.

In Gramsci’s works, a blend of Hegelian and Marxian theories of civil society comes out clearly. While identifying the components of the integral state as political society and civil society, he finds the Hegelian Ethical state as a project that envisions domination beyond coercion (Durst, 2005). The organisation or contestation of this hegemony leads to thinking about different forms that the state and civil society can assume as an outcome of the struggle between forces that are located in both terrains. The state can assume either democratic or authoritarian forms. Thus the struggle to expand democratic rights in the political field or maintain alternative forms of rule is a sort of ‘war of position’ between forces whose actions aim at alternate outcomes that range between democracy and authoritarianism (cf Gramsci, 1971). Investigating the contours of this kind of engagement could be usefully done with the epistemological structures of Hegel and Marx as points of departure. Gramsci, Habermas and Foucault line up in the dialectical study because their works represent further illumination of the idea of relations of forces which is a vital theoretical resource in the analysis of democratisation. ‘Relations of forces’ is deployed here in a neo-Gramscian manner to refer to the engagements at the political, economic, theoretical and ideological spheres between contesting social forces in the structure

and superstructure of society in relation to the form and project of democratisation. 'Relations of forces' as an approach not only considers the levels of interaction in the struggle between social forces but also the strategies deployed in each instance, the forces involved and the outcome they want to achieve. The concept accommodates all struggles based on relations of production and relations of power.

Having made a brief presentation of some dialectical theories, this study demonstrates how each of the contributing discourses after Hegel moved the theory to a new level of application and relevance. In that connection, the study claims significance at the levels of epistemology and praxis. At the level of epistemology, dialectics is applied in the search of further knowledge on democratisation and democratic theory. Besides, the synthesizing of dialectical theories into a conceptual framework and the application of the framework in the analysis of a specific historical instance (Nigeria), is a novel test of the interpretive usefulness of a dialectical framing of state-civil society relations. The study could also open the possible fault lines of existing theories of state and civil society in the context of democratisation. Since political theory offers a tool kit for understanding political practice, this study could provide clues on points of intervention in complex societies with problems of deepening democracy. With an understanding of the trajectories of change and the dynamics embedded in the interpenetration of state and civil society, a framework could be created for political practices that guarantee a viable democratic architecture for a transitional society like Nigeria.

The Nigerian Context

Nigeria is the concrete historical case in which this work examines how the construction of the form of the state has unfolded as a complex interplay of contesting group interests in the political field. The progression of the dialectics of change in Nigeria could be viewed from the point of view of the evolutionary voyage of the Modern Nigerian state from its origin as an undemocratic creation by an external colonial power. When the partition of Africa was made in 1885 at Berlin, the space known today as Nigeria was brought under British interest. It was first administered by the Royal Niger Company with a Charter of the British Crown. In 1900, formal

colonial administration commenced with the state divided into the Colony of Lagos and Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria. Progress of British rule was trailed by important political developments that created a window of entry into the political field for a few Nigerians who had acquired Western education at the time. Major constitutional developments that commenced in 1922 with Sir Clifford's constitution were crucial to opening the platform of intervention on the nature of political rule by a few Nigerians that sought political inclusion through demands for more democratic opening of the political space.

It was the provisions of some of the colonial constitutions that directly led to the formation of groups and parties for electoral participation. Precisely, the Nigerian Youth Movement was formed in 1923 after the Clifford constitution of 1922 had introduced elections to the city council in the Lagos Colony. Participation in the election opened room for further demands on the colonial government based on the need for broader opportunities for democratic participation. Further demands on the colonial state were connected with inequality of opportunity at the level of economic relations. The narrative of Coleman (1958) shows that the Nigerian entrepreneurial group felt denied of opportunities which were enjoyed by their expatriate counterparts. Their resulting disenchantment with colonialism gave impetus to nationalist struggles for political independence. The struggle was significant for constitutional transformations in the colonial period. Every progress achieved in the process incrementally led to further demands. Ultimately, political independence was achieved. At the core of the processes that led to political independence were simply the on-going demands for opening up of the political space for wider participation of citizens in the process of governance and extension of opportunities for their development. In summary, the struggle for the end of colonial rule was inextricably bound up with the struggle for democratisation. The role of organised groups was central to this struggle. Thus, tension in the colonial state was a function of the divide between democratic forces in civil society and the non-democratic colonial state. There is need to explore the contours of the divides in these sites and how they impinge on democratisation.

When Nigeria attained political independence on 1st October 1960, hopes were high that this result of long struggles with colonialism would lead to the extension of democratic norms, through good governance, widening of popular participation and satisfaction with political rule. But this was not the case because political misrule became a major challenge to state making (see Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006) leading to fissures in the architecture of the post-colonial state. These fissures are related to the presence of contradictory interests across state and civil society (political field). In competing for control of political spaces, some of the groups that had been part of the pressures for political independence during colonial rule resorted to strategies that undermined democracy, notwithstanding that the over-riding aim of their anti-colonial struggles was to achieve democratic freedom. Class struggles after colonialism not only intermeshed with ethnic interests, but the institutions of liberal democracy could not be applied to achieve social citizenship. Political participation became a prerogative of privileged elites while politicians devoted themselves to their personal interests, electioneering and party manoeuvring rather than mobilization for national needs. Since political power was key to the advancement of personalist and narrow ethnic interests, political elites sought access to it with desperation. Elections became a source of violence and contest for power turned increasingly corrupt with most of them attended by crisis (see First, 1970). The Western Nigeria regional election of 1964 was rigged and was followed by crisis. The next year, 1965, the Federal election was massively rigged leading to deep disagreement between the major political parties and the political coalitions that formed for the purpose of the elections. Events following the elections and the trend of the nation's politics created uneasy conditions that offered an alibi for military intervention in Nigerian politics on 15th January 1966.

Events following military intervention in the country in 1966 led to a three year civil war between 1967 and 1970. When the war ended in 1970 the military government led by General Yakubu Gowon promised a transition to an elective democratic rule. However, he was overthrown in a military coup which brought General Murtala Mohammed to power in 1975. In February 1976 Lt. Col Dimka tried to remove the military government in yet another coup. Though the Head of state, General Murtala

Mohammed, was killed in the process, the coup was unsuccessful. The assassinated military leader was succeeded by General Olusegun Obasanjo. Transition to civil rule by the military government of the late General Murtala Mohammed, was continued by the succeeding Obasanjo regime in line with his predecessor's initial steps. Ultimately Nigeria was returned to elective civil rule in 1979 by Gen. Obasanjo. But the civil rule was short-lived as the military returned again with a coup in 1983 led by General Muhammadu Buhari. Another coup took place in 1985 and commenced General Ibrahim Babangida's eight year military rule which ended in 1993 after the annulment of a presidential election that was supposed to finalise a process of transition to an elective civil rule. An Interim National Government (ING) led by a civilian, Ernest Shonekan was put in place to conduct another transition to civil rule. The interim government was however removed in a palace coup by Gen Sanni Abacha after eighty three days in office. The main reasons for all the military intervention could be summarized as massive corruption and the reluctance of the political elite to institutionalise democracy.

Military suspension of democracy has to be understood from a broader perspective of contesting group interests, in particular, class forces, intra-class dynamics, ethnic factors and of course not excluding the pitfalls of the civilian politicians in government. This is to say that military rule is also part of the ruling group project that undermines the generalisation of the political, social and civil rights which underpin democracy. These issues are aspects of a larger process of dialectical political struggle in which undemocratic forces are predominant.

The military regime of General Abacha which succeeded the transitional government of Ernest Shonekan was highly repressive. Massive domestic and international pressures were on Abacha to return the country to democracy. The Abacha era (1993-1998) and the earlier eight year rule of Gen Ibrahim Babangida were characterized by a vibrant engagement from groups in civil society against authoritarian military rule. In response to pressures from domestic civil society, international social movements and other external forces, the Abacha military regime started a transition to civil rule, with the aim of transforming himself into a civilian ruler. However, he died in office

in June 1998. The succeeding military leader General Abdusallam Abubakar conducted an election that returned Nigeria once again to an elective civil rule in 1999. In the era starting from the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida to the end of military rule, activism in civil society was comparatively high as it was marked by a mutual rise of groups that demanded democracy and those whose agenda conformed with the governing interests that desperately wanted to continue in power without democratic processes and outcomes.

In the context of politics and power struggle in post-colonial Nigeria, political rule struggles to contain pressures by democratic forces for the extension citizenship rights across the political field while serving the interest of political elites that treat the state “as a means of production” (Ekekwe, 1986, p. 18). The view of the state as a means of production in Nigeria characterizes peripheral capitalist societies where the state leads the processes of accumulation but has a weak capacity to implement the legal framework against corruption. This encourages the ruling group to utilize the state as a source of both political and economic power. In the ensuing political struggle among the dominant forces, they instrumentalize some categories among which are the military institution and ethnicity for the advancement of their group interests. While the military stands out as a direct participant in political rule, part of the dynamics that have driven military participation in politics is ethno politics chiefly motivated by narrow group and class interests.

Bienen (1989) was correct in arguing that Nigeria’s relatively professionalized military organisation was overwhelmed by communal tension when the killings of some officers in the first coup was perceived in ethnic terms. The subsequent participation of the military in political domination witnessed an ethnic dominance of both the military institution and politics. Nonetheless, the dominance was not exclusively ethnic in character because despite the substantial influence of the Hausa-Fulani ethnic faction of the ruling forces in the government and politics of the country at the time there was a collaboration of elements from other ethnic groups in the process. There also exist alliances of forces that cut across ethnic, class and other divides at the level of struggles to embed democratic rights. But the ruling forces

demonstrate higher ability to organise and constrain the growth of democratic struggles with use of repression against the democratic forces. The ruling group also undermine democratic forces with strategies of co-optation, and appeal to ethnic sentiments among other factors.

Ethnicity and Democratisation

Ethnicity became a factor in the modern state in Africa because according to Nnoli (1989) imperialism created conditions in which foreign capital could not break down communal barriers to its activities. Imperial capitalism could not eliminate communal distinctions and assimilate the various language and cultural groups into a new capitalist culture like the experience of earlier industrial capitalist states. In the Western experience of capitalist development, it transformed the pre-capitalist societies into cosmopolitan capitalist societies. The inability or unwillingness to reproduce the same development trajectory in Africa left the pre-capitalist social and cultural relations largely intact. In subsequent developments, these relations survived as potent social forces which retained enough strength particularly at the socio-cultural level, to provide a rallying point for the population. Sentiments associated with these primordial communities became readily available for exploitation by both colonial and post-colonial political leaders. This was possible because the level of occupational differentiation was low. Also the low level of class consciousness and strong competition for scarce valuable resources tend to make individuals identify more with those whom they share similar communal sentiments based on family, clan, culture, language, religion and other ties. It is within such identity groups that the individual has the confidence of mutual trust, assistance and communication.

As social relations expand from smaller villages or towns to vast urban areas, group affiliations expand from smaller groups like families and clans to the linguistic groups. Ethnic groups compete with others in national politics and in that process, ethnic identity assumes a significant place (cf Nnoli, 1989). Under such condition, electoral voting turns into an ethnic census since ethnic connections command greater importance than programmes of governance presented by political parties. Each of the major political parties before independence till 1966 military coup had ethnic

support bases. The National Convention of Nigerian Citizens led by an Igbo politician Nnamdi Azikiwe had strong Igbo support. The Action Group led by a Yoruba politician, Obafemi Awolowo was an off-shoot of a Yoruba cultural association and drew its support mostly from the Yoruba. The Northern People's Congress was led by a Northern Monarch Ahmadu Bello. The party was the political standard bearer of the Northern ruling elite and drew support from the dominant Hausa Fulani and several minority ethnic groups of northern Nigeria. Since ethnicity is a major determinant of political contest, political offices are seen to be occupied by the ethnic groups of the occupants of such positions and hardly the individual who occupies the position (cf Nnoli, 2008).

A similar interpretation of the modern state in Africa by Ekeh (1975) argues that colonialism created two publics in Africa namely, the primordial and civic publics. Ekeh's idea is that in the Western conception of politics there is a monolithic public realm morally bound with the private realm because these two spheres share a common idea of what is right and wrong. This is not the case in Africa because according to him, colonialism created two publics. At the level of the primordial public, communal groupings, ties and sentiments influence and determine public behaviour and impinge on public life at the traditional level of interaction. The primordial public is considered moral and operates at the same moral imperatives as the private realm. There is also the civic public which came with colonialism and is the basis of the modern state in Africa. It is based on civil structures like the military, civil service, police etc. The civic public in Africa lacks the generalized moral imperatives in the private realm as in the primordial public. Ekeh's narrative captures the mentality that drives ethnicity in relation to democratisation of the modern state. Basically the perception of the citizens is that the state (the civic public) does not represent the public that cares. Consequently, the struggle for political power easily takes the form of blocs of ethnic formations competing for spaces in which the achievement of political power can advance their interests in relation to other groups. This is the character that underpins ethnicity and ethnic politics. It is not based on the generalization of political, civil and social rights for all members of political community.

Ethnicization of party politics began in the colonial era. This development drew strength from urban based ethnic associations formed during that era. For instance, the cultural association of the Yoruba ethnic group called *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* (the society of the descendants of Oduduwa) was formed in London in 1945 by Yoruba students in the United Kingdom. The association later metamorphosed into a political party, the Action Group (AG) in Nigeria. Its main support base was the Yoruba ethnic group of the South-Western Nigeria. The Igbo Federal Union which later became the Igbo State Union was formed in 1936 by Igbo ethnic group of the South-Eastern Nigeria who were resident in Lagos, primarily to promote education and material wellbeing of the Igbo. However, it later became a quasi-political association that strongly identified with one of the Nigerian political parties in the colonial era, the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) led by Nnamdi Azikiwe of the Igbo ethnic group. Similarly, the Northern People's Congress rose out of a pan-northern cultural group called the *Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa* which later transitioned into the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) political party (Coleman, 1958; Nnoli, 1989, 2008). NPC had emphasis not on ethnic group but on the northern region. However, there was an established dominance of the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group in the region, as such, regionalism of the party coincides with interest of the dominant group in the region (Nnoli, 1989). The politics of the three major ethnic groups obscured the ethnic minorities who had to find political accommodation by allying with the major ethnic groups due to the advantage of big numbers in determining electoral victory.

The establishment of political platforms along ethnic lines reinforced ethnic competitions in economic and other spheres. Indeed the elections that produced the government at independence in 1960 were based on these ethnically oriented political parties. The political crisis that resulted in the post-independence elections were linked with desperate political competition in which the political elites had made ethnicity an instrument of power struggle (see Anglin, 1965; Sklar, 1967). The tensions that trailed the federal elections of 1964 and the violence which commenced after the Western Nigeria elections of 1965 led to a military coup on January 15,

1966. The coup was interpreted in ethnic terms. The coup planners who were mostly of Igbo origin were accused of harbouring an agenda of Igbo domination of the rest of the country. Resentment that resulted from the pattern of killings in the first coup led to a counter coup in July 1966, in which there was a massive killing of army officers of Igbo extraction and civilian Igbo residents in the northern parts of the country. Consequently, the predominantly Igbo Eastern Nigeria declared a separate republic of Biafra. The secession led to the Biafran war (1967-1970). Nine years after the civil war, civil rule was restored. The political parties re-emerged without being formally tied to ethnic associations. Nonetheless, they exhibited strong ethnic inclinations in terms of their patterns of mass support. The second civil rule was in effect a re-enactment of the first one in which political competition was not different from ethnic competition (see Nnoli, 1995).

The Nigerian experience bears out Rothschild's analysis of the politicization of ethnicity in which he argues that it renders a people cognitively aware of the relevance of politics to the health of their ethnic and cultural values. Politics stimulates their concern about this nexus and mobilizes them into self-conscious ethnic groups as well as directing their behaviour towards activity in the political arena on the basis of this awareness. Ultimately, national integration is stunted (Rothschild, 1981). In Nigeria, ethnic citizenship is strongly expressed in relation to national citizenship. Thus ethnic competition prevails at the expense of nation-building, and the development of democracy.

However, ethnic associations cannot be denied as actors in civil society. This is because their social struggles may sometimes target injustice in resource distribution, domination and exploitation. To be sure, some of the conditions they struggle to eliminate suppress the virtues of civil society. This was the case with the Movement for Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) led by the late Ken Saro Wiwa. His struggle for environmental and social justice led the Nigerian state to hang him alongside other activists. Ethnic associations can also engage in struggles for the establishment of electoral democracy. For instance, the *Afenifere*, a pan-Yoruba cultural organisation was actively involved in the struggle to end military rule in Nigeria and

revalidate the result of a presidential election held on June 12, 1993 which was won by Chief MKO Abiola. However, the active involvement of the *Afenifere* in this struggle was more because Chief Abiola was of the Yoruba ethnic group than a matter of democratic rights of citizens on the basis of their electoral choices. Similar socio-cultural associations in Nigeria like the *Oha-na-eze* which advocates the interests of the Igbo ethnic group, *Arewa Consultative Forum* which stands for northern interests, among others saw the struggle to revalidate the June 12, 1993 election result as a primary concern of the Yoruba ethnic group because the electoral mandate which was denied was won by one of their own. This underpins the dangers of ethno-politics to nation building and the ambivalent value of ethnically mobilized civil society groups in democratisation. Their democratic aspiration is driven by the need to extend the benefits of democracy to their group and hardly beyond that boundary. Similarly the environmental activism of the Ogoni ethnic group that was led by late Ken Saro Wiwa was basically seen as their issue because the struggle was not nationalized as a concern for democratic rights of a group of Nigerian citizens which ought to be a general concern or a broad issue for groups in civil society, at least at the early stages.

The exclusiveness and particularistic focus of ethnicity renders it a threat to class action. Before the development of organised labour in Nigeria as Nnoli (2011) noted, ethnic associations had usurped the functions of trade unions and secured the loyalty of the people by providing solidarity and collective identity, socio-economic security and outlet for expression of grievances and pursuit of remedies for them. This is one of the ways that ethnicity undermine class actions. Nonetheless, there is still a culture of continually growing democratic impulses by groups that transcend ethnic appeals and press for the democratisation of the political field. Similarly, there are other groups acting on or invading civil society which are not fundamentally driven by ethnicity, yet their actions retard the growth of democracy.⁵ Thus, this thesis will focus mainly on studying the struggles of social forces that are not defined in ethnic terms or pursue particularistic goals that advance the interest of particular ethnic formation. The justification for taking this angle is that building a modern democratic

⁵ Groups of this kind are illustrated in the thesis with rent-seeking associations that engage in mass mobilization and support for authoritarian regimes.

nation-state can hardly be sustained on the basis of struggles based on ethnicity. Therefore, while recognising ethno-politics as a factor in Nigerian politics, this study focuses the theme of democratisation within the changing contours of a contingently developing civil society. This focus moves emphasis away from struggles outside this fragile emerging space towards a focus on the dialectics of struggle between forces contesting democratisation. Thus ethnicity is not the overriding concern, but one factor in the process of democratisation

Reflections on concepts and definitions

Civil Society

Civil society concept is so much a tangle of confusion and contestation. It has as many meanings as there are writers in the field. It has meaning in the sociological, economic and political applications. Each of these meanings highlights one or more aspects of what civil society represents. To situate civil society in the discourse of political change, it is useful to look at its structural link with the state. The Enlightenment thinker, Adam Ferguson, presented civil society as a stage in the transformation of human society from backwardness to progress. He suggested that the enjoyment of peace and the prospect of being able to exchange one commodity for another turns the hunter and the warrior into a tradesman and a merchant. This further leads to the division of processes of labour and creates an environment of commerce which represents a transition from barbarism to well-ordered society (See Ferguson, 1980). This is a view of civil society as a product and feature of material civilization (Cohen & Arato, 1992).

A number of modern thinkers on civil society draw on Ferguson and base their formulations on civil society on certain criteria of civility. The criterion of civility is important in thinking about the historical emergence of civil society. However, a fully-fledged civility is an ideal that hardly obtains in pure form anywhere. Alexander (1997) defined civil society as

a solidary sphere in which a certain kind of universalizing community comes gradually to be defined and to some degree enforced. To the degree this

solidary community exists, it is exhibited by ‘public opinion’, possesses its own cultural codes and narratives in a democratic idiom, is patterned by a set of peculiar institutions, most notably legal journalistic ones, and is visible in historically distinctive sets of interactional practices like civility, equality, criticism and respect (Cited in Alexander, 1998, p. 7).

He is quick to note that this kind of civil society can only exist to one degree or another. The reason is that civil society “is always interconnected with and interpenetrated by other more or less differentiated spheres which have their own criteria of justice and their own system of rewards. There is no reason to privilege any one of these non-civil spheres over any other” (Alexander, 1998, p. 7). Based on Alexander’s idea, it can be argued that a fully-formed civil society only serves as an ideal model, against which actual societal projects can be assessed.

Tocqueville (2003) brought an important insight to the conception of civil society. He found that associational forms could constitute a useful bulwark against authoritarian rule. The atomized individual is incapable of presenting an effective counterforce against an undemocratic state. But at the associational level, voices and interests turn into sufficient democratic forces that could present a counter-weight to undemocratic tendencies in the state. As he puts it, at the associational level, members “are no longer isolated individuals, but a power conspicuous from a distance...when it speaks men listen (2003, p. 125). Before the French Revolution, Tocqueville informs that it was only by coming together in civil associations that weak individuals became strong. The associations they formed such as political party and interest groups could either participate directly in political life or serve as ‘schools of citizenship’ where individuals learned the habits of co-operation that would eventually carry over into public life (see Fukuyama, 2001).

The strength of Tocqueville’s idea lies in demonstrating the relevance of civil associations to the project of democracy by acting as a counterforce to undemocratic political rule. This is useful in the sense that it illuminates the importance of associations and movements in thinking about the historical emergence of civil society. However, it is important to point out that associations may sometimes

provide a platform for undemocratic forces which may deceptively lay claim to democratic objectives. Also Tocqueville seems to portray civil society as though it has a mission to oppose the state. On the contrary, civil society is a part of the integral state and do provide the site for hegemonic struggles between dominant and subaltern forces in society as illuminated by Gramsci. For Gramsci, Associations provide framework in which struggles of social forces are worked into ideas by organic intellectuals and applied for countering the executive state when it turns undemocratic. It needs to be noted that social actors including associations and their individual representatives operate across both state and civil society and may articulate either democratic or undemocratic objectives. The dialectical struggle arising from these conflicting objectives suggests that civil society is a place for democracy only when it bears a preponderance of democratic forces and institutions that embed the rights of democratic citizenship.

In the work of Hegel, civil society arises out of human material needs that are made compatible by laws which are supposed to protect private property and common interests. He specifically described the civic community as:

an association of members or independent individuals in a formal universality. Such an association is occasioned by needs, and is preserved by the law, which secures one's person and property and by an external system for private and common interests (Hegel, 2001a, p. 134).

Implicit in Hegel's theory of civil society is a definition of the individual in terms of his connection to the system of needs through his function in the system. Hegel started the process of showing the inter-connection between state and civil society in this conception of civil society but played down the political relevance of civil society in the dialectics of social change. Even as he recognized the importance of rights and obligations in his theory, he placed the state above the influence of the forces in civil society. Nonetheless, there is a constant dialectical inter-penetration between forces in state and civil society. This inter-penetration continuously conditions the character of the state even though the state regulates the social processes (see Fatton, 1995).

In Whitehead's observation, some important units that are normally accounted for in civil society such as religious or political associations are absent in Hegel's civil society. Guilds, corporations and communities are posed in Hegelian theory as compulsory rather than voluntary associations. The theory requires individuals to pursue their interest within a framework of mutually recognised rights and obligations regulated by public authority (Whitehead, 1997). Here, the identified gap in Hegel's idea is that it fails to accommodate some important actors in the site. Besides, he ignored the dynamics of contestations in civil society, thus giving the untenable impression that it has a fixed and final form.

Ferguson and Hegel converge around the notion that the rise of civil society is linked with the political embedding of market relations. But Marx critiqued the implied assumptions of these earlier theorists of civil society by demonstrating the exploitative domination of the space by capitalist forces (see Marx, 1867) and suggesting that civil society is dominated by the bourgeoisie. Following Marx, this domination limits the ability of the space to extend democracy because the bourgeoisie merely generalizes the conditions of their class interest as public interest. These interests are embodied in politics, laws and public policies. This is the crux of Marx's idea when he noted that the state is an expression of the interests of the ruling class that emerges from socio-economic relations. In this regard, Beckman (1993, p. 20) views the state versus civil society debate as one platform where "competing class projects confront each other, each seeking to ensure a social basis for its own control over the state". A similar elaboration by Arato and Cohen shares the view that civil society is a site per excellence for action, as well as a product of such action. They pointed out that:

Gramsci viewed the particular content and form of civil society as the outcome and object of a class struggle. From this point of view, the outcome depends on which social group has been or is becoming hegemonic. Where the bourgeoisie is hegemonic, the outcome is bourgeois society, and its constitutional guarantees (rights) and political expression (parliamentary representation) are window dressing for bourgeois rule (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 146).

In spaces like Nigeria the predominant contest is mainly around building the institutional form of a democratic state. This struggle also features the ideological and theoretical aspects, but these latter dimensions tend to be under-specified in analysis due to emphasis on issues regarding institutional referents of a liberal democracy. In the entire levels of struggle, there is a complex dynamic of engagements involving coalitions of contrasting classes and other social forces divided between allies for institutionalized democratic state and coalitions acting for reverse outcomes. In the process, there exist both genuine articulations for democracy and the masking of interests around democracy by the discordant social forces.

Three Part Model of Civil Society

Thinking about civil society entails both politics and economy as Hegel and Marx imply. However, their views of civil society in particular, appear overly economic. Later enquiries did not find the economic view of civil society satisfactory even though their works are inevitable take off points in civil society theory. Cohen and Arato (1992) drawing from the insight of Habermas, inclined towards a three-part model of society comprising state, civil society and market. In spite of this claim, it remains difficult to mark out the boundaries of the three spheres because of how their aspects intersect with one another. It is therefore possible to reflect on the unity of civil society with state and market as a reality to be understood in the manner of three united in one, yet with their separate identities. A part of this trinity is the governing arm of the state which bears the political interest of the dominant forces. The second part is a sphere of market embodying what Hegel and Marx construed in terms of economic relations. The third part is a terrain of actions for moulding or contesting hegemony through ideology and other patterns of norms and cultures in society. This third part of society straddles economic and political relations. It is the part in which reinforcement or contestation for the existing institutions of state and civil society takes place. It is the part that though, overlapping state and economic relations clearly designates civil society.

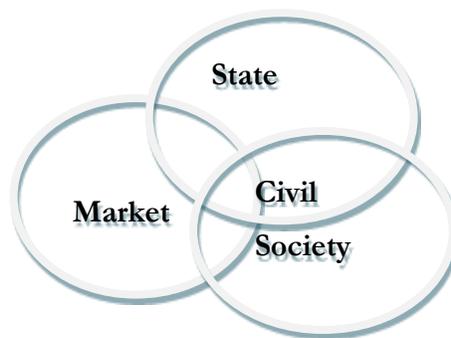
The three part mode of society is implied in the theory of Antonio Gramsci (1971). He countered orthodox Marxist economic reductionism by illuminating the

dimension of associations in civil society and cultural intermediations and by discovering modern equivalents of Hegel's corporations and estates. Despite his Hegelian influence, Gramsci was able to differentiate civil society from the economy and the state (Cohen & Arato, 1992). By showing that the state consists of both civil society and apparatuses of political rule, he connected everything that civil society represents in the economic sphere and the superstructure as organically related parts. But the interesting niche by which his formulation enriched civil society theory is the portrayal of the integral state (consisting civil society and political society) as a terrain of relations of forces in which groups struggle for the establishment of political and other practices they deem best for society. By this innovation, Gramsci unlocked the abstraction which Hegel and Marx had wrapped in the dialectics of state and civil society. Hegel had located civil society in the superstructure but elaborated its functions mostly around material needs. Marx took after Hegel and also explained civil society within the same materialist framework. But by locating civil society in the superstructure Hegel prepared ground for Gramsci's project on the subject. Marx's contribution to Gramsci's location of civil society in the superstructure was the introduction of the role of intellectuals in articulating the basis of domination⁶. When the positions of Hegel and Marx were blended in Gramsci, civil society is returned to the superstructural sphere that embodies dynamics of economic, cultural and political relations. Forces within the site struggle for ascendancy and their struggles connect with the overall dialectics of domination in the political field. While democracy is an ideal to be pursued, not all forces acting in the political field bear democratic interest or deploy democratic methodology. Thus the Gramscian epistemology which entails a dialectical logic of struggles in the integral state between different social projects offers a more appropriate lead to understanding civil society in the context of democratic struggle.

Groups in society acting as interest-bearing agents bring impact to bear on three distinct but united structures of society. In doing so, they may function in associational forms that express economic/political or cultural interests. The paradox

⁶ By defining intellectuals in the German Ideology as active conceptive ideologist who make rationalizing the ideas of the ruling class their chief source of livelihood (See Marx, 2000), Marx laid a background for what Gramsci later referred to as organic intellectuals in civil society.

of these three parts lies in the fact that they are separate in functions even as they are organically united. Their existence in political practice could be construed in a dissolution-preservation continuum. This implies that while they are dissolved in each other, their separateness is still preserved in that dissolution. Separateness or relative independence of each sphere accounts for why civil society is a bearer of ensembles that could support or challenge forms of the state and or economy despite its intersection with them. In a similar way, the state and market both influence the character of civil society. This is a relationship in which each of them as a social structure has capacity to determine and at the same time is subject to determination by other structures.



The three part model of society better reflects the nature of civil society because it more appropriately demonstrates its intersection both with the dialectics of the integral state and the dialectics of the political economy. The spaces within the three parts comprise the terrain of action for political agents whose interest may cut across the three structures. The basis on which social agents are linked with particular political forms and projects of the state is their shared interest in both the economic base and the superstructure, while tension results from their engagement with other forces that also domicile the same space but articulate different interests or social projects. More concretely, the process of democratization involves a unity of interests of democratic forces in state and civil society and a struggle between these democratizing forces and de-democratizing or anti-democratic forces within the same sites.

Outside the context of newly democratizing states, the struggles for the advancement of democracy may not necessarily be between democratisers and de-democratisers. Instead, the dominant form of engagement may be about competition between different forms of the existing social project. Hence, within each ideological form, there may be contests over which of the contending shades should constitute the dominant practice. For instance the contest for welfare state or neoliberal state is a competition between two projects of the capitalist state. Nonetheless, these forms of the state may not result in changes in the fundamental structuring of established capitalist democracies. Instead, they are related in varying ways to the extension or vitiation of social citizenship. In effect, certain social practices support the rights of social citizenship and the struggles by social forces to actualize this takes place in civil society. Thus the project of democracy is not just confined to the newly democratising states, but also includes more democratically advanced states. Similarly, democratic struggles in newly democratising states also include struggles over the form of the societal project. The sites of these struggles are state and civil society.

Civil society can be defined in the context of democratisation as an institutionalized terrain which straddles state and society where the engagement among social forces with contrasting interests links up with the aspiration for the achievement and generalization of political, civil and social rights as the basis of democratic citizenship. This conception take into account the fact that civil society could be a terrain of action for groups applying debates, and other forms of activism in support of or in opposition to the nature of the state. In advanced countries, there is usually a preponderance of forces that have largely accepted certain basic rules of liberal democratic political field and play by those rules. But the preponderance of these forces is not the end of democratic struggle. It continues as 'war of position' between contrasting ideological shades which the contesting social forces seek to set up as the dominant project. In transitional states, the struggle between social forces focuses on the need to generalize and accept the basic norms and rules associated with liberal democracy. However, achieving liberal democracy only offers a condition for further democratic struggle towards the realization of what Marshall (1997) refers to as civil,

political and social rights of citizenship. Such norms include free speech, free association, freedom of thought and religion, rights of equal citizenship and the entire range of social rights,⁷ free and fair elections, accountable governance and rule of law. There are groups struggling in newly restored elective civil rules for the generalization of these norms as the guide to political practice, however they have yet to attain preponderance over groups within the same terrain that undermine democratic struggles.

Two Ways of Thinking about the State – Executive and Integral

In Political science there is a common tendency to conflate the state with government. Though the executive state or totality of institutions of government is the concrete and commonly referred form of the state, it does not fully express the phenomenon of the state. The state is more broadly construed both in terms of government or executive state and the integral state which is a view of the state beyond its executive apparatus. While government refers to institutions of direct exercise of political rule, the integral state includes both government and ideological apparatuses in civil society (see Gramsci, 1971). Such institutions in civil society like the schools, the mass media and other aspects of cultural expressions comprise the framework through which the ruling group organise acceptance for their social projects. However civil society is broader than the ideological apparatus of the state because it also provides space for constructing counter-hegemonic projects. To illustrate, the discourse component of civil society plays out in the popular media of the press which Habermas (1989) rightly sees as dealer in public opinion. He drew attention to the press as that part of civil society that could have significant impact on the state. Habermas did not see the press as reinforcing the power of the state. Instead he prefers to locate the role of the press as a framework of private communication which connects the state with the citizens through communicative engagements. Some of these engagements may be critical on the form or project of the state. This is different from earlier usages by Althusser (1971) and Poulantzas (1969) who see the press as one of the ideological apparatuses of the state. This is because they see it in terms of constructing hegemony for the state and its dominant forces.

⁷ See social rights according to Marshal in p.7.

Though there may be differences in Habermasian constitution of the press as part of the civil society and the Althusserian idea of the press as an ideological apparatus, there is a meeting point in accepting that its location is civil society. In this essay, the press is seen as straddling both the private sphere of individuals in a communicative structure and public sphere of the state as part of its ideological apparatuses. Within both spheres the dynamic of relations of forces fits it in the ambivalent roles of both constructing hegemony and that of constituting alternative hegemony. The church and schools are also caught up in the janiform roles of serving the hegemonic role of the state and providing platform applied for contesting both the form and project of the state. This character of some of the contexts of civil society reflects Gramsci's notion of the state which recognises the importance of the visible structures of exercise of power and at the same time shows that continuity and change in the form of the state is connected with processes within civil society.

Weber's conception of the state tends to emphasize its executive aspect. He defines the state as

a compulsory association claiming control over territories and the people within them. Administrative, legal, extractive and coercive organisations are the core of any state. These organisations are variably structured in different countries and they may be embedded in some sort of constitutional, representative system of parliamentary decision making and electoral contest for key executive and legislative posts (Scocpol, 1985, p. 7).

This idea tends to give stress to the executive dimension of the state. To be sure, the control of the executive form of the state is the peak of political domination. This is because the visible institutions of political power lie in the apparatuses of governance. The prerogative of legitimate use of force in the political community is located in this arm of the state. It combines extractive and distributional capacity with the potential for coercion which is institutionally supported. But the state as Gramsci shows is not just about formal structures of rule. Scocpol drew attention to this through Stepan's presentation of the concept of state in which he argued that:

the state must be considered as more than the 'government'. It is the administrative, legal, bureaucratic and coercive systems that attempt not only to structure relationships between civil society and public authority in a polity but also to structure many crucial relationships within civil society as well (Scocpol, 1985, p. 7).

To be sure, the state is about these apparatuses of domination and institutional structuring of relationships in civil society. However, this notion of structuring needs to include social forces that occupy and interact across the state and civil society. Competing intellectuals and other political agents constantly generate ideas that maintain or contest existing praxis. When new ideas gain acceptance, they alter old institutions and provide new institutional conditions of engagement for social forces. Thus the struggles of social forces also structure the institutions of the state. The mutual structuring between state and civil society via the interaction of agents in the political field could be understood as the crux of Gramsci's theory.

Part of the Gramscian thesis is re-echoed in Saward's argument of "an extended state made up of organisations not normally thought of as being part of the state, such as the church, trade unions, orthodox political parties, the schools and universities and the media"(Saward, 1994, p. 78). More broadly, the integral state is a terrain of struggle for hegemony not only in terms of formal control of political power but also the generation of norms that govern and sustain domination along certain characteristics of the existing order or construction of new ones. Inherent in the integral state is an on-going dialectics of structuring of relationships in which laws regulate the engagement of social forces while social forces constantly transform laws and institutions.

Contributing to the integral state theory, Jessop commences his strategic relational approach with the proposition that the state is a social relation (Jessop, 2008). He added that these relations do not exist in isolation, but are embedded in a wider political system(s), articulated with other institutional orders, and linked to different forms of civil society. This idea also reflects the theme of change when Jessop noted about state and society that:

A key aspect of their transformation is the drawing of the multiple lines of difference between the state and its environment(s) as states (and the social forces they represent) redefine their priorities, expand or reduce their activities, recalibrate or rescale them in the light of new challenges, seek greater autonomy or promote power-sharing and dis-embed or re-embed specific state institutions and practices within the social order (Jessop, 2008, p. 6).

Jessop's relational approach contributes to understanding the dynamics in the political fields of societies where struggles for the establishment of vital democratic institutions are resisted by the dominant forces. In the absence of operative institutions of democratic rule, the engagement of the state is likely to occur outside of norms which are defined as legally acceptable by the ruling group. For instance, popular resistance to undemocratic rule in Romania resulted in a bloody fate for Nicolae Ceausescu (See Anglin, 1990) because the ruling group suspended the conditions for political freedom through civil engagements. Similarly, dictatorial and Sultanistic⁸ regimes of the Middle East inevitably became part of the Arab Spring because of the resistance of the dominant political elite to democratisation. Regimes of this kind reject the institutional embedding of democratic rights because the dominant group will lose power if the political rights of free choice and other conditions of democratic citizenship are generalized. Under this condition, social forces incline less to deliberation and more to confrontations (not necessarily violence).

The confrontational relations with democratic forces characterize authoritarian military regimes that refuse to democratise. In the Nigerian instance, some of the mass media organisations, human rights groups and other associations that were critical of the government under the military rule were either banned or placed under

⁸ Weber (1978) explains that sultanism tends to arise whenever traditional domination develops an administration and a military force which are purely personal instruments of the master who determines domination. Weber noted that the non-traditional elements of such domination is not rationalized in impersonal terms but depends on the ruler's discretion thus setting it apart from the rational authority types (Cited in Linz & Stepan, 1996). Further, Linz and Stepan added that in sultanism, there is a fusion of the private and the public, strong tendency towards familial power and dynastic succession, lack of distinction between state career and personal service to the ruler, lack of rationalized impersonal ideology. Economic success in this system depends on personal relationship with the ruler. Besides the ruler acts according to his own unchecked discretion with no larger impersonal goal (1996, p. 52).

conditions that encumbered their ability to continue with demands for democracy. Oftentimes, the democracy activist groups are accused of constituting a threat to security and order. However, to the democracy activists, the dominant elite in an authoritarian system maintains a privilege which needs to be levelled (see Whitehead, 1997). Democratic struggles under Nigeria's military rule persisted despite legal restrictions. It would ordinarily seem that the refusal of democracy activists to comply with the law is undemocratic, but the forceful suspension of elected government by a faction of the military elite and elimination of institutional conditions for democratically renegotiating change is the reason for the strategies applied by democratic social forces in contesting the authoritarian state. In short, when legality is undemocratic, democratic movements are forced underground.

Jessop's strategic relational sense of the state follows the traditions of Marx, Gramsci, Poulantzas, and others whose theories of state and power focus on relational dynamics. Generally, the idea of the state based on relations of forces is useful for understanding the struggle for democratisation. Further, the struggle for democratic transformation of the state takes place in the political field provided by the integral state. In the face of an authoritarian rule, the suspension of the conditions underpinning a democratized civil society within the integral state prompts social movements to demand institutional restructuring of the state. In the process, civil society may be renewed as a space for fostering democracy or appropriated by dominant and undemocratic social forces to promote practices that undermine democracy.

Building on the relational inclination of Gramsci, Poulantzas (1969) drew on the concept of ideological state apparatuses used earlier by Althusser in the 1968 edition of *Lenin and Philosophy* (Althusser, 1971) to distinguish the arms of the state that are distinct from the 'repressive'⁹ ones. In similar vein, Poulantzas proposed that the state is composed of various apparatuses out of which some play a repressive role and others are sites of ideological control and contestation. He represented the

⁹ Althusser explains the use of the word repression in this context by arguing that both the army, police and the administrative arms of the state are repressive. He included the administrative arms of the state because he sees that "administrative repression may take non-physical forms" (Althusser, 1971, p. 143).

repressive apparatus of the state with institutions like the army, the police, tribunals, and administration while ideological apparatuses of the state include the church, political parties, the unions (excluding revolutionary parties or trade union organisations), the schools, the mass media (newspaper, radio, television). These ideological apparatuses of the state are constituted in the realm of civil society. Poulantzas considered the ideological institutions as part of the state because according to him:

1. If the state is defined as the instance that maintains the cohesion of a social formation and which reproduces the conditions of production of a social system by maintaining class domination, it is obvious that the institutions in question – the state ideological apparatuses – fill exactly the same function.
2. The condition of possibility of the existence and functioning of these institutions ... under a certain form is the state repressive apparatus itself. If it is true that their role is principally ideological, and that the state repressive apparatus does not in general intervene directly in their functioning, it remains no less true that this repressive apparatus is always present behind them, that it defends them and sanctions them, and finally, that their action is determined by the action of the state repressive apparatus itself....
3. Although these ideological apparatuses possess a notable autonomy among themselves and in relation to the state repressive apparatus, it remains no less true that they belong to the same system as this repressive apparatus. Every important modification of the form of the state has repercussions not only in the mutual relations of the state repressive apparatus, but also on the mutual relations of the state ideological apparatus and of the relations between these apparatuses and the state repressive apparatus....
4. ...the ‘destruction’ of the ideological apparatuses of the state has its precondition in the ‘destruction’ of the state repressive apparatus which maintains it (Poulantzas, 1969, pp. 77–78).

To understand progress and reverses in democratic transition, it is necessary to look at the vertical and horizontal interaction between forces that are located in the integral state (executive state and civil society), that is, how the forces interpenetrate these

sites in order to reorder the political framework of domination or sustain it. The ideological apparatuses are for instance populated by forces which may have commitment to different social projects. These differences in interest could manifest in the forms of alliances among ruling groups and the form of the state they embed or struggle to establish. During the era of military governance in Nigeria for instance, a section of the mass media (newspapers, radio, television) particularly the government owned ones were used to promote the continuity of military rule and policies of military regimes. At the same time, another section of the mass media (newspapers, magazines and radio), mostly privately owned ones, condemned military rule, exposed abuses in governance and advocated a return to an elective civil rule. Civil society organisations were equally bifurcated between pro-regime and anti-regime groups bearing conflicting attitudes to democratisation. The point here is that in the context of democratic struggle in transitional states, the institutions of civil society and state are integrally connected to each other and the forces operating across them engage in struggles for or against their democratisation.

From the foregoing, there is no political issue in the sphere of the state that does not link up with civil society. Responses to political issues from the space of civil society are contingent on the inclinations of social forces that mutually interact within it and the state. The integral linkages between the social forces in state and civil society in this dialectical process lend weight to the strategic relational perspective of Jessop. Indeed Jessop's works are further elaborations of earlier works by Poulantzas. The provenance of root of this analytic lens is further traced to Gramsci's integral state theory. The entire works unite at one point which is that the struggle between social forces in state and civil society is the core dynamic that drives change either toward democracy or authoritarianism. The ideological apparatuses referred to by Poulantzas are important spaces in this process and would be points of interest in historicizing the trajectory of Nigeria's democracy.

Political Change: Democracy, Democratisation and De-democratisation¹⁰

Political change is used here to describe the swings in democratisation trends which may include democratic inclinations, authoritarian tendencies and other forms of reverses in democratization such as a high level of tension generated by the struggles of contradictory social forces. Such tension is associated with conflicts in the political field which arises from the repression of democratic forces and their persisting demands for democracy. Political change focuses state trajectories characterized in each moment in terms of the typical tendency of the period in the process of political transition to democracy. Outcomes of the process of political transition are products of dialectical struggle between social forces in state and civil society. These struggles as already noted are related to the framing and reframing of political practices, values and institutions of a political community arising out of a 'war of position' between competing social forces. Political change may therefore be seen in the context of relations of forces as the swings between democratisation and de-democratisation. Net movement may occur towards democracy, authoritarianism or other forms of political rule as a product of these relations.

Democracy theory mostly ranges between minimalist and maximalist perspectives or procedural and substantive notions. In addition, there are radical varieties of post-capitalist theories of democracy. The minimalist notion views democracy in terms of procedures characteristic of the mainstream of liberal democratic theory. In contrast, the maximalist perspective rationalizes procedural elements but extends the substantive content of democracy to the socio-economic rights of citizens. In effect, the emphasis of the maximalist viewpoint is the capacity of political rule to go beyond the minimal political rights and to address the socioeconomic aspirations of the people. These varying perspectives on the meaning of democracy connect with struggles for dominance in the political field. Each group tries to essentialize the meaning of democracy that suits its aspirations to attain or maintain social domination. The minimalist theorists project a theory of democracy that separates the political from the economic realm. Disconnecting these two spheres gives rise to a

¹⁰ This section draws extensively from Nwosu (2012).

theory of democracy that undermines a welfare state and presents democracy as the political structure of the capitalist state whose task is the defense of property and contract rights. It limits the rights of citizenship to civil and political rights. The maximalist theorists make a simple addition of social rights which creates an obligation on the state to apply mechanisms of governance to provide equitable conditions for development of the citizens. In the end, the competition to popularize certain meaning of democracy is a part of the politics of democratisation.

Operating on the platform of the procedural thesis on democracy, Huntington defines a political system in the twentieth century as being democratic “to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all adult population is eligible to vote”(1993, p. 10). This construct which is built on Joseph Schumpeter’s earlier work on democracy diminishes the worth of normative traditions of democratic theory and their emphasis on the substantive component of political rule. It prioritizes the institutional and procedural definition which is said to be the only approach with empirical referents that render the concept of democracy measurable and for that matter useful. While the procedural approach and the referents it emphasises are important in democracy, its tendency to emphasize measurable indicators is downright reductionist and seems more interested not in the essence of democracy but on the technocratic requirement of theoreticians to measure the so-called referents. The central indicator in the procedural conception of democracy is election. But if the essence of liberal democracy is really elections as Huntington (1993) Schumpeter (2003), Dahl (2003), Przeworski (2003) and other liberal democracy theorists lead us to understand, the social contract element which is the basis of citizen claims on the state is lost. Such analytical thrust abandons the idea of people (*demos*) and privileges issues associated with system reproduction (procedure).

Emphasis on how the system is reproduced suggests ignoring popular rights and expectations or *rolling back the citizens* and rendering democracy a business of those

with special skills of operating the systems procedure. Indeed, Schumpeter pursues this track of reasoning by arguing that:

democracy is the rule of the politician...If we wish to face facts squarely, we must recognise that in modern democracies of any type other than the Swiss, politics will unavoidably be a career. This in turn spells recognition of a distinct professional interest in the individual politician and of a distinct group interest in the political profession as such (Schumpeter cited in O'Toole, 1977, p. 457).

To further emphasise the importance of politicians in modern democracies, Schumpeter cited a successful politician who notes that “what businessmen do not understand is that exactly as they are dealing in oil so I am dealing in votes” (Schumpeter cited in O'Toole, 1977, p. 457). This portrays democracy as a business of vote-hunting by political elites and vote casting by the rest. Consequently the role of ordinary people is confined to the fringes of participation in the ballot. At the same time, the extent to which government is used as an instrument for addressing people's material conditions and creating social citizenship is not considered relevant provided elections are conducted. But de-emphasising people in favour of system or procedure tends to create systematic political alienation.

Arato and Cohen (1992) showed an interesting appreciation of the need to understand the basis of dichotomies in democracy theories. They argue that elite theories based on the procedural approach for instance claim to be realistic, descriptive, empirically accurate, and the only model that is appropriate to modern social conditions. Since the motor of the political system is power just as profit is the motor of the economy, the struggle to acquire and use power is at the heart of the political. Thus democracy is distinguished from non-democracies by the way in which power is acquired and decisions are made. So long as some core set of civil rights are respected and regularly contested elections are held, on the basis of universal franchise, so long as alternation of power among elites occurs smoothly without violence or institutional discontinuity, so long as decision making involve compromises among elites and is accepted by the population (even if passively), a polity can be considered democratic in the minimalist procedural sense. In effect, a set of conditions that guarantee

stability in a system with competitiveness in acquiring political power is conflated with democracy. However, Arato and Cohen balance this view of the procedural theorists with a normativist contention that what makes for stability and continuity does not mean the same as what makes the system democratic.

Continuing, the writers pose the following question:

what is left if one drops the ideas of self-determination, participation, political equality, discursive processes of political will formation among peers, and the influence of autonomous public opinion on decision making? In short, the price of the elite model's realism is the loss of what has always been taken to be the core of the concept of democracy, namely the citizenship principle (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 6).

The citizenship principle is central to viewing democracy as grounded in a democratised civil society. Thus democratic theories that undermine the political, civil and social rights that constitute democratic citizenship are theoretically questionable. In Gramsci's thinking regarding intellectual inadequacies of a limited institutional focus on democracy he argued that "one of the most successful 'ideological bluffs' of the bourgeois intellectuals was the myth that real democracy and social equity could be achieved through parliament and universal suffrage..."(Bates, 1975, p. 363). Indeed, it is on the basis of political, social and economic dimensions of the citizenship principle that democratic forces in civil society have always carried on their struggles not just to participate in votes.

Macpherson (1977) in a critique of the procedural notion of democracy draws attention to the fact that liberal democracy (not democracy) started in capitalist market society and its meaning continues to be under that influence. The earliest theoretical formulations by the utilitarian school, drawing from classical political economy saw man as a maximizer of utilities and society, a collection of individuals with conflicting interests. Because political rule is constituted by men who are also interest-driven, the only way to prevent the government from despoiling the rest of the people is to make the governors frequently removable by the majority of all the people through votes. In this vein, the need for government was deduced, with

desirable functions for it and desirable system of choosing and authorizing government.

Macpherson points that this model of democracy sees its existence only for the protection of and from self-interested utility maximizing individuals. Responsible government in this model exists for the protection of the framework of economic pursuit and profit. But critics of Jeremy Bentham especially James Stuart Mill held that democracy in its true essence could be a morally transformative force. Mill's emphasis was on how democracy could contribute to human development. Macpherson's position is that the framework offered from market-oriented discourses does not capture the true essence of democracy. The minimalist procedural model which reflects that perspective treats democracy as a market mechanism in which the voters are consumers while the politicians are entrepreneurs. As an adaptation of the market model, the system functions in a way that:

politicians and voters are assumed to be rational maximizers and to be operating in conditions of free competition with the result that market-like political system produced optimum distribution of political energies and political goods. The democratic political market produced optimum equilibrium of inputs and outputs – of the energies and resources people would put into it and the rewards they would get out of it (Macpherson, 1977: 79).

With focus on the mechanistic equilibrium generated by the process, the approach has an inadequate conception of citizenship. The formal equality of citizens it professes at the political level of structure is empty because it is a carryover of the principle of competitive equality in unequal market conditions. Protection of rights therefore means protection of the market ethos of competition and contract regime. In the political context it is the right of free competition for votes (Nwosu, 2012).

Mindful of the inadequacies of the procedural view of democracy, Macpherson declared a mission of revising liberal democratic theory with a view to making the theory more democratic while rescuing the valuable part of the liberal tradition which

is submerged when liberalism is identified with market tradition (Panitch, 2008). Liberal democracy actually implies a commitment to the free equal development of all individuals. He believes that achieving this requires a non-market classless society whose political practice contains non-historically limited insights of liberalism including:

1) representative government 2) an understanding of the state that includes its 'performance of common activities arising from the nature of all communities' and 3) the preservation of civil liberties so central to liberal theory – freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom from arbitrary arrest – in order to guarantee the individual what Macpherson called 'protection against invasion by others (including the state) (Panitch, 2008: 92).

The end state of democracy for Macpherson is the one provided by Marx which is the vision of an ultimately free classless society where individuals have the greatest conceivable opportunity to develop and use their human attributes. Roper (2011) shares this conviction in a more radical sense after his engagement with David Held's idea of cosmopolitan social democracy. Democracy is thus an ideal to be pursued with an end state in view. This end state must be allowed to evolve without any attempt to create it by violent revolution or coercion. The image created here is that of an encompassing perspective that accounts for democracy as government of, for and by the people. Thus, democratic theory must blend procedural and substantive elements. As shown in Ake (2003), Nzongola-Ntalaja (1997), Aborisade and Onyeonoru (2001) struggles for political democracy are deeply connected not only to politics but also to the economic aspirations of the people. Therefore struggles within civil society for democracy must be understood beyond the narrow lens of elective civil rule. It should incorporate what uses are made of political power regarding guarantee of citizens rights and provision of environment for human development as held by John Stuart Mill's model of democracy (Macpherson, 1977). Since this ideal form of democracy has yet to be fully achieved anywhere, Nnoli (2011) is correct in describing it as a work in progress. Democratisation is therefore gauged in terms of either net movement towards actualising both the procedural and substantive components of democracy or regression from these components.

Nigeria returned to elective civil rule in 1999. Since then, the struggle for democratisation has been concerned with activism around a range of issues centrally including: credible elections, political corruption, issues related to accountable governance, increasing political participation, and fundamental rights of citizens. Such rights include among others, free speech, free association, freedom from discrimination. The struggles also include demands for applying governance to address the structural conditions of the people by creating opportunities for development of their potentials. This is to say that added to the struggle for the fulfilment of institutional procedures in a democracy, there is also the deeper substantive aspiration of socioeconomic needs of the population which need to be addressed with good governance. This essential but usually neglected component of democracy is rightly seen by the Commonwealth Foundation as embedded in the expectations of the masses from government and they include the aspirations for:

...the fulfilment of immediate survival needs – water, food, health, housing, employment, education, and (good) roads, In other words, citizens expect the state to be the provider of economic security and ensure that all citizens have access to regular, reliable and efficient basic services. There is also an expectation that the state guarantees appropriate legal protection, respects human rights by allowing freedoms and demonstrates the capacity to resolve conflicts without force or violence. Citizens also count on the state to guarantee political stability, eliminate corruption, ensure accountability and transparency, protect the environment and create room for greater citizen participation. By definition then, the capacity of a state to adequately meet these expectations is what defines good governance in the minds of the average citizen (cited in Johnson, 2006, p. 9).

When citizens demand elective political rule, it is an expression of the desire to have in place a system of rule that fulfils the kind of governance that meets their aspirations and provide for political, civil and social rights.

For this study, democratisation is operationalised to mean net movement towards representative government with effective popular participation in decision making, free and fair elections, fundamental human rights, citizen control of the state, political equality of citizens, rule of law, protection of citizens against invasion by others and the state itself and utilization of political rule for development of citizens. It is a movement towards an end state which is democracy. A reverse movement along these dimensions represents de-democratisation. This reversal is operationalised as the absence of free and fair elections for political representation; lack fundamental human rights, state neglect of protection of citizens from invasion by others, lack of commitment to the application of available resources of the state towards creation of conditions for full development of citizens.

A Note on Methods

A theoretical discourse on the nature and forms of interpenetration between forces on the terrains of state and civil society warrants a qualitative investigation. Oftentimes, qualitative enquiry falls back on case study approach. Case study is “the intensive study of a single case for the purpose of understanding a larger class of cases...” (Gerring, 2007, p. 95). Case studies, from Gerring’s description are holistic, comprehensive examination of phenomena. The associated method of evidence gathering is usually naturalistic or real life context. It investigates a single phenomenon, instance or example. Such instances or cases may be nation-states, regions, or similar contexts of research.

The value of the case study approach for theoretical research is strengthened by the work of Kaarbo and Beasley (1999) which identified four important types and applications of the case study approach namely: using theory to explore cases, using cases to develop theory, using cases to explore and refine theory and using cases as a test of theory. It has to be added that these four uses (or typology) need not be mutually exclusive. Indeed the theoretical explorations of the nexus of Nigerian state and civil society in the context of democratisation could possibly extend the frontiers of interpretations of the existing theory or theories being tested or applied in the explanation of the processes of political change in the country. This is so because the

formation under study is likely to present unique characteristics different from the original historical instances in which the theories were developed. Thus theory development and refinement in the light of changing contexts of application becomes a possibility from the present study. The last of the usages or types of case study, which is using cases as a test of theory, is the core of this exercise. Precisely what is being tested are the dialectical theories of change in relation to social forces in state and civil society as they affect democratisation. Ultimately, each of these usages or typologies serves the purpose of building explanatory basis for understanding a larger class of similar units (Gerring, 2004). Although similar units could be understood by analysis of one instance, each historical instance is treated in the light of its uniqueness. Indeed the uniqueness of every case is a further justification for case study approach in theoretical analysis. Nigeria may fall into several characterizations like post-colonial state, post authoritarian state, transitional democracy and so forth depending on what a researcher intends to achieve. But despite the broad defining indices of any of the characterizations, it has its own uniqueness. This lends further weight to the case study approach.

A case for investigation is normally selected with attention to how it fits the parameters of the theory around which it is investigated (See Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999). For a theoretical study rooted in dialectical analysis, the state civil society nexus in Nigeria is deemed to meet the parameters of dialectics because it has to do with relations of contradictory forces in the struggle for democratisation. The Nigerian experiences in the process form a specimen of study for dialectical theories of change.

Social theories only make meaning in the social world. The social world in itself is, according to Abrams (1982), a historical world. For the purpose of his exposition, Abrams sees history as the interaction of structure and actions or process. The structure in this regard is the universe of study constituted by spaces also viewed as smaller structures within a broader framework. In effect state and civil society are structures within the overall framework of society. Actions underpin the role of agency within social structure(s). Abrams finds this a sociological process which

could be understood in terms of history. This argument makes a case for a historical approach to the dialectics of democratisation in the selected case.

Beyond historiography, the social theory side of the work locates it more within the circuit of historical sociology. Alexis de Tocqueville, Marx, Engels, Weber, Gramsci and more recently, Almond, Lipset and Scocpol have made extensive use of this approach (Abrams, 1982; Mahoney & Villegas, 2007). Abrams noted that works which gave thrust to the relationship between social divisions and conflicts on the one hand and organisation of political alliances and opposition on the other hand assume systemic connection between different forms of political institutionalisation and the qualities of resulting political systems such as democracy, authoritarianism etc. Usually these writers formulate their problems in terms of phased articulation of the history of social conflict with history of political organisation. Ultimately, Abrams finds these works which are constructed in terms of a complex and extended process of structuring with certain forms of process hypothetically resulting in certain forms of political system, as authentic exercises in historical sociology. In this case, this study started with the propositions that certain forms of relations between agents in the political field would generate outcomes that range from authoritarian to democratic systems. These relations are investigated within the colonial and postcolonial historical epochs in Nigeria.

Historical analysts in comparative politics argue that the root of major political outcomes often rest most fundamentally with causal processes found in the past. Thus they ask questions about causes of major outcomes in particular cases. To explain these causal processes they recommend a close look at the unfolding of events over a substantial period of time (see Mahoney & Villegas, 2007). To underpin the importance of historical analysis, Nnoli (2011) reckons that the importance of history in social analysis lies in the fact that no social phenomenon is comprehensible and useful unless it is characterised by a union of its past, present and future. We cannot understand the present outside the past both of which create visions of the future. However, Popper (1960) severely criticises any effort to build historical prediction on the basis of cause and effect. His rationale for this is that there exists the possibility of

intervention by non-historically determined outcomes which challenge historically path-dependent conclusions. This study would analyse the political conjuncture of each selected epoch on its own. But where certain outcomes are historically determined it would illustrate the connections between them and the processes of their occurrence. For instance, there may exist certain connections between the structures of domination in the colonial state in Nigeria and the post-colonial state or the patterns of democratic struggles in the two epochs. The basis of any of these assumptions would be clearly illustrated with historical links in the patterns of occurrence. This raises the work beyond the exclusively path-dependent trajectory even as certain outcomes may be so.

The historical case study requires a deep knowledge of the case being studied. Doing historical sociology takes the analyst through substantial secondary sources which are usually interpretative documents about both theories and historical events. They include journals, published books, dissertations, relevant professional monographs, working papers etc. Primary documents are also to be utilized for the purpose and these include government publications, newspapers etc. Though these are important sources of primary information, the author's personal observation of some of the events that come into the analysis is also a useful but limited source of insight which may be regarded as a source of primary information.

To make meaning out of generated information, the study makes use of content analysis. This is a method of analysing and making inferences about the contents of recorded texts (see Bowen & Bowen, 2008). Secondary expressive documents especially theoretically oriented ones tend to hold different views on the theme of this study. Reckoning with possible conflicting interpretations in historiography, it is common for scholars to acknowledge differences in interpretations of events and processes. This acknowledgement helps scholars to animate their own arguments. Oftentimes, they state how to resolve the differences in interpretation (cf Mahoney & Villegas, 2007). This is a useful guide to content analysis which comes handy for the analysis of theoretical and historical documents to be used in this research. Rigorous content analysis enables the researcher to balance ideas expressed in the theoretical

documents against reality particularly as it affects the Nigerian instance. This is necessary for the reasons that the theories for explaining democratisation and change in Nigeria were originally developed for the purpose of interpreting European societies. Thus, there is a challenge of identifying historical differences between the European cradle of the theories and the point of application. For instance, European class formation and development of the state system and democracy are associated with historically specific developments such as wars, economic transformations and of course revolutions. But in most of Africa, the modern state system as well as its institutions developed in a different historical experience especially colonization. Thus theoretical analysis of the trajectory of democratisation would reckon with the differences in the milieu of the interaction of social forces.

Interpretative content analysis may not be free from carrying over the possible contentions in earlier studies. Mindful of this, the process of developing the discourses also entail professional interactions and dialogues that would help in refining perspectives on the theme within its epistemological bent. This is to ensure dependability of viewpoint within the set framework of analysis.

The method of exposition shall be the interpretation of state-civil society relations in terms of its connection with democratisation and de-democratisation. Isolated aspects of state-civil society interaction and aspects of political change are to be analyzed in theoretical terms using dialectical discourses on state and civil society. In discussing the two major historical periods in the development of the Nigerian state, namely the colonial and post-colonial periods, the study follows the trajectory of state society relations in these periods in terms of how the outcomes of relations of forces align, on the one hand, with democratisation or de-democratisation and with dialectical principles, on the other hand. Each selected sets of events and actors that make up a particular conjuncture are discussed in the light of the dialectical framework of analysis in the work. For each of the selected units of study, their relationship with the struggle for democracy shall be studied in the colonial and postcolonial period.

Among many events and actors, that constitute state society relation in each of the periods of study, purposive choice is used to select the ones considered typical of what various social forces in state and civil society stood for at given moments in relation to democratisation. Accordingly, three important units of study are selected for this work. They are the press, organised labour, anti-regime and pro-regime activist groups committed to various outcomes in democratisation.

The press is selected because it is an instrument of public opinion and important media of popular culture. This makes it an important agency in civil society. Here, the sense in which Habermas (1989) presented it as a communicative framework in the private sphere which connects citizens and state is blended with the notions of Althusser and Poulantzas who see the press as part of the ideological apparatuses. The press plays both roles through agents who bear contrasting agenda on the form and project of the state. Indeed the press has been a major actor in Nigerian civil society since the colonial era. Its active roles during the struggles for the end of colonial rule, military rule and moments of national crisis warrants an interest in it as part of the dialectics of relations of forces in the state.

Organised labour is another important agency in civil society. Its existence and linkage with democratic project expresses the kind of associational space which Tocqueville finds as having the potential for countering authoritarian tendencies in the state. Tar (2009) actually did a study of organised labour and democratic struggles in Nigeria. In that study he correctly noted that the labour movement is an integral part of civil society. Therefore activities of organised labour groups shall be focused in this study. The groups that have featured prominently in Nigeria's democracy struggles are the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Nigeria Trade Union Congress (NTUC), National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN). The basis of choosing labour whose issues are usually articulated around the economic base is that the economic struggles of these groups verge on politics and they are usually interlocked with political struggles. Each time labour acts politically for economic reasons, economics is dissolved into politics. Again its role draws attention to the fact

that the earliest thesis of Marx and of course Hegel's which links civil society with the economic base should be understood in terms of the unity of economy and politics.

Also to be studied are the anti-regime and pro-regime organisations that featured in events and struggles connected with democratisation. One of the anti-regime groups to be studied is the Zikist Movement of the pre-independence era which was a radical activist and a rare anti-regime typology in Nigeria. Zikist Movement is identified as radical because of its definite ideological leaning towards socialism. The other category of activists is non-radical but no less activist in anti-regime activities during the struggle to end military dictatorship. What distinguishes the radical and non-radicals among the anti-regime group is simply their ideological leanings. The non-radical anti-regime democracy activists include the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Some of them engaged the state to transform to elective civil rule. Many became very vocal following the annulment of the Presidential elections of June 12, 1993. They include: Campaign for Democracy (CD), Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Committee for Defense of Human Rights (CDHR), Constitutional Rights Project (CRP) and National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). The pro-regime non-governmental organizations are studied because they are also actors in civil society. They serve as platforms through which the state weakens democratic social forces. Of particular interest shall be Association for Better Nigeria (ABN) and Youth Earnestly Ask for Abacha (YEAA). The selected groups may be justified as study units not because they are very large units of study, but because they were located at the juncture of the two epochs and the prominence of their activities reflect the political pulse of the historical periods in which they feature.

Analysis following the account of the activities of the range of groups listed above in relation with the state shall point out how the organisations either seek to reconfigure the state in line with democratic principles or support for authoritarian forms of the state on the one hand and how political forces controlling the state respond to these various groups that engage the state on the other hand. These actors constitute the

agency through which state civil society dialectics play out in the context of political change. The centrality of these units in the struggle for democratisation justifies their selection as study samples.

Chapter Outline

This nine chapter work is divided into two parts. The first part comprises five chapters which deal with methods and theory while the last four chapters deal with praxis or applications of the theory in the analysis of democratisation in Nigeria. The preliminary pages contain the problematique of the study. The Nigerian context is briefly introduced to the reader as the concrete setting for investigating the theoretical issues laid out in the problem. The significance and justification for the work also forms a part of the preliminary discussion. It is considered important to lead the reader through an understanding of the key terms in the study. Essentially, the contested concepts of the state, civil society and democracy are elaborated. Their deployment in this research follows a process of interrogation of some existing notions of them in order to unfold the way this study understands and uses the terms. This is followed by a section on the strategy of research.

Chapter one follows the preliminary pages and focuses on the thoughts of Hegel and Marx on the subject of state and civil society. The thrust of the discourse is how these philosophers present relations between the terrains and their ultimate effect on political change. The end is the evaluation of the relative relevance of their ideas on Nigeria's experience of democratisation.

Chapter two continues with reviews of state and civil society in the Gramscian and neo-Gramscian writings. This is used to search for insights about the notion of civil society as a democratising site which at the same time contains other interests that can hardly be linked with democratic credentials. The insight drawn from this provides a guide for exploring associational groups in civil society and their patterns of linkage with Nigeria's democratisation.

Chapter three presents the thesis of Habermas on civil society. His views are reviewed vis a vis the critical discourse perspective of Foucault. The Foucauldian alternative view offers a standpoint for appreciating the importance of the structures of power in designing democratic outcomes. This stage of the work offers the interesting insight of comparing the ideal and real. While Habermas represents the world of ideal which is illuminated by his Kantian heritage, Foucault represents the world as it is in power relations between actors in state and civil society. This aspect of the work is significant because it underpins the importance of power in political transactions. Indeed Foucault raises nuanced dimensions of power which are necessary in thinking about state, civil society, democracy and power relations.

Chapter four focuses on the dialectics of change. The application of dialectical principles underpins discussions on the engagement of forces which drive change and determine the nature of the political order. The dialectical approaches discussed include Hegelian and Marxian perspectives. The works of Althusser and Poulantzas are discussed as further applications of the advances which Gramsci made after Hegel and Marx regarding the engagement of social forces. These dialectical approaches provide the background for building a framework for interpreting the interaction between social structures and social agents in the context of Nigeria's democratisation.

Chapter five is the interface between part one, that is, the theory part, and part two which deals with Nigeria's democratisation. This chapter synthesises the theoretical discourses and offers a preview on how the dialectical perspective is applied in the analysis of the engagement of social forces in the process of democratisation in Nigeria.

Chapter six presents the key historical events connected with democratic struggles in Nigeria. Its thrust is the examination of the first proposition related to relations of forces and authoritarian outcomes. In that regard the chapter discusses the state in relation with the press, organised labour and a radical activist group. Its coverage includes the colonial and post-colonial historical epochs.

Chapter seven explores the truth of the second proposition by dwelling on outcomes that are linked with the strategies of crises mediation by the Nigerian state. The chapter begins with the crisis of liberal democracy and corresponding mass discontent in Nigeria's postcolonial history. It continues with the consequent military intervention in politics and how it deepened the crisis of democratisation. The chapter also discusses some major developments that came with military rule and their impacts on civil society and democratisation. Neoliberal reforms stand out in this regard. Another epochal development discussed is the transition to civil rule programme that ended in an annulled presidential election in 1993. The chapter ends with a section that places the crisis of state and its mediational strategies in a dialectical analysis using relations of force approach.

Chapter eight focuses on examining the proposition that democracy could be institutionalized by an alliance of democratic forces in state and civil society if they embed norms and practices that support its principles. It goes on a historical tour of strategies of institutionalization in the colonial and post-colonial era. It also discusses the focus of such institutionalisation which also extends to the current post military era and examines its adequacy. The chapter ends with an analysis of the pattern of institutionalisation as a variant of relations of forces. Precisely, Foucaudian critical discourse on power is applied in reviewing the dominant epistemology whose image of democracy is accepted as the objective one despite obvious setbacks.

Chapter nine is the concluding chapter. It presents a summary of the major theoretical arguments on state, civil society and political change from the perspectives of Hegelian and neo-Hegelian schools. It also summarizes Marxian arguments. The chapter further presents a summary of the Gramscian School, and contemporary discourses of Habermas and Foucault on civil society democracy and power. The theoretical synthesis arising from these works is presented in terms of its application in the relations of forces and authoritarian change in Nigeria, patterns of crises mediation by the state and the extent of effort in institutionalising democracy in Nigeria. It also presents the contribution of this study to both political theory and

practice On the basis of the summary of main arguments, the thesis draws a conclusion and makes suggestions on the points of intervention in the dialectics of Nigeria's democratisation.

Chapter 1

Hegelian and Marxian Discourses on State and Civil Society

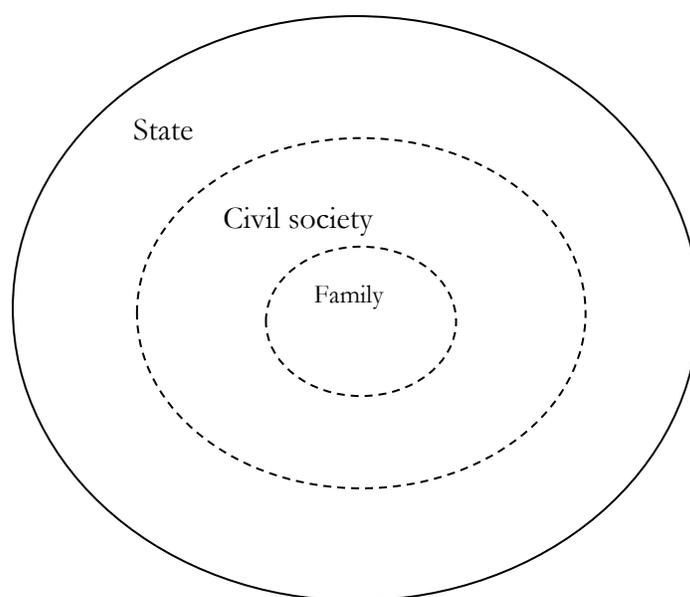
The roots of civil society theory actually predate Hegel and Marx. The idea featured in the formulations of classical philosophers and much later, of the Scottish Physiocrats. These earlier works influenced both Hegel and Marx. Indeed, Marx pointed out that it was following the Physiocrats that Hegel worked out his idea of civil society as linked with political economy. The Hegelian and Marxian works on civil society created an interesting broad vista for appreciating the concept especially in its relationship with the state and social change. They present a dialectical framework for looking at the processes of change on the terrains of state and civil society. This chapter reviews Hegelian thoughts on state and civil society in relation to their overall relevance for understanding democratic changes. It also presents Marx's contribution to civil society theory through his review of the thoughts of Hegel. Finally, the chapter evaluates the usefulness of these contributions to the analysis of the specific experience of Nigeria in democratisation.

Hegel

Hegel grounded the state and civil society relationship in his theory of the modern state. His ethical system is based on "unity of the will in its conception with the will of the individual or subject" (Hegel, 2001a, p. 51). This suggests that the state (the will) ideally harmonises with the individual whose duty it is to conform to the state. He sees that what makes up civil society is a collectivity of individual interests brought into a space by their needs. These private wills put together are embodied in the state or universality. The harmony of universality with independent wills of individuals is the idea behind Hegel's ethical system. The progression of harmony of private wills begins within the family. According to Hegel, in the family:

the individual has transcended his prudish personality, and finds himself with his consciousness in a totality. In the next stage is seen the loss of his peculiar ethical existence and substantive unity. Here the family falls asunder and the members become independent of one another, being now held together by the

bond of mutual need. This is the stage of civic community which has frequently been taken for the state. But the state does not arise until we reach the third stage, that stage of ethical observance or spirit, in which both individual independence and universal substantiality are found in gigantic union. The right of the state is placed higher than that of the particularities. It is freedom in its most concrete embodiment, which yields to nothing but the highest absolute truth of the world spirit (Hegel, 2001a, p. 51).



The logic with which the Hegelian ethical system builds a chain link between family and the state is that love and feeling leads to family, mutual needs among individuals lead to civil society while individual will is united to that of the state. Beyond family, there arises economic requirements driving the individual into civil society because each individual is seen as a mixture of wants and necessity that constitutes one of the principles of civic community. The individual is connected with others in a system of mutual dependence in which each considers others as means to the attainment of his/her ends. In an interpretation of the Hegelian thought, Bosanquet held that:

when the man (or woman) arrives at maturity and leaves the safe harbour of the family, he finds himself *prima facie*, isolated in the world, of conflicting self-interest. He has his living to make or his property to administer. He is tied to others in appearance, only by the system of wants and work, with the elementary function which is necessary to it, viz, police function and the administration of justice (Bosanquet, 1958, p. 253).

Essentially Bosanquet was expanding the components of civil society which Hegel had split into elements including:

a. the recasting of want, and the satisfaction of the individual through his work, through the work of others, and through the satisfaction of their wants. This is a system of wants. b. Actualisation of the general freedom required for this, i.e., the protection of property by the administration of justice. c. Provision against possible mischances, and care for the particular interest, by means of police and corporation (Hegel, 2001a, p. 154).

From the above expressions of Hegel, the terrain of civil society embodies the capitalist market relations. It is also linked with the state which institutionalizes the modes of market regulations through a system of laws and norms. As Whitehead (1997) renders it, individuals in civil society would pursue their self-interest within a framework of mutually recognized rights and obligations regulated by public authority that is characterized by an impartial system of justice. However, the same civil society contains self-dissolving properties. Hegel was aware of this self-dissolving tendency of civil society and suggested that an unfettered division of labour could generate a section in society that is materially impoverished due to the

narrowness and monotony of work. This section of civil society may tend to lose self-respect and its identification with the community. Here, Hegel expresses the potential of competitive economic processes in civil society to create poverty for less advantaged competitors. To prevent such outcome, he suggested regulation of civil society by the state (cf Ioannidou, 1997).

Concentrating on the regulatory prerogative of the state led to a statist trend in Hegel's thought as Cohen and Arato (1992) correctly observed. This is important in the interpretation of Hegel because the antinomies of his theory arise from demonstrating the important unity of the sphere of material relations and the state, on the one hand, and reification of the state as though it is a self-determining sphere that is unaffected by other spheres in conditioning social outcomes, on the other hand. Hegel's statist inclination leads him to see the state as the universality, as "the realized ethical idea. It is the will, which manifests itself, makes itself clear and visible, substantiates itself. It is the will which thinks and knows itself and carries out what it knows" (Hegel, 2001a, pp. 194–5). In a different section, he raises this notion of the state to a theosophical viewpoint by arguing that:

the state is the march of God in the world: its ground or cause is the power of reason realizing itself as will. When thinking of the idea of the state, we must not have in mind any particular state or institution, but must rather contemplate the idea, this actual God by itself (Hegel, 2001a, p. 197).

Hegel not only spiritualized the state but also constitutes it as an autonomous sphere that transcends every individual nation state when he argued that:

- (a) The idea of the state has direct actuality in the individual state. It as a self-referring organism is the constitution or internal state organization or polity.
- (b) It passes over into a relation of the individual state to other states. This is its external organization or polity.
- (c) As universal idea, or kind, or species, it has absolute authority over individual states. This is the spirit, which gives itself reality in the process of world history (Hegel, 2001a, p. 198).

The world spirit advances in a dialectical progression from the family and collective will of individual members of society. These atomized individuals are inevitably united by their needs at the sphere of market-based civil society regulated by the state. The state in Hegel's theory bears relevance to democratic thought when it is viewed outside the abstract metaphysical imagery he gave it and the so-called movement of the world spirit and understood as an embodiment of human aspiration for freedom. This is to say that when the world spirit (collective will) arrives at constitutional government that respects the rights and freedom of citizens it creates universal criteria which could offer a basis for the expansion of human democratic freedom. As Hegel portrays the state as an embodiment of concrete freedom, he expects the individual to find in obeying the state, the protection of his person and property, satisfaction of his real self, and the consciousness and self-respect implied in his being a member of the political community.

When the state has evolved to the point of constitutional government, civil society still joins it in unity in securing societal order. Order in civil society is maintained by a modality worked out by the state through a constitution. In more simple terms, Hegel's speculative philosophy assumes that the state begins at the realm of the spirit and becomes the regulator of concrete reality that also develops in civil society which is expressed in human interactions at the sphere of needs including corresponding civil associations. His ultimate expectation is an ethical state that is characterized by harmony between the spheres of state and civil society.

In concrete terms, state and civil society are expressed in the action of agents across both structures. However, Hegel did not show that agents acting on these spheres bear competing projects which create a possibility of either harmony or disharmony. Cohen and Arato (1992) drew from Marx's critique of Hegel to argue that Hegel did not see any reason to consider the antagonism implied by the existence of a class of direct labour. To be sure, the existence of this class alongside the bourgeoisie in civil society raises the issue of contradictory interest of social classes. Discordant interests of entities within the same field forms a basis of struggle and challenges the notion of ethical harmony between civil society and the state. In real terms, class forces or a

coalition of classes around a social project may find a harmony of interest around their project. Democratic struggles for instance, embrace alliances of socio-economic classes with contrasting objectives. This process comprehensively embraces the structuring of society's economic, political and ideological organisation. Each group of social forces involved in the discordant dialectics of democratic struggle may find a harmony of interests in their project. And if they successfully extend and generalize their project in state and civil society, they would have harmonized the two terrains in relation to their project. But an ethical state expressed in terms of an overall unity of forces or interests in state and civil society is quite idealistic. Indeed the basis of continuing struggles in the dialectical movement towards democracy is that the point of an overall harmony of interest suggested by the concept of the ethical state will be the highest stage of democracy which is yet to come.

The modern state as an actualization of freedom is, for Hegel, the legitimate defender of the common good that ought to regulate the civil society which is purported to be inherently unstable (Baynes, 1988, p. 1416). This may account for why civil society in Hegelian theory is placed below the realm of the state and under its regulation. As a higher phenomenon, Hegel argues that "the state is no utilitarian institution engaged in common place business of providing public services, administering the law, performing police duties and adjusting industrial and economic interests. All these functions belong to civil society" (Sabine & Thorson, 1973, p. 598). Since the state is not to perform these functions in Hegel's thought, its defense of the common good lies in providing the regulatory environment for civil society to do so. The inclusion of police duties within the functions of civil society bears explanation. In the elaborations of Cohen and Arato (1988) the modern term 'police' does not cover Hegel's meaning and in accordance with the earlier absolutist usage, he means more than prevention of crime and tort and the maintenance of public order. Hegel's actual use of the concept of police are presented as "surveillance (linked to crime and tort), intervention in the economy in the form of price controls and regulation of major industrial branches and public welfare in the form of education, charity, public works and founding of colonies" (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 104).

In the young Marx's interpretation, "security is the highest social concept of civil society, the concept of police, expressing the fact that the whole of society exists only in order to guarantee to each of its members the preservation of his person, his rights and his property. It is in this sense that Hegel calls civil society 'the state of need and reason'" (Marx, 1844, pp. 12–13). Hegelian theory showed the dynamics of needs in civil society and their connection with the structures of political rule. Perhaps Hegel was forward-looking in assuming that this intersection will be harmonious and lead to freedom beyond national states. Actualizing freedom beyond national governments underpins the notion of universality. In that freedom, the state merely stands out as a principle of ethical organisation whose spirit is reflected in government.

Universality or principle of the god state is the basis of most critical readings of Hegelian theory. Expressing his critical reading of Hegel's theory of the state, Hobhouse (1993, p. 20) observes that "it was the Hegelian conception of the state which was designed to turn the edge of the principle of freedom by identifying freedom with law...by identifying the state as supreme and final form of human association". Continuing in the critique of Hegel's theory, Hobhouse maintains that Hegel's theory of the state:

justifies the negation of the individual which the modern practice of government is daily emphasizing. It sets the state above moral criticism, constitutes war a necessary incident in its existence, contemns humanity... In short we see in it a theory suited to a period of militancy and regimentation..."(Hobhouse, 1993, p. 25).

The Idea in the theory portrays the modern state according to Hobhouse as assuming a position, which in earlier ages might have been given to the church or the deity. Continuing, Hobhouse anchors his critique on the abstract point of freedom on which Hegel built his theory of the state. He posits that freedom in Hegel's sense means conformity with the law and custom as interpreted by the ethical spirit of the particular society in which the individual belongs. Hegel aims at a rational order of ethics, yet on analysis this turns out to be the system of institutions and customs, which the state has engendered and maintains (Hobhouse, 1993, p. 32).

The main thrust of the critique by Hobhouse is that Hegel tried to build a conception of an absolute state that is at the same time not arbitrary. The absolutism of the Hegelian state reflects in its superior moral position which is the reason why it is meant to regulate civil society (cf Sabine & Thorson, 1973). The Hegelian formulation ignores the connection of institutions with the interests and struggles that establish them. Sometimes, the institutions may not actually express freedom depending on the character of the dominant forces that framed them. But Hegel ignores these dynamics and anticipates in error that the state will represent a moral force.

Other critical views on Hegel also find him a rationalist of totalitarianism. Popper (1962) finds Hegel as one of the enemies of the 'open society' whose theoretical position negates democracy. Precisely he accused Hegel of being a hireling of the Monarchy in Berlin that sought an intellectual basis to justify its absolute power at the period. However, Kaufmann (1951) contested Popper's methodology of selective use of aspects of Hegel's thoughts that seemingly justified the totalitarian state. The ultimate aim of this methodology by Popper according to Kaufman was to impute improper motives on Hegel's thoughts.

In Habermas evaluation, Hegel did not give a fair place to civil society because he failed to give enough latitude to public opinion. "Demotion of public opinion was a necessary consequence of Hegel's concept of civil society, because according to him, science fell outside the domain of public opinion" (Habermas, 1989, p. 118). Continuing, Habermas argues that:

Hegel took the teeth out of the idea of the public sphere of civil society; for anarchic and antagonistic civil society did not constitute the sphere emancipated from domination and insulated from interference of power, in which autonomous private people related to one another. Thus it did not provide the basis on which a public of private people could translate a political into rational authority. Even civil society could not dispense with domination; indeed, the extent to which it naturally tended toward

disorganization, it had a special need for integration by political force (Habermas, 1989, p. 122).

Though Habermas critiques Hegel's idea on public opinion, there is a sense in which Hegel observed the importance of public opinion. For him, public opinion is "the unorganized means through which what a people wills and thinks is made known" (Hegel, 2001a, p. 224). Further, he added that:

public opinion contains therefore the eternal substantive principles of justice, the true content and the result of the whole constitution, of legislation and of universal condition in general. It exists in the form of sound human understanding, that is, of an ethical principle which in the shape of prepossessions runs through everything. It contains the true wants and right tendencies of actuality" (Hegel, 2001a, p. 224).

Hegel's view on public opinion started with the reckoning of its value and ended by noting that it deserves to be "esteemed and despised; to be despised in its concrete consciousness and expression, to be esteemed in its essential basis" (2001a, p. 225). Here, he was portraying the ambivalent value of public opinion. In spite of the ambivalence of public opinion, to place it completely beneath the power of the state confers excessive power on the sphere of the state. Habermas, critique is right to the extent of seeing that public opinion synthesizes the outcomes of discursive interactions in civil society. His observation draws from emphasis on this essential ingredient of civil society in the process of democratic transformation. Placed side by side with the effort at democratic transformation in Nigeria, the state tends to function more like a universality that despises public opinion both in operating free and fair institutions of public representation and public policies. Thus a state theory that disregards public opinion expresses democracy deficits.

Bongmba (2006) joins the train of Hegel's critics by arguing that the authoritarian states which emerged in post-colonial Africa reflect Hegelian state theory. This is a reaction against Hegel's ascription of self-fulfilling rationality to the realm of state. By bringing divinity into the state-civil society discourse, Hegel forgot that the so called internal essence of the state is supposed to be created and recreated by the dialectics of social forces that engage with one another in state and civil society to

generate outcomes in line with their interests. These dialectics pervade the material basis of existence and the superstructure. Hence even as Hegelian and Marxian thoughts on state and civil society did not specifically emphasise democracy, their stress on state and civil society and how these sites are deployed in the journey of freedom point to the evolution of democracy. Thus, Hegel's privileging of the state if not understood in the context of institutional regulation of interactions in an ethical system guaranteed by justice, appears like an authoritarian state.

Hegel's insight in associating civil society with economic pursuit is interesting for formations like Nigeria where colonization provided the background for the rise of indigenous actors in civil society, at least in the economistic sense that Hegel deployed the term. This tends to align well with the Hegelian thesis that civil society is a creature of the state. To illustrate, the establishment of Nigeria as a colonial state corresponded with the colonial mode of political regulation that was favourable to the economic interests of organised trading outfits, European administrators and workers in the colony (civil society of the colonizing state). Political domination in the colonial state was characterized by exclusionary practices including policies of racial inequality in wages, restrictions on political participation and the denial of franchise from non-property owning adults and females,¹¹ discrimination against local businesses in access to facilities like banking and shipping which the colonial government allowed the expatriate businesses to control in large measure. These exclusionary practices led the local entrepreneurial class to join mobilizations by local political forces through the press, labour unions and other associations to struggle for the end of colonialism (1958).

The history of emergence of the modern state in Nigeria and other colonized formations tend to follow the Hegelian theory. This is not necessarily in the line of spirit or universality but on the logic of activities of expanding European businesses in economic activities. Hegel suggests that civil society is forced to found colonies,

¹¹ Ananaba (1969) documents differential emoluments among European and African workers who were in the same cadre with Africans receiving 75% of what their European counterparts were paid. This provided a basis of accusations for racial discrimination. Ezera's (1964) work on constitutional development in Nigeria shows that the first election held in Nigeria provided only four positions for local representation in the Legislative Council while qualification for vote was based on property ownership and income.

owing to the increase of population and over-production. It is this drive that led to colonialism and creation of the modern state system outside most of the non-European formations. This could mean that the *Zeitgeist* in Hegel's philosophy either moved to Africa (contrary to Hegel's exclusion of Africa from world history), by the default of the political economy drives of European civil society. Marxian analysis sees this process as being driven by the expansionary character of capital (Ake, 1982). This same expansion logically led to its growth into imperialism (Lenin, 1999). Part of the political implications of the expansion of capital is the creation of colonial states, each with a central political authority that claimed the monopoly of use of force without popular legitimacy. This self-made authority which did not draw from harmony with the particular wills of the subjects of colonial domination represents a universality that undermines democracy.

In the culmination of the colonial state, Hegel suggests that:

the universal, which is contained in the particularity of the civil community, is realised and preserved by the external system of police supervision, whose purpose is simply to protect and secure the multitude of private ends and interests subsisting within it (Hegel, 2001a, p. 179).

The above idea suggests a need for institutional security for the sustenance of colonialism which is itself a devaluation of democracy. In the case of Nigeria, the private interests or civil society which the colonial state had to secure was the British commercial interests that were operating in Nigeria at the time. These were the interests that corresponded with or were in harmony with the colonial state and according to Hegel deserve state protection. Hence, rights were narrowly circumscribed to the dominant economic interests in the Nigerian colonial state. The character of the colonial state fits the unilateral determining model of the state for which Popper (1962) accused the Hegelian state theory of being totalitarian.

In relation to Hegel's ethical harmony, this study had argued that it collapses in the face of the diversity of forces and the interests competing for spaces within civil society. To illustrate with Nigeria, her civil society hosts groups that articulate positively with the ruling group in the state and those that contest its form and

institutions. The manner in which various groups advance their interests has implications for democratisation since some of them do not necessarily pursue interests that lead to democratic outcomes. It is common to see that by the nature of the Nigerian state, most groups that associate their claims on the state with democratic demands are rights activist groups. However, there are some civil society groups whose non-political nature may tempt analysis to view in terms of being in ethical harmony with the state as Hegelian theory expects of civil society. LeVan (2011) for instance exemplified these politically dormant associational actors in Nigeria with Home Town Associations (HTAs). Despite the satisfaction by these associations of autonomous status which encourage civic groups to place political demands, they prefer to function only as help networks for members and remain substantially apolitical.

LeVan argues that rather than Tocqueville's idea on civil society, the Hegel's notion of ethical harmony between state and civil society is a more appropriate resource for understanding the character of the Home Town Associations in Nigeria. However, it is not always the case that political dormancy of certain associational realms translates to ethical harmony with the form and project of the state. LeVan's interpretation is that, by avoiding involvement in politics, the Home Town Associations in Nigeria do not wish to "undermine their social objectives" (2011, p. 146). However, the apolitical nature of such categories does not mean that they are satisfied with the institutional form of state. This form of association merely provides a coping mechanism for the citizens in the face of economic hardship and political powerlessness which a repressive state foists on them. The Hegelian theory did not take into account the political practices by which the state may frustrate the institutions of citizens' rights. Authoritarian systems such as military rule diminish the democratic value of institutions and render the state a coercive universality. Fatton's analysis from a class perspective offers a better explanation of the general character of groups like the Home Town Associations in Nigeria under military rule:

No longer at ease with their environment, subordinate classes have retreated into their own invented spaces of survival. In their desperate quest to elude their incarceration in the regimented network of state control, subordinate

classes are seeking solace in the private spaces that civil society offers them (Fatton, 1990, p. 470).

Alternative forms of organising social safety nets are set up in apolitical civil society groups. In effect the apolitical Home Town Associations represent an expression of disengagement between particularities and the universality. If the lack of political interest by Home Town Associations as portrayed in LeVan's work truly reflects Hegelian sense of state and civil society relations, then Hegel's universality, is not an acceptable model of a democratic state-civil society relations.

Hegel is held to be a philosophical idealist. This is a tradition of analysis which he shares with Plato. Philosophical idealism is metaphysical in character and presumes a certain immanent order in nature which stands above society (Nnoli, 2011). Hegel applies this sense of order in conceptualising state civil society relations. The relationship that emerges from his idealist historical science is thought to be a basis of freedom and harmony in society. Nnoli accuses philosophical idealists of being ahistorical in analysis. While this may hold true for some philosophical idealists, Hegel sought to build a general historical science in his dialectics. However, his theory of history would be insufficient to capture the contours of democratic development in specific national experiences. He essentially focused on the idea and ignored concrete historical practice. In the end, the Hegelian dialectical structure fails to explain the internal or local logic that characterizes each national system, their politics and democracy based on state civil society interaction. Yet this dialectic was the basis of further revolutionary thoughts of Marx based on philosophical materialism. This latter approach, locates dialectics in concrete human activities. In the light of Marx's intervention Nnoli argues that democracy must be understood within the context of the local situation of a people, particularly the material conditions of that situation.

Marx

Marx's engagement with Hegel provided a radical interpretation of state-civil society relations. He reversed the thesis that presupposes state to civil society and in contrast, contested that civil society is actually the basis of the state. In his classic statement:

neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary, they originate in the material conditions of life, the totality of which Hegel, following the example of English and French thinkers of the eighteenth century, embraced within the term “civil society”(Marx, 1993a, p. 3).

Here, Marx argues for the centrality of civil society rather than, as in Hegel’s writing, the state. There has been a lot of critical focus on Marx’s prioritization of civil society. This limited focus and the corresponding critiques arising from them fail to bring his overall project to light. Bobbio for instance, put forward the following as the elements of Marx and Engel’s doctrine of the state:

1. The state as coercive apparatus or as the ‘concentrated or organized violence of society’, i.e an instrumental conception of the state which is the opposite of the ethical or finalist one.
2. The state as an instrument of class domination, where ‘the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie’ i.e a particularistic conception of the state as opposed to the universalistic conception which is characteristic of all theories of natural law including Hegel’s.
3. The state as a secondary or subordinate phenomenon in relation to civil society where ‘it is not the state which conditions and regulates civil society, but it is civil society which conditions and regulates the state’ i.e, a negative conception of the state which is in complete opposition to the positive conception found in rationalistic thought (Bobbio, 1987, pp. 141–142).

In his earlier works which are the common reference point for this charge, Marx focused the material content of civil society and how it plays out in the dialectical progression that structures political rule. At this level he did not show that this structure of political domination, the state, could assume a character of its own and also determine outcomes in civil society. However, in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* Marx observed that “the state enmeshes controls, regulates, superintends and tutors the civil

society from its most comprehensive manifestation of life down to its most insignificant stirrings, from its most general modes of being to the private existence of individuals...” (Marx, 1999, p. 30). Here, a case of mutual determination between the spheres of state and civil society is implied because on the one hand the civil society controls the state and on the other hand, the state controls civil society. Accordingly, the charge about Marx’s prioritization of civil society over the state fails to stand.

On Bobbio’s second point about the instrumentalist view of the state, Marx was aware that dominant forces in the state make compromises that accommodate interests of subordinate classes. This was the theme in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* in which Bonaparte identifies his interest with those of the lower classes in society. Further, Marx never confined determination of causality to civil society as Bobbio suggested in the third point above. He summed this in the *Grundrisse* where he argues that “the concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse...” (Marx, 1973a, p. 101). Marx’s main idea in this regard is that when considering a phenomenon, no one part is to be ignored. Thus state and civil society are parts of one totality in which each aspect is as much a determining force as others. Pulling together the aspects of Marx’s thought viz the one in which he is accused of prioritizing civil society over the state and where he spells out the regulatory and conditioning role of the state over civil society, it becomes clear that his main idea is that there exists mutual determinations between state and civil society. Therefore, the claims of Bobbio reflect just one aspect of Marx’s thought. Basically, Marx’s whole enterprise needs to be put into focus to see that he transcended some of the common charges made against his work.

Marx accuses Hegel of separating state and civil society, but the point is that both of them see the intricate and organic connection between the two spheres. It appears that what Marx strongly reacts to in Hegel is the unlimited power of the state over civil society as he sees organs of political rule as mere projections of the dominant interests towards effective class domination through political power. The point of Marx in that connection is that civil society is a bearer of forces which regulate the

form of the state. But this does not represent his overall perspective on state and civil society.

In the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx argued that all the contradictions of the Hegelian presentation on state and civil society are found together in this development:

1. He has presupposed the separation of civil society and the political state (which is a modern situation), and developed it as a necessary moment of the Idea, as an absolute truth of Reason. He has presented the political state in its modern form of the separation of the various powers. For its body he has given the actual acting state the bureaucracy, which he ordains to be the knowing spirit over and above the materialism of civil society. He has opposed the state, as the actual universal, to the particular interest and need of civil society. In short, he presents everywhere the conflict between civil society and the state.
2. He opposes civil society as unofficial or private class to the political state.
3. He calls the Estates, as element of the legislative power, the pure political formalism of civil society. He calls them a relationship of civil society to the state which is a reflection of the former on the latter, a reflection which does not alter the essence of the state. A relationship of reflection is also the highest identity between essentially different things.

On the other hand:

1. Hegel wants civil society, in its self-establishment as legislative element [sic], to appear neither as a mere indiscriminate multitude nor as an aggregate dispersed into its atoms. He wants no separation of civil and political life.
2. He forgets that he is dealing with a relationship of reflection, and makes the civil classes as such political classes; but again only with reference to the legislative power, so that their efficacy itself is proof of the separation. He makes the Estates the expression of the separation [of civil and political life]; but at the same time they are supposed to be the representative of an identity - an identity which does not exist. Hegel is aware of the separation of civil society and the political state, but he wants the unity of the state expressed

within the state; and this is to be achieved by having the classes of civil society, while remaining such, form the Estates as an element of legislative society (Marx, 1970, p. 66).

Marx's critique of Hegel in the above summary identifies a contradiction in Hegel's theory that presents the state as though it is opposed to civil society. The intervention of Marx in this regard was to show how civil society is linked with the state. He further reveals the other aspect of Hegel's theory which expresses the separateness of civil society and the state, yet anticipates a harmony between the two spheres. On the separation of state and civil society, Marx argued that:

Hegel saw civil society as expressing the work of the Idea 'behind the backs' of people who were governed by forces of which they were unconscious (like Adam Smith's "invisible hand"), whereas he saw the State as the self-conscious actualisation of Reason. Hegel promoted the separation of the State and civil society arguing as many were to argue later, that the state had no business interfering in the economy (Marx, 1844, pp. 15–16).

Marx began by critiquing Hegel for separating state and civil society, but in the end absolved him of the same charge by arguing that the keenest insight of Hegel lies in his sensing the separation of state and civil society to be a contradiction (Marx, 1970, p. 68). In this remark Hegel's sense about the unity of the terrains of state and civil society is implied even as his idea was statist.

Hegel appeared to separate state and civil society to an extent but he did not argue like the classical economists, that the state has no business interfering in the economy. Indeed he stated the need for a certain level of state intervention in the political economy aspect of civil society. Avineri (1972), draws attention to Hegel's view of civil society in terms of political economy where he showed that when members of civil society engage in unimpeded economic activity, some who do not have sufficient advantages will regress into poverty alongside the concentration of enormous wealth in a few hands. He reasoned that under such condition, state intervention was necessary as the only condition that can maintain harmony in civil society. This is to say that the Hegelian state is the intervening state that is different

from those of the classical economists. This brings out the interdependence of spheres though it prioritizes the state.

For Marx, the terrains of state and that of civil society are mutually dependent aspects of one broad field. The vital functions and conditions of life of civil society according to him are political. In this connection, the rights of man as a private individual in civil society are simply the same rights of citizens as members of a political community (see Marx, 1844). Drawing this argument together with the part of Marx's thought that appear to prioritize civil society, it becomes clear that he assigned no less importance to the political sphere of the state. From this broad view of the project of Marx, the background to the integral nature of the state can be discerned. Indeed he hinted the integral state idea by arguing that "...private judgment and private will of the sphere called civil society in this book come into existence integrally related to the state" (Marx, 1970, p. 68). This is a thesis that Gramsci later elaborated into the integral state theory. In another rendition, Marx wrote that the Estates are:

civil society as legislatures, they are its political existence. The fact therefore that civil society invades the sphere of legislative power en masse, and where possible totally, that actual civil society wishes to substitute itself for fictional civil society is nothing but the drive of civil society to give itself political existence, or to make political existence its actual existence (Marx, 1970, p. 98).

Marx refuses to conflate state with civil society, yet he also insists on not separating them. With that approach on state and civil society he left a point of departure for a later project that later became the integral state theory.

Running through Marx is the sense that the concept of civil society encompasses both state and market (market is also part of the sphere of civil society in his thought) and he sees that their separation is not only false but a mere façade that disguises their capitalist structure. The bourgeoisie is the core agency in Marx's theory of civil society and he sees this class as projecting their domination of the economic sphere towards the political state so as to legitimize it through legal norms. Marx's persistence on the non-separation of state and civil society underpins his thought that

both aspects are connected. But it is difficult to deny that each of the spheres has a level of autonomy from each other. This is developed in Poulantzas' position that:

The 'antagonism', 'separation' or 'independence' of state and civil society (or society) indicates the following fact: that the specific autonomy of the CMP [Capitalist Mode of Production] of the capitalist state from the relations of production is reflected in the field of class struggle by an autonomy of economic class struggle from the political class struggle. This is expressed by the effect of isolation on socio-economic relation in which the state assumes specific autonomy vis-a-vis these in putting itself forward as the representative of the unity of the people/nation i.e the body politic founded on the isolation of socio-economic relations. It is only by disregarding the change of problematic in Marx's work and by playing on words that this autonomy of structures and practices in Marx's mature works can be interpreted as a separation of civil society and state (1978, p. 135).

The point here is that the levels of struggle are closely related such that a clear separation between the sites of the struggle (state and civil society) can hardly be sustained. Therefore what Hegel elevated to the status of universality is simply the dominant project in civil society and the state. This implies that the state is incomplete without civil society. However, at the same time, the two spheres are relatively autonomous of each other. Social forces bearing distinct projects contest across state and civil society, thereby underpinning the dialectical nature of the sites as one integral political field in spite of their relative autonomy. Their engagements are institutionally regulated, yet the forces project interests that lead to restructuring or maintenance of the institutions. In the context of democratic processes in praetorian states and newly restored civil rules (transitional states), some agents within civil society may support democratic forms of the state while others incline towards institutions and practices that do not reflect or extend democratic norms. This raises the complexity of state and civil society terrains and draws attention to the divergent projects of social agency in their relations in the overall political field. A net movement towards democracy underscores a predominance of agents committed to the embedding rights of democratic citizenship while undemocratic outcomes indicate an ascendancy of forces that undermine democratic outcomes. Prevalence of

the latter forces in the dialectics of political change creates consequences that pervade other aspects of social relations. It leads to the denial of large mass of the people of civil and political rights. Equally, it deepens the alienation of citizens from social rights.

Marx analyzed how capitalist social relations of production create estrangement or alienation. He argues that alienation proceeds from exploitation of the workers which devalues their world as they struggle to increase production (Marx, 1993b). The condition of the worker builds into the need for engaging both the terrains of politics and that of material existence. Since the material condition of the workers is regulated by institutions of the political state, economic and political alienation place them in radical chains. In contemporary times, alienation is not all about the worker or limited to economic relations. Subjects of alienation could be expanded to include all those denied conditions of political freedom guaranteed by democracy. This freedom continues to seek actualization and finds manifestation in the struggles of groups and social movements for the establishment of both institutional conditions and practices of democracy.

Hegel's thesis on alienation was in the light of the spirit and Marx did so in the light of concrete material existence. These two views could be seen as representing the essence of struggles for freedom. The Hegelian thesis that regard this struggle as a spirit phenomenon seems to be aware of the abstract nature of this alienation and represented it with the symbolism of a spirit seeking actualization while Marx was more concerned with its concrete reality in the life of the laboring population. In the Nigerian context, this concrete reality manifests politically as the systematic estrangement of the mass of citizens from various rights that define their belonging to the political community. In that vein particular struggles in civil society are instances of the struggles surrounding universal conditions of democratic citizenship. Alienation from the necessary rights of citizenship means denial from effective democratic belonging to the political community. Marx underpinned the importance of this effective belonging through participation in the political life of the community by arguing in *The Jewish Question* that:

... the so-called rights of man – to be precise, the rights of man in their authentic form, in the form which they have among those who discovered them, the North Americans and the French. These rights of man are, in part, political rights, rights which can only be exercised in community with others. Their content is participation in the community, and specifically in the political community, in the life of the state. They come within the category of political freedom, the category of civic rights (Marx, 1844, p. 11).

It is important to note here that this aspect of Marx tend to concentrate on the superstructures in discussing the rights of man whereas works like the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* and *The German Ideology* highlighted material aspects but systematically showed their connection with the superstructure. The rights of man and citizenship rights converge around the entitlements of free and equal participation in the political life of community. These rights are important basis of democratic freedom. In struggling to realise them, actors in state and civil society seek different forms of penetration into the structures in which they are framed. When Hegel ascribed the quality of universality to the state, he tended to underplay the capacity of forces in civil society to penetrate and condition the institutions that regulate their engagements. Thus he did not account for possible bifurcation of interests in the political field that could lead to revolutionary pressure from civil society against an authoritarian state. The notion of an idealistic ethical state under-girded by moral principles tended to make Hegel take the nature of power for granted, thus compromising the dialectical principle of his philosophy which is based on contradictions and change. He tended to compromise dialectics by leaving the state on its own accord to be a self-developing patron of civil society. But in an actual sense, the dialectical process involves mutual penetration and influence by forces in the two spheres on one another in relation to institutional basis of the state and competing social project. In all these, they do not act on their own as universality and particularity, rather, they are structures on which human agents act out their interests. In the process, the structures could be applied to serve ends that may or may not conform with democratic principles.

Hegel pointed to the role of agency by referring to corporation duties which are seen as adjusting industrial disputes. This represents his attempt to introduce trade associations as mediating institutions between atomized members of civil society and the state. On this note, public freedom is possible in the corporation because it involves a relatively high level of participation (Cohen & Arato, 1992). In effect, Hegel recognised that associational groups are important in the terrain of civil society, but he narrowly confined the associations to economic relations. He did not indicate how the relations of agency feature in the terrain of the state and condition its institutional basis. Marx in contrast views civil society as a realm dominated by class conflict and class rule. The dominant bourgeoisie extrapolates its interest into the structures of political rule to dominate the society. Thus the commitment of Marx was to show how the nature of relationships in civil society and state determines political participation and contributes in framing outcomes that impinge on the `democratic rights of citizenship.

Hegel, Marx and Nigeria: A Synthesis

The greatest innovation in the state/civil society theory that emerges from examination of Hegel and Marx writings is the dialectical analysis of the economic and political spheres of society. Through this method, they constructed the state and civil society as an integral dialectic. Their theories can offer insight on aspects of the state in Africa. The colonial and postcolonial African states are commonly described as authoritarian. In Mazrui's view, "the African state is sometimes excessively authoritarian to disguise the fact that it is inadequately authoritative" (cited in Diamond, 1988, p. 6). Most analysis link the provenance of this form of the state to colonialism. First (1970) rightly observed that colonial powers owed their presence and their claim to legitimacy to force. She further argued that

colonialism was based on authoritarian command; as such it was incompatible with any preparation for self-government. Africa was the continent of bureaucratic rule. In that sense, every success of administration was a failure of government. Government was run not only without but despite the people (1970, p. 40).

This raises the question of citizenship rights in a democratised political field. In the colonial state, the political field was not democratised and there was little space for generalised equal and democratic participation. Mamdani (2002) offers insight to this situation by tracing the various incarnations of the state in Africa and the corresponding role of civil society in each moment of the evolution. Essentially the authoritarian basis of the state could be linked with the Hegel's state that is moulded in the character of universality. Marx's reduction of social relations to lived experiences of social classes expressed in alienation render his dialectics more amenable to analytical usefulness. However, the focus of Hegel and Marx on formations distinct from Africa prompts the need to search for a theory that draws together the kernel of their dialectics in order to more flexibly apply such theory in fully explaining how political forces relate in Nigeria.

The initial unfolding of the colonial state approximated the Hegelian mentality of the state as universality. For instance Mamdani (2002) rightly argues that the principles of colonial government such as direct rule, indirect rule and the principle of association created a system of decentralized despotism. To govern the colonies, the colonialist in each case used a single legal order defined by the

civilized law of Europe. No 'native' institution would be recognized. Although 'natives would have to conform to European laws, only those 'civilized' would have access to European rights. Civil society in this sense was presumed to be 'civilized' society from whose ranks the uncivilized were excluded (Mamdani, 2002, p. 16).

Institutional segregation gave formal expression to the bifurcation of the state especially in operative laws at various levels of the society. Customary laws of the natives were used to govern them under a native authority recognized by the colonial government. The high-handedness of these local authorities towards the natives meant little to the colonial government provided there was order. In so far as different institutions and laws served two different groups within a state, that is, two levels of domination, we speak in terms of a bifurcated state in which the 'civilized are the citizens and the rest (mostly indigenous peoples and peasants) are subjects (cf Mamdani, 2002). The point here is that conditions of democratic citizenship were not

universally operative for everybody within the colonial state. It was a preserve of a group which Mamdani, refers to as the ‘colons’. This could be interpreted to mean that domination at the period saw no need for a generalized appeal for voluntary consent or legitimacy. In that connection, dominant civil society of the period populated by the colons was in value harmony with the authoritarian colonial state while the peasantry and the ensembles that formed the anti-colonial social movements were not captured in the sphere of rights of citizenship. The colonial state tended to operate like “the will which thinks and knows itself and carries out what it knows” (Hegel, 2001a, pp. 194–5). It lacked the essential element of harmony of particular and universal wills which is the basis of Hegel’s ethical system. In fact the colonial state could not be reconciled to the will of the local people because the state was a project of capitalist expansion that extended the power frontiers of the colonizing state to the colonies to appropriate surpluses. In a Marxian sense, political and economic alienation of the colonial people was a necessary condition for capitalist profit. Under colonization, the dominant economic and political practices suspended popular freedom with use of force.

Local structures of support for the colonial executive state were drawn through the forceful incorporation of existing traditional mechanisms of governance appropriated with the policy of Indirect Rule. The colonial state initially had as actors in its civil society, the organized business interests which were mostly British owned monopolies and oligopolies in colonial Nigeria. Coleman (1958) shows that the alien entrepreneurial group were strong in support of the British Administration which in turn provided a climate of security for the capitalist businesses. The positive connection between organised business interests and the colonial government which created institutional conditions for their operation indicates a harmony of interest among dominant forces in the government and civil society. Their unity of interest was necessary for mutual protection in maintaining the undemocratic colonial order. This tends to reflect Hegel’s proposal for an alliance of mutual care in Section 249 of the *Philosophy of Right*. The universality is preserved in the particular functions of civil society while it has the “higher function of caring for the interests which lead out beyond the civic community” (Hegel, 2001a, p. 179). But there were also contentious

interests in the layout of civil society which Hegelian thought did not reckon with. In colonial Nigeria, these were the [oppositional] press, labour unions, and political movements (mostly anti-colonial organizations some of which also existed as political parties) and peasant resistance groups. This section of actors in civil society were seeking the kind of political opening that would lead to the transfer of power and reconstitution of political rule in order to extend citizenship rights to all. Consequently they were subjected to repression by the colonial state. Repression in this case could be interpreted from Hegelian viewpoint as a response against non-identification of the anti-colonial forces (particular interests) with the universality (state). When Hegel constituted the absolute state, he expected an ethical moral community not an arbitrary one that could turn repressive against democratic freedom. But the challenges to the colonial state indicate that Hegelian theory did not properly account for the dynamics of democratic struggle and power. As Lewis noted,

a Hegelian concept of civil society may be useful in understanding how access to and exclusion from public space and citizenship rights was organized in colonial African contexts, while Gramscian ideas about civil society have long been relevant to understanding of organized resistance to colonialism and post-colonial states (Lewis, 2002, p. 254).

Beyond Hegel, if economic motivations of nationalist struggles are put in perspective, the Marxian thesis more appropriately captures these processes in concrete material sense. For instance, in discussing the possibility of emancipation from alienation, Marx suggested that the conditions of material existence of the alienated working class will drive it into struggles against estrangement. He saw this proletarian class as a category “which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other spheres of society and ... and hence can win itself only through the complete re-winning of man” (Marx, 1993b, p. 8 of 9). This is the group that Marx referred to as “a class with radical chains, class of civil society that is not of civil society” (Marx, 1993b, p. 8 of 9). The meaning of this is that while institutional formalities of civil society may be in place, socio-economic inequalities that create alienation prevent the emergence of a fully democratized civil society. Thus, civil society has an embedded crisis within it which will be dialectically resolved only by struggles against the

asymmetrical distribution of opportunities in society. Marx vested the struggle on the labouring population. However, this needs to be extended to all groups alienated from rights of democratic citizenship.

The struggle for democratisation in Nigeria commenced with anti-colonial agitations. Upon the attainment of political independence, some of the former agitators against political and economic alienation in the colonial era became political leaders, promising to create the conditions of democratic citizenship. However, they have failed to deliver on this promise while sustaining political and economic alienation of the citizens. At the same time the new ruling group began to deploy institutional mechanisms to narrow the openings for democratic engagement by social forces. The institutional mechanisms included repressive labour laws, limitation of press freedom and free speech, suppression of civil society organisations which demand the expansion of democratic rights (see chapters 7, 8 and 9). Nnoli (2011) rightly argues that this continuity in the pattern of rule from the colonial to post-colonial era demonstrates that the struggle which ended colonialism, merely indigenized authoritarian domination.

Bangura (1991) suggests that the dominance of the ruling class in production and state activities does not easily translate itself into hegemony in the sphere of civil society. He further narrates how decolonization in Africa led to representative governments but not democracy. The guided democratisation that led to representative regimes restrained free expression and free association, banned radical literature and was repressive on activists considered to be too militant for the transition process. With a foundation on authoritarian precedents, post-colonial political rulers devised arguments to suspend open competitive democratic processes. In some instances the military institution was used by the ruling group to continue along the same undemocratic path. All these combined to render many of the African states including Nigeria, more authoritarian. But economic hardship caused discontent and crisis which created a new impetus for a pressure on the state to re-democratize. Bangura found that this process created groups across civil society and state, with conflicting attitudes to democracy. This argument is reflective of trends in

Nigeria's democratic transition where powers behind the state deploy civil society mechanisms to continually reinforce the form of political rule. At the same time groups that persist in the demand for rights of democratic citizenship are subjected to various forms of undemocratic application of state power.

In summary, Hegel's theory can be a source of insight with regard to the relations of forces that led to colonial conquest and domination. The emergence of Nigerian state and civil society may have followed the Hegelian pattern because it was a contingent product of an external state that was in search of overseas colonies for the welfare of actors in its own civil society. Indeed Hegel recommended colonization. This explains the exploitative character of the colonial state. It is the undemocratic pattern of power relations in the colonial state that gave rise to social forces which began to contest its form. This is to say that local civil society did not create the Nigerian state contrary to Marx who sees that it is civil society that creates the state.¹² Instead, the colonial state operated alongside supportive British business firms in colonial Nigeria. At the same time the very existence of the colonial state and its pattern of domination induced the development of local activism within Nigeria at least in the context of social movement. Hegel's theory of the state as an all-knowing universality cannot account for the rise of social forces which display contrasting and contesting tendencies in response to the state becoming authoritarian. However, Marx is able to fill the gap left by Hegel by laying bare the economic basis of political actions while also reckoning with the impact of politics on economic actions.

Marx's theory offers links to how the dynamics of material domination lead to the rise of activism by alienated social groups. He, like Hegel, offered interesting points

¹² Marx's idea on dialectics of state formation tended to focus the Western society whose capitalist development was chiefly driven by the bourgeoisie which dominates its civil society. It is not possible to ignore the dynamics of civil society in an analysis of the state. Indeed Gramsci has demonstrated how the state is constituted by the civil society and political society. Thus when it is argued that an external state founded a colonial state, there is an underlying assumption that the dominant forces in civil society of the colonizing state may have created an initial impetus for such colonization. However, since such dominant forces necessarily connect their interests with their state with in turn, deploys its coercive instruments and other political apparatus for the conquest of new colonies and for relating with other colonizing powers, it becomes correct to argue in principle that colonial states originated from the colonizing states. The main point here is that, the colonial state did not emerge from the interactions within indigenous civil society in such formations, but one which arose out of convergence of interests of forces in civil society and political society of the colonial power.

of departure for thinking about the state civil society nexus but he appears not to capture the specificity of non-industrial societies like Nigeria. Though the two thinkers laid a strong epistemological background for interpreting state and civil society dynamics, they revolved around the binary notions of society consisting of state and economy. It needs to be noted however, that they both displayed insights that transcend state and economy in their interpretations of development of society, but made limited elaborations regarding some of the nuances of inter-penetration of forces that drive the process. Ultimately, neither Hegel nor Marx provided a view of civil society sufficient to interpret contemporary developments especially in the context of democratisation in post-colonial societies.

Since the dialectics of change transcends the Hegelian and Marxian binary or two part model of society, there is need to further search for a broader narrative of the dynamics of change in state and civil society that advances the interpretive foundations of Hegel and Marx. The background laid by Hegel and Marx for understanding the cultural process of civil society which intersects with both economic and political relations became the point of intervention by Antonio Gramsci. His fuller analysis of the this process as 'relations of forces' provides a strong basis for comprehensively grasping the dialectics of democratisation that is necessary to properly explain the concrete development in Nigeria.

Chapter 2

Gramsci, Civil Society and Democracy

This chapter presents Antonio Gramsci's political theory in relation to democratisation. It commences with an outline of the intellectual roots of his thoughts on state and civil society that draw together the theories of Hegel and Marx. Gramsci extended his theorizing to political practice by active engagement in the Italian Communist Party (P.C.I). The Hegelian streak in Gramsci's thought is emphasized by Bobbio (1980) because Gramsci's Marxism, while retaining an economic dimension brings back the superstructural dimension to civil society. This chapter proceeds from highlighting the major sources of influence to Gramscian theory to his main ideas on state and civil society. It also presents the major responses to Gramsci. Grounding the overall project of Gramsci on the dialectics of 'war of position', the narrative goes on to explore its relevance to the Nigerian experience of struggle for democracy.

Intellectual Roots of Gramsci's thought

Hegel and Marx form the major building blocks of most of the later formulations on civil society. While these figures influenced Gramsci in significant ways, he was also moulded in his early writings by Benedetto Croce. He in fact noted that he had been "tendentally Crocean" (Gramsci, 1971, p. xxiii) in his youth. He is said to sometimes cast Croce in the mould of a Duhring to be polemically decimated and more often see him as comparable to Hegel as a thinker whose work could be a source of benefit in the struggle to renew Marxist thought. He moved towards a methodological differentiation of civil society from the economy and thematized the generation of consent through cultural and social hegemony as the decisive variable in the reproduction of the existing system (See Cohen & Arato, 1992). This differentiation more clearly brought out what Hegel and Marx mooted in their ideas but did not quite clearly articulate. It was by Gramsci's differentiation of state, civil society and economy that "civil society especially its cultural institutions appeared as the central terrain to be occupied in the struggle for emancipation" (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 144). Thus civil society as a modern catchword for democratic struggle draws from

Gramsci's contribution to the theory. Arato and Cohen (1992) pointed out that he maintained a political project that remained a Marxist one, but travelled a road from Marx to Hegel. Gramsci basically carried out a methodological reconstruction of state and civil society theory that was grounded in a rebalancing of Marx's economic preoccupation with the best of Hegel's political philosophy.

State and Civil Society in Gramscian theory

Gramsci identifies two superstructural levels. One of the levels he said:

can be called 'civil society' that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called the 'private' and that of the 'political society' or 'the state'. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' or command exercised through the state and 'juridical' government (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12).

Gramsci links state and civil society in their roles in the process of domination in society. While the state is represented by visible institutions that exercise formal authority such as the judiciary, the police, army, prisons and executive power generally, civil society plays the role of legitimating the power of the state by constructing cultural and ideological bases for the acceptance of the existing institutional authority. He identifies the intellectual as the central agency in civil society. The social structures that express civil society in his opinion are: schools, churches, the press and of course political parties and trade unions. These institutions of civil society collaborate with the state in the process of domination, yet are also sites of struggles and contentions out of which can occur political change.

Gramsci's project began as a Marxist theory but drifted away from Marx's method of engagement with Hegel. That is, Gramsci re-emphasized the political that in Marx's struggle against Hegelian ideals was de-emphasized. However, an overall consideration of Marx reveals his recognition of the superstructural dimension of civil society. This could be found where Marx expressed the conditioning role of the state over civil society despite his earlier notion that civil society is the source of the state. The thought that the state also conditions civil society would have made a deep

impression on Gramsci and inspired his theory of the integral state in which civil society is an important part of the relational dynamic of the state. Indeed his sources of influence were the works of Marx that demonstrate relational inclination, with the outstanding ones being the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and *Class Struggle in France* (see Boccock, 1986).

In Marx's earliest writings, where civil society is portrayed as the basis of and a regulator of the state, he meant to show that the state is a framework of class rule. But his later suggestion in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* that the state controls and regulates civil society implies that the state could have relative autonomy from social forces. By implication, the state could rise beyond the forces that constituted it and regulate those forces. This intersection between social relations of production and institutional regulation by the state led Gramsci to recreate civil society as a unique sphere.

Bobbio (1980) has argued that Gramsci's ideas regarding civil society reflected more of Hegel than Marx. In his opinion, Marx's moment of civil society coincides with the material base, (as opposed to the superstructure of ideologies and institutions). For Gramsci, the moment of civil society is itself superstructural. Bobbio's argument fails to clearly appreciate the influence of Marxian works on Gramsci. Taking into account the role of intellectuals described by Marx in *The German Ideology* as propagators of ruling groups' interests and the character of the bourgeois state as a *Bonapartist* phenomenon, it becomes clearer that Gramsci is in agreement with the fundamental ideas of Marx. The characteristic manipulation of Bonaparte to achieve the solidarity of the underclass is paralleled by the bourgeois state's constitution of order through a combination of coercion and consent while obscuring its coercive dimension. This is the essence of Gramsci's theory of hegemony. In all, it may not be very helpful to insist that Gramsci replicated any of the theories because his thesis was a unique creation in spite of being rooted on the Hegelian and Marxian thoughts.

Hegel's influence on Gramsci must be reckoned with, because the Hegelian ethical system envisioned harmony of spheres of particularity with that of universality. However, Hegel did not create room for the kind of latitude which Gramsci permitted civil society in relation to the state. Due to the complex struggles that characterise the site from which alignment of interests emanate either in support or contest against the form of the state, Gramsci substituted corporation, as used by Hegel, with association. Thus "the associational forms that replace Hegel's corporation can for Gramsci, turn into key vehicles for social movements" (Cohen & Arato, 1992, pp. 146–147). By this replacement, he is said to have added a dimension of social movement to the concept of civil society which infuses it with a political dynamism and independence from the system of needs. This brilliant reworking of Hegel recognizes that the institutional condition of civil society is one aspect of it. The other aspect is the struggle of socio-economic groups which is structured by institutions that could in turn be changed by social agents acting within them.

In the light of Gramsci's analysis, Simon posits that:

civil society is a sphere of class struggles and of popular democratic struggles. Thus it is a sphere in which a dominant social group organises consent and hegemony. It is also the sphere where the subordinate social groups may organise their opposition and construct an alternative hegemony – a counter hegemony (Simon, 1991, p. 27).

Hegel emphasizes the state as a realised substantive will built on the harmony of the universal and particular. The process of actualising this harmony is what Gramsci views in the form of the construction of hegemony. However, he did not as Hegel did, make civil society a passive product of the state which must always conform to it. Instead, it was rendered as a dynamic part of the integral state. Gramsci's narrative shows that interactions in the political field reflect relations of forces as an on-going process. Therefore struggles to either change or maintain the form of society in relation to social projects are on-going processes. At the political level, struggles for democratisation range from societies struggling to establish basic institutions of representation to those struggling around various projects of democracy bound up with paradigm shifts in the dominant socio-economic system such as the movement

from the Fordist era of welfarism to the contemporary neoliberal era. Thus contrary to the final attainment of harmony of state and civil society with liberal democracy, as the idea of the end of history (cf Fukuyama, 1992) implies, Gramsci more appropriately views the unfolding of history as a war of position between competing projects occurring in the terrain of capitalist democratisation.

An interesting innovation that Gramsci brought into the theory of state and civil society is the concept of hegemony. This has a conceptual root in Lenin's works, which constitute another source of Marxist influence on Gramsci. Hegemony was used by Plekhanov and other Russian Marxists in the 1880s to express the need for the working class to lead an alliance with the peasantry for the overthrow of the Tsarist autocracy. The concept was developed further by Lenin who saw it as a strategy that could be used by a working class that was then a small minority. This was to enable the class to win support of the great majority by successfully leading the bourgeois democratic revolution in alliance with other classes. Gramsci added a new dimension with his concept of the 'national-popular'. He reasoned that a class cannot achieve national leadership and become hegemonic if it confines itself only to its immediate class interests. It must take into account the popular and democratic demands of the people, which do not have a purely class character or in other words which do not arise directly out of production relations. Such groups include those engaged in radical and popular struggles for civil liberties, movements for national liberation, the women's movement, peace movement and movements expressing the demands of ethnic minorities (see Simon, 1991). The struggles of these groups are in a strict sense not class struggles even though they are related. By integrating these movements with the need for class alliance, Gramsci moved significantly beyond economic determination.

Hegemony has a national popular dimension in addition to its class dimension. It requires a unification of different social forces into a national popular collective will. It is interesting to note that Marxist progenitors of the concept of hegemony meant that it should be a socialist strategy; but Gramsci saw that it was also a practice of the "capitalist class both in gaining state power and maintaining that power once it has

been achieved” (Simon, 1991, p. 23). Struggles between different social projects, though grounded in the socio-economic terrain, are expressed via the political institutions and norms of liberal democracy, or struggles for the emergence of these norms which involve actors in both the state and civil society. It is Gramsci’s political theory that more clearly elaborated how political change is related to actions within these terrains. He did this by demonstrating that even as civil society is linked with the state and economy, it has a level of difference from them. Social forces operating in civil society and state on the one hand, engage in the building and rationalization of domination for popular acceptance. Success in this process confers domination with legitimacy by achieving consent of the subaltern classes. At that point, hegemony is said to be attained. This task of rationalisation is according to Gramsci belongs to agents located in civil society.

Gramsci’s institutions of civil society (schools, churches, clubs, journals and parties) according to Bates (1975) contribute in molecular fashion to the formation of social and political consciousness. But as already mentioned Gramsci by no means limited civil society to state organised ones or the traditional types like the churches, schools etc. Rather he included social movements and groups that may contest the existing order so as to establish new types of institutions or political projects. The interest in Gramsci is that his formulation entails the weaving of interests of each group into projects that combine political, economic, theoretical and ideological dimensions. The political interests of the ensembles acting in the entire political field are expressed at these levels of practices.

The relationships and interconnections between levels of social practices are expressed in Marx’s note that “... Mutual interaction takes place between the different moments. This is the case with every organic whole” (Marx, 1973a, p. 100). The notion of social practices as expressions of one organic whole draws from Hegelian linkage between universality and particularity. Individual wills link up with state, yet the state transcends the individual or particular wills. Though the Hegelian state or universality rises above the individuals or particularities it exists in a dialectical unity with them. Gramsci’s integral state substitutes Hegel’s universality.

Also the expansion of civil society in Gramsci more lucidly illustrates dialectical unity in which organically connected but relatively autonomous categories interact with each other and with the state in a process of mutual determinations. This dialectic is one in which interaction among social forces either helps to maintain an existing social project or establish alternative ones. Gramsci therefore brought in relations of social forces which bears on various aspects of social practices in the dialectical struggle for domination and change. In these relations, the moments of economic, political, ideological and theoretical practices¹³ (see Althusser, 1966) constitute aspects of the organic whole and dialectically play out in the competition between social projects.

An important part of the Marxian thought that went into Gramsci's formulation is the ideological role of intellectuals in the construction of hegemony. In the *German Ideology*, young Marx had expressed the same idea by arguing that the division of labour is one of the chief forces of history, and manifests itself in the ruling class as the division of mental and material labour. According to him, inside the ruling class one part appears as the thinkers or intellectuals of the class. These intellectuals of the ruling class were qualified as "its active conceptive ideologists who make the perfecting of the illusions of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood" (Marx, 2000, p. 21). Also Marx made it clear that the ruling ideas in every age are that of the ruling class, noting further that:

the class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; ... The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things, consciousness and therefore think. In so far therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among

¹³ Althusser prefers to portray these relations as social practices.

other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas and regulate production and distribution of the ideas of their age (Marx, 2000, p. 21).

Marx in the above passage provides part of the basis on which Gramsci built the concept of hegemony. Material production and ideological production appear seamless in Marx's thesis because he held the ruling material force to be organically connected to the ruling intellectual force. Thinkers of the dominant order take on the role of perfecting the worldview of the ruling group for popular acceptance. This rationalization of the worldview of the ruling group happens at the realm of civil society which is the domain of intellectuals.

Gramsci like Marx considers ideology as part of the superstructure. This would have led Gramsci into portraying civil society as the sphere where ideological apparatuses operate for the construction of hegemony. Emphasis on the superstructure is part of why Bobbio thought that Gramsci was inspired more by Hegel than Marx. But both Hegel and Marx's thoughts are like seeds which germinated in the elaborations of Gramsci. Hegelian, Marxian and Gramscian thoughts on state and civil society could be understood as moments in the evolution of the intellectual history of the integral state. Gramsci for instance transcended Marx by seeing beyond the dominant class intellectuals. His idea is that every social group coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production creates one or more strata of intellectuals (organic intellectuals) which give it homogeneity and awareness of its own functions in the economic social and political fields.

Beyond intellectuals associated with technical expertise, Gramsci held that the elite among the entrepreneurs or their deputies must have the capacity to organise society right up to the state. This is needed for the creation of conditions that favour the expansion of their class (Gramsci, 1971). His expression of this process as the construction of hegemony was a creative use of Marx's description of the role of intellectuals in *The German Ideology*. Gramsci went further to argue that the party was an organic intellectual of the working class which is indispensable if this class must win power. By anticipating political power for the working class, Gramsci underpinned the role of intellectuals in both rationalizing the dominant ideology as in

Marx to a further role of constructing alternative ones. To be drawn from this is that the unfolding of social practices takes place not only on the economic plane. It also happens at the ideological, theoretical and political of relations.

In contemporary democratic struggles, associations in civil society represent spheres of articulation for the establishment and deepening of democratic norms and various social projects. These articulations are normally done along competing paradigms. At this level of struggle, theory and ideology become crucial as guides to political practice, and the basis of socio-political engineering (cf Nnoli, 2011). Theories and ideologies are mutually reinforcing. Their importance to the dialectics of competing social projects led Gramsci to draw on the value of intellectual agency in applying them to constitute consensus or articulate an alternative framework of social practices. He argued in this regard that:

one can construct on a specific practice, a theory which by coinciding and identifying itself with the decisive elements of the practice itself, can accelerate the historical process that is going on, rendering practice more homogenous, more coherent, more efficient in all its elements, and thus, in other words, developing its potentials to the maximum: or alternatively, given a certain theoretical position, one can organise the practical element which is essential for the theory to be realised. The identification of theory and practice is a critical act through which practice is demonstrated rational and necessary, and theory realistic and rational. This is why the problem of the identity of theory and practice is raised especially in the so-called transitional moments of history (Gramsci, 1971, p. 365).

These practices in the case of transitional societies like Nigeria revolve around creating basic conditions and norms for sustainable institutions of democracy. Theory and ideology materialize around the packaging of minimalist democracy alongside neoliberal economic reforms with the purpose of building a capitalist democracy. For the extension of the minimalist democratic project, externally funded Non-Governmental Organisations in African states occupy an important space within civil society and actively project the minimal state model as the desirable typology (see Marcussen, 1996). Nonetheless, there are critical interventions from other civil

society groups that promote the need for broadening the responsibility of the state in line with the substantive elements of democracy.

Gramsci saw the strategic errors of economic determinism and according to Bates (1975, p. 363) argued that “ ‘economists’ failed to understand ‘how mass ideological facts always lag behind mass economic phenomena and how at certain moments, the automatic drive produced by economic factor is slowed down, cramped or even broken up momentarily by traditional ideological elements’ ”. The drive for political freedom, have dimensions which include political, economic and ideological dimensions. In the revolutionary pressures that exploded as the Arab Spring for instance, the economic drive was among the motives, but hardly more prominent than the need for the end of a long dictatorship and a democratic reorganisation of political rule in the Libyan experience. In the cases of Tunisia and Egypt economics featured more prominently alongside other factors, especially the need for democracy as the best political framework for addressing material conditions of existence. It was therefore misleading in the view of Gramsci, to “think in terms of separation between the sphere of economics (production of surplus value) and the sphere of politics (struggle for power). The Gramscian idea sees that “the social relations of civil society inter-penetrate with the relations of production” (Simon, 1991, p. 28). Through this interpenetration, intellectual agency and its ideological role is utilized in constructing consent for the prevailing order or challenging it. Accordingly state theory needs to conceptually account for these intangible but necessary pillars of support for the executive state. Gramsci’s basic proposition is that “the state cannot be understood without a thorough understanding of civil society” (Simon, 1991, p. 69).

Gramsci’s thesis on the integration of civil society into state theory is based on the thinking that “man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas. ‘The foundation of a ruling class’ he wrote ‘is equivalent to the creation of a *weltanschauung*’ ” (see Bates, 1975, p. 351). Embedded in this *weltanschauung* is the ruling idea which combines with force for the purpose of achieving hegemony. Simply defined, Gramscian hegemony is “a relation not of domination by means of force, but of consent by

means of political and ideological leadership. It is the organisation of consent” (Simon, 1991, p. 22). It is “political leadership based on consent of the led, a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularisation of the world view of the ruling class” (Bates, 1975, p. 352). The task of popularising this world view is that of the intellectual who seeks to justify and extend the world view of the rulers to the ruled thereby securing the free consent of the masses to the prevailing hegemonic project. In a sense, this reduces the cost of exercising power.

The important niche that Gramsci brought with the theory of hegemony is that its construction goes side by side with contestation against it by alternative social projects which also compete for generalization as the dominant social practice. Accordingly, civil society is “a market place of ideas, where intellectuals enter as ‘salesmen’ of contending cultures” (Bates, 1975, p. 353). Far reaching struggles for ideological and other levels of domination of society find veritable context in civil society. This is because class struggle and popular democratic struggles render the life of the state “a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 182).

A crisis of ruling class hegemony according to Gramsci is a consequence of the failure of the ruling class in some major political undertaking for which it has requested or forcibly extracted consent of the broad masses or because huge masses, especially peasants and petit-bourgeois intellectuals, have transformed from passive to active, with demands that may lead to a ferment or revolution. This condition, which indicates a crisis of authority, is spoken of by Gramsci as a “crisis of hegemony or general crisis of the state” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 210). It is a point where intellectuals of the dominant group can no longer generate enough ideas to sustain consent and retain stability of the historic bloc. This causes a withdrawal of support from the hegemonic bloc. At such point, the executive state may also lose the ability to control the citizens with use of ideology. The failure of a specific ideological project may lead to use of coercion in formations without alternative projects of political rule. Such situations may offer a leeway for the military to invade the political space. In Nigeria, democratisation has been undermined by the absence of

political rule that is supported by norms that guarantee rights of citizenship and a space within which debates about competing forms of governance may take place. Consequently, political rule has not achieved hegemony while competing social forces are marshalled between the lines of activism for democracy and political opportunism that reinforces undemocratic tendencies.

The work of Miliband (1973) bears relevance to Gramsci's moments of culture in their interactions with state, market and political change. With respect to organized religion in contemporary capitalist societies, he argued that it has "played a profoundly functional and integrative role in regard to the prevailing economic and social system" (1973, p. 181). This argument suggests in the case of religion at least, the futility of any anticipation that civil society could provide a platform that leads social development beyond capitalism. However, in relation to achieving liberal democratic transformation within a capitalist order or an aspiring one the church may align with democratic forces. Indeed, the Catholic Church was a potent force in contesting dictatorships in the Philippines and Eastern Europe in the 1980s, particularly Poland (cf Huntington, 1993). Also at the high point of struggles against authoritarian military rule in Nigeria, some religious leaders were active in the agitations for return to civil rule and the advancement of civil and political rights (see Obadare, 2013). This role of the church in recent histories of democratisation suggests that it cannot be confined to the mere role of an ideological apparatus of the state as Althusser (1971) and Poulantzas (1969) argued. Their thoughts were confined to the advanced capitalist states and do not capture the national experiences of states in democratic transition. Gramsci's theory shows sufficient flexibility to accommodate not only advanced capitalist liberal democracies but also states in transition by reckoning that civil society is also a space of counter hegemony (cf Simon, 1991). In that regard, opposition against undemocratic rule provides the contrast to authoritarian domination.

Another moment of culture, which Miliband discussed, is the press, which propagates the national view. The press and other mass media, educational institutions, youth, organizations, ex-soldiers associations, the churches, business and lobbies partake in

the propagation of the 'national interest' which is usually the interest of the dominant group. The mass media in "advanced capitalist societies are mainly intended to perform a highly functional role, they too are both the expression of a system of domination and a means of reinforcing it" (Miliband, 1973, p. 198). He sees them as operating within a milieu dominated by business, and most countries particularly the advanced capitalist countries, are "business civilizations permeated by a business culture and a business ethos, business itself has played a major role in making them so" (Miliband, 1973, p. 190). Functioning within such an environment seems to suggest that culture and public opinion are largely circumscribed by capital. This is because, the media of culture and public opinion - such as newspapers, radio, television etc. are subject to control of ownership and the capitalist owners who already have ideological dispositions to which the media do not have to fundamentally contradict. If anything, such dispositions are propagated.

Miliband's discussion of the press lines up with the Althusserian and Poulantzan location of the press within the ideological apparatuses of the state. Each of them emphasized the ideological role of the press for the capitalist state. They are likely to be aware that the left press is not part of these ideological apparatuses of the state, but did not observe this exception in their major works. Also, Althusser and Poulantzas did not consider the thesis of Gramsci and its principle of 'war of position' in relation to societies struggling to establish formal democratic institutions. Within such formations, a section of the press could be both an instrument of authoritarian forces in control of the state whereas another section provides a context for activism against the prevailing form of the state and political practices. In the colonial times for instance, the *Daily Times* newspaper was a conservative journal that inclined towards a defense of the status quo as against newspapers like the *West African Pilot* which was anti-colonial (see Nnoli, 2008). The pattern of ownership of the press in Nigeria ranges between state and private ownership. Its relationship with the state is not strictly tied to ideological projects of the ruling group. Instead, it reflects factional divides among the dominant elite or sectional interests. During Nigeria's struggle for elective civil rule, the press was bifurcated between groups that struggled for the establishment of liberal democratic institutions and its sustaining norms and others

which had a leaning towards the military-ruled authoritarian state, and actually furthered its projects. The accounts of Olukotun (2002, 2010), illustrate the role of the activist press in the struggle to end military rule in Nigeria. The involvement of the press in Nigeria's democratic struggle is concerned more with the level of struggle for the establishment of liberal democracy. To be sure, this is a necessary step in the ultimate development of democracy at the substantive level. But to put the general role of the press in perspective, the actors who operate in that space may not always be united in the pursuit of one social project. In Nigeria's struggle for return to elective civil rule the press was a context of ambivalent roles in the 'war of position' between authoritarian and democratic forces.

Althusser, Poulantzas and Miliband conform with an aspect of Gramsci in their shared position that schools are used to propagate the dominant project. Notwithstanding variations in curriculum, the total message according to Miliband (1973) is usually one of attunement to and acceptance of prevailing economic and social order, its main institutions and values. While the academician could be stood between the state and market, Miliband remarked that there are rare occasions when he fundamentally acts against them. Academics are usually drawn into government as consultants where they not only rationalize, but also import into the academic, "a 'responsible' appreciation of the official point of view" (1973, p. 224). Similarly they cavort with businesses as consultants where their usual challenge is to build knowledge to agree with capitalist market-oriented views. There exists a similar use of intellectuals drawn from universities for the advancement of projects of the authoritarian rule in Nigeria. During the periods of military rule intellectuals appointed into government were known to have advocated for the continuation of military rule (see NPSA, 2007). However, intellectuals functioning in certain group frameworks in periods of military dictatorship were part of the contexts of activism for the movement towards elective civil rule. The latter argument does not undermine Miliband, Althusser and Poulantzas since their concern was about the use of the education as a moment of culture to reinforce the capitalist project. Gramsci's theory more broadly offers a relevant perspective for understanding the ambivalence of academic intellectuals in the struggles for democratic transformation in Nigeria

because for him, civil society is a space for the articulation of hegemony as well as counter hegemony. In the Nigerian case it is a conflict between democratic and authoritarian forces.

Responses to Gramsci

Hunt (cited in Martin, 1998) charges that Gramsci's analysis marks only a limited advance over vulgar Marxist reductionism. His idea is that Gramsci separated the superstructural sphere of civil society from any determinate influence of economic relations thereby divorcing the analysis of civil society from an adequate consideration of the essential inner structure and dynamic of capitalism. In the judgment of Hunt, Gramsci inadvertently mimicked Hegel by constructing a new universality but in this case, of the concept of civil society. This argument needs reconsideration for the reason that Gramsci's thesis popularized the material force of ideology and other soft elements of state power. His exposition brought in the importance civil society and its aspects in thinking about the state. He demonstrated that ideology is also a potent material force which plays as much role as politics and economy in domination. He also showed the complex interpenetration between the state and civil society as components of an integral political field, yet demonstrated their relative independence. Gramsci's theory ultimately leads not to a new universality but an understanding of how different state forms are constructed through the mechanics of social practices.

Anderson's critique of Gramsci emanates from three concepts of state-civil society nexus implicit in Gramsci's formulations on state and civil society, that is, "state contrasts with civil society, state encompasses civil society and state is identical with civil society" (Anderson, 1976, p. 13). This oscillation between three definitions of the state offers an entry point to criticism of Gramsci. Anderson carefully traced the three shifts in conceptual applications of state and civil society in Gramsci noting that when state was defined as comprising political society and civil society, "the distinction between political society and civil society is maintained while the term 'state' encompasses the two. In other passages, Gramsci goes further and directly rejects any opposition between political and civil society" (Anderson, 1976, p. 13). In

the third shift, Anderson draws attention to Gramsci's argument that civil society and state are one and the same and that laissez-faire is a form of state regulation introduced by the legislature and maintained by force. This argument is built on the fact that Gramsci also declared that economic activities belong to civil society. The principle of laissez-faire that exists in the economic realm is put in place and protected by the state on behalf of the dominant group. Thus the third shift in Gramscian use of state and civil society brings them together as a substantive identity.

The three shifts in the application of civil society by Gramsci which Anderson critiques, respond to the complexities of relations between state and civil society. In the first shift in which Gramsci presents the term 'state' as comprising both the executive state and civil society and yet retains their distinction, he succeeded in elaborating the integral state, which was hidden in Hegel and Marx. Marx had critiqued Hegel for separating civil society and the political state while at the same time theorizing the unity of the state expressed within the state, which "... is to be achieved by having the classes of civil society, while remaining such, form the Estates as an element of legislative society" (Marx, 1970, p. 66). However, Marx ended up as Hegel did when he argued that private judgment and private will in civil society exists in integral relationship with the state (Marx, 1970, p. 68). But the relative autonomy of the state and civil society implied in the project of Marx recognizes the distinction between state and civil society. Thus the first use of civil society in Gramsci was a blending of these early foundations by Hegel and Marx. In the second shift, Anderson makes a strong argument using the Weberian notion of the state as the sphere of the legitimate monopoly of force within a territory to suggest that civil society cannot share this function with the state. Nonetheless, the legitimacy of the state in carrying out this function is constructed and justified within civil society as an on-going process. Where the function of legitimizing the state fails, the possible outcomes may be either a crisis that leads to state failure or an ascendancy of a new form of the state and social project. Thus, there is a gap in any view of the state that ignores its dialectical nature. In the third shift of Gramsci's usage of civil society, Anderson notes that it was made coextensive with the state in a manner that nullifies

the very distinction between state and civil society. To be sure, semantic flaws are traceable in the three shifts of deployment of civil society by Gramsci as isolated by Anderson. However, a return to dialectics could be one way to look at the latter usages of civil society by Gramsci. It is possible that by rendering civil society as coextensive with the state, he puts across the sense that the dominant project in the state at each moment is generated by the hegemonic forces that operate across state and civil society. The seeming conflation of the two spheres by Gramsci expresses the dialectics in which dominant forces in both state and civil society articulate the same project, not that he was unmindful of the structural separateness of state and civil society.

Gramsci was able to see that despite the hegemonic group in the state, there are subordinate groups that engage with the ruling group's legal framework of power. Sometimes this subordinate group is drawn into the projects of social change regarding the nature of political rule in the state. This was largely the case under colonial rule in Nigeria, when the petty bourgeoisie united in common platforms with the working class and the peasantry to contest colonial domination. To illustrate, the anti-colonial political party in Nigeria, the National Conventions of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), had working class organizational membership. It was the first political party to undertake a nationwide tour to mobilize the citizens against certain colonial projects and of course drew support from the peasantry (see Coleman, 1958). In this regard there arises an evident tension in civil society, thus raising questions on how it could be one with the state. Also, state and civil society may become identical in the sense that there exists a harmony of interest between agents of an existing dominant project in state and civil society. Thus the antinomies of Gramsci as outlined by Anderson are representations of complexities of state civil society relations.

Gramsci and Nigeria

The concrete case of Italy which Gramsci discussed in his work is a world different from Nigeria. Italy, at the time of Gramsci's writing, was already an advanced industrial capitalist society. Also, it does not share a similar history of colonialism with Nigeria. However, one aspect of the narrative on Italy is of interest to this work,

namely the Southern Question. This refers to the problem that arose from a protectionist policy which favoured the industrial north by cutting off foreign capital. With a secured dominance of the domestic market, a basis emerged for the community of interest between industrial capital and reformist workers. This is because the effect of the policy was that the peasantry in the South could not export their produce. At the same time, protectionism constrained them to buy the products of Italy instead of cheaper goods made in more advanced countries. This provided a basis for a community of interest between big industrial capital and reformist working class organisation. In response, Gramsci proposed a counter to this alliance by proposing what he called a 'federal republic of workers and peasants' as an intermediate ideological preparation for socialism (Gramsci, 1971). The objective of this proposition was to create a mass base for the advancement of socialist struggle. The general point drawn from here is the idea of relations of forces. The Italian instance was a coercive suppression of the masses. It includes class and economic questions but is certainly more than these concerns. Indeed, with the unity of industrial capitalists and workers, the Southern Question is said to obscure the class questions. Essentially, classes and social groups were engaged in relations in which the victorious group will implement its project. Of course the alliance between capital and labour was a conscious bourgeois project (see Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci was quick to develop a counter hegemonic strategy against the existing one which failed to extend democracy across classes and regions in Italy.

Similarly, the dialectic of encounter between the ruling group and the masses in both colonial and post-colonial Nigeria is one in which the masses are suppressed as in the Southern Question, while democracy is suspended through a variety of practices. Thus the analysis of the Nigerian experience is based on the general principle of relations of forces as a reality in every struggle for hegemony and counter hegemonic engagements. But the analysis recognises that Nigeria has peculiarities such as limited industrialization, the role of external forces in the state through petro-business and international financial institutions, military coups. Accordingly, the application of 'relations of force' merely abstracts Gramsci's framework of analysis, but takes into

account the special characteristics of the Nigerian historical instance in which it is deployed.

In the context of Nigeria's democratisation project, relations of forces explain the interaction between the colonial government in Nigeria, the British business interests in Nigeria and other non-state local forces such as the conservative press that aligned with it. This verges on the claim of Anderson that Gramsci theorised the state to be identical with civil society or that the state encompasses civil society. But the unity of the dominant forces in the political field of the colonial state existed side by side with coalitions of groups that struggled for the extension of citizenship rights and an end to colonial domination. What appears like contrast between state and civil society is a disjuncture of interests among forces with competing projects all of which are arrayed in state and civil society.

The state applies its institutions to mediate contradictions between the fundamental social group and subordinate groups in the society. The extent of objective mediation of these contradictions determines the status of the state as a democracy. Formal objectivity of the state is lost when the ruling group illegitimately deploys state apparatuses to undermine contending groups. This leads to de-democratisation.

In Nigeria, the relations that portrayed reversal of progress in democratisation commenced shortly after the independence when institutional parameters of democratisation were compromised through breaches of the electoral process and of neglect of citizens' welfare. The Nigerian general election of 1964 and Western Nigerian election crisis of 1965 and further crises attending them exemplify such instances. When the crises became intractable, the military arm of the state intervened through a coup, with a view to restoring an institutional form of the state that can mediate crises of contesting social forces. Therefore, what went wrong with Nigeria's first post-independence elections and the consequent political intervention by the military symptomizes a general crisis of the state or the failure of state capacity in mediating conflicts of social forces. These crises and the attendant military rule are elaborated in chapter seven.

Gramsci saw that struggle for power in modern society is carried out in “public with participation of ‘countless multitudes’. And this participation takes place concretely in civil society” (Buttigieg, 1995, p. 20). He is praised for understanding the dynamism of civil society as the terrain of social movements with capacity for promoting democratic change. Buttigieg (2005), however, cautioned against simplification of this view because emphasising only the democratic potential of civil society may lose sight of the competing inclinations of agents acting in the space. Illustrating this with the Italian Socialist party as an important terrain that expressed civil society, Gramsci drew attention to tendencies that undermined the party. He wrote that the party:

has provided an arena for bizarre individuals and restless spirits; in the absence of political and economic liberties that spur individuals to action and that continually renew the leading groups, it was the Socialist Party that furnished the lazy and somnolent bourgeoisie with new individuals. The most frequently quoted journalists, the capable and active members of the bourgeoisie are deserters from the socialist movement; the party had been gangway for political success in Italy... (Gramsci cited in Buttigieg, 1995, p. 16).

Regarding the press as a part of civil society, it provide spaces for framing the popular discourse map which is necessary for mobilization and embedding of the principles of each project. This explains why governments always seek to control mass communication. Undemocratic forms of control, such as the kind that prevailed under most of the military regimes in Nigeria could trigger or reinforce activism for liberal democratic transformation. Such democratic activism from the press could cause an increasing need by the government to control this vital avenue of public opinion and discourses (see chapter six).

Communication and public opinion are like the conveyor belts of ideology. They are vital elements in controlling popular worldview. Thus

public opinion is strictly linked to political hegemony. It is the point of contact between civil society and political society, between consensus and force. The state when it wants to initiate unpopular action preventively creates the adequate public opinion; that is, it organises and concentrates certain elements of civil society (Bates, 1975, p. 363).

The need for dominating the conveyor belts of ideology and mass communication is to condition the consciousness of the masses towards legitimizing the existing order or to prevent mobilizations against it. The ruling group in each formation creates and disseminates what Gramsci refers to as *forma mentis*¹⁴. A governmental system achieves order by using this *forma mentis* to generate mass consent. The dominant class perfects this by accepting that government apparatus cannot always assert their corporate interests narrowly and directly. By this concession or compromise, the necessary fiction that government of the state transcends class distinction is sustained as credible. Groups that are out of power are allowed to aspire to it. The expectation is that the prevailing *forma mentis* will make them pursue their goals without aiming to overthrow the status quo. Behind this seemingly objective practice is the idea that the social order can be incrementally perfected through fair and open competition. Issues are deemed to be best resolved through reforms fought for and negotiated among competing groups within the ambit of the existing social order. While the social order is left intact, campaigns for change are waged within the sphere of civil society (see Buttigieg, 1995). In the case of Nigeria, the core of democratic struggle is the establishment of the norms (*forma mentis*) and institutional context of democracy which all groups will not only accept as binding but also allow to operate without interference. The tendency of the Nigerian ruling forces in the era of military rule was to suppress groups that agitated for the norms of political democracy.

Differences among societies in allowing latitude to these norms is connected to the level of development of the state in terms of institutions and processes that sustain the growth of democracy. Changes leading to democratisation require the transformation of social relations in the political field that links both material base and superstructure. This is held as the basis for the transformation of state apparatus and

¹⁴ Drawn from Buttigieg (1995, p. 23) and could be described as a representation of reality.

organisation of civil society as well as the family (see Simon, 1991). The argument here is that democratisation necessarily goes beyond the transformation of formal institutions in the political structure. It should be able to guarantee political civil and social rights. The process of this transformation entails a 'war of position' between groups with competing social projects. In moments of struggle against colonial rule, corrupt elective civil rule or military rule, there are usually struggles to bring about democratic transformations which are resisted by unprepared political forces (cf Martin, 1998). "This war of position does not exclude the possibility of very sharp struggles, even violent ones, against coercive organs of the state. What it means is that the decisive struggle for state power can only be won on the basis of a decisive shift in the balance of forces in civil society..." (Simon, 1991, p. 76). Hence Gramsci's project of political change takes a complete view of the entire political field (civil society and the executive state) and the contests of social forces around political, economic, theoretical and ideological practices. Democratisation in authoritarian societies is usually a 'war of position' between blocs of interests for change and those for the status quo.

This chapter examined the contribution of Antonio Gramsci to civil society theory. His intellectual influences are found to be drawn from Hegelian and Marxian ideas. Nonetheless, Gramsci's project transcended the two. His Hegelian influence is the basis of returning civil society to the superstructure. But he did not disconnect its fundamental linkages with the economic base which are thought to be the emphasis of Marx. Also, Gramsci's elaborations indicated the importance of the intellectual and of course theory and ideology in the site of civil society. These elements in civil society frame the mind-set that supports hegemony in the state using the instrumentality of schools, churches, press. The most radical of Gramsci's theory is that the same space of constructing hegemony is where the organic intellectuals of groups that favour alternative projects also articulate contrasting and contesting forms and projects of society. The chapter also reviews the responses to Gramsci's thesis and sees that the critiques of Gramsci simply draw from non-consideration of the overall dialectical character of his project. Standing on the premise of the dialectical links which Gramsci's works gave to all levels of social practices in society, this works sees

democratic struggles as linking political, economic, ideological and theoretical practices both in establishing the institutional forms and the project of democracy. On that note, a conceptual tool for understanding the trajectory of Nigeria's democratisation in this work will be rooted on Gramsci's theory

Chapter 3

Habermas, Foucault: Discourses on Civil Society and Democracy

This chapter discusses the ideas of Habermas on civil society and democracy. It reviews his communicative rationality which proceeds from a view of civil society as a democratised sphere of rational public debates. The review is undertaken mostly in the light of Michel Foucault's theory of power in the context of critical discourse. Following the review of other discourses on power and democracy, political practice in Nigeria is examined in terms of the relevance of each of the theories.

Processes of democratisation and de-democratisation occur on the terrain of the integral state made up of the executive state and major institutions and norms of civil society. A cross cutting interaction between forces that are domiciled in these two terrains is the dynamic that gives rise to either democratic or authoritarian forms of society. Coalitions of groups connected by democratic aspirations in contest for the expansion of the democratic space have been part of Nigeria's colonial and post-colonial political development. Nonetheless, at no point in the country's history has there been a predominance of democratic forces in both the executive state and civil society. In spite of the relative weakness of democratic forces in Nigeria, the dialectical see-saw between them and the undemocratic forces remains a constant feature of the polity.

Two important forms of the dialectical relations between social forces in the political space are confrontation and negotiation. Focusing on the notion of civil society as a civilized society, one in which rational civilized conducts must be the norm, Ferguson (1980), Shils (1992) and Habermas (1987) prefer to privilege the civil negotiational perspective. This dimension proceeds from a notion that "the attitude and ethos that distinguish the politics of a civil society is civility...a solicitude for the interest of the whole society, a concern for the common good" (Shils, 1992, p. 1). To be sure, this is an aspect of the constitutive norms of civil society but actual civil societies never

equate completely with this template. Indeed Shils admitted that no society is entirely civil. This view reckons with possibilities of tension where democratic norms of civil society such as free speech, free association, other aspects of fundamental human rights, freedom to participate the political life of the state and social rights are subjected to constraints due to relations of power. The thrust of Habermasian thought is that these tensions are best managed within a democratised communicative structure.

For Habermas, communicative rationality is an essential feature of the site of civil society. Hence it is underpinned by rational debates among competing forces in society. In developing the discourse component of civil society, Habermas (1989) went back to civil society's capitalist origin as a corollary of a depersonalised state authority. Activities and dependencies hitherto relegated to the framework of the household economy emerged from confinement in the private into the public sphere¹⁵. The emergence of capitalism caused a transition of modern economies to commercial economies. This development unleashed two important elements on which the power structure came together namely traffic in commodities and news. The Mercantilist phase of capitalism involved the growth of the second element into a unique explosive power. State authorities began to use the press for the purpose of administration. Also Mercantilism had a bureaucratic commercial policy of public regulation of private initiative. Consequently the zone in which public authority, maintained contact with private people by way of continuous administrative acts was rendered problematic. This zone of contact between the public and private involved a wider circle of persons than those participating directly in capitalist production. The more this condition increased, the more self-sufficient economic units shrank, resulting in increasing dependence of local markets upon regional and national ones. Broad strata of the population in the towns were affected in their daily existence as consumers from these regulations of Mercantilist policy. When there was scarcity of

¹⁵ Habermas described the public sphere elsewhere as a "network of communicating information and points of view (i.e., opinions expressing affirmative or negative attitudes); the streams of communication are, in the process, filtered and synthesized in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified public opinion"(Habermas, 2007, p. 389).

wheat for instance, bread consumption was prohibited on Friday evenings by official decree.

Taxes, duties and general official intervention into the privatised household finally came to constitute the target of a developing sphere of critical discourses. Increasingly, society now confronting the state clearly separated a private domain from public authority. At the same time, this separation turned the reproduction of life into something transcending the confines of private domestic authority and becoming a subject of public interest. That zone of continuous administrative contact became 'critical' in the sense that it provoked the critical judgment of the public making use of its reason.

Continuing, the Habermasian account identifies the convergence of this emerging critical sphere with the press through its input of pedagogical instructions, criticisms and reviews. This paved the way for learned articles and critical reasoning to gain easy public access and consumption. Indeed after the revolutions in England and France, the idea of the public became fluid including a forum in which private people came together to form a critical mass, readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion. Using the vehicle of public opinion, civil society puts the state in touch with the needs of the people. Thus, for Habermas, the communicative structure is an important element of the sphere of civil society. But he cautioned that the view on which private people assembled to form a public and reached agreement through discourse and counter-discourse must not be confused with what was right and just. Even the identification of public opinion with reason became untenable. As long as power relationships were not effectively neutralised in the reproduction of social life, as long as civil society itself still rested on force, no juridical condition which replaced political authority with rational authority could be erected on its basis. Consequently, the dissolution of feudal relations of domination did not amount to the purported dissolution of political domination in general but only to its perpetuation in different guise (Habermas, 1989, p. 125). This interesting caution seemed to diminish as Habermas moved on to argue that the norms of rational discourse constitute the core basis of civic engagement.

While reckoning that the rise of civil society under the capitalist mode of production did not eliminate domination and inequality, Habermas is suggesting that the progress of society is based on rational discourses in the public sphere and the triumph of the best among competing ideas. People gather in clusters of interest and transform the political sanctioning of society from a private sphere into a public topic. Arising from its inherent dialectic is that this public sphere would come under the control of groups that, because they lacked control over property and a basis of private autonomy, could have no interest in maintaining society as a private sphere (Habermas, 1989). Therefore,

the democratically revolutionised public sphere that wishes to substitute the real civil society for the fictitious civil society of the legislature thus became in principle a sphere of public deliberation and resolution concerning the direction and administration of every process necessary for reproduction of society (Habermas, 1989, p. 27).

Public sphere dynamics may sometimes have an institutional dimension in which associations of organised private interests directly attempt to take on the form of political agency or by parties which have fused with organs of public authority, established themselves above the public whose instrument they once were. Political process involving equilibration of power now takes place between private bureaucracies, special interest associations, parties and public administration. Habermas added in a hopeful vein that the dialectics of the process justify the hope of Marx that “the masses will employ the platform of public sphere, institutionalized in the constitutional state, not only to destroy it but to make it into according to liberal pretence, what it had always claimed to be” (Habermas, 1989, p. 177). It is acceptable that some forces in civil society aspire after this suggestion. But the view is expressed in a reductionist manner that suggests homogeneity of interests among the actors in civil society. The possibility of homogenous rationality which leads to deliberations and consensus excludes contentions that arise in the absence of spaces for democratic negotiation as in periods of military rule or apartheid. Recalling that the sphere of civil society is dialectical, actors within it cannot be strait-jacketed into a particular

characteristic. Indeed the earliest formulation by Ferguson in 1767 which portrayed civil society in terms of transformations of Western material civilization from uncivilized to civil society reckoned with the difficulty of actualising a homogenous civil order. Indeed one often neglected part of Ferguson's essay is a statement on the end note in which he explained that:

Our notion of order in civil society is frequently false... we consider commotion and action as contrary to its nature; we think it consistent only with obedience, secrecy and silent passing of affairs through the hands of a few. The good order of stones in a wall, is their being properly fixed in the places for which they are hewn; were they to stir, the building must fall: but the order of men in society, is their being placed where they are properly qualified to act. The first is a fabric made of dead and inanimate parts; the second is made of living and active members. When we seek in society of the order of mere inaction and tranquillity, we forget the nature of our subject, and find the order of slaves, not that of free men (Ferguson, 1980, p. 173).

It is interesting that Habermas invests a lot of confidence in liberal democracy which is supposed to be driven by rational discourses from an order of civilized men. Sustaining democratic political practices in his thought will proceed from a democratised public sphere in which arguments lead to rule by 'force of better argument' (Flyvbjerg, 1998a, p. 5). Validity and truth in the process are generated by respecting five requirements of discourse ethics:

(1) no party affected by what is being discussed should be excluded from the discourse (the requirement of generality); (2) all participants should have equal possibility to present and criticise validity claims in the process of discourse (autonomy); (3) participants must be willing and able to empathise with each other's validity claims (ideal role taking); (4) existing power differences between participants must be neutralised such that these differences have no effects on the creation of consensus (power neutrality); and (5) participants must openly explain their goals and intentions and in this connection desist from strategic action (transparency) (Habermas cited in Flyvbjerg, 1998a, p. 213).

Democratic citizenship from the perspective of Habermas could therefore be understood in terms of taking part in public debate while political participation is discursive participation. Therefore he sees discourse ethics as the well-spring of a democratic public sphere (see Flyvbjerg, 1998a). Habermas pursues this point by arguing that what is meant by ‘civil society’ today in contrast to its usage in Hegelian and Marxian thoughts no longer includes the economy as constituted by private law and steered through markets in labour, capital and commodities. Rather, its institutional core comprises those non-governmental and non-economic connections and voluntary associations that anchor the communication structures of the public sphere. Civil society is composed of those more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organisations, and movements that are attuned to how societal problems resonate in private life spheres, distil and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere. Elsewhere, Habermas expressed a related thought that

the core of civil society consists of a network of associations that institutionalise problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organised public spheres. These ‘discursive designs’ have an egalitarian, open form of organisation that mirrors essential features of the kind of communication around which they crystallize and to which they lend continuity and permanence (Habermas, 2007, p. 393).

There seems to be an assumption here that there exists no major divergence to approaches in problem solving and for that reason, discursive designs are sufficient to address the contradictions of social existence. Habermas also expresses the hope of idealists in assuming that the five conditions of his discourse ethics could apply anywhere without serving any group interest. It is unlikely that this assumption holds true for most of Africa’s post-colonial states or any other formation. Besides, this formulation runs into the problem of ignoring the connection between the economic base, politics and asymmetrical social relations associated with them. It tends to assume that these social relations will not reflect in both contexts and language of discourses. It also takes for granted, the prevalence of the basic institutions and norms of democratic citizenship. Given the complexity of its meaning, it tends to be more appropriate to look at actually existing civil society in terms of a field in which relations of forces play out. The field is institutionally structured and may have layers

of associational actors. These associations crystallize around certain interests which they advance through mechanisms of communication. But limiting interactions in civil society to this aspect of relations obscures the fact that the transactions of social forces and movements transcend the discourse ethics.

Discourse ethics draws from the lifeworld which is used by Habermas to refer to “the reservoir of implicitly known traditions, the background of assumptions that are embedded in language and culture and drawn upon by individuals in everyday life” (Cohen & Arato, 1992, pp. 427–428). He gave the term three structural components namely culture, personality and society. Also he revised Talcott Parsons AGIL¹⁶ functions, seen as pre-requisites for societal stability and made lifeworld a part of those functions. With an AGIL diagram beginning with A at the upper right and progressing counter clockwise Habermas sees that an “action context” is generated. Looking at the horizontal and vertical divisions of the four cells, the A and L represent the “private sphere”, G and I represent the “public sphere”, G and A represent the systems of material reproduction or reproduction of context of society, I and L represent what Habermas called the lifeworld or symbolic reproduction of the context of society. Assigning the meaning of influence and Value Commitments to the I and L acronyms, he sees the lifeworld as providing the social sphere in which people talk about their differences and come to common understanding (see Habermas, 1987) and Heath (n.d). The emphasis of Habermas in his model of civil society is that the unsuppressed lifeworld supports a culture of democratic debates. He assumes that humanity is democratic and will pursue the realisation of this attribute using rationality that is embedded in processes of democratic deliberation. Thus the ability of civil society to embed democracy is related to freedom of the lifeworld from colonization by other sub systems of society. This freedom creates conditions for the rationalization of the lifeworld through communicative discourse.

Drawing from the above formulation, actually existing civil society cannot be equated with the Habermasian ideal. In the context of authoritarian rules, subsystems of

¹⁶ A is the adaptive subsystem (economy); G represents Goal-attainment subsystem (the polity); L is the pattern maintenance sub system or the locus of cultural and motivational commitments and I is the Integrative subsystem (law, norms and social control).

material reproduction of society are dominated by power relations. Nonetheless, democratic forces in actually existing civil societies strive to achieve Habermas' ideal model. Relating this to Nigeria, the nature of political rule under colonialism could not have allowed the prevalence of a democratised lifeworld. Activist media and other organisations which raised matters that warranted democratic debates at the time were suppressed by colonial authorities because such media was popularising the need to create conditions that could undermine the authoritarian basis of colonial rule. The peasantry which constituted the largest section of the population were excluded from the rights of full democratic participation in votes, expression of choices in public policies through open democratic debates. Davis (2006) observed that the peasantry were excluded because of fear that accommodating them through creation of a democratised political space could foster anti-colonial solidarities. They were subjected to forced labour, displacement from land, taxation and other practices of the colonial state (See Nnoli, 2011). This amounts to deprivation of civil rights. Political and social rights as articulated in Marshall (1997) were also absent in the colonial state. In effect, the public sphere or Habermas's space of discourses was narrowly circumscribed under colonial rule.

Each bloc within the space of political struggles continually adjusts its interests as well as strategies for realising them. Strategies could be negotiation or other levels of struggle such as uncoordinated resistance by peasant groups like the Aba women riot of 1929, strike action by the organised labour and calls for resistance by anti-colonial movements like the Zikist Movement. It was a certain convergence of interests of some indigenous educated elements, business groups, working class and the peasantry in their struggles against the colonial government that led to the opening of spaces for negotiations which gradually ended colonial rule. Struggles to embed democracy in the postcolonial state were equally subject to the same experiences of suppression of the communicative ideals suggested by Habermas. In both instances, the conditions of discourse ethics were absent.

Essentially, Habermas's influence by Kant's moral philosophy is seen to be the reason why he re-echoes Enlightenment rationalism. Delue and Dale (2009) made a

refreshing presentation of Kant's idea that values of intellectual freedom should be protected and that traditions should be assessed on the basis of how well they promoted the progress of reason, truth and freedom. For Kant, public use of reason allows people to discuss important questions through which they are able to expand their knowledge and progress in general enlightenment.

To engage in public reasoning, certain rules are considered necessary by Kant. In the first place the individual must liberate him/herself of "self-incurred tutelage" (DeLue & Dale, 2009, p. 182) or reliance upon others who are allowed to shape their own views. By adhering to this rule, the individual extricates him/herself from control of others who impose their thoughts and force acceptance of their beliefs without question. Secondly, the individual should play by the maxim of "enlarged thought" (DeLue & Dale, 2009, p. 182). This is achieved by assessing one's opinion side by side with other points of view. A common standpoint is believed to arise as people understand each other's' perspective until a common position which transcends boundaries of prejudice is achieved. The third Kantian rule of public reason is to "think consistently" (DeLue & Dale, 2009, p. 182). This rule requires that the individual be constantly governed by the first two rules. They must not allow prejudice to determine their thinking and must constantly seek to understand the views of others during the course of achieving common position. This is the basis of civic virtue of mutual respect.

Kantian moral philosophy recommends that individuals should live by categorical imperative which requires that each person in society be treated as an end not just a means. Treating people as ends implies respect for their freedom and rejection of the use of people as a means to the various projects of others. It is by communicating with others in line with the rules of public reason and self-accommodation to treat others as ends in the process of public reasoning that public use of reason is secured. In order to make possible the kind of communication among people that allows them to treat others as ends, there must exist public institutions that permit freedom to the people. With this emphasis on freedom, it follows that public use of reason can only thrive in a society that the civil, political and social rights of citizens are guaranteed

and consciously protected. Only civil society is said to guarantee this freedom because it is the only space that assures each person the rights needed to engage in an enlightened discourse (See DeLue & Dale, 2009). The authors cited Kant's maxim that "respecting other' freedom, a major and great civic virtue, becomes embodied in society when there is a 'correct constitution' which supports a civil society as well as a 'goodwill ready to accept such constitution'" (2009, p. 188).

In all, so much confidence is vested in the rationality of the individual in creating the structure of civic discourses and sustaining it. The capacity to support freedom at the realm of civil society and extending such freedom to a constitution of the state is assumed to be the basis of democracy. Kant's discourse presupposes civil society as a terrain of civilized values.

Enlightenment rationalism to which Kant made enormous contribution is claimed as essential to the beginning of liberal democracy, but revolves around ideal expectations and has little to offer in terms of understanding power in the context of democratic discourse. Indeed "it is precisely by paying attention to power relations that we may achieve more democracy" (Flyvbjerg, 1998a, p. 219). Fontana reinforced this notion by arguing that "Habermasian civil society has ostracised all forms of power, for it cannot tolerate conflict and strife" (2006, pp. 53–54) . Habermas in this regard, "follows Lockean liberals who see civil society purely in terms of consensus and persuasion" (Fontana, 2006, p. 54). Further, Habermas is charged for neglecting power and creating more problems than he set out to solve. Indeed if his ideals of freedom from domination, more democracy and a strong civil society were to be achieved Flyvbjerg (1998a) argued, then the first task would not be to understand the utopia of communicative rationality but to understand the realities of power.

The Habermasian discourse ethics while providing a relevant ideal model for democracy, would appear a limited resource in explaining the contours of changes in the Nigerian instance. In particular, Habermas does not help us understand how interests that dominate the executive state interact with the diverse group of agents

located in the terrain of civil society. Struggle for Nigeria's political independence was not limited to civil discourses. However, discourses could not be denied as part of it, but was combined with other levels of engagement like strikes and certain forms of expressions of militant social movement. Negotiations for independence, occurred within a power or institutional structure set up by the colonial state. The struggle for the end of military rule in Nigeria took a similar trajectory. This experience offers a basis for connecting discourses to power relations because the discourses are set within institutional frameworks set up by dominant forces. Such frameworks do not create a level playing field for entities contesting the interest of dominant forces (cf Foucault, 1989).

Habermas sees constitution and institutional development as necessary for strengthening civil society based on the thinking that these processes are informed by the outcomes of rational discourses. However, discourses are also about power. Its mechanism could be utilized to achieve democratic freedom, yet it is equally capable of sustaining norms that are far removed from democratic outcomes. For instance the framing and reframing of such institutions like constitution and elections in Nigeria have not been done outside the context of and the guidance of the ruling forces in the state who define its trajectory by mapping the boundaries of debates. Illustrating for instance with post-independence constitution making in Nigeria, it was the military government that initiated the debates for making a presidential constitution for Nigeria in 1979. Appointment to the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) was done by the government. Also the 1989 constitution-making process took the same trajectory. The framework of dialogue was set from the executive state. A striking matter of importance in the 1989 constitutional committee is that the outcome of a more than 27,000 suggestions (See LeVan, 2011) in a nationwide consultation by a political bureau set up by the military government was a choice by the citizens to move towards the socialist direction. But this was rejected by the executive state (Tar, 2008). Ultimately, the constitution was never operated before it was annulled by another military regime which commenced a process for another constitution making deliberations. In the last instance, the military government simply overturned the deliberations of the constitution making assembly and appointed another committee

which did a hurried job of another constitutional dialogue. Many of the novel suggestions for a new constitution were not applied in the last constitution of 1999 (Ekwueme, 2011). Nnoli (2011) was therefore right in arguing that both the colonial and postcolonial constitutions in Nigeria were not products of the people. Excluding the people or their preferences in dialogues of constitution-making is certainly not in correspondence with Habermasian rationality in which rational debates and force of better argument are the guiding norms of decision making. What is at play in the Nigerian instance is a conflict between power and rationality. This conflict operates in different ways in different societies. Two axioms of Flyvbjerg capture this “Power defines rationality” (1998b, p. 227) and “in open confrontation, rationality yields to power” (Flyvbjerg, 1998b, p. 232).

Precisely, the Nigerian illustration translates to use of power to moderate consensus. Thus, aspects of the Foucauldian analysis of discourses are relevant to understanding the practical relations of state and civil society in many formations including authoritarian political systems. Flyvbjerg was apt to remark that Foucault theorized in the tradition of Nietzsche and is the philosopher of “... real history told in terms of conflict and power” (1998a, p. 211). Narrating Nietzsche’s thesis of how power is constructed, Delue and Dale (2009) revisited his position that it is not possible to rely on Enlightenment philosophy of reason for life preserving and species preserving. Nietzsche argued that these thinkers use reason or the cold dialectic of spirit of god in movement to determine those objective truths that can be made the basis for justification of ideas. For Nietzsche therefore, what modern thinkers label as truth represents their particular values and prejudices. He sees this as the case with Kant’s categorical imperative which is suggestive of the existence of universally valid moral propositions. In that vein, Nietzsche stands out as the first postmodern thinker for presenting a clear challenge to the notion of universal truth or rationality.

Nietzsche’s notion is that human values are developed from a combination of realities including instincts and passions as well as by customs and traditions that are part of the life of the individual. Therefore there are impulses that lie at the core of an individual’s life. Following the ancient Greeks, Nietzsche qualified this dimension as

Dionysian after the god *Dionysus*. He thinks that human beings combine conflicting tendencies and impulses and there is no inherent natural order among our passions and feelings. Therefore, a person is at bottom, a chaos and needs guiding principles in which he can believe to order his life in order to function in the world. These principles are found in civilization and culture which are invented to provide life with structure and continuity. Nietzsche again drew from ancient Greek mythology and related this dimension to the god *Apollo* (See DeLue & Dale, 2009).

In the *Apollonian* dimension, human values are fashioned by existing customs and traditions. Over time, norms associated with customs and traditions come to emphasize order above everything else. In doing this, it becomes an obstacle to people in the course of developing their lives according to their deeply rooted passions. Basically, the *Apollonian* dimension tends to squelch the inner passion of the *Dionysian* dimension. To Nietzsche, the *Dionysian* dimension often comes to the rescue with creative annihilation and awakened passions that had fallen asleep under the orderly governance of *Apollo*. Hence, *Dionysus* is the source of wilfulness and defies *Apollo*'s quest for order. It is the basis of resisting a life setting that is overly constraining. It guards against a world in which traditions and customs, rules and methods for securing order deny creative expressions that can transform the structure of human living. Ultimately, Nietzsche advocates a world in which *Apollo*'s dictates for order facilitates the richness of *Dionysus* and without the dominance of either of the tendencies. In relating this to politics, Nietzsche argues that "moral categories arise from a struggle between competing social forces. In a battle, the side that wins determines the substance of morality including ethos that the losers must accept" (DeLue & Dale, 2009, p. 297). The politics of Nietzsche envisions a society with full triumph of *Dionysus* that at the same time retains some dimensions of *Apollo* intact so that there remains a necessary degree of order and self-restraint for the flourishing of *Dionysus* (See DeLue & Dale, 2009).

Nietzsche's thesis above seems a dissolution of institutional norms of civil society over and above the passions of the individual. He understands this passion as creative without reckoning that it could as well be destructive. In the end, Nietzsche fell into

methodological individualism which made Kant to see fundamentally rational individuals moving into civil society to engage in rational democratic discourses for social progress. Nietzsche rather saw a creative free spirit which must be allowed to rise beyond the obstacles of norms and order and this is for him, the basis of freedom. Nietzschean thought on power is quite influential and inevitably connects with civil society theory.

In the tradition of Nietzsche, Foucault contends that the Enlightenment helped to institute and validate structures of power that are hostile to freedom. The exercise of power in the modern world may not rely on brute force but individuals are induced by various behaviour-managing techniques to do as patterning norms require. Similar to Nietzsche, Foucault sees that the depiction of civil society as a force for good “hides the fact that power pervades the separate sphere of civil society in ways that might be detrimental to people....power pervades society by imposing on individuals certain ways of seeing, acting and living” (DeLue & Dale, 2009, p. 308). This is right to the extent that even discourses are expressions of interest towards a certain modality of domination. Therefore consensus in the context of dialogue may be a projection of a certain form of power which Foucault believes is diffused at various levels of interaction including discourses.

As narrated by Newman (2004), the core of Foucault’s theorization on power is that it could no longer be confined to a central place as a mechanism of class or economic domination as in Marxism. He also went beyond the anarchist methodology that construes power in a central symbolic structure. Foucault thinks that the same way as power cannot be reduced to the economic dominance of the bourgeoisie, it can also not be reduced to the institutions of the state. While rejecting Marxist and anarchist reductionism, he suggested that a relevant political philosophy should be constructed around the problem of sovereignty. For Foucault, “we need to cut off the king’s head” (Newman, 2004, p. 143). His main case is that the analysis of power must start from its smallest mechanisms – various practices, relations, techniques, discursive operations that cut across major institutions of modern society such as prisons, industries, hospitals and more.

Power relations are generated and sustained on the basis of knowledge constructed from discourses. Hence Foucault argues that, “it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power” (Foucault, 1980, p. 52). Elsewhere, Foucault continued a similar argument that:

Discursive relations are not as we can see, internal to discourse; they do not connect concepts or words with one another; they do not establish a deductive or rhetorical structure between propositions or sentences. Yet they are not relations exterior to discourse, relations that might limit it or impose certain forms upon it, or force it in certain circumstances, to state certain things. They are, in a sense, at the limit of discourse: they offer it objects of which it can speak or rather...they determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, explain them, etc. These relations characterize not the language (*langue*) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is employed, but the discourse itself as a practice (Foucault, 1989, p. 46).

The point Foucault makes is that communicative structures are structures of power. Such structures, he implies, may not always be a source of objective rational communication. Norms that underpin those discourses are constructed and do not allow the individual to fully express the dimensions of his/her being once confined to the framework which is expected to guide thought and behaviour. Perhaps an important illustration of the Foucauldian thesis on discourses and power could be done with the impact of epistemology on the meaning of the concept of democracy and political practice. While there are contending notions about it, there is a dominant one which is being popularized by a certain discursive paradigm. The dominant notion of the concept reduces its existence to the presence of electoral institution and a certain regime of civil and political rights. Most civil society actors in transitional states are drawn into this discourse on democracy and actually limit their engagement for democratization on the institutionalization of capitalist democracy. Consequently,

they unwittingly sustain the hold of capitalist power over the emergence of a democracy that fosters full rights of citizenship.

Habermas' take on Foucault is that his genealogical analysis dismisses identities and origins and replaces it with differences, displacements and beginnings. Also the hermeneutical search for meanings is replaced by the dismantling of effective history. He equally charges Foucault with replacing global historiography and macro consciousness with serial and specific history. Secondly, Habermas argued in relation to the notion that every society has its own regime of truth, that if power serves to explain what is knowledge and truth as well as constitute a basis for historiography, historicism and relativism become the main features of Foucault's theory of power. This is qualified by Habermas as cynical in undertones and false in its ontology and methodologically reductionist (See Isenberg, 1991).

In conclusion, the point of interest in the divergence between Habermas and Foucault is that they represent two aspects of civil society namely consensus of deliberations and conflict of power relations. The reality of relations in state and civil society is cast in conflict while its ideal is mirrored in consensus. Habermasian idealism tends to assume the absence of power relations and does not focus beyond the ideal civil society. Foucault's emphasis on power relations limits the possibility of constructing a broad framework that expresses democratic consensus. He seems cynical of claims about democratic rationality and consensus because discourses which drive them have to do with power. But there is no particular time that elements of the ideal and real do not fuse in the political field. This means that both power relations and its inherent dialectics neither eliminate universal ideals nor does the ideal undermine Foucault's critical discourse. Therefore an exclusive focus on the Habermasian discursive rationality fails to grasp what is done. Yet to construe civil society only in terms of power dynamics as Foucault does, necessarily neglects what ought to be done. Hence there is need for navigation of the "middle road" between, on the one hand, essentialist universality, and on the other, the politics of difference and particularity" (Newman, 2004, p. 155). It is within the blend of these two ideas that state-civil society relations in Nigeria could be understood. It embodies both conflict

and at some points democratic negotiations as well as consensus. Also some conflicts and disruptions in the political field do not conform with discourse ethics or communicative reason. There is the necessity to account for these two ever-present dimensions of relations in state and civil society. Thus, it is in blending Habermas and Foucault theses in the analysis of Nigeria that the dialectics of relations of forces at the level of discourses could be properly accounted for in the processes of struggle for democratic transformation. But since both Habermas and Foucault focused on the Western historical experience, the core value of their theses is the dialectical element that could be drawn from them. Discourses are integral part of power relations and are dialectical. Since a level of discourses could be discerned in Nigerian politics as illustrated with constitution-making dialogues, it commands importance in the analysis of dialectics of democratisation in that formation.

Chapter 4

Dialectics of Political Change

The thread running through the preceding chapters about political change in the context of democratisation is that it is a dialectical process. This continuing process of development with mutual negation of contrary forces and interests bears on processes of construction and maintenance of social power (domination and hegemony) and the political form of that power which may be democratic or authoritarian. To set up a dialectical framework for the interpretation of political change in Nigeria, this chapter will explore the dialectics of Hegel's ethical system. The importance of Hegel's ethical system is that it foreshadows the integral state in which clusters of interests act in distinct spaces that are parts of a whole or totality to construct the character of that whole. The chapter continues with Marxian dialectical method which is related to the Hegelian tradition. Marx's ideas which try to give concrete existential forms to Hegelian abstractions represented as the Idea or Universality is found an important contribution to the theoretical development of dialectics. Marx re-interpreted dialectics and brought its appreciation closer to social relations. His philosophy retained the form of Hegelian dialectical logic while altering its contents. Arising from this is that there is a level of convergence between Marx and Hegel on dialectics. It is in this light that Lenin remarked that "it is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital* and especially its first chapter without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's logic..." (cited in Lukacs, 1975, p. 169). Hegel-Marx convergence is found in Antonio Gramsci's dialectical elaborations of dynamics and principles of change inherent in the integral state and the hegemonic processes. Therefore Gramsci follows in the line of narrative in this chapter. Further works that built in the dialectical traditions of Hegel, Marx and Gramsci particularly, Althusser and Poulantzas are also explored in this chapter. Finally, the narratives are contextualized on the Nigerian experience.

Gramsci lucidly applies Hegel and Marx in his analysis of the dialectics of forces in state and civil society. With his conceptual categories of integral state and hegemony, Gramsci saw the engagement of contrary forces for assertion in terms of hegemonic

‘war of position’. He allows scope for groups of forces in both state and civil society without tying determinism to one aspect of these forces, thus freeing civil society theory of interpretations of exclusive economic determinism (orthodox Marxism) and the Tocquevillean tradition, which is skewed towards the perception of civil society as a democratic site in opposition to an undemocratic sphere of the state. It also stands above the Habermasian viewpoint which idealistically links democracy to communicative structure in civil society. Gramsci also enabled political theory to handle the perceptions that conflate structure with agency. He basically separated the two and showed that dialectics has to be understood in terms of the engagements by agents within the structures that make up the political field namely, state and civil society.

Gramscian input has become an important guiding light to contemporary theorizations on state civil society dialectics. He particularly opened the entry point for Louis Althusser who brought together Hegel, Marx and Gramsci and more clearly expressed the interaction of forces not in terms of monist causation or determinism from one realm (the state or the Idea or even the economic base). Borrowing from linguistics and psychoanalysis, Althusser qualifies as overdetermination the way in which social processes and dynamics within distinct social structures determine outcomes in others and in turn have outcomes in them determined by other social structures (Althusser, 1966). The political structure can determine what happens in the economic structure as well as the levels of ideology and theory. Each of these levels of society determined by the political structure equally determines the political structure. Each moment of these progressions in the development of dialectical theory of the state and how it plays out in social practice shall be examined in the context of relations of forces in Nigeria’s democratisation.

Hegelian Dialectic

The magic charm of Hegelian thought is the dialectic. He took the Ancients’ conception of dialectic as essentially being the heightening of contradictions as his point of departure and moved its meaning to a level of seeing dialectic as creating possibility of transition to higher truth (See Gadamer, 1976). The grand idea of

Hegel's philosophy is totality which preserves within it, each of the stages it has overcome or subsumed (sublation). Overcoming or subsuming is a developmental process made up of 'moments'. The totality arises from that process which preserves all its moments as elements in a structure (Spencer & Krauze, 1996). In other words, Hegel sees the dialectical process as one of development, in which the Idea unfolds in stages, transcends the stages but retains the elements of the preceding stages. Building on this, Ollman (1993, p. 10) construes dialectic as "a way of thinking that brings into focus the full range of changes and interactions that occur in the world...". Contradictions or negation is the dynamic of dialectics. Three important pairs of contradiction are used in Hegel's thought. The first is Being - in which an opposed pair of concepts seem flatly opposed but can be shown to be intimately related by means of analysis. In the second division, Essence, the opposed pairs immediately imply one another hence to define one is one at the same time, to define another. In the third division, a more sophisticated contradiction is attained in whose identity, component parts; Universality and Particularity are conceptually related (Spencer & Krauze, 1996).

In applying this dialectical logic to the study of historical development, Hegel suggested that universal history shows the development of the consciousness of freedom on the part of Spirit and the consequent realisation of that freedom. This development Hegel notes:

implies a gradation - a series of increasingly adequate expressions or manifestations of freedom which results from its Idea in general viz. that it is self-determined - that it assumes successive forms which it successively transcends; and by this very process of transcending its earlier stages gains an affirmative, and, in fact, a richer and more concrete shape...(Hegel, 2001b, p. 79)

Though rabidly critical of the dialectic and rejecting the scientific status which he accused dialecticians of associating it with, Popper simplified the above process with the dialectic triad of thesis antithesis and synthesis:

First some idea or theory or movement is given, which may be called “thesis”. Such a thesis will often produce opposition, because probably it will be, like most things in this world, of limited value – it will have its weak spots. This opposing idea or movement is called “anti-thesis” because it is directed against the first, the thesis. The struggle between the thesis and anti-thesis goes on until some solution develops which will in a certain sense; go beyond both thesis and anti-thesis by recognising relative value of both, i.e, by trying to preserve the merits and to avoid the limitations of both. This solution which is the third step is called the “synthesis”. Once attained, the synthesis may in turn become the first step of a new dialectic triad... (Popper, 1940, p. 404).

Though Hegel rarely used the words thesis-antithesis-synthesis, they are very often employed in explaining his dialectics because they come close to his descriptions, viz “existence-in-itself”, “existence-for-itself”, and “existence-in-and-for itself” (Kainz, 1974, p. 7). Applying this dialectical principle, Hegel’s narrative of the development of world history begins with the oriental world and culminates in the Germanic state after going through several historic cultures. It is in this process that he finds the development of the Idea which ultimately unfolded to become the modern state. The state which Hegel saw as the universality became according to him, the basis of, and antecedent to civil society. His notion of the ethical system is based on harmony of the universality (state) and particularity (civil society) which are outcomes of the dialectical process. He also envisioned a harmonious interpenetration between the two spheres. Hegel theorized this organic relationship in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* when he reasoned that “...the [unconditioned] universal is simply and solely the plurality of diverse universals of this kind” (Hegel, 1977, p. 82). The universal represents the totality which is framed in the state while the diverse universals can be said to represent the various clusters of interests that exist in civil society. This becomes a distant insight into the organic relationship between state and civil society and at the same time a suggestion of plurality or diversity within the same spaces.

With the dialectical principle in mind, state and civil society represents a paradox of difference in unity. The principle of negation supports the notion of difference while

the idea of totality underpins unity. Hence in dialectical terms “their parts of development do not only intersect, in mutually supportive ways, but are constantly blocking, undermining, otherwise interfering with and in due course transforming one another” (Ollman, 1993, p. 16). This explanation can be said to represent the interaction of the internal essence of each of them.

State and civil society have existence that is expressed in both the structure and superstructure of society. The internal dialectics of relations that embrace production, distribution, exchange and consumption work themselves out in civil society around the economic base and in different levels of the superstructure. These processes exist as aspects of social practice which clusters of competing social forces struggle to embed. The broad forms of the aspect of political practice in transitional states are democratic and undemocratic forms. Essentially, the struggle to construct a certain form of social practice over and above another competing one could be understood as dialectical relations of forces.

Marx and Dialectic

Marx believed that Hegel systematized dialectic but enveloped it in mysticism. Thus he took up the challenge of simplifying the abstractions of Hegel and making dialectic accessible to ordinary human intelligence (See Spencer & Krauze, 1996). In the preface to *Das Capital* Volume One, Marx held that:

My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but it is its direct opposite, To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e, the process of thinking, which under the name of “the Idea”, he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world and the real world is only the external phenomenal form of “the Idea”. With me on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought (Marx, 1867, p. 14).

Marx accused Hegel of mystifying dialectic but acknowledged himself a pupil of the Hegelian method. The thesis of Marx’s inversion of Hegel tends to ignore the suggestion by Marx of the relevance of the Hegelian method to him. Althusser (1966)

undertook an elaboration that clarified what the inversion of Hegel means. He suggested that Marx may seem to have inverted Hegel because the whole Hegelian conception is regulated by the dialectics of moments of the idea. Hegel explains the material life and concrete history of all peoples using the dialectic of consciousness. The people's consciousness is cast in the realm of ideology. Further, Althusser showed that for Marx, the material life of men explains their history. Thus, their consciousness and their ideologies are merely the phenomena of their material life. This logic according to Althusser unites all the appearances of inversion. He argues further that Hegel regards every modern society to be constituted by two societies including society of needs or civil society and the political society or state. Everything – religion, philosophy and the epoch's consciousness of itself are embodied in the state. Therefore the society is a composite of material and spiritual life. Material life (civil society or the economy) is to Hegel apparently autonomous because it is subject to law which is outside it. This law is the goal of the material life yet it is the condition of its possibility. Here Althusser showed that what is seen as inversion of Hegel is an inversion of relation of terms. "While for Hegel, the politico-ideological was the essence of the economic, for Marx, the economic will be the essence of the politico-ideological" (Althusser, 1966, p. 108). The logic in each case can work backwards thereby illustrating that causality between the structures is a mutual dialectical process. On this note, Althusser argued:

For all its apparent rigour, the fiction of the 'inversion' is now clearly untenable. We know that Marx did not retain the terms of the Hegelian model of society and 'invert' them. He substituted other, only distantly related terms for them. Furthermore, he overhauled the connexion which had ruled over the terms (Althusser, 1966, p. 109).

Elaborating further, Althusser argued that every concrete difference featured in Hegelian totality including the spheres visible in this totality such as state, civil society, religion, philosophy, are differences which are negated as soon as they are affirmed because they are only moments of the internal principle of totality. The same idea of totality featured in Marx's analysis of production, distribution, exchange and consumption where he argued that though these aspects are not identical, they are

parts of one totality in which one structure at each moment, reigns over the contradiction in them (Althusser, 1966).

Hegel drew from the logic used by ancients and other philosophers who had developed a method of bringing out consequences of opposed hypotheses without knowledge of what they were dealing with. In the eighteenth century, Kant's transcendental dialectics of pure reason demonstrated anew, the worth of this dialectical method of the ancients. Like them, Kant saw that reason necessarily involves itself in contradictions. Hegel not only claimed to vindicate Plato's way of justifying beliefs by dialectical scrutiny of assumptions but also accepted Kant's demonstration of reason's necessary contradictoriness. Indeed in the main divisions of Hegel's *Phenomenology* he tries to show how the interaction of the various modes of knowledge which Kant examined – intuition, understanding and the unity of apperception or self-consciousness are related (Gadamer, 1976). Arising from this is that at each level of application of the dialectic, a new content is infused into the form. For instance what appears like Marx's inversion of Hegel is dialectically shown to be a ruse of reason not necessarily real (see Althusser, 1966).

The concentration of Marx's analysis was on society from which he proceeded to the state whereas Hegel comes from the opposite direction of state or universality to the society or particularities. What needs to be searched out for in this whole process is the logic of internal engagement of forces in the field generated by state and society within a context of democratic struggles. Essentially agents in the political field actuate and are at the same time actuated by economic and political forces and other categories related to social practice such as ideology and theory. The mutual engagement of agents in society within terrains that are organically linked (state and civil society) and the different impacts of their actions in the political field is the dialectical basis of change. Dialectical investigations are concerned with these organic linkages and engagements. In Althusser's interpretation of dialectics, he sees that these structures and their interactions must be understood in their complexity. They are organically linked and at the same time have relative autonomy and each is

capable of being the determining instance at various points depending on forces at play at the conjuncture.

In the *Grundrisse* Marx showed the organic connectedness of production, distribution, exchange and consumption observing that:

the conclusion we reach is not that the production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they all form the members of a totality, distinctions within a unity A definite production thus determines a definite consumption, distribution and exchange as well as definite relations between these different moments.... Mutual interaction takes place between the different moments. This is the case with every organic whole”(Marx, 1973a, pp. 99–100).

The emphasis on the principle of totality and how the whole splits into several moments is quite for understanding the relations of social agents at the superstructure especially the political sphere. The political field embraces the state including its expression in executive authoritative form and the layers and clusters of interest in civil society which have various ranges of political pertinence at the conjuncture. Some agents present in these layers are active in reinforcing the hegemony of the dominant project in the executive state, others contest the dominant project, while there are some that have requisite qualities for activism but do not have explicit political objectives. The character of Home Town Associations (HTAs) in Nigeria as discussed in chapter one, exemplifies this politically dormant layer of agents in civil society. In the same way, the political practices of the executive state have different patterns of reinforcement or containment for different agents that form the layers of interest in civil society depending on how each group relates with the form of the executive state and the forces controlling it. It is these relations that define the political field in either a democratic or authoritarian form.

Marx’s application of Hegelian philosophy of internal relations leads him to see that the elements which come into his (Marx’s) analysis are inter-linked aspects of society none of which could appear or function independent of other aspects. Thus, it can be argued that in the context of power, state and civil society are “expressions of the

same relation only seen from the opposite pole”(cf Ollman, 1993, p. 134). Assuming that each aspect of social practice is a moment of the whole and is in mutual interaction with other moments, Marx is portrayed as meaning that “there can be no cause that is logically prior to and independent of that to which it is said to determine. In short, the common sense notion of ‘cause’ and ‘determine’ are founded on such logical independence and absolute priority do not and cannot apply” (Ollman, 1993, p. 36). Going further, Ollman argues in the tradition of Althusserian Marxism that “in any organic system viewed over time, each process can be said to determine and be determined by all others. However it is also the case that one part often has a greater effect on others than they do on it” (Ollman, 1993, p. 36). The Althusserian interpretation of Marx refers to the predominant role of one sphere at each point in time [a condition which is not fixed] as “structure in dominance”(see Althusser, 1966, pp. 200–201). This argument contributes in putting to rest the so-called economic determinism. Ollman above, referred to this when he argued that the absolute priority of any sphere does not and cannot apply.

Althusser, Poulantzas and Dialectical Interpretations

Althusser’s interpretation of Marx joined Gramsci in further refuting the long held notion of economic determinism and brought interesting new insight to Marxian applications of dialectics. To establish his position, Althusser cited Engels who remarked in a letter to Block that:

Production is the determinant factor, but only ‘in the last instance’: ‘More than this, neither Marx nor I have ever asserted’. ‘Anyone’ who twists this’ so that it says that the economic factor is the only determinant factor, ‘transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, empty phrase’. And as explanation: ‘The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure – the political forms of the class struggle and its results to wit constitutions established by victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas – also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles, and in many cases

preponderate in determining their form...’ (Engels cited in Althusser, 1966, p. 112).

Engels added that “Marx hardly wrote anything in which this theory did not play a part” (cited in footnote, Althusser, 1966, p. 112). Also, in a letter to J. Block in 1890, Engels had conceded that the manner in which he and Marx presented their ideas tends to make them culpable for being regarded as theorizing economic determinism. As he wrote,

Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side that is due to it. We had to emphasise the main principle vis a vis our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights (Engels cited in Althusser, 1966, p. 105).

It is important to note Althusser’s effort to broaden interpretation of the Marxian dialectic with reference to later works of Marx and letters of Engels. He presented Engels thought that “history asserts itself through the multiform world of the superstructures, from local tradition, to international circumstance” (Althusser, 1966, p. 112). This is surely meant to make a case for the importance of the superstructure in the dialectics of change. Gramsci is portrayed by Althusser in complimentary light for representing the importance of the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions of the dialectical moments about Italian and European history in the *Prison Notebooks*. Hence his theory of hegemony is noted as a “remarkable example of a theoretical solution in outline to the problems of the interpenetration of the economic and the political” (Althusser, 1966, p. 114).

The transformation in the quality of Marx’s writing is seen by Althusser as a change from ideology to science (Block, 1995). This transition in Marx is said to be a removal of mystical shell from Hegel’s dialectic. What remains after this “is no longer an organic unity whose dynamism is rooted in a contradiction introduced at the instant commencing production, rather a structured and self-compensating

mechanism visible only in its overdetermined effects” (Block, 1995, p. 222). In Althusser’s description:

Overdetermination may describe the phenomenon in which contradiction that is inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from the conditions of existence, is radically affected by them, determining but also determined in one and the same moment and determined by the various levels and instances of the social formation it animates (Althusser, 1966, p. 101).

When applied to historical materialism, overdetermination is about mutual determinations of base, superstructure and forces. Hence Althusserian Marxism argues for an “accumulation of radically heterogeneous contradictions of different origins, different sense, different levels and points of application’. Although these may ‘nevertheless merge into a ruptural unity, we can no longer talk of the sole unique power of the general contradiction” (Block, 1995, p. 222). This is the de-concentration of change from one aspect of the entire moments of dialectics in society contrary to orthodox studies of Marxist dialectics that see only economic determinism. Althusser has illustrated how Engels and Gramsci drew attention to this character of the dialectical process.

With the idea of totality in mind, dialectical thought is developed in the Althusserian tradition as unfolding of a totality with the dominance of one aspect at various points. He designated these aspects as levels of practice. Practice is “any process of transformation of a determinate given raw material into a determinate product...” (Althusser, 1966, p. 166). He further says that there are different practices which are distinct but belong organically to same complex totality. Therefore “social practice, the complex unity of the practices existing in a determinate society contain a large number of distinct practices” (Althusser, 1966, p. 167). These practices are divided into the economic, political, ideological and theoretical. In the articulation of these four levels “the economic ‘transforms nature by human labour into social products; the political transforms social relations through revolutions, the ideological transforms men’s consciousness, and theory transforms ideology into science” (Block, 1995, p. 222). From Althusser’s standpoint, it is evident that underplaying

aspects of this organic whole in dialectical analysis indicates gaps in understanding the logic of dialectics.

By constituting four levels of practice, Althusser no longer sees the

mode of production as the forces and relations of production, with the superstructure seen as epiphenomenal, rather it includes all levels of practice and their interaction. With each level of practice enjoying some amount of autonomy, contradiction necessarily ensues at several levels due to what Althusser calls the law of uneven development. That is the structured whole of society consists of several levels of practice... that stand in uneven development to each other but that mutually condition one another (Block, 1995, pp. 222–223).

While the levels of practice are usually united in their existence, at each point, one level is the most decisive. At other times another level of practice could displace the existing decisive level. This is contingent on the politics and other conditions within a formation or epoch.

Again, the notion of ideological state apparatus as deployed by Poulantzas is important in understanding the dialectics of forces and change. He for instance referred to the Marxist-Leninist idea of ‘destruction’ of the state and reminded that this fate of the state embraces the state ideological apparatuses. To show that he was not making a case for the end of ideology, he added that the ideological apparatuses to be destroyed are the ones which maintain the current form of the particular state in question. State repressive apparatus cannot be destroyed while its ideological apparatuses are left intact (Poulantzas, 1969). Hence destroying the state at the ideological level is a case for a transformation in ideological practices. Here, Poulantzas more deeply captures the essence of Gramsci because the above argument demonstrates that the institutions and practices of civil society are not confined to the articulation of hegemony for the dominant forces in the state. They can as well be applied for the destruction of the ideological basis of the state through counter-hegemonic processes. Applying the dialectical interpretations of Althusser

sand Poulantzas to democratization, the process is ideological as much as it is political, economic and theoretical.

Dialectics of Democratisation: From Social Practices to Relations of

Forces

This section connects social practices as elaborated by Althusser with a broader concept of 'relations of forces' and then with the struggles for citizenship rights. Social practices reflect in the projects of competing societal groups. On a general level, the outcome of the interaction finds expression in the type of economy, political form of society, theory and ideology sanctioned and advanced by the dominant forces. Social practices in Althusserian analysis unfolds in the activities of men employing determinate means of production within a framework of determinate relations of production. In this regard, both class dynamics and dialectics usefully connect with his idea. Social practice is therefore his specific application of the dialectical principle in analysis. Althusser is essentially suggesting that the levels at which 'war of position' take place in society could be pinned down to the political, economic, ideological and theoretical moments. To be sure, this is an advance in dialectical interpretation. However, Gramsci's 'relations of forces' offers a broader scope that accommodates the peculiarities of societies outside fully mature capitalist formations. This is because social struggles in most states transitioning to liberal democracy manifest a complex mix of 'war of position, war of movement and 'underground warfare'. At the level of struggles for the establishment of democratic institutions, there is still a clear division between democratic and undemocratic forces. The extent to which democratic rights are realized in the process mirrors the strength of democratic forces in their relations with undemocratic forces.

It is the view of Gramsci that forces which are active in the history of a particular place and period and the relations between them must be analysed (cf, Gramsci, 1971). Thus in thinking about the social forces in Nigeria human agents, mentalities like ethnicity, ideology, external forces etc are all aspects of the active historical forces to be analysed. In addition, the way the political field which provides the site

of action, structures the behaviour of the active forces and is in turn structured by these forces, also needs to be analysed.

Relations of forces entail conflicts at the level of framing economic practices, political rule and ideological reproduction. However, Habermas (1981) argues in reference to new social movements that new forms of conflict are no longer in the areas of material reproduction. Instead they arise in the areas of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization. He associates the new social movements with issues like anti-nuclear, environmental, and gay issues among others. Habermas believes that new conflicts are not related to problems of distribution but with the grammar of the forms of life. This argument cannot be sustained in cases of transitioning states. It seems to be based on the notion that societies have overcome crisis of socio-economic relations in which groups compete around conditions of material survival. In Nigeria for instance, competition for material reproduction is a vital aspect of popular struggle for democracy. The common expectation is that political democracy can address questions of economic and social justice. Questions of material reproduction are as much relevant to democratic struggle as are ideological reproduction. The point here is that the political, economic, ideological and theoretical moments are consistently operative in the struggles of social forces. When for instance, the local political elites in Nigeria struggled against colonial rule, issues of material reproduction including unequal opportunities, were raised by the local entrepreneurial class and the workers (see Ananaba, 1969; Coleman, 1958). However, the democratisation of the political space (related to the political moment) was the over-arching objective. In the process, other levels of relations were present. There was for instance, the deployment of the ideological tool of the press and theoretical resources of democratic freedom. The core aspiration of the engagements was to achieve practices which are superior to the undemocratic political rule and economic practices under colonialism.

In post-colonial Nigeria, the nature of interaction of forces bears out Althusser's (1966) claim that there is no 'lonely hour' for any of the moments of practice. One

phenomenon that demonstrates the overdetermining nature of the aspects of practices in which relations of forces take place is the neoliberal project. The neoliberal project is for instance, one among many practices that impinge on democratisation in Nigeria. It manifests the entire moments of social practices which also feature in relations of forces. Harrison (2010) demonstrates the dimensions of neoliberalism in a way that reflects the levels engagement of forces. He argues for instance that formal multi-partyism and neoliberalism coexist reasonably easily. It is advanced in theory by neoliberals as the political structure that corresponds with the kind of economic governance they project. While multi-partyism is a useful democratic principle, its appropriation by the neoliberals to frame politics in African states around the dominant neoliberal model is important in understanding the entire question of the bundle of relations it entails. As a practice, neoliberalism expresses the dialectics of totality which Althusser elaborates with the concept of social practices.

Neoliberal political practice rolls back the state from citizens' welfare and privileges market capitalism. Harrison noted that rolling back the state is commonly understood as a preventive action against state's 'distortive' intervention in the capitalist market. Also when citizens act as groups in professional, labour, students associations and other forms of unions against the neoliberal regime of development, they mostly contest the neoliberal economic policies imposed by the ruling group and bring to the fore, the intersection between political and economic content of the neoliberal project. Sometimes these actions and struggles are condensed in political demand for democracy or economic demand for better wages or social demands for certain aspects of state-subsidized welfare. It is also in consideration to the political realm that governments have to make political decisions about whether to suppress social protests against economic reforms or serve citizens interests against reform commitments made to International Financial Institutions (IFI's). Mkandawire rightly sees that this condition creates "two constituencies' in 'choiceless democracies'" (Harrison, 2010, p. 33). The first constituency which is the priority of the ruling group is the International Financial Institutions while the second is

constituted by the citizens. IFI's are among the external components of the forces in interaction in several African states.

The type of multi-party politics which neoliberalism reckons with as good politics is the one that advances neoliberal economic governance not democratisation of economic and other social practices. Indeed neoliberal economic practice is rightly described by Nasong'o (2004, p. 122) as authoritarian economism. The role the institutions of capitalist globalization like IMF and World Bank in neoliberal reforms in Africa reinvents the question of ownership of the state in postcolonial societies as discussed by Alavi (1972) and Osaghae (2005). Their case which is quite correct is that external forces are part of the pertinent interests that determine the state trajectory in Africa. The interests of the external forces and a section of the local ruling group is the conditioning of Nigeria's democratisation towards a path determined by neoliberal ideas.

The current neoliberal turn in global capitalist development may be seen as the present stage of development of the Idea (in Hegelian sense). As the dominant specificity of the capitalist project, the neoliberal architecture is advanced through theoretical, ideological, economic and political levels of relations. As Harrison (2010, p. 32) puts it, "neoliberalism encapsulates a bundle of practices which pervade all aspects of political economy". Continuing he holds that "there is no aspect of neoliberalism that is not at once an intervention in the economy, polity and society" (Harrison, 2010, p. 32). Nigeria's democratisation experience unfolds at these levels of relations. Thus, it is based on the neoliberal construction. Dominant groups frame this construction in clichés in which neoliberal relations purports to represent interests of the citizens, but in the final analysis it fails to live up to these pretences.

The entire levels of relations and the determination of each aspect by others have been present in Nigeria's democratic struggle and the processes take place in state and civil society with a dialectical logic that goes back to Hegel and Marx. Gramsci broadens the dialectic principle with the idea of 'relations of forces'. Later work of

Althusser presented an interesting application of the same principle with the idea of social practice. However, Gramsci's relation of forces approach remains broader in accommodating the nuances of transitional states. A more detailed elaboration of Gramsci's principle of 'relations of forces' and a diachronic account of relations of forces in Nigeria's democratisation history will be presented and viewed from this dialectical lens in the succeeding chapters of this work.

Chapter 5

Contextualizing Nigeria in the State Civil Society Debate: Relations of Forces

This chapter aims at situating the major debates in the literature and theoretical perspective of analysis to the particular experience of state, civil society and the dialectics of democratisation in Nigeria. It will demonstrate how relations of forces within the general framework of dialectics provide the theoretical platform that draws together, the core debates in the literature in which the leading works of Hegel, Marx, Gramsci, Habermas, Foucault, Althusser and Poulantzas provide scope for several other debates. Reckoning that the major theories of state and civil society are based on particular experiences of European history, the core justification for the extension of these debates and their theoretical underpinnings to a non-European historical formation is the convergence of these thoughts on the principle of relations of forces. This offers a conceptual framework for understanding most of the debates. The study proceeds on this note to explain the cradle and constellations of social forces and their relations in Nigeria from colonial to post-colonial times. The interactions of these forces in Nigeria are related to struggles in which they are divided between contests for democratic forms of the state or engagement in practices that undermine democratisation. Finally the chapter identifies the groups, classes and social forces that had engaged and still engage the state along the lines of the democratic and even non-democratic principles.

Hegelian thought showed that freedom of the ethical spirit derives from ethical harmony between the state and civil society. To be sure, he would have intended the voluntary yielding of individualized wills to a generalised will which expresses harmony of the collective. While this imagination of harmony ignores the nature of power which does not thrive on consensus of particular wills, his interpretation can still be applied in exploring the dialectics of universality and particularity. In the actual dialectics expressed in relations of forces stronger interests dominate power and subordinate others. This is what creates the notion that the Hegelian state is an authoritarian state. But based on the principle of continuous development of the Idea

social forces may increasingly achieve harmony. Supposing that human freedom which may be expressed in political terms as democracy is an aspect of the Idea, its development in all societies has gone from repressive domination to more sophisticated or democratised forms of relations. In its more advanced form, it has reached the level of democratised political dialogues and debates between social forces. In the specific history of Nigeria since the establishment of the modern state through colonialism, there have been robust relations of forces related to the establishment of democracy. Progress and reverses in this regard are products of the processes involved in the relations.

Hegelian theory located material relations in civil society because the state which has evolved from its historic journey of formation is better left with only regulatory functions. Also, the sense of corporation with which he associated civil society reflects the associational aspect of actors on the terrain. While the laws and institutions of relations are important foundations of civil society, the associational aspect provides the strategic field in which civil associations may engage with political practice. Emphasizing mostly on corporations, Tocqueville (2002) sees that the associational aspect of civil society facilitates the embedding of democracy through collective actions.

The Hegelian thesis supplied the raw materials of civil society theories while other theories expanded on it. These expansions drew from Hegel's general principles but gave more thrust to concrete human political and economic struggles in societies. Bringing these principles to concrete human experience was the preoccupation of Marxian theorizing on social change. Marx's contribution to the development of the Idea expressed in his theories is the application of material history to the dialectical principle of relations of forces. He is the theorist of discovery of the material aspect of the anatomy of civil society. But rather than see civil society as a part of the end products of the state, he contested that the realm of material relations is the core of social struggles. Thus the state materializes as a product of socio-economic struggles even as it is the regulator of the same process. In the process of regulating the material relations, the state is also structured by dynamics of social forces that

participate in the process. Thus the idea of mutual determination between structures that constitute the society becomes more attractive than the notion of economic determinism that arises from the erroneous claims about Marx's inversion of Hegel. The proper argument is that through a dynamics of relations between social forces that act across the social structures and levels of social practice, each aspect of society is structured by other aspects. Thus Marx and Hegel are united by the principle of relations of forces as a basis of social progress. While Hegel began with interactions between universality and particularities, Marx concretely set up these interactions as human interactions mostly visible in socio-economic processes.

Relations of forces is a specific conceptual term used by Gramsci (1968, 1971). He identified relations at various levels including: relations between international forces involving states; the objective relations within society which takes into account, the degree of development of productive forces; relations of political force and those between parties (hegemonic systems within the state) and to immediate potential political military relations. Gramsci gives hint to the analytical relevance of relations of forces by arguing that "it is the problem of relations between structure and superstructure which must be accurately posed and resolved if the forces which are active in the history of a particular period are to be correctly analysed and the relation between them determined" (1971, p. 177). He suggested the necessity of distinction between organic movements (relatively permanent) and conjunctural movements (appears occasional, immediate and accidental). Conjunctural phenomena give rise to minor political criticism arising from the conducts of agents in the executive state (politicians). Organic phenomena give rise to socio-historical criticism which target wider social groupings beyond public figures. The conjunctural and organic phenomena constantly engage in mutual dialectical interaction that builds up to a level of crisis for the existing social project. At the point of crisis, the dominant political forces struggle to conserve the existing project while the forces of opposition organise to contest it.

Gramsci went on to identify moments of relations of forces. The first is relations linked to the structure which ties the development of material forces of production to

the emergence of various social classes. The second moment is the relations of political forces which have to do with the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness and organisation attained by various social classes. Persons who share similar professional or economic interest may become conscious of their homogeneity and feel a duty to organise as groups in the economic field. This develops to a point of consciousness of solidarity of interest among members of a social class. Interest is further extended to the political field when the group seeks political voice or representation in legislation or assert a need for reform of an existing order. Also, the group becomes aware of their corporate interest in society and transcends the corporate limit of purely economic class. This is the political phase when a transition is made from structure to complex superstructures. At this phase, previously germinated ideologies become 'party'. In conflict and confrontation with others, one or a combination of them prevails and propagates itself as the dominant project throughout society (see Gramsci, 1971). This causes a unity of economic, political, intellectual and moral aspects of society. From this standpoint, a universal plane is created for hegemony of the dominant class. Struggles between the dominant class and subordinate classes most times involve elements of the structure and complex superstructures (economy, politics, ideology, theory). No matter the aspect that becomes most prominent in each instance, they are to be understood as parts of a totality.

Gramsci was referring to broad projects that embrace the entire aspects of a socio-economic system. The salience of the political terrain in the politics of authoritarian states and the struggles for democracy that tie up the economic base and ideology illustrates Gramsci's relations of forces. Authoritarianism suggests that dominant forces do not extend the democratic rights of citizenship and is sustained in power by the use of coercive apparatuses of the state. When an authoritarian rule is ended and democratic practices are instituted, the character of struggles shifts mostly to the ideological level and focuses different varieties of a given practice such as neoliberalism or welfare capitalism or different brands of post capitalisms. These interactions about changing social projects describe the Gramscian 'war of position'.

Gramsci's 'war of position' is developed around the concept of hegemony. It is within the scope of relations of forces that social practices unfold in form of the struggles to construct, contest or maintain hegemony. In these relations or struggle, Gramsci identifies three forms of war namely:

war of movement, war of position and underground warfare. Gandhi's passive resistance is a war of position, which at certain moments becomes a war of movement, and at others underground warfare. Boycotts are a form of war of position, strikes of war of movement, the secret preparation of weapons and troops belong to underground warfare (Gramsci, 1971, p. 229).

In dialectical terms, none of these typologies of warfare in relations of forces excludes others. At the highest level of which is 'war of position' the lower levels are subsumed within it. Gramsci's idea could be deployed in different formations with a clear interpretation of each concrete situation. For instance, war of position could be seen in more democratised states as competing projects between different modes of regulation of the capitalist state. However, historical evidence of democratic reverses such as the rise of extremist organisations in Nazi Germany suggests that there is never a total overcoming of conditions of war of movement or frontal engagement between democratic and anti-democratic forces. In transitional states, relations of forces could be seen in terms of competing projects of democratic and undemocratic forces in the bid to establish institutions of democratic governance and extend the rights of citizenship. In the process, debates (war of position) and other forms of struggle that may include war of movement and underground warfare feature in a dialectical mix with one another.

Building on an intellectual heritage that passed from Marx, Gramsci and Althusser, Poulantzas (1980) conceived the state as a relationship of force, especially the material condensation of such relationship among classes and class fractions, expressed within the state in a necessarily specific form. Poulantzas added that it is by understanding the condensation of relationship that we avoid the impasse of that eternal counter-position of the state as a thing or instrument and the state as subject. A similar notion of the state was expressed by Jessop who argues that "...state power is a complex social relation that reflects the changing balance of social forces in a

determinate conjuncture...” (1982, p. 221). These arguments ground the idea of the state on relations of forces. Relations of forces have bearing on social classes. However, the point needs to be made that dominance can be achieved through the alliance of a fundamental social class and other classes. Dominant forces can be a blend of powerful interests arising from distinct classes. In Nigeria for instance, it may be little gainful to speak about dominance of the bourgeois and fractions of petty bourgeois elements. This is because the ruling group comprises elements from feudal traditional aristocracies, bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, external forces represented by multi-national businesses especially in the petroleum sector. The list may not be exhaustive but the above-listed are the constant forces that constitute the ruling group in the country. The state for is determined by relations among the ruling group; relations between them and state institutions and relations between the ruling group and other social forces in Nigeria. The relation among and between groups shape the state and are in turn shaped by the state. This study locates these configurations of social forces and interactions in Nigeria within the scope of Gramsci’s relations of forces.

Kant, Habermas, and Foucault may not have specifically mentioned relations of forces. But Kant’s emphasis on norms of debate which leads to the emergence of the moral force of the superior argument is about social relations within a deliberative context. The entry of Habermas into the debate draws on the same strength of relational dynamics. Like Kant, he located these relations in debates or what he calls communicative structures. Both Habermas and Kant repose confidence on the human propensity to be rational and by that very fact, always aspire for democracy driven by free debate and communication. Kantian and Habermasian discourses were debated by Foucault with a penetrating analysis of how power is constructed through the norms and language of discourse or debates. Thus the so called democratic norms and language that express them may not necessarily be value free. They bear and extend interests of those who constructed them. Norms, according to Foucault are products of discourses and discourses are “...practices obeying certain rules” (Foucault, 1989, p. 138). As a result, debates are also part of the relations of forces. Its language and norms reflect certain forms of domination. This is illustrated in chapter eight with the

constitutional debates in Nigeria in which the forces controlling the executive state specify their preferences and confine the debates around those preferences. The point here is that debates also express of relations of forces.

Tocqueville introduced the notion of balancing out an authoritarian state by associations. Thus to him associations provide a democratic framework for relating with the political order and holding it democratically accountable. Several other works such as Havel (1985), Putnam(2000, 2003), Carlyle (2008) are lined behind this notion of civil society as a countervailing force on authoritarian state. While this position may be correct in relation to the forces and interests that organise for democracy, this study argues that divergences in the interests of agents in civil society must be clearly identified and profiled in connection with what their actions represent for democracy. This is to say that forces acting in the overall political space including some associations do not all articulate democratic ends. It is only when the dominant force in state and civil society embeds and furthers democratic ends in the process of relations of forces that it may be qualified as democratic.

What emerges from the literature and theoretical discourses in this study is that the major ideas examined on state, civil society and democracy are organised around relations of forces. Indeed it is by drawing on relations of forces as a broad meta-narrative which emerges from these works that scope is created for combining dialectical theorists and other thinkers on civil society. Some of the works did not theorize specifically on dialectics but advanced discourses that are also based on the principles of relations of forces. This conceptual niche creates room for the applicability of the ideas to the analysis of formations which are historically distinct from the original focus of most of the works from which they are drawn. Thus the main justification for extending these theoretical perspectives on Nigeria is that they address the theme of relations of forces. Essentially, democratic struggle everywhere is about relation of forces.

The Importance and assumptions of Relations of Forces

Building on relations of forces as a conceptual niche reckons with the link between structure and agency. This is to say that structure, whether the state or civil society is constituted by the actions of human agents dialectically speaking. Marx's statement that civil society grows out of political economy and that the corresponding mode of political rule and other superstructure that arises from there demonstrates agency structure relationship. Also when he confers the task of tutoring and supervising civil society on the political state, Marx was applying the logic of relations of forces in which there exist mutual determinations between social structures. In the mutual structuring between state and civil society, agents within these sites are regulated by the structures (state and civil society) which they created. At the same time, the engagement between social agents also structures the mode of regulation (state and its institutions). These continuous mutual and inter-penetrating interactions underpin development of society. Therefore, relations of forces recognise that development of democracy or political order is like the development of the Hegelian Idea, an on-going process. Thus the concept admits that change is a dynamic process that affects ideas, human agents in addition to social and political structures.

'Relations of forces' as a conceptual approach reckons with the importance of group (agency) dynamics in political change. Equally important here is the political form of the structure on which the agents act. Political form may either have a wide space for democratic rights or impose unnecessary constraints to these rights. Indeed, the political form of the structure is mostly the reason for organising at group levels for change. Organised group action is a clearly identifiable kind of engagement in civil society. A group could be constituted by social classes or fractions of it. However organised actors in the political field (structure) may not necessarily be homogenous in class composition. In this regard, the organised peasantry, working class association, manufacturers association, student association, press guild, merchants association, Non-Governmental Organisations, political parties etc could all form parts of the group dynamics that connect in various ways with the state regarding the existing form and project of societal organisation. There are also instances in which

coalitions of some of these forces find common ground to engage the political state. This coalition may arise out of shared experiences of repression or exploitation among the subaltern classes like the working class and the peasantry. Class coalitions may also arise when one class group makes its project appear broad enough to accommodate other classes around a shared concern and a conception of general interest. This coalition mechanism was used by the petty bourgeois forces during Nigeria's struggle for independence. During that colonial era, there were coalitions of labour unions and associations founded by petty bourgeois elements some of which crystallized into political parties. These political parties, though organised along the lines of petty bourgeois aspirations, had associational membership which included labour unions, literary societies, professional associations, social clubs and ethnic unions (see Nnoli, 2011). The organisations appeared to articulate and advance the collective interest of all the class forces it purported to represent and was very active in anti-colonial struggle in Nigeria. However, post-colonial politics of such organisations which turned to political parties failed to provide proper democratic representation to the interest of the working classes and peasants that allied with them for democratic struggle during the colonial era. Rather, the state prioritizes the interest of the dominant ruling forces constituted by an alliance of bourgeois and petty bourgeois forces, feudal element and proxies of external forces over the broader interests of Nigerian citizens. To sustain the privileges of the ruling group, the state maintains a form which applies authoritarian mechanism to curtail democratic rights and freedom. Thus political alliance of the petty-bourgeois forces, peasants and workers during anti-colonial struggle conveys the metaphor of Bonaparte as applied by Marx in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis BonaParte*. The alliance was a group strategy of the petty bourgeoisie to achieve state power by via anti-colonial struggles.

In the light of the above, struggles for democracy in Nigeria could be addressed from the point of view of class dynamics, however, it need not be strictly confined to class analysis. The ruling group in Nigeria is not homogenous in the sense of the ascendancy of a particular social class. Within the ruling group are feudal forces which either wield direct influence or use proxies in the executive state, the bourgeois and petty bourgeois forces of various shades such as national bourgeoisie with locally

based means of wealth, comprador bourgeoisie that represents international capital. There is also a group regarded as the bureaucratic bourgeoisie which include civil service technocrats and military officers whom the nature of Nigerian politics vests with a level of political clout (cf Sklar, 1979). This alliance of class forces according to Sklar and their domination does not rest on the control of means of production. He identified with the view that dismissed ownership of means of production and the employment of hired labour as the determinants of class. Sklar's view is anchored on trends in corporate capitalism and bureaucratic socialism in which the control over means of consumption and means of compulsion are equally important determinants. He added that political determinants of class position are relevant in the analysis of non-industrial societies. Citing instance with the northern Nigeria, Sklar argued that dominant class formation is a consequence of the exercise of power by those who control diverse social organisations. He reckoned with the importance of control of economic resources, but maintained that "class relations, at bottom, are determined by relations of power, not production (Sklar, 1979, p. 537). In the light of relations of forces, it could also be argued that each relation, whether about the economy or power, bears other moments.

Bringing the specific experience of Nigeria into this analysis, it needs to be recalled that the complex dimensions of social struggles draws in cleavages that may not wholly be understood in terms of class analysis. Some of these cleavages which are ethnic, regional, religious or others sometimes provide the basis of struggles to the point of disregarding class interests. In 1967 for instance, the tension among the ruling group became so intense that it led to ethnically motivated violence and ultimately a civil war. Class determined action may not completely account for such outcome. Also, the crisis of democratisation after the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential elections in Nigeria divided the ruling group once more between lines of support for democracy and authoritarian government. This is not to say that the entire struggles followed non-class trajectory. But to account for issues that are not clearly based on class, the concept of 'relations of forces' is applied to represent the complex patterns of dialectical relations in Nigeria.

The relations of forces perspective recognises the role of exogenous factors in political change, as well as the local conditions, history and interaction of the domestic social forces in the struggle for domination. Exogenous factors draw attention to the local impact of international business interests especially the petro-business and the global capitalist institutions within the Nigerian state.

In a historical sense, the cradle of the struggles that are represented within the ambit of 'relations of forces' is traced back to the effort of Nigerian local groups to fight external colonial forces right from the onset of colonialism. Nnoli (2011) identifies the initial elements in this struggle as the peasantry who contested colonial repression and sought an end to it. This is because the initial class that the colonial rulers encountered were the peasantry. The political project of colonialism warranted a disarticulation of the existing political, economic and other forms of life in the peasant societies. Colonial political domination and economic exploitation inevitably corresponded with undemocratic practices which the peasantry resisted with little success. Colonialism which began the modern nation-state in Nigeria commenced the initial phase of relations between the peasantry and the externally imposed modern state.

Assumptions of Relations of Forces

The application of relations of forces in this study takes a neo-Gramscian approach. It sees the process as a dynamic 'war of position' for political change. The following assumptions under gird the application of relations of forces in the Nigerian experience:

1. 'Relations of forces' embodies the stages of struggles namely 'war of position', 'war of movement' and 'underground warfare'. It emerges as a relevant analytical resource in instances where the struggle has yet to fully become ideological, but is not based on 'war of movement' or physical engagements. The country has recently restored elective civil rule in which political practice indicate deviations from basic democratic practices like

elections, human rights and social justice, yet there are civil engagements for their improvement.

2. The central point about relations of forces is that it offers a dialectical resource for the analysis of progress and reverses in democratic institutions and processes. Relations of forces for the analysis of the Nigeria in this study will bifurcate social practices and agency into democratic and undemocratic ones.
3. The political and the economic aspects of these relations stand out more than the, theoretical and ideological dimensions. However, the entire moments are embedded in each aspect of the practices.
4. Relations of forces in Nigeria involves loose alliances of social forces from various classes and groups that are united by democratic struggle and another loose alliance of dominant conservative forces drawn from various classes. Some of the alliances are informal and none of the contending social forces explicitly claims to act against democracy. However, the interaction of the alternative forces around the project of democracy indicates that some of them actually undermine democracy.

Trajectory of Relations of Forces in Nigeria

The colonial Phase

Okonjo (1974) gave an account of how social forces arose from traditional societies in both Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria to resist both colonial conquest and domination, though without success. Traditional rulers were deposed and replaced with persons considered amenable to the project of the colonialists. Where no visible political structure was found, one was imposed by the colonial authorities. Forced labour and taxation were imposed to the displeasure of the local people who were treated as subjects, not citizens. It may create some difficulties to raise issues about whether or not peasant groups' resistance to undemocratic conquest qualify them as actors in civil society. This is a matter for different research. However, the inclusion of this early history of the responses of peasant societies to authoritarian conquest and domination is meant to develop a historical trajectory for the ultimate rise of social groups that have more consistently engaged with the Nigerian state in the struggle for democracy. Nnoli's (2011) extensive chronicle of peasant resistance to both the

establishment and functioning of an authoritarian colonial order include: the Mahdi revolt of 1905, Iseyin uprising of 1916, Egba revolt of 1918, Ekumeku Movement uprising of 1925, Dancing Women Movement rampage of 1925, Calabar Market Toll uprising of 1925, Warri riots of 1927 and Aba riots of 1929. Nnoli also observed that opposition to colonial domination, oppression, exploitation, injustice and illegitimacy were common to all these resistance movements. To be sure, these are conditions that undermine democracy. Thus peasant revolts against colonial rule and policies were democratic struggles. The struggles marked the initial pattern of relations of forces in the Nigerian state.

The outcome of this initial moment of relations of forces however was a victory of the authoritarian colonial state which crushed peasant revolts. The obvious reasons according to Nnoli (2011) are the weakness of peasant organisation in the struggle, absence of leadership, lack of relevant alliances with other oppressed classes and absence of an ideological guide in pursuit of their struggles. Besides, their struggles were spontaneous and reactive. It only rose in response to actions of the colonial authorities. Consequently, they could not carry out their engagement with the state in a coordinated and continuing basis. Hence it was easy to isolate and destroy the peasant uprisings leading to the dissipation of their energy and victory of the authoritarian colonial state.

The spontaneous character of peasant struggles and the inconsistency and weakness of their organisation render them weak both as an economic class and political force. Marx considered the political pertinence of this class in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* when he observed that:

In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their cultural formation from those of other classes and bring them into conflict with those classes, they form a class. In so far as these small peasant proprietors are merely connected on a local basis and the identity of their interests fail to produce a feeling of community, national links, or a political organisation, they do not form a class. They are therefore incapable of asserting their class interests in

their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented. Their representatives must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, an unrestricted governmental power that protects them from other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small peasant proprietors is therefore ultimately expressed in the executive subordinating society to itself (Marx, 1973b, p. 239).

Marx's portrayal of the peasantry above explains their subordinate circumstance in political life. Whereas they satisfy the criteria of a socioeconomic class, they do not always form a potent social force in terms of consistent class action. Nonetheless, this may apply differently in varying historical formations. For instance, Disch (1979) observes that Marx dismissed the peasantry as a social force likening the weakness of their organisation to a 'sack of potatoes'. However, successful social transformations in China and Cuba have been sources of interest on the role of the peasantry in social transformation. Also 1994 uprising in Southern Mexican state of Chiapas by the Zapatista National Liberation Army had to do with issues of work, land, education and electoral fraud. Hence it was a campaign for democracy (Smith, 1996). In that connection, the peasantry may demonstrate exception to the notion of not being a class for itself.

In the case of the peasantry in colonial and postcolonial Nigeria, they largely conform to Marx's model. They were weak vis a vis the forces they confronted. Their weakness, which reflected in lack of ideology, organisation and consistency render them prone to defeat and authoritarian domination. But their initial resistance to colonialism and all its implications for political, civil and social rights can be posed as the earliest collective action against undemocratic rule in the history of the modern state in Nigeria. Not only did the colonialists conquer the peasant societies they met in place, they used the mechanism of Indirect Rule¹⁷ to weaken them further. The

¹⁷ This was originally defined by Frederick Dealtry Lugard, the first colonial high commissioner of Northern Nigeria and later Governor-general as "the government by an alien race, of a people of 'inferior culture and inferior civilization' by means of their own indigenous political institutions, and through the class of persons who were their traditional rulers in pre-British times. The objective of government under the policy of indirect rule, was to rule the indigenous people of Nigeria very largely in accordance with

elements chosen by the colonial state to advance its mission became local symbols of the repressive colonial state. The local allies to the authoritarian political order were drawn from traditional rulers used for the policy of Indirect Rule, native recruits to the ranks the police and army and others who became enforcement agents of the colonial system. Having penetrated the ranks of peasant society, colonialism made the peasantry weaker, thereby undermining their contestations for freedom and ultimately denying them the rights that define citizenship.

The conquest of the peasantry and replacement of their political and economic organisation with colonial ones paved way for the introduction of the modern state system at the political level. At the economic level the peasants suffered forced labour, taxation without representation, loss of their agricultural land for the establishment and expansion of new colonial cities. Also the transformation of traditional subsistence economy into a commodity one had the effect of compulsive transfer of agricultural production from local survival needs to cash crops which became necessary in an economy that also became monetised (Nnoli, 2011). These changes gave rise to a few developments namely, the requirement of basic skills necessary for running the system brought by colonialism. Organising formal education therefore became an important component of colonialism. To the colonists, new skills created opportunities for new sources of livelihood different from peasant farming. This development also marked important transitions in class formation and relations of forces in which the peasantry had become subdued.

Western education according to Coleman (1958) created the effect of facilitating the emergence of a separate class. It endowed members of that class with the knowledge and skill, the ambitions and aspirations that enabled them to challenge the colonial government. Some of them trained to become journalists, lawyers, doctors, engineers or in various other high status occupations. Those who sought jobs in civil service

their own mores and accepted ideas of law, legal rights and obligations (generally termed native law and custom), so long as these were not contrary to natural justice, were not “barbaric” or otherwise grossly offensive to European sensibilities and were not repugnant to good conscience. Always, under the system, the British Resident or the Political Officer was to be the trusted friend, guide and confidant of the chief and the latter’s authority was to be supported so long as he had no other political god but the governor and his residents (Okonjo, 1974, p. xvii).

were paid less than their European counterparts with similar qualification. Also workers in various colonial government departments such as railway, colliery, ports, post and telegraph had experiences of poor remuneration and unfriendly working conditions. The educated Nigerian elites were aware that the modern state system is based on the democratic principle of equal representation. The political consequence of this for the colonial authorities was that incipient middle class became a source of nationalist assertion (cf Sklar, 1979). They organised in associational forms including political parties and began to place demands on the executive state to end colonialism and democratise.

When the anti-colonial associations engaged the colonial state, they had a broad vision of an end to colonialism. This demand was the most significant political demand of the period. It became the basis of shared interests among the native petty bourgeois elites and workers. Also the struggle integrated ethnically mobilized interests such as town unions and tribal associations. In effect, the struggle led to an alliance that cut across social classes. Some journalistic outfits owned by local petty bourgeois elements became supportive of workers' struggles. At the same time, workers were sympathetic to political travails of some of the leading petty bourgeois nationalists at the time such as Nnamdi Azikiwe whose journalistic outfits were closed by the colonial government for expressing sympathy with workers union over a labour struggle with the state (cf Nnoli, 2011).

These groups were able to produce a feeling of community as the participants constituted themselves along the lines of their primary interests which were to fight either exclusion or exploitation. They produced national links both spatially and across class lines. Membership of the anti-colonial organisations had a national spread. Finally, they evolved political organisations to press home their interests. Their organisation at the economic level such as workers organisation could be seen in the economic terms of class, but their alliance at the political level has to be understood in terms of class unity.

Class unity was proposed by Lenin as an important step in colonial revolutions. He saw that it was necessary to make use of the cooperation of the bourgeois national-revolutionary elements. However, he meant this alliance to be temporary in the process of which the proletarians must maintain freedom of action (See Bing, 2009). In Nigeria's case, it was not really the working class that was making use of the petty-bourgeoisie. Instead, the critical mass of the workers and the importance of their strategies of industrial action in engaging the colonial state were used by the local petty bourgeoisie to advance their interest. Precisely, the petty bourgeoisie were struggling for political inclusion. Nnoli (2011) rightly argued that the colonial struggle was tailored along petty bourgeois ideological lines. Even when petty bourgeois organisations like the Zikist Movement and later, the Action Group political party did not mind adopting radical ideological clichés, their interests were far from being radical (See Olusanya, 1966). The import of this is that competing class projects may sometimes be obscured when forces coalesce as actors in civil society in the war of position to transform a certain political practice. In Nigeria, there was a unity of interest around democratic promises of anti-colonial struggle. However, the end of the struggle showed that the emergent local elite of power fostered this unity of general interest as a strategy to achieve power.

The Post-Colonial Phase

The end of colonialism was a victory for the dominant interests embedded in the coalitions in civil society. It brought about the actualisation of some indices of democracy such as formal sovereignty, constitution, elections, parliament, executive and judicial institutions of political rule. But these were merely procedural components of democracy. These institutions failed to address the substantive issues of democracy as expected by the masses during the anti-colonial struggle. The earlier expectations of the masses from independence was to have a clean break from the new way of life imposed by the White man and to regain control of their lands and other resources. However, their expectations later broadened to include improved standard of living, greater returns for their labour, improved facilities for transport and sale of their farm produce, education as a means of social mobility that would ensure better life for their children, adequate water supply, electricity, healthcare

facilities (see Ade Ajayi, 1982). Most of the major political parties and movements in the colonial era had become part of the post-colonial government. Former coalitions of the petty bourgeois and proletarian organisations in democratic struggles collapsed. The reason is that the privileges of former colonial rulers had been taken over by the petty bourgeoisie some of whom became the new managers of state power. There was a re-alignment of interests in which the masses that allied with petty bourgeois organisations in the democratic struggle were abandoned by the new elite of power. At the same time, the state retained its essential authoritarian character as in colonial rule.

Another turn in relations of forces in Nigeria came with military intervention in politics caused by a general crisis of the state. The military rulers allied with feudal forces represented by some traditional rulers. They also collaborated with politicians, bureaucrats and technocrats. Long years of domination by this alliance represented in political rule by the military diminished the minimal democratic progress made during the anti-colonial struggles. Political rule under the military became repressive against the critical press and public opinion. Military regimes also preferred to respond to many legitimate democratic demands of the working class, peasants, students, organisations and trade unions with coercion. In dealing with these groups, the regimes mostly applied either harsh military decrees or physical force to prevent further agitations for democratisation.

The military regimes also played deceptive games of promising to return to elective civil rule. This helped the regimes to leave the citizens in long suspense of expectations for democratic change. In this regard, Ajayi (2007) saw transition to civil rule programmes as strategy for continued military rule. General Babagida postponed his regimes transition to civil rule thrice and bungled the process in the end with the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential elections. General Abacha also delayed the process until he had put structures in place to enable him succeed himself as a civilian leader. The process of his transmutation to a civilian leader was on before he died while still in power. The military rulers also applied the strategy of propping groups from within civil society organisations to support the military

government and undermine other actors in civil society who demanded democratic transformation of the state. This practice was common under the military regimes of General Ibrahim Babangida and General Sanni Abacha. Nonetheless, in the light of relations of forces, military rule could not be said to be representing the entire military as a national force. Rather the military managers of state power represented the political forces which benefit from political domination in the form of authoritarian military rule. Both civilian elements and military officers were part of these political forces.

Military intervention is viewed by Smith (1996) as a way of managing relations under pronounced political conflict or crisis of hegemony rather than changing power structure. He further noted that coups in many instances speed up circulation of elites and realignment of factions of the ruling classes more often than they bring a fundamental change in the organisation of state power and its allocation between rather than within classes. This means that military intervention represents a specificity of relations of forces. Nun's (1986) work on how military coup is largely a middle class phenomenon that mostly benefits the same class reinforces this position. In Nigeria, the class in power does not act for itself alone. Its actions also represents powerful feudal forces (represented by some powerful traditional rulers such as emirs), external interests (external institutions such as Multi-National Companies with business interests in the country) and other local forces (cf Sklar, 1979). In most cases, the military intervenes under crisis which could threaten the fundamental interest of this dominant alliance in the Nigerian state. The progress of democratisation is related to the disposition of these forces.¹⁸ They either undermine the process through military coup or engineer it to produce a perverse form of democracy such as the third wave variant that emphasizes only procedures or even a worse form of the third wave democracy in which most aspects of the institutional

¹⁸ The dominant forces may not necessarily be in agreement on all matters. For instance, on the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election, the politicized military officers, some traditional rulers, politicians and technocrats were united in support of the continuity of the state on the path of military rule. There was also a faction of the political elite that agitated for the restoration of the outcome of the election. The activism of the latter group contributed to the tension between state and civil society. However, the authoritarian elites continued to dominate political rule with military governance until 1999.

procedures are breached. Zakaria (1997) described this perverse model as ‘illiberal’ democracy.

In the post military era, the struggle for political democracy remains ever present. But it is no longer about return to elective civil rule. Rather it includes the substantive demands by the citizens for qualitative improvement of their living standards. Labour and trade unions still demand improvement of the poor living standard of workers. There are also groups mobilizing in connection with improvement on aspects of procedural issues of democracy such as the conduct of free and fair ballots. Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) of the Catholic church, labour unions and a long list of other civil society associations organise to monitor elections, issues of accountability by political office holders, human rights, gender issues, environmental and a host of other issues. Journalists and other activists not only consistently demand for institutionalisation of a free press but also they struggle for legal basis for freedom of information.

From the foregoing narrative, the democratic forces in Nigerian civil society have struggled through the colonial era to the present time with such strategies as, dialogue, debates, public criticism of state actions. Sometimes they engage in physical demonstrations too. Occasionally there may be radical oriented ones like the Zikist movement of the colonial era that insisted on disobedience to the undemocratic colonial state. Some political activist groups became pronounced during the struggle against the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential elections and they included human rights organisations and other political groupings. There were also social forces acting through associational forms and framework of mass communication that were propped to counter the democracy movements and mobilize support for the undemocratic regimes. While this later group were mostly non-violent, their interests aligned with non-democratic pursuits of the ruling forces. This process represents relations of forces in which agents acting in two broad lines of either democratisation or de-democratisation compete for ascendancy.

Democratic struggle is a long drawn and continuing process. For instance, after the compromise by the ruling group to conduct elections at the peak of military rule, the procedures were flawed in a strategic effort to justify their intent to continue the undemocratic project. In effect what actually happened was an undemocratic reorganisation of political domination. Gramsci captured this in the note that:

a crisis cannot give the attacking forces the ability to organise with lightning speed in time and space; still less can it endow them with fighting spirit. Similarly, the defenders are not demoralized, nor do they abandon their positions, even among the ruins, nor do they lose their faith in their own strength or their own future (Gramsci, 1971, p. 235).

This idea captures the fact that the end of a specific expression of an undemocratic order like the military rule may not translate to a full empowerment of democratic forces in the state or extinguish the grip of the dominant authoritarian forces on political power.

The engagement for the embedding of democracy continues between differently oriented forces in executive state and civil society. This logic is true of all societies but in varying levels. Where democratic outcomes are substantial, the forces aligning to create this outcome engage in actions to sustain the order. In the absence of sufficient democratic engagement to alter the balance of forces, undemocratic forces continue to dominate the political field. But in the two instances, there is a permanent functioning of social dynamics for change. For Nigeria, the democratic forces are still comparatively weak; operate more in the space of civil society than the executive state but lack sufficient force to dispel the dominant undemocratic forces. Some of them create pertinent effect in their demands on the state. Others operate as weak entities that make no demands on the state. There are yet some that make particularistic demands while the forces that control the state continue to weaken the democratic forces with coercion and different forms of penetration of the space of civil society with the use of proxy associations. To be sure these are relations of forces which demonstrate that the struggle for democratisation in Nigeria is between forces in favour and those that are not favourably disposed to democratic outcomes.

To apply this dialectical framework in the interpretation of Nigeria, the subsequent chapters shall explore relations of forces at various levels of social practices beginning from the colonial era. Relations of forces in state and civil society and how they produce authoritarian outcomes, the deepening of social crisis and the establishment of democratic institutions shall be explored in the following important contexts of civil society in Nigeria. They are context of the press, context of organised labour, context of pro-regime and anti-regime civil society organisations and context of dialogues for constitution-making and political reforms.

Chapter 6

Relations of Forces and Authoritarian Outcomes

This chapter commences the illustrations of relations of forces in the sites of executive state and civil society in Nigeria. The basic proposition that underpins the chapter is that if the dominant agency of the executive state has authoritarian inclination and successfully dominates other agents in the integral state, the resulting order will be authoritarianism. The chapter will first lay out indicators for authoritarianism. It continues with a diachronic presentation of an account of the various ways in which managers of state power and their allies respond to democratic demands from social forces. The chapter will also examine how the ruling group apply the apparatus of state on the most pronounced actors in civil society including the press, organised labour and radical activist groups. The scope of the narrative will include the two major historical eras of the modern state in Nigeria: the colonial and post-colonial eras. Finally, there will be an analysis of the conjuncture of the colonial and post-colonial eras regarding how the practices of agents in the political field, reflect dialectical relations of forces.

Social practices embedded in relations of force in Nigeria incline either towards democratisation or de-democratisation. The first chapter of this work has specified what may be considered as democracy. But reverses from democracy or de-democratisation is rather a broad concept and bears some specification. Linz and Stepan (1996) developed a number of ideal typologies of regimes different from democracy. These include: authoritarianism, totalitarianism, post totalitarianism and sultanism. However, none of their descriptions completely fits Nigeria in terms of empirical indices. Linz and Stepan's description of authoritarianism is close to the Nigerian experience but will be modified to be analytically applicable to Nigeria. The point of this is to avoid a slipshod assumption that any system that is not a democracy can only be authoritarian despite other possible undemocratic regime types.

Linz's criteria for classifying regime types based on the regime's relationship to pluralism, ideology, mobilization and leadership leads him to define authoritarian regimes as:

political systems with limited, not responsible political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader and occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones (Cited in Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 38).

It is important to note that the conditions for authoritarian systems of Linz (1964 cited in Linz & Stepan, 1996) tend to assume that by reversing these conditions democracy is achieved. His framework therefore projects a minimalist democracy. Even though minimalist democracy falls short of substantive democracy that centrally includes social citizenship, it still constitutes a necessary step for such progression. Besides, some of Linz's indices are too broad for analytical usefulness. The index of leadership for instance requires clear operationalization. The use of coercion to suppress opposition as was common in most military dictatorships may be a part of Linz's index of leadership though he did not specify this. But this index should be a salient component of the model to make it a useful tool for analyzing Nigeria's experience of authoritarian regimes.

The criterion adopted by Linz that authoritarian regimes do not have extensive or intensive mobilization also bears elaboration. He reckoned that at some point in the development of authoritarian regimes, they may engage in some level of mobilization, but suggested that this is neither extensive nor intensive. But the Nigerian experience tends to reverse this claim. Military regimes in Nigeria had sought mobilisation for support of their policies and some of them tried to subtly build a deep support base for their ambitions to transform from military dictatorship to civilian dictatorship. The regime of General Ibrahim Babangida engaged in the establishment and funding of mobilisational platforms such as the National Council of Women Society (NCWS); an arm of the bureaucracy used for mobilisation called Mass Mobilisation for Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER); National

Directorate of Foods, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) for programmes and policies of the regime (Tar, 2008). Similar platforms of mobilization used under Babangida's regime were also used by the regime of General Abacha. During Abacha's rule, MAMSER was retained with a change of name to National Orientation Agency (NOA). In addition, both the Babangida and Abacha regimes aided mercenary politicians and patron-seeking Non-Governmental Organisations to set up organisations of support and mobilization in support of their regimes (cf LeVan, 2011). These are illustrations of commitment to mobilization. Though Linz qualified mobilization into extensive and intensive there could hardly be a clear line between the two based on the practices of military dictatorships in Nigeria from the mid-1980s to late 1990s. Authoritarian regimes do mobilize even if for undemocratic purposes. Thus, for the criterion of mobilisation, what needs to be reviewed in Linz's typology is that an authoritarian regime may mobilize, not for democratic ends but for its own long term survival and also for countering mobilisations that potentially threaten it.

Linz and Stepan (1996) tried to address the limitations of this model by suggesting in a revised version, that for countries on transition path, a particular authoritarian regime within its later stages might have “ a robust civil society, a legal culture supportive of constitutionalism and rule of law, a usable state bureaucracy that operates within professional norms and a reasonably well-institutionalized economic society” (Linz & Stepan, 1996). They suggested that for such a polity, the first and only necessary item on the initial democratisation agenda would relate to the creation of democratic institutions, autonomy, authority, power and legitimacy. Again, the only index that could apply to Nigeria in this revised model is robust democratic activism in civil society during military dictatorships. In the present post military era, a legal culture moving increasingly towards formal constitutionalism could be added to it. Thus we can reformulate the elements of authoritarianism with the following indices: lack of responsible pluralism; lack of clear ideology but opportunistic appropriation of bits of an ideology or patchwork of ideologies (this may fit into Linz's distinctive mentalities); political mobilization for regime survival rather than for mass participation and democracy, small leadership but with patron-client

linkages to society; absence of political representation and where it exists, free elections will be lacking; non-generalization of the principle of rule of law; intolerance to political opposition; pronounced use of the coercive apparatus of the state on citizens and the use of state institutions to suppress citizens demands and free expression. It is these indices that characterise authoritarianism for the purpose of this study. The entire set of conditions may not necessarily be present at one time but a prevalence of at least a half of the indicators in a state point to an authoritarian trend. Applying this understanding of authoritarianism, this study now evaluates how the Nigerian state relates with the press, labour and radical activist groups across the colonial and post-colonial epochs.

The State and the Press in the colonial era

The press is a significant actor in civil society. As a medium it could articulate both consent and dissent in relation to the existing hegemony. Bratton (1994) underlines the importance of the press in Africa's democratisation by observing that African journalists, as part of the driving forces within civil society use their publications to spread political opinions that may be censored as dissident by the political mainstream. Also, Habermas (1989) demonstrated the crucial place of the press in civil society. Mindful of the strength of mechanisms of public communication, those who operate the executive apparatus of the state seek to regulate the press in order to curtail its explosive extreme by which it may articulate dissent against the executive state and dominant forces in society. Regulation of the press is itself appropriate. However such regulation could be deployed by undemocratic forces to preserve the form of society that undermines rights of legitimate free speech in a democracy. The common strategies of press control under authoritarian rule in Nigeria are: use of legal instruments, coercion and use of government sponsored media to counter critical ones.

The colonial government was not unaware of the mobilizational power of the press. It therefore sought to regulate the media using legal instruments in a manner that grants the government significant control over what is put out for public readership. Ogbondah (1992) drew attention to the first law to regulate newspaper publication

which was introduced in 1903 with the enactment of Newspaper Ordinance (No 10). The law required that prospective newspaper proprietors made and signed an affidavit containing the address and the real and true names and addresses of its proprietors, printers and publishers. It further required them to execute a bond of two hundred and fifty pounds with one or more sureties. The law provides that:

From and after commencement of this Ordinance, no person shall print or publish or cause to be printed or published within this colony any newspaper unless he shall have previously

1. made signed and sworn an affidavit before any police, magistrate or District Commissioner or any Commissioner of Oaths or registered in the office of the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court an affidavit containing the several matters and things following, that is to say (a) the correct title or names of the newspaper, (b) a true description of the house or building wherein such newspaper is intended to be printed, and (c) the real and true names of the abode of the person or persons intended to be the printer or printers, publisher or publishers, proprietor or proprietors of the same; and
2. given and executed and registered in the Office of the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court a bond in the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds with one or more sureties as may be required and approved by the Attorney General on condition that such printer or printers, publisher or publishers, proprietor or proprietors, shall pay to his Majesty, His Heirs and Successors every penalty which may at any time be imposed upon or adjudged against him or them (Ogbondah, 1992, p. 5).

Ogbondah goes further to explain that the colonial state imposed the above law because it lacked the mandate of the governed and sought to retain power by introducing a measure to regulate and control the press and possible criticism of government actions and policies. At that period, the newspaper as a public media was the weapon with which the educated Africans criticized the colonial state and imperial policies. The fear of the colonial government was that unchecked press criticism could create negative publicity and lead to various forms of resistance.

The law, according to Ogbondah, generated widespread condemnation from the press and the general public beginning from the time it was proposed at the Legislative Council. When it was introduced, the newspaper, *Lagos Standard* denounced the Newspaper Ordinance and argued that it was meant to weaken the press which was the mouthpiece of the public and advocate of inalienable rights of the people as well as the medium through which the governed expressed their grievances and sought redress from the rulers.

In a similar vein, the seditious Offences Ordinance of 1909 criminalised the publication of false reports or statements that exposed a government official or the government itself to ridicule or contempt. The Seditious Offences Ordinance under sections 3 and 5 reads:

Whoever by words either spoken or written ...brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt...the government established by law in Southern Nigeria, shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to two years or with a fine or with both imprisonment and fine. Whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement rumour or report, with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause any officer of the Government of Southern Nigeria or any person otherwise in the Service of His Majesty to disregard or fail in his duty as such officer or servant of his majesty ... shall be punished (cited in Ogbondah & Onyedike, 1991, p. 63).

In 1908, a newspaper publication by Herbert Macaulay, a Journalist and a foremost Nigerian anti-colonial activist accused the colonial Governor of Southern Nigeria, Walter Egerton of “ wicked appropriation of land...personification of prejudice... and scandals” (Omu 1978 cited in Ibrahim, 1998, p. 25) . It was important to the colonial government to prevent or “...punish publications ...designed to influence an excitable populace the bulk of whom...have only recently emerged from barbarism and are still actuated by old traditions of race” (Omu 1968 cited in Ogbondah & Onyedike, 1991, p. 64). Both the Newspapers Ordinance of 1903 and Sedition Ordinance of 1909 failed to prevent critical opinions from the press in matters of

governance. Relying on these laws, Governor H.S. Freeman sanctioned *Iwe Irohin* (a missionary organ produced in Abeokuta from 1859) for its perceived prejudicial effects on Her Majesty's policies. Also, journalists like Herbert Macaulay were imprisoned several times under these laws (Ibrahim, 1998).

The use of legal restrictions by the colonial state could not subdue the critical press. Indeed the press grew increasingly critical and influential. Between 1862 and 1913, James Davies of the *Nigerian Times*, John Jackson of *Lagos Weekly Times*, Sapara Williams of *Lagos Weekly Record* and E. D. Morel of the *African Mail* used the platform of the press to fight against undemocratic colonial laws, racial segregation, land alienation and taxes among several other authoritarian practices (see Ibrahim, 1998). Herbert Macaulay also used the press to fight the colonial water rate policy, the Sedition law of 1909 and the non-observation of the provisions of the treaty of cession of Lagos by the colonial government.

Lord Lugard, the first colonial Governor-General of Nigeria was alarmed at the growth and influence of the activist press and convinced his Nigerian friend, Sir Kitoye Ajasa to launch a pro-colonial newspaper, *The Nigerian Pioneer*. Also, the European chamber of commerce in 1925 started a conservative pro-colonial newspaper, *The Daily Times* (see Nnoli, 2008). This led to the emergence of two tendencies in the Nigerian press – one conservative and pro-colonial, the other activist and anti-colonial. Regarding the strategies of relations of forces in the context of the press, three trends are observable, one is the use of the coercive power of the state (such as imprisonment of journalists) on the critical/activist section of the press, the other is the use of prohibitive legislation against this section of the press. The other tactic was the penetration of the press (as Lord Lugard did) to influence the emergence of narratives which counter the critical opinions of the activist press against the colonial state. This role of the activist press indicates generally that the space of the press transcends the role of ideological apparatus of the state. However, state-organised or supported press can function as an apparatus for the rationalization of its form and project. Overall, the contrasting objectives pursued by different

sections of the press around democratic struggle expresses an aspect of dialectical engagement of social forces.

Habermas's (1989) historiography of the transformation of the public sphere bears relevance on this matter, because, according to him, when the press became a dealer in public opinion, the state also assumed the important role of censoring what gets to the public. The authoritarian colonial state determines what legislation it puts in place to limit responses to its governance from the press, which may lead to mass action or crisis in the colonial state. In sum, the origin of the use of laws in Nigeria to constrain free democratic expression and dissemination of critical viewpoints by the press goes back to the colonial era.

Apart from being the origin of the use of legal constraints to muzzle the press, the colonial state was also the initiator of the use of proscription or application of outright ban on oppositional press. During the 1945 general strike by Nigerian workers in demand of improved wages, the colonial government accused the *West African Pilot* and *Daily Comet* Newspapers which were established by Nnamdi Azikiwe, a Nigerian nationalist, of contributing to labour agitation and therefore banned the two newspapers from July 8, to August 15, 1945. The colonial government had claimed that the two newspapers, two days before their ban presented an interview with the country's Public Relations Officer and the position of moderate trade union leaders who did not actively support workers strike, in a manner that ridiculed both the Public Relations Officer and the moderate trade unionists (Ananaba, 1969; Falola, 2009; Mordi, 2009). This was a smokescreen for punitive action against journalistic outfits whose critical views were a source of discomfiture to the colonial state. Similarly, when proposals for a new constitution were called, the general workers' union, the Nigeria Trade Union Congress (N.T.U.C) had sent a memorandum containing among other things a proposal for universal adult suffrage. But the colonial government ended up retaining real powers in the hands of the Colonial Governor and his Executive Council. In addition, the constitution moved towards reinforcement of the alliance between the British colonial authorities and the autocratic native chiefs through whom they governed at the local levels. One of the

activist newspapers, *The West African Pilot* in its editorial critically reviewed the situation arguing that:

Any system of government which nourishes feudalism or advances a baronial class who must thrive at the expense of the lower classes is undesirable ... The powerful indirect rulers of the north enjoy good salaries (5,000 pounds per annum) and Oriental palaces; they have nothing to complain about. But the classes under them have no justice, no education and their health is not enviable. The building up of a ruling class, vested with power, supplied with money and set up to live in pomp and luxury side by side with a poor and underfed peasant class, will have exactly the same result as such a system has had in other countries – namely, the people seek the destruction of such institutions (Birchman, 1945, para. 38).

To be sure, this kind of commentary on an authoritarian government is likely to be received with displeasure by the authorities. Thus at the slightest chance, the colonial government moved to suppress the media which could be a source of impetus to growth of political opposition.

The state and the Press in the Post-colonial Era (from 1960)

The major characterization of the Nigerian state in both the colonial and postcolonial period is that the executive state apparatus is too strong with respect to relations with forces of contestation in civil society. The strength of the executive state is manifested in the existence of a strong central government. Each regime has sought to preserve this structure to the peril of any opposing group. In the period following independence of Nigeria, some civilian and military regimes have in a manner similar to that of the colonial government, limited free expression from the press. Restrictive press laws and physical brutality on members of the press are usually common in such regimes. For instance the 1964 Newspapers Amendment Act, which shares similarities with the colonial 1903 Newspaper Ordinance and other anti-press laws, undermines democratic free speech. A related legal code, the Defamatory and Offensive Publications Act of 1966 is arbitrarily expressed to include “publications which are likely to provoke or bring into disaffection, any section of the community”

(Global Campaign for Free Expression, 1997). This broad and arbitrary definition of defamation will enable political authorities with the sufficient flexibility to interpret and use the law against the legitimate expression of dissent. It is interesting to note that this law was passed in an elective civil rule after Nigeria had become independent.

In the years of military dictatorship decrees were used to cut down if not eliminate freedom of the press. One of them was the Decree No 4 of 1984 which “criminalized false press reports, written statements or rumour that exposed an officer of the military government, a state or federal government to ridicule” (Ogbondah, 1992, p. 10). Two journalists had earlier been arrested in April 4, 1984 for publishing news about diplomatic postings. It was two weeks after this arrest that Decree 4 was enacted and back-dated to March 29, 1984 in order to cover the two journalists who were detained (Nnoli, 2011). The most formidable section of the law provides as follows:

Any person who publishes in any form, whether written or otherwise, any message, rumour, report or statement, being a message, rumour, statement or report which is false in any material particular or which brings or is calculated to bring the Federal Military Government or the Government of a state or public officer to ridicule or disrepute, shall be guilty of an offence punishable under this Decree (cited in Ogbondah, 1992, p. 11).

The law, according to Ogbondah, empowered the head of the military government to prohibit the circulation of any newspaper that might be detrimental to national security. It provided for the trial of offenders by a specially constituted military tribunal made up of members of the armed forces and a high court judge. The objective of Decree 4 according to the military government was to check excesses of the press and make it responsible. However, the Decree was actually drafted to prevent criticisms of the regime. There were suggestions that the military Head of State at the time, General Buhari was corrupt and lacked the moral high ground to fight corruption as was initiated by his regime. Expressing the relationship between the military and the press, Janowitz suggests, the military regimes are often more

repressive in dealing with civilian political groups. Such regimes curtail freedom of speech and repress newspapers. Tension between the military and journalists are particularly acute. “The military profession views journalists as irresponsible and almost traitorous, since they are continually criticizing” (Janowitz, 1964, p. 88). The 1984 Decree clearly illustrates the thesis of Janowitz. The Decree is wrongly suggesting that the “‘protection of public servants’ rather than ‘truth’ should be the basic principle of journalism” (Ibrahim, 1998, p. 24). This is an index of authoritarian leadership. It does not tolerate opposition and within available limits, it imposes constraints on dissemination of information that could lead to public scrutiny of its activities or mass action against political misrule.

Decree 4 of 1984 could be regarded as an incarnate of certain colonial press laws that sought to control critical discourse which is a characteristic of a democratic public sphere. In the nature of the Newspaper Ordinance of 1903, the 1955 newspaper law of Eastern Nigerian Government was enacted to regulate the publication and distribution of newspapers in the former Eastern region. Apart from the details of operators of a newspaper, those of its news agents and place of operation were also required during registration. The explicit requirement of the contact details of all those involved in newspaper production tends to suggest an undue state surveillance on them.

Ogbondah and Onyedike narrated the journey of the colonial newspaper laws to post-colonial use of laws to restrict the press and how they became the model for framing chapter 81 of the Western Nigerian Newspaper Law of 1957 and Section 23 of Northern Nigerian Penal Code. Thereafter it was incorporated into the Newspaper Amendment Act of 1964 which affected the whole country. The journey of authoritarian press laws in Nigeria connects with similar laws of the past and manifests the uneasy dialectics of existence between undemocratic forces in the executive state structure and the impulses for transformations reflected in the activist press. On the surface, these laws would appear as checks against dissemination of malicious publications, but they mostly served to protect the political regimes that enacted them. It was the same attempt at regime protection that led to the enactment

of Decree No 4 of 1984. Its origin may be traced to a distant precedent provided by the colonial press laws.

Official repression against the press did not stop with the Buhari regime's Decree 4. The succeeding military dictatorship of Ibrahim Babangida continued in a similar vein. He initially played a populist gambit by repealing the obnoxious Decree No 4 of his predecessor and released journalists incarcerated under the decree. But some years down the line, he became even more dictatorial than the immediate past regime. In 1993 alone, the Babangida led military regime enacted Decrees 33, 35, 43 and 48 to control the independent press (Olorunyomi, 1996). Outstanding among the press control laws of the regime was the Treason and Treasonable Offences Decree of May 1993 (nicknamed the death decree) which made punishable by death, the publication of anything, which in the view of authorities could disrupt the fabric of the country (Olukotun, 2002, p. 329). These are restrictions meant to limit the critical power of the press. The reason for the government's action is its awareness of the delegitimizing capacity of a free press against undemocratic rule.

The regime of Ibrahim Babandiga imprisoned many journalists. At the time he stepped down in August 1993, four senior editors of *Tell*, a news magazine: Nosa Igiebor, Ayodele Akinotu, Kolawole Ilori and Onome Osifo-Whiskey were in detention. Also, after proscription of the News magazine, all its editors were declared wanted on the national television. Besides, families of journalists were invaded and terrorized by security agents. Babangida's regime is widely accused of the brutal assassination of Dele Giwa, an editor of a weekly news magazine called *Newswatch* (see Afolayan, 2000; Olukotun, 2010).

General Babangida also applied the strategy of closures against the press. In 1992, his regime shut down the *African Concord* (a news magazine owned by the late millionaire businessman Chief M.K.O Abiola who won the annulled Presidential election of June 12, 1993) and demanded an apology for a publication which the regime deemed offensive to the government. Also in May 1993, the security agents invaded the premises of the *Tell* magazine and confiscated 70,000 copies of the

magazine printed for distribution. Another weekly news magazine, *The News*, was proscribed four months after it started publication. In July 1993 alone, seven media houses were shut down (Olorunyomi, 1996). Following the example of his predecessor dictator, General Abacha equally used the strategy of closures and seizure of publications of the activist media houses. In a sequel to the closure of *The News* magazine, the company floated the *Tempo* magazine and maintained the same style of activist journalism. As a consequence, the police started prosecuting vendors found selling the magazine for circulation of ‘seditious materials’ (Olukotun, 2002, p. 324). The closures and operational difficulties imposed by the government on the critical section of the press represent the strategies of the ruling group in relations of forces.

On the conviction that the existing harsh laws and other measures are not remitting the influence of the critical press, General Babangida’s regime continued to issue further Decrees to narrow the space of the oppositional press. The Decree 43 of 1993 for instance, stipulates the establishment of a Newspaper Registration Board within the Ministry of Information and required that Newspapers are registered annually with the Board. The cost of registration was made very expensive. First, the Newspaper has to pay a pre-registration deposit of two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) Naira,¹⁹ and a non-refundable fee of one hundred thousand (100,000) Naira.²⁰ Non-compliance with this requirement attracts a closure of the newspaper and court proceedings against offenders. Conviction leads to a fine of two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) Naira (US\$3,125) or imprisonment for up to seven years or both. The Newspaper Board under this regulation was empowered to deny license to a Newspaper if it is not satisfied with the performance of the Newspaper in the previous year. When a court of law in Lagos ruled that the Decree was null and void, it took only a few days for the Decree to be revalidated under section 5 of the Constitution Suspension and Modification Decree No 107 of 1993 (Global Campaign for Free Expression, 1997).

¹⁹ About 3125 USD

²⁰ About 1250 USD

The military regime headed by General Sanni Abacha from November 1993 to June 1998, was also confronted with robust democratic activism from the oppositional press. General Abacha's plan to transmute from a military head of state to a civilian leader drew massive opposition. It seems that one of the outcomes of prolonged military dictatorship is that it gave greater impetus to the vibrancy of democratic agents in civil society, though patron-seeking undemocratic agents also increased at the same time. Opposition from the activist press led to the enactment of Decrees 6, 7 and 8 of 1994 which like other preceding Decrees were aimed at limiting freedom of the press. Falling back on these laws, the government incarcerated many journalists (Walker, 1999). The political situation between 1993 and 1998 illustrates according to Afoloyan "the futility and danger of coercion in the face of awakened, politically sensitized and determined citizenship"(2000, p. 149).

Coercion on journalists who worked with activist oriented news journals was common under the regime of General Abacha. Olukotun (2010) recorded sixteen persons in a list of journalists who were political detainees as at December 1997 under the regime. Bagauda Kaltho of *The News* magazine who was abducted in 1996 died in jail and his death was to be known two years later, after the death of General Sanni Abacha. Dapo Oloruyomi, Nosa Igiebor and other journalists fled abroad to escape assassination. In short, this period in state-civil society relations was characterized by the control of the executive state by agents that could not manage the political field under democratic norms, democratic pluralism, legitimate popular mobilization and free popular election of leaders. The visible indicators of authoritarianism were coercive authoritarian laws and use of outright force on various platforms through which democratic activism were coordinated and expressed in civil society. The press was one of these platforms.

As argued earlier, the space of civil society while ideally a site for democracy is nevertheless prone to penetration by undemocratic forces. Authoritarian states penetrate this vital space by using sections of it for organising consent. While such regimes repress democratic oppositional press, the government-owned public media play propaganda roles for the regime. Akingbulu (2010) reports that both the *Federal*

Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and *Nigeria Television Authority* (NTA) are voices of the Nigerian government in which citizens democratic preferences do not find enough scope for expression. These outfits were propaganda channels of the government under military dictatorship. As Afolayan (2000) reported, under the regime of General Babangida, the government directed all government owned media, such as the *Daily Times*, the *New Nigerian* (both print media), the Nigerian Television Authority (electronic media) to launch counter-offensive against all opponents of the government. Government use of this approach is similar to the instigation of Sir Kitoye Ajasa by Lord Lugard to set up a newspaper to counter the narratives of the critical press against the colonial government in Nigeria. In the ensuing competition between the oppositional and government media, the government media lost readership. General Babangida's resort to the same approach in an era where government has also invested in the media could be explained away with the reason that these media are also parts of government departments. This aspect of the role of the press is the tendency represented in the idea of Althusser (1966) that the press is one of the ideological apparatuses of the state. Therefore, they are like public relations apparatus which present the point of view of the government. Dialectical 'relations of forces' is the logic of civil society struggles. This is based on the logic of contradictions in which mutually opposed forces engage one another within the same site, such as the context of the press. The point here is that the press as a platform of civil society does not maintain a closed boundary against forces in control of the government. Indeed the government deploys the arm of the press under its control or influence to justify the viewpoint of the government. Here, press criticism is applied by oppositional forces in contesting the undemocratic state, while the application of repressive laws is a strategy of ruling forces who end up suspending democracy and projecting an authoritarian form of the state.

State and Organised Labour in the colonial Era

The 1945 COLA strike

Organised labour is an important factor in Nigerian civil society and has remained historically active in democracy struggles in the country. In line with this view, Tar

(2009) noted that labour unions in Nigeria have spearheaded democratic struggles and endured stiff repression from the state. Though organised labour usually gravitates towards economism in its demands, these economic demands verge on matters of social justice. But apart from specific demands connected with contest against exploitation and improvement of material conditions of existence, Nigerian workers have historically been known to also make explicit political demands as narrated in this section and in the next chapter.

The Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) strike of 1945 was based on economic demands in the first instance. But the chain of events following it shows that every economic action is also political and perhaps ideological. The immediate cause of the 1945 general strike was the unwillingness of the state to honour its pledges on workers' pay. In the account of Ananaba (1969) Government had in 1942 supplemented the wages and salaries of its employees with the grant of Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) and promised to review the allowance according to trends in Cost of Living Index. This promise was made by Sir Bernard Bourdillon who retired in 1943 as Governor of Nigeria. Bourdillon's successor, Arthur Richards, saw no reason to accept the wage reforms as promised by his predecessor. Therefore, his regime refused to implement it.

COLA was awarded in July 1942. By early 1943, there were indications of a sharp rise in the cost of living. On the basis of the promise made by Bourdillon in 1942, the index figure in October 1943 justified a review of the COLA awards. Nonetheless, this promise was not kept. On March 22, 1945, the Joint Executive of the Government Technical Workers set up at the representative meeting of February 10, 1945 wrote to the Government demanding a minimum wage of 2s.6d for labourers and a 50 percent increase on the existing COLA with effect from April 1, 1944. The workers noted that granting these demands was going to "minimize the tide of fast approaching national disintegration in health and stamina and in order to reduce further sapping of vitality among the workers" (Ananaba, 1969, p. 45). In response to this letter, the government acknowledged the rise in the cost of living because certain essential commodities were in short supply, but rejected the workers claim that there

was fast approaching national disintegration in health and stamina or sapping of vitality among workers and therefore declined to revise the rate of pay or Cost of Living Allowance.

Despite the government's refusal to grant the relief sought by the workers by way of an increased COLA, it went out of its way to give special relief to European workers thereby creating room for the accusation that its refusal to concede to workers' demand was based on racial discrimination rather than ability to pay. In May 1942, the Government introduced the payment of separation allowance to Europeans whose wives were not living together with them in Nigeria. In 1943, that is, when the Cost of Living Allowance was supposed to be revised, the Government rather revised the separation allowance and extended its pay for other dependants as well as for wives. In August 1944, the payment of local allowance was introduced, and for the first time, the payment was extended to Africans holding 'superior posts'. Africans were paid three quarters of the amount received by the Europeans. However, the demand by other African workers for a minimum daily wage of 2s.6d was declined.

The workers strike began and lasted from 22nd June to 2nd August 1945. In some of the provinces, it dragged till 14th August. It received profound sympathy both within and outside the country. It was seen as a justified struggle by the workers for a better standard of living. The nationalist news journals identified with the workers during the struggle. Newspapers of the Zik group were strongly in support of the workers. Consequently, the *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Comet*, the two leading tabloids of the Zik group were banned for five weeks in reprisal.

In a very pronounced show of support, the *Daily Comet* of June 15, 1945 had rendered a very critical comment on the colonial government saying:

We have read Government reply with care, and as far as we can see, it is based on the assumption that if prices of rice, garri and palm oil can be forced down, the African workers' wages may safely be frozen where they now stand. We are afraid we cannot subscribe to this view because it is a faulty

belief that one or two cheap foodstuffs can cause any material improvement (Ananaba, 1969, p. 51).

The kind of social environment generated by the colonial state against the strike and the general show of alliance of interests in civil society between organized labour groups and petty bourgeois elements in the press was a kind of collective action to widen the democratic space which was narrowed by authoritarian governance.

Organised Labour, Activism and state violence

The Iva Valley Massacre

The Iva valley massacre which took place in Enugu Eastern Nigeria in 1949 is arguably the most significant episode in the history of state-labour relations in Nigeria. Brown (nd) noted that with the end of World War II people of British African colonies expected radical social and political changes for their loyal support of the Empire during the war but were confronted with the imposition of increased production target required for the rebuilding of England. The Enugu Government colliery was the site where industrial disputes most clearly demonstrated the link between an economic and political demand. The tussle "...threatened to catapult industrial dispute into a broad-based political crisis..."(Brown, nd, p. para 3). In a broad sense, this crisis is related to collective demands for welfare by workers and the persistence of the colonial authorities on highly exploitative and oppressive production relations.

The detailed narrative of the event by Ananaba (1969) connects the growth of the struggle for workers' welfare with the rise of militant trade unionism in the colliery led by one Mr Okwudili Ojiyi. In September 1944 the Colliery Workers Union and the Colliery Surface Improvement Union declared a dispute in connection with wage increase and payment of daily allowances to hewers. The introduction of a piece rate system as a solution to the demand for a wage increase was rejected by the workers because they did not understand it. Those who refused to work under the piece rate system were dismissed in April 1945. The piece rate system failed as productivity continued to decrease. The colliery management was forced to re-engage the dismissed workers and re-introduce the time rate system following an agreement

between the colliery management and a committee of representatives of the workers appointed by the management. The Colliery Workers Union and the Colliery Surface Improvement Union were not party to the agreement.

The Colliery Workers' Union presented a case for a wage increase following the recommendation of the Miller committee. The claim was rejected by the colliery management on grounds that it did not recognise the union. The union threatened to call out its members on strike and the management replied by issuing a warning notice that workers who participate in the strike would be summarily dismissed. Mr Ojiyi the secretary responded to the challenge by going into the mine to teach the workers the '*welu nwayo*' (which translates in English as 'go slow') approach to work. The 'go slow' approach operated in a way that work would be on, but productivity was continually declining. So successful was this tactic that the colliery management was forced to open discussions with the Colliery Workers Union. The success achieved with the use of strike made the 'go slow' approach popular among the miners. In fact they quickly submitted other claims which the management refused to pay. This again led to series of 'go slow' in the mine. At a point, it was difficult for officials of the CWU to dissuade the workers from the 'go slow' approach.

Hewers in the mine had on September 13, 1949 made a formal demand for seniority pay through the CWU. This was turned down by the management. After series of further pressures by the hewers and sustained insistence of the management that hewers have been considered and are actually being paid the said allowance, the hewers took further industrial action in the form of another 'go slow'. In fact as the 'go slow' proceeded, more and more claims were made. Two top officials of the CWU Ojiyi and Agu tried to persuade the men to call off the strike but could not succeed. In reaction, the colliery management posted notices threatening severe disciplinary action that may lead to dismissal should the strike continue. Thereafter, there was a summary dismissal of more than fifty hewers. This commenced a build-up of tension, particularly as more and more leaders who were pressing the demands were relieved of their positions.

A few days after the dismissal exercise, the workers wives took to the streets and demonstrated against the mistreatment of their men. Fearing that the industrial dispute had a political overtone, a decision was taken in a meeting held by the Chief Commissioner with senior Government officials that explosives must be removed from the Obwetti (Ogbete) and Iva valley mines. The Chief Commissioner thought that some kind of alliance existed between political agitators and the miners. The authorities feared that if workers' agitation continued, they could misuse their access to the explosives in the mines by making them available to political agitators. It was agreed that the explosives would be removed on November 18, 1949. When the process of removing the explosives commenced, over seven to eight hundred men gathered at the mouth of the mine to watch.

When E.J.R Ormiston, the Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police arrived in Iva Valley, he felt threatened by the mood of the miners who were singing and dancing. Their (miners) mood did not deter F.S Phillip, a Senior Superintendent of Police from trying to enlist their support in removing the explosives. This invitation angered the miners who intensified their singing and dancing. Many of them according to Phillips had red pieces of clothes tied to their helmets, wrists and knees and were dancing in a dangerous way. He understood this as a sign of readiness for combat. Consequently Phillips commanded his men to shoot at the miners. In the end twenty one were shot dead while fifty one were wounded (See Ananaba, 1969).

The historical account of the colliery workers episode is important for this study in the sense that it is typical of the state's response to groups that were pressing for improved material existence under a state-organised exploitative relations of production. It could be rightly argued that though economic struggle was directly involved, it was also a struggle for the creation of democratic conditions in which citizens can freely demand and achieve welfare based on their legitimate labour. However, all that mattered to the colonial government was security of conditions for extraction of surpluses and exploitation of labour for the same purpose.

In recent history the state has retained this coercive nature against interests that engage it in the extraction of oil in the Niger Delta region of the country as exemplified by the imprisonment of leaders of striking oil workers in 1994 and the assassination of environmental activists in Ogoniland in 1995 under the authoritarian rule of General Abacha. The dominant agents in the Nigerian state, beginning from the colonial period, had been committed to the securitization of conditions for extraction of surplus without interest in the democratic allocation of values. It was in fact the need for such security that caused concerns about explosives in the colliery getting into the hands of political agitators, who could destabilize the undemocratic relations of production and its supporting political order that was based on force.

The following points of reflection by Ananaba link economic and political practices:

Why did the administration see a purely industrial dispute as a political agitation and why did it decide as the Fitzgerald Commission emphasized, that explosives must be removed at all cost? The evidence given before the Fitzgerald Commission by J.O Field, Senior Assistant Secretary in-charge of Defence and Security provides an answer. Field said that since 1948, it has been apparent that certain elements had been trying to acquire arms and explosives. Although there was no evidence that these elements had any dealings with the miners, the fact remained that several thefts had been committed, involving the loss of thirty cases of explosives in the colliery magazine (Ananaba, 1969, p. 105).

It was the suspicion that some sort of alliance existed between the miners and the so-called political agitators that convinced the chief commissioner and his advisers that events in the colliery were no longer just an industrial dispute. Evidently, the response of the agents of the state in the line of coercion was for the maintenance of stability in an authoritarian order. The state officials felt there was a congruence of economic demands of the miners and political demands of other activists such as the Zikist Movement.

The elaboration of the idea of overdetermination by Althusser (1966) offers a lens for understanding how the levels of 'relations of forces' which also include the political, economic, ideological levels inter-penetrate and determine one another. The economic level spills over the political and other levels. This inter-penetration and the common tendency for one level to also materialize when the other is at play support the organic unity of the levels of relations of forces. In the narratives above, the political and economic levels materialize as dominant in the encounter between the colonial government and workers. The levels at which ideas are organised into material forces is manifested in the relations between the press and the colonial government.

State and Organised Labour after independence

The 1964 General Strike

Organised labour in Nigeria stands out as one of the persistent categories among the groups that engage the state. Its actions are connected with the leading role of the state in the process of accumulation. As the major employer of labour in Nigeria, the post-colonial state has to grapple with struggles associated with wage demands in an environment of economic hardship of workers. The instrument of struggle has mostly been strike action. The 1964 general strike in particular, is significant because, it was the first major labour protest after political independence in 1960. It also underpins the willingness of workers to consistently use legitimate and organised platforms to democratically press for their material well-being. An interesting point about this strike is that it was one in which both economic and political demands were quite explicitly stated as the reasons for the industrial action.

The background to the strike was the Zudonu committee Report forwarded in 1961 to the federal government by the Trades Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC(N) that was not given attention by the government. A similar claim by the Nigerian Trade Union Congress (NTUC) was also ignored by the government. Shortly after, the United Labour Congress of Nigeria emerged to succeed both the TUC(N) and NTUC. The new body took up the wage agitation and wrote the federal government demanding a

general revision of wages and salaries and the introduction of a national minimum wage. As the government would not reply to its letters and reminders, the United Labour Congress of Nigeria issued a threat of general strike. The government's position as presented by the Minister of Establishment and Service Matters was that the period was not an opportune moment to make wage claims. Further, the minister noted that the government's concern was how to create employment and was "not in the mood to negotiate in a manner that would be advantageous to labour" (Ananaba, 1969, p.229).

When consultations between labour and government failed, the United Labour Congress addressed an open letter to all political leaders, all legislators and all governments of the Federation of Nigeria. The letter according to Ananaba (1969) was based in the following issues:

1. Government's plan to introduce Preventive Detention Act: labour deplored this plan which it understood as the most reckless invitation to a new crisis in the nation which introduces the young democratic country on the path to a totalitarian rule which leads inevitably to the violation of human dignity, destruction of freedom and rule of law.
2. Call for National Government: This was an idea bandied at official quarters that there should be an all-party national government in the country with a life span of fifteen years for a start. The planned national government excluded the existence of opposition. Labour condemned this plan and whatever reasons were behind it contending that "a government without an official opposition is an organized deceit of the people, it is the beginning of first treacherous strokes of dictatorship" (Ananaba, 1969, p.234)
3. Economic Distress of the Workers: The workers noted their long plea to the Government to carry out a thorough review of salaries and wages, redraw the wage structure and generally improve their working conditions all of which the government have ignored and left the workers to live in poor conditions.

The letter of the Congress ended with the following appeals:

- a. Drop the contemplated Preventive Detention Act
- b. Abandon the idea of an all-party government without official opposition
- c. Stand for the dignity of every citizen
- d. Defend our national freedom and our personal liberty
- e. Heed the workers' demand for a salaries and wages review
- f. Forward with democracy (Ananaba, 1969, p. 236).

It is clear that the above letter contains as much if not more political demands than economic ones. Thus the labour struggle interconnects economic demands such as better wages, improved working conditions and political conditions necessary to secure civil and political rights of citizens. Sometimes political demands may only be implied in workers struggles. At other times, they are explicit and form a significant part of proletarian agitations. For instance, the resistance against a plan to set up an undemocratic political structure which politicians contrived as 'National Government' was an important part of workers agitations in the 1964 general strike. Struggles of this kind provide context for the unfolding of relations of forces.

Neither the economic nor the political demands placed by the workers were honoured by the government. Consequently, there was a day strike on September 27, 1963. This was followed by the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry by the government (Morgan Commission) to investigate and examine the workers' demands. The Commission began its work in October 1963 and ended in April 1964. Curiously, the report of the Commission was not published. A Joint Action Committee of Labour tried without success to persuade the government to publish the report. In a mass meeting held on May 30, 1964 the Joint Action Committee was mandated to organize a general strike on June 1, 1964 if before that day the government did not release the Morgan Report. In addition to this, the workers demonstrated against non-release of the report in defiance of a ban on public demonstrations in 1962 by Sir Abubakar's Government.

The strike actually started as planned, while the government tried to break it by threat and victimization. When it entered the fifth day, the Prime Minister ordered the workers back to work within 48 hours or face dismissal. In response, a mass meeting of workers adopted a resolution giving the Prime Minister a 48 hour ultimatum to resign his position. On June 7 and 8, exploratory talks took place between labour leaders and representatives of the Federal Government. The strike was called off on the 13th of June 1964.

The striking trend in state/labour relations is that each moment of pronounced struggle between state and organised labour opens up opportunity for political demands. Thus at each given chance, organised labour extends economic demands to demands for democratising political rule. At best, the groups have achieved piecemeal wage concessions without progress on the political demands and at worst the outcome has been coercive reprisal by the state. In all, when the political level of relations of forces is not regulated by democratic practices, workers and mass agitations which may be expressed in strikes go beyond the immediate points related to economic relations articulated as the basis of struggle to matters of political significance. More fundamentally, they revolve around an unspoken democratic need namely, a democratisation of the political and economic structures.

Further high points in relations between labour and the state during the struggle for return to civil rule is left for chapter seven which is on crises, mediation and change. That particular encounter between state and organised labour came at a specific moment of state crisis that once more made political demands part of labour's central objective of struggle.

The State and Labour in the post military era (from 1999)

Since the end of military rule in 1999, organised labour has in many instances acted like the unofficial opposition to government in some aspects of governance especially market reforms in the state. The usual point of major contestation is market reforms especially the removal of the government subsidy on petroleum products consumed within Nigeria and the need for wage improvement. The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) in alliance with other trade unions and civil society organisations use the instrumentality of strikes and mass rallies to compel reduction from the levels of increase on prices of petroleum products preferred by the government. The successes of these groups led the elected regime of President Obasanjo to seek means of reducing the capacity of organised labour from extracting concessions from the government mainly by industrial action. President Obasanjo introduced a bill in the National Assembly in 2004 with the major object of whittling down the strength of the Nigeria Labour Congress. The Bill was designed to strip Nigeria Labour

Congress of its status as the sole labour centre. It later emerged as the Trade Union Amendment Act 2005.

The Amendment Act prescribed two levels of Trade Union organization namely: the trade unions and federation of trade unions, removing the third tier, the central labour organization. As a result, the Nigeria Labour Congress becomes one of the federations of trade unions in Nigeria. On the surface, the government claimed to have designed the amendment to democratize the labour movement in Nigeria so that it does not have one undemocratic centre. Instead, it will make room for independent centres that will create room for divergent views when necessary. But the real motive of the government it is argued,

was to break the backbone of labour movement. The Nigeria Labour Congress had before the amendment been statutorily entitled to a portion of the dues contributed by members of affiliated unions as the central labour organization. This advantage appears to have been lost since the amendment (Amucheazi & Onwuasoanya, 2008, pp. 271–272).

Besides, one labour centre is a more unified political force. Thus, it had been easy for the labour union to take a common position and mobilize workers around that point of view. The government was acutely aware of the influence of organised labour as a result of their central organisation and worked to undermine it. Though this was done with the instrumentality of the parliament, it is an undemocratic projection of power because there was no recourse to the views of the members of the organisation concerned.

It is important here to explain the need of the government to undemocratically dismantle a unified labour in an environment of elective civil rule. By the turn of the 20th century, a number of unions emerged from groups like railway workers, teachers, factory workers and colliery workers that were all focused on advancing the interests of wage workers. Some of them include: the Nigerian Civil Service Union, the Nigeria Union of Teachers, and the Railway Workers Union. These organisations were active in the struggle to end colonialism. In the post-colonial era, the continuation of undemocratic rule also led workers to continue engaging the state for

democratic transformation. By 1978, the military regime at the time promulgated a Decree to amalgamate trade unions into a single labour federation namely the Nigeria Labour Congress. This Decree which pretended to harmonise acrimonious trade unions was actually aimed at containing labour radicalism. The regime's possible calculation was that a single labour centre was easy to be placed under state domination (Tar, 2009). The motive for this unification of labour unions achieved a reverse effect. Labour became more organised and more forceful in articulating positions in matters of governance, particularly in challenging harsh policies of the government. It is interesting to note that it was General Obasanjo's military regime that unified labour in 1978 with a Decree. Yet it was under the same leader as a civilian head of state that the government undemocratically dismantled the labour centre in 2005 using legislation. Like Decrees under military rule, this legislation illustrates the undemocratic use of power by the executive state.

One major constraint on organised labour is the restrictions imposed on the right to strike and picket by the 2004 amendment labour laws. By that amendment, strike action is outlawed for persons employed in the provision of essential services. Essential services as enumerated in Amucheazi and Onwuasoanya (2008, p. 272) include employment in the public service of the federation or of a state; any service connected with the supply of electricity, water, fuel, sound broadcasting, telegraphic, cable, wireless or telephone communication; any service connected with maintenance of ports, harbours, docks, aerodromes or the transportation of persons, health/sanitation related institutions and fire service. Also included are services in the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Company Limited and Employment with Banks. As the cited authors point out, these prohibitions displace the pre-existing law, the Trade Union Act which permitted strikes within the essential services sector at the expiration of 15 days of notice to the employer. The amendment on essential services is a recycling of the Essential Services Decree of 1977 which excluded certain group of workers from forming labour unions or participating in industrial action (See Tar, 2009).

Further, the Trade Union Amendment Act insists that a strike must concern a labour dispute that has to do with a collective and fundamental breach of contract of employment. In addition, a simple majority of members of the Trade Union must approve the decision to embark on strike action before it can take place. In the analysis of the implications of this aspect of the law, Amucheazi and Onwuasoanya (2008) are of the view that if a strike must concern a labour dispute, it circumscribes the workers' right to strike within issues of industrial relations only. Outside of this purpose the worker or trade union is exposed to criminal liability of up to six months imprisonment. Consequently, strikes called by trade unions in protest of government policies and decisions would be regarded as illegal.

One point that may be interrogated here is whether civil society associations can act only on limited concerns. This concern arises because members of trade unions are first and foremost citizens, before being members of any group. In that regard, the group framework within a civil population should be an acceptable legitimate one for placing demands on the state. Amucheazi and Onwuasoanya observed on this note, that in the Nigerian context, the seven general strikes called by the Nigeria Labour Congress between 1999 and 2007 were related to government decisions that indirectly affect the income of all workers whether employed in the public or private sector. The strikes of the period were in protest to an increase in value Added Tax (VAT) and prices of Petroleum products. “ In an economy where workers grapple with low wages, every economic decision of the government which affects the level of disposable income might present a legitimate enough object for industrial action” (Amucheazi & Onwuasoanya, 2008, pp. 274–275). This argument is reinforced by the fact that in Nigeria, the state is a major owner of the means of production. And once the government makes a decision that adversely affects the economy of workers it is inadvertently politicizing labour because the possible responses in the form of strikes will touch off effects on both politics and economy.

In January 2004, the Federal Government proposed to introduce a fuel tax of N1.50K per litre, of petrol, the Nigeria Labour Congress threatened to organize mass protests and call out workers on strike. The Federal Government instituted legal action against

labour on grounds that such a strike would be outside the ambit of industrial relations. The relief sought by government was granted by a high court but quashed on appeal at a higher court. This was before the 2005 Amendment. Subsequent strikes are expected to conform with the amendment. The post military civilian regimes retain the well-worn strategy of using legislation to weaken points of democratic activism and refusing to honour its agreement with workers. The regimes of Olusegun Obasanjo and his successor Umaru Musa Yar Adua between 1999 and 2010 variously refused to honour their wage and funding agreements with university teachers and other trade unions in the country. Also, Goodluck Jonathan turned back on his promise of paying 18,000 Naira.²¹ monthly minimum wage to workers in Nigeria. At the same time the government continues to devalue the currency and embark on increasing the pump prices of petroleum products in line with its market-friendly reforms.

Part of the strategy of pulling these policies through is the weakening of associational points of political engagement with the state. Associations such as organised labour groups are viewed as obstacles to market reforms. Essentially, using state power to implement policies that undermine groups which contest undemocratic governance is an instance of relations of forces. Politics and economy are salient sites of these relations in which the heart of the struggle is the effort by one of the competing forces to seek the embedding of practices that support the rights of democratic social practices while the other group strives to maintain an alternative form of the state. The nature of the relations between state and labour during elective civil rule has been less on the side of application of physical coercion on workers. Nonetheless laws, policies and other mechanisms applied by the ruling forces are incapable of consistently supporting and preserving a democratic civil society because, they sometimes can serve as instruments of authoritarian domination. Laws and policies in themselves express relations and mirror the character of the ruling forces in relation to democracy. 'Relations of forces' is therefore expressed in the engagement between the citizens in the various avenues of popular democratic agitations like the organised labour context, for the democratisation of state institutions.

²¹ This amount translates to about 114 United States Dollars.

Authoritarian State and Radical Activism

The Zikist Movement

The Zikist movement was a radical nationalist group that emerged during the colonial period. It identified itself with the personality of Nnamdi Azikiwe who was a major figure in the struggle for Nigeria's political independence. It fits into the nature of political activism that arises in peculiar authoritarian circumstances such as colonialism, military dictatorship, and suppression of a select national group, race or religion. The Zikist Movement identified with other activists of the era. However, it was categorically clear about its radical direction ideologically speaking. It was the only group that had a similar aim with the early peasant resistance in parts of the country which rejected colonialism outright and wanted its immediate end (see Nnoli, 2011).

The background to the rise of the Zikist movement, reported by Coleman (1958), is connected with events in late 1945 which brought Azikiwe under heavy attack by his critics because of the alleged claim that the colonial authorities wanted to assassinate him. Three of his young admirers: Kolawole Balogun, M.C.K Ajuluchukwu and Abiodun Aloba started the Zikist movement. The immediate objective of the organization was to defend Azikiwe. In furtherance of their aim, they pledged thus:

Nevermore shall we allow this evangelist (Azikiwe) to cry his voice hoarse when millions of youths of Nigeria can take up his whisper and echo it all over the world....He has lived a life that must live as long as Nigeria lives” (Coleman, 1958, p. 297).

Azikiwe's activities through his media outfits gave him a high public profile that culminated in a cult of personality which the Zikist Movement built around him.

The philosophy of the Zikist movement was expressed as follows by Orizu in his book, *Without Bitterness*:

...Zikism is irredentism. It is a God-sanctioned plan. It is rejuvenated universal philosophy; it is no jingoism; it is not racialism; it is not anarchism; it is not monistic; it is not sarcastic; it is not apologetic; it is faith in life, a

creative impulse....Zikism must grow and spread one social myth; namely African irredentism, which must mean the redemption of Africa from social wreckage, political servitude and economic impotency....Africa is then to be saved from ideological confusion, psychological immaturity, spiritual complacency and mental stagnation (Coleman, 1958, p. 297).

The Zikist Movement was deeply political in character as it virtually became the youth wing of the National Convention for Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C), a nationalist political party at the time. In fact an official statement of the N.C.N.C defined their linkage with Zikist movement thus “The N.C.N.C is the whole and the Zikist movement is part of that whole” (Coleman, 1958, p. 298). By 1948, according to (Olusanya, 1966), when the NCNC was not quite politically active, the Zikist Movement filled the gap because young people who felt frustrated by this inactivity rallied to the Zikist banner. The condition of NCNC was a matter of frustration arising from its lack of success when it led a delegation to London in 1947 to protest the 1946 Richard’s constitution. Hot heads in the Movement organised around radical lines in their nationalist agitations.

The engagement of the Zikist movement with the colonial state was downright confrontational. Its most radical political demand was the call for the immediate end of colonialism as a first step towards the formation of a West African Union in the hope that it would offer a basis for broader African unity along socialist lines. This demand was certainly different from those of other nationalist groups which were “dominated by requests for gradualist incremental devolution of power and responsibility to the educated elite, equal pay for equal work and educational qualifications, self-government within the commonwealth and other limited bourgeois demands” (Abdulraheem & Olukoshi, 1986, p. 65). The Zikists were defiant and saw that Nigerians should regard their civic duties to be resistance to and total rejection of the colonial state. In a public lecture, for instance, a leading Zikist, Osita Agwuna, demanded a philosophy whose adherents “shall see nothing good in cooperating with the British government as long as we remain enslaved” (Coleman, 1958, p. 298). He went further to outline measures requiring positive action including a country-wide general strike, refusal to pay taxes, a boycott on all things foreign and

a demand that all students going overseas take a course in military science. This statement was supported by leading Zikists some of whom expressed open hatred for Britain and the symbols representing it. Ogedengbe Macaulay for instance argued, “if we tell the Governor to come down, he will not; we must drag him down and take over” (Coleman, 1958, p. 298).

Evidently, the hotheads of the Zikist Movement were tired of pen and paper kind of protest against the colonial state and had become prepared for resolute practical action. Their strategy is thought to be drawn from the riots which occurred in Ghana in February 1948 that led to political concessions to the nationalists in that country. This convinced the young Zikists that a more practical demonstration of their desire for independence was necessary. They applied the weapons of strikes, boycotts, picket and non-violent civil disobedient campaigns. Since some of their leaders were trade unionists, it was easy for them to influence the organisation of strikes (See Olusanya, 1966). Thus the Zikists brought dynamic radicalism to anti-colonial struggles and was the first organisation among the nationalist groups to state a clear interest even if not sufficiently articulated, towards a socialist path.

In several instances, the Zikists succeeded in putting working class demands on the political agenda in close contact with the trade union movement (See Abdulraheem & Olukoshi, 1986). Following the Iva valley shooting of miners at Enugu for instance, the Zikists instigated riots in Aba, a town in South Eastern Nigeria, urging people to rise in violence against the government and anything that represented it. Their argument was that:

...all the people in the country regard one another as comrades in arms against the rule of the present Government, if for no other reason than that it is a foreign Government voted into power not by the people but imposed upon them by the might of British arms... (Coleman, 1958, p. 301).

This last statement conveys the crisis of definition of civil society because violence is antithetical to the norms of a democratised civil society. But an exclusive dialogue approach within a political framework which suppresses and suspends a democratised civil society is faced with the challenge that the context of any discourse or

movement is set by the dominant power. One of the fundamental levels at which the dominant forces set the context of debate is the creation of the norms considered rational for such context. Foucault rightly argues that it is in the definition of rationality that dominant forces construct power (cf Flyvbjerg, 1998b). In this case, an unelected colonial government seeking to extract surplus will be in dialogue with groups contesting the logic of this form of domination at the level of politics and economy. Evidently, the prevailing mode of power will condemn the activists and probably reject their claims as empty and ‘uncivil’ in modes of engagement. However, the activists express aspiration for democracy in an undemocratic situation with no room for immediate democratic change. In the end, this returns us to one of the theoretical dilemmas of conceptualizing civil society and mapping out its boundary and the kinds of agents it should accommodate. The question could be settled by understanding civil society beyond a focus on the role of agency. Social movements may for instance be ideologically oppositional and formally illegal yet their articulations are connected with the expansion of democratic freedom. While the actions of such movements may not define civil society strictly speaking, they nevertheless act within its space.

The bitterness of the Zikists would have got to the extreme as on February 18, 1950, they were alleged to have attempted to assassinate the Chief Secretary to the Government. Because of this growing incidence of conspiratorial network, the government police carried out a surprise search of the houses of Zikists all over Nigeria and uncovered large quantities of seditious literature (Coleman, 1958, p. 301). During the trial of the secretary of the movement he was so defiant as to openly tell the judge that:

...with these immense resources and the coercive state machinery behind you and the government you represent, I do not as a Zikist recognize the right of this court to try this case...You are a symbol of that imperialist machine which I and my colleagues abhor; therefore I am not pleading before this court... (Cited in Coleman, 1958, p. 301).

To be so openly defiant on the part of Zikist Movement was sufficient to attract strong reprisals from the colonial authority.

The Zikists though unwilling to adopt the norms of debate which they may have found frustrating, organised around a project of activism for democracy. Their basic image of colonial political governance is that

...the colonial state was conceived in violence rather than by negotiation. This violence was often quite out of proportion to the task in hand, with burning of villages, destruction of crops, killing of women and children and execution of leaders....The colonial state was not only conceived in violence, but it was maintained by the free use of it... (Crowder cited in Fatton, 1990, p. 457).

To sum up, the main basis of radical activism was repressive political rule. In organising their resistance to the state, the Zikists made the ideological element of their struggle salient. For their political practice, they envisaged democracy for the country with the end of colonial rule. It does not seem that radical politics in the country has had as much tempo at the organisational level at any other time or with any other group as with the Zikist Movement. Though the group was later banned, its existence was an important moment in demonstrating the convergence between ideological and political moments in relations of forces for democratisation in Nigeria.

Understanding Relations of Forces and Authoritarian Outcomes in Nigeria

To understand the colonial and Post-colonial conjuncture, political engagement of groups in the two epochs could be contextualized around relations of forces. The most visible elements of these relations are economic and political aspects though the other aspects are also embedded in them. Colonial press laws, represent an approach in preserving an authoritarian system that lacked legitimate authority. The law was a particular expression of political practice in the relations of forces. It undermined the

freedom to critique the government, thus suppressing an essential aspect of democratic engagement with the state. Habermas' *Structural transformation of the public sphere* shows how government in the late feudal era was eager to censor what was put out for public consumption. At this time, authorities, concerned about stability would not comfortably accept circulation of opinions or thoughts that challenged the ruling authorities. It is rather interesting to note that during the colonial era in northern Nigeria the majority of the elites were working for the colonial government. There was no flourishing of the critical press as in the Southern part of the country. Indeed there was only one newspaper established in the region by the government in 1939, The newspaper, *Gaskiya* was censored by both government and native authority (see Ibrahim, 1998).

Press laws similar to the colonial version continued to exist after political independence. These laws were made stricter in their repressive details and used by military regimes. Like colonial rule, military governments in Nigeria share the common characteristic of the use of force to dominate the political space. The essential difference is that government personnel have local origin in the case of military rule. Lack of popular mandate and the fear that the press could use critical discourses to spread the illegitimacy of their rule, led the military regimes to engage in the use of restrictive laws against the press, physical violence against journalists and closure of perceived oppositional media houses for frivolous reasons. Again, this is because of the power of the press as a conveyor of opinions and its capacity to mobilize contestations that could end authoritarian rule. Hence, the ruling group found it expedient to retain power by force since a democratic reorganisation of political power could end their domination. The laws applied in the process suppressed part of the necessary rights of democratic citizenship. They were institutional aspects of relations of forces applied to suppress the emergence of a democratised political field.

Some interpretations may view the undemocratic press laws as an expression of the Hegelian notion that the state is the universality that determines other realms of society and thus uses its providential rationality to resolve social crisis. Other realms

of society are below the state and constitute the categories which Hegel referred to as particularities (civil society – including press, labour movement and other unions) which need to conform to the universality within the ethical system of the state. Thus Hegel's thought which assigns enormous powers to the state seems the birth place of excessive power of the modern state. But Hegelian thought may not have envisioned the use of the instruments of the ethical order such as apparatuses of the state for authoritarian suppression of members of the ethical community. He actually suggests that "the right of individuals to their particularity is contained in the concrete ethical order; because it is in particularity that the social principle finds a visible outer manifestation" (Hegel, 2001b, p. 138). He further held that "right and duty coincide in the identity of the universal and the particular wills..." (Hegel, 2001b, p. 138). Here, Hegel's motive appears to be the construction of a harmony of interests between the state (universal) and citizen (particular). The colonial state was incapable of achieving this harmony. It therefore made recourse to political repression to constitute order. Ultimately, 'relations of forces' at the time was typified by the treatment of the colonial people as subjects instead of right-bearing citizens.

Dominant forces in the colonial state understood the crucial place of the press in relations of forces. This is because the press operates at a realm which could generate critical questions and mobilizations that may threaten the existing arrangement of power. Press criticism of political rule was a response to political repression while the corresponding use of laws to either close down publishing houses, restrict their capacity to inform the public or engage in the expression of critical views about the state all express the dialectics of relations of forces in the political and ideological levels of relations.

Political relations were not only characterized by the narrowing of the avenues of free speech. It was also defined by the narrowing of the spaces of free political participation and pluralism. The colonial authority only allowed limited elective positions and limited franchise. Some anti-colonial organisations struggled and achieved a certain level of expansion of the chances for local participation in elective positions. They included Nigerian Youths Movement, National Convention of

Nigerian Citizens, Action Group, Northern Peoples Congress etc. However another social movement, the Zikist Movement, rejected the incrementalist approach to the end of undemocratic rule and insisted on the immediate end of the colonial rule. The movement did not exclude the necessity of force for the end of undemocratic rule since dialogue was considered a futile approach. For the group, this was an important step towards the creation of a democratized political field. However, the colonial government had to suppress the group through its own institutions of order. The suppression of the contexts of political expression with restrictive press laws, proscription of critical press, support for pro-colonial press, suppression of activist groups and perhaps cautious toleration of other moderate political groups bears on the nature of relations of forces at the level of political practice under colonialism.

Relations of forces in post-colonial Nigeria reproduced similarities with her colonial past. The post-colonial state has shown conflicting attitudes to the emergence of plural or diverse points of democratic expression. The periods of political pluralism under elective civil rule were 1960 to 1966 (first civil rule), 1979 to 1983 (second civil rule), 1999 to present. The other periods, 1966 to 1979 and 1985 to May 1999 were the era of military rule. At the latter period, the ruling forces governed the state with elements from the military. As in the nature of military rule, political parties were suspended except during transition to civil rule. Other organisations that were not political parties but were understood as expressing oppositional views or contesting certain actions of the government were repressed. These included human rights organizations, trade unions, student unions, some private individuals. Accordingly, the post-colonial state in Nigeria has not demonstrated an institutional capacity in favour of responsible pluralism. This is connected with a certain post-colonial form of political domination in which the ruling group undemocratically retains political power using the framework of military rule. With use of military decrees, physical coercion, and other subtle means that undermine democratic forces constraint is imposed on the ability of political opposition or subaltern groups to freely compete for power or contest the nature of political rule.

State labour relations in both colonial and post-colonial era embody both economic and political practices. The character of the relations reveals not only an exploitative state but also one which uses coercion and other undemocratic means to subjugate the working population and other socio economic groups. The use of broad platforms of activism by civil society groups to agitate for their interest brings their actions to the public sphere of civil society. This includes organized labour's engagements wage related and other issues of democracy. Nigeria's ruling group inclines towards the political choice of suppressing these engagements by workers. In the colonial era, the use of force in suppressing the demands of the colonists especially the underclass was the case at the massacre of colliery workers in Enugu in 1949 by colonial authorities. Instances of coercive projection of force after colonialism include the effort to suppress the 1964 general strike, the 1994 oil workers' strike and most of the trade union strikes and students demonstrations during the era of military rule. Apart from direct use of coercion, the state uses legal instruments to impose limitations on the power of organized labour to use the strike mechanism to press for demands connected with their wages, general material existence and social justice. Evidently these are relations that integrate politics and economy and they involve political rights, and civil rights.

The popular struggles in Nigeria suggest that citizens need is not less than a state that cares and preserves their political freedoms and material well-being. This need is at the heart of democratic struggles. Workers mostly articulate this needs around wage related demands. However, their struggles have a broader dimension that also embrace the political and the ideological aspects. The aspirations of workers articulated and expressed through strikes and demonstrations and government's responses by coercion or legal prohibitions express an aspect of relations of forces. Projection of physical force by the government breaches civil conducts and fundamental rights of workers. Also the rejection of well-founded claims of other subaltern groups and further steps to weaken their capacity to continue the engagement undermines democratic rights. This study by no means argues that all the demands and claims of workers must be met by government without question. However, the government remains responsible for creating institutional conditions of

democratic bargains between workers and employers including the government as an employer of labour. Deploying the state apparatus to disempower any group that democratically engages the state on rights of citizenship diminishes democracy and projects authoritarian practices. This again is part of the relations of forces itself. That is, agents representing different sides of the struggle not only engage in direct action, they also engage in ideological struggle to justify their own position and destroy alternative positions.

In the light of the modified template adapted from Linz, the relations of forces between the ruling group and subaltern groups located in the press, organized labour and social movements is one in which the ruling group represses oppositional publications in the press and encourage publications that represent the viewpoint of the political establishment. This is a strategy of relations of forces which aims at subordinating the subaltern groups at the realm of ideological apparatuses within the society. Also, in both the colonial and post-colonial periods, the dominant forces suppress labour unions' demands for fair wages and democratic governance while labour unions apply the instrumentality of strikes and picketing. Such interactions between labour and state represent economic and political levels of relations. The state also undermines oppositional organisations some of which it characterizes as 'uncivil' (such as the Zikist Movement) because they refuse to conform with the legal regimes of the state. Other political interest groups with less radical agenda especially in the colonial era are permitted to exist within the regulatory powers of the state. Here the relations of forces are both ideological and political since the state defines the terms upon which groups interact with it. Thus, relations forces in the contexts of the press, organised labour and social movements demonstrate that the state permits limited but not responsible political pluralism which is an index of authoritarian rule.

On the ideological criteria of authoritarianism, the colonial regime did not articulate commitment to any ideology. Though it was unfriendly to radical Marxist ideas, it did not bring liberal ideals to bear on governance, because liberalism would have entailed liberal democratic rule. Thus at the level of theory and ideology, practices of the colonial state qualify it in terms of distinctive mentality as a criteria of an

authoritarian system. Similarly, postcolonial regimes also lack clear ideological commitment. While there seem to be a clear avoidance of movement towards the left, the pattern of capitalism the regimes embrace is perverse. It allows room for private accumulation but flunks on other institutional infrastructure of a capitalist society such as elevating the market principle of free competition to free political competition or treating citizens as equal agents that belong to one large market in the form of a political society. At some point, the constitutional debate had adopted a mixed economy in which private ownership could go alongside state participation in the process of accumulation (see Panter-Brick, 1978). However, the government has moved in the neoliberal direction since the 1980s. But neoliberal reforms alone have yet to generate practices that drive the political structure in a capitalist state. The Nigerian ruling group is ideologically capricious and changes towards any direction that creates an easy path to the personalization and concentration of power and state resources on a few.

Regarding the criterion of mobilization, the colonial government was also not known for mass mobilization into its programmes. Popular mobilization was pursued by anti-colonial movements and trade unions. The authorities restricted mobilization with requirements of registration to keep unions in check against political activism. The fear of colonial government as with undemocratic authorities everywhere is that mass mobilization in the absence of democracy is dangerous to stability. In contrast, the post-colonial authoritarian regimes in Nigeria did mobilize for the purpose of regime security. They established specialized government units for this purpose. Some of the mobilizational platforms were Government Organized Non-Governmental Organisations (GONGOs) and other Non-Governmental organisations and groups linked to sitting governments through funding.

The practice of the ruling group in the above narrative expresses projection of coercive force against citizens, application of institutions of the state to repress avenues of public expression, lack of clear commitment to an ideological direction, lack of tolerance to legitimate opposition, mobilization of support only for regime survival and not for genuine democratic participation, failure to create representative

institutions based on free elections, small leadership with clientelist penetration of society that ignores rule of law. Thus the outcome of relations of forces in terms of the state form is authoritarian.

Chapter 7

Crises, State Mediation and Change

Popular Struggle for Democracy, State Responses and De-democratisation

This chapter focuses on how the state mediates crises arising from engagements by contending interests in the political field and how such crisis management by the state determines the direction of political change. The state requires the legitimating image of an objective universal force so that it can mediate the struggle among competing interests in society. Thus political order requires a generalised consciousness among the citizens that the state represents the collective will of the citizenry. The image of the state objectivity is undermined when it is appropriated and deployed for the furtherance of certain classes and groups without the compromises that portray it as equally representing all groups in society. Under such condition, the state undergoes a crisis of legitimacy or what Gramsci (1971) refers to as crisis of hegemony.

The concrete manifestation of the crisis of hegemony may be violent resistance or generalised disorder in society. It may lead to either an overcoming of the dominant forces by contending ones or a Bonapartist recomposition of the state by the dominant forces. To explore Nigeria in this context, the chapter begins with the earliest crisis of the post-colonial state in its political practice which began to manifest with the 1964 general elections and 1965 Western Nigeria election. These crises led to mass discontent, mass demonstrations and public disorder which prompted a military intervention in politics. The narrative continues with the failure of the military rulers in their declared mission of creating the proper path to democratic transformation and their suppression of democratic forces in civil society.

The chapter also discusses economic reforms in the 1980s under military rule. Mass discontent arising from mismanagement of the economy by civilian leaders was part of the justification of the military leaders for intervening in politics. Neoliberal market reforms introduced by a military government to manage the economy actuated intense activism in civil society and led to definite demand for an end to military rule and return to an elective democracy. Further, the chapter discusses the

commencement of transition to elective to civil rule with focus on how the executive state related with social forces which were divided along the lines of democratic and undemocratic projects. In the end the overall political practices and dynamics connected with the state and how it mediates crisis is addressed within the broad framework of relations of forces.

Crises of the State and civil society in Post-Independence Nigeria

To recall Gramsci's (1971) note, a crisis of the state occurs either because the ruling class has failed in some major political undertaking for which it has requested or forcibly extracted consent of the broad masses or because huge masses have passed suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity and put forward demands which taken together, may add up to a revolution. The end of the struggle against colonialism tended to give the Nigerian people the hope that a democratised political rule would address their political exclusion and economic alienation. However, in practice, the outcome of the struggle created a class of indigenous rulers who retained the form of the colonial state, the privileges of a political elite, and continued the exploitation of the labouring population. Indeed, the privileges of the elite increased as there existed immense opportunity for illegitimate wealth through political corruption. The gap between the subaltern classes and the ruling elite grew exponentially. Not only did state executives and their allies appropriate political privileges to themselves, irregularities were introduced into the electoral process thus compromising an important institution of democracy.

Signs of crisis were already visible in the 1959 federal elections which produced the government at independence. The three major splits in Nigeria's parliament were along the lines of political parties with different ethnic support bases. The National Convention of Nigerian Citizen (NCNC) had its support base in Eastern Nigeria which is predominantly Igbo. Another political party, Action Group (AG) had its support base in the Western Nigeria which is predominantly Yoruba while the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) with strong influence of the Hausa-Fulani held sway in the Northern part of the country. The lack of a clear majority by any of the

parties after the 1959 general elections led to a coalition between NPC and NCNC (Anglin, 1965). But before the next general election in 1964, ethnic politics driven by political ambitions of the leading figures in the parties had undermined this coalition. This paved the way for another coalition before the general election of 1964 which was adjudged to be flawed.

The federal elections of 1964 was followed by the Western Nigeria regional election held in 1965, which was rigged by the ruling Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). NNDP was a coalition partner with the majority party in the federal parliament. The electoral irregularities in the 1965 Western Nigeria elections added to the bitter end of the 1964 federal elections and became a source of civil strife in which hundreds of persons were killed amidst a breakdown of law and order. The civil unrest was an open indication by the citizenry of a lack of confidence on the sitting government. These developments invited a military coup on 15th January 1966 (Sklar, 1967).

The new military government under General J.T.U Aguiyi Ironsi was quick to impose a ban on the most prominent associational groups in Nigeria including, political parties and tribal associations. These were channels that reinforced each other in advancing ethnic interests. The role of the parties and some tribal associations in undermining democracy portray them in the light of what Chambers and Kopstein (2001) refer to as ‘bad’ civil society. The military regime also considered banning all existing labour unions because according to General Ironsi, “...these were a source of disunity in the country” (First, 1970, p. 304). The last group does not truly represent Ironsi’s description. Indeed it was for lack of enough civil society groups with labour union’s kind of ability to engage the state on both matters of citizenship rights and democratic governance of the country that politicians succeeded in acting in disregard of norms of accountability, free elections, rule of law, deployment of public resources for human development and other indices of democracy. Thus, the real source of disunity was not the labour unions but undemocratic forces undermining the virtues of civil society and dominating the state. Indeed organised labour had shown signs of becoming a vanguard for democracy before the 1964 general strike (see Ananaba,

1969). Their demands combined the economic well-being of workers and political democracy.

The direct involvement of the military institution in politics is in the first place an indicator of crisis which the state could not mediate within the ambit of democratic norms. It appears that one of the explanations offered by Smith (1996) for military intervention would suit the context of the first military coup in Nigeria. He suggested that where modern democratic civilian institutions are fragile and the rules of politics are not firmly entrenched, the attempt of one middle class faction to secure a permanent monopoly of power could make other factions resort to extra-constitutional means of gaining power. He sees this as:

the classic Bonapartist scenario where the pure form of bourgeois rule through liberal democratic institutions is impossible to sustain during crisis and where other classes become increasingly difficult to manage and incorporate into the social order, again because of the weak ideological base (Smith, 1996, p. 255).

The same author goes further to argue that the crisis of hegemony in post-colonial societies to which a form of Bonapartism responds, includes conflicts between tribes and regions as well as interests founded on pre-capitalist, capitalist and comprador class structures. Military intervention represents a way of mediating such conflicts rather than a way of changing the power structure of a society. After the first coup in Nigeria, politics overwhelmed the capacity of the military institution because it lacked the skills of democratic political rule. The approach of the military high command in the mediation of the political crisis led to the escalation of ethnic tension. This eventually led to the counter coup of July 1966. Events following the counter coup plunged the country into a civil war.

Civil war and military rule combined to enhance the power of the executive state and further reduced the salience of democratic civil society groups within the first era of military intervention in politics. A consequence of the reduced pertinence of democratic forces in civil society arose when the regime of General Yakubu Gowon began to prevaricate on returning the country to civil rule after the war, a group

started advocating for the continuity of military rule. In the annual conference of the Nigerian Economic Society (NES) in 1973, the president of the association who was at the time, a top government official, argued for a one party state which could be understood as euphemism for continued military rule. Soon after, in a seminar at the University of Ibadan in Western Nigeria, he followed this up with the view that there was no need for a change from military rule arguing that the military government was delivering the public good (NPSA, 2007). The declaration on the platform of NES by its president showed how elements in civil society manifest likelihood of corporatist linkages with the government in non-democratic societies. This is similar to the experiences of some Latin American states in which according to Kamrava and O Mora (1998), some civil society groups ally with the military oligarchy in order to obtain or maintain certain material privileges.

Part of the crisis of the state and democracy that arises from military rule is the growth of factions of political interest in the army. The military institution therefore becomes a platform for the expression of factional grievances and interests via coups. General Gowon was a product of this factional-interest coup in 1966. However, when a perception grew in the army that General Gowon was isolating himself from the institution [the military], his colleagues became unhappy and overthrew him (Fayemi, 2002). His successor General Murtala Mohammed noted in his maiden speech that:

after the civil war, the affairs of the state, hitherto a collective responsibility, became characterized by a lack of consultation, indecision, indiscipline and even neglect... Things got to a stage when the head of administration became virtually inaccessible even to official advisers and when advice was tendered, it was often ignored (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1995, pp. 2–3).

Hence the coup was more of a reaction among the officers against exclusionary behaviour of the Head of state as he no longer involved others who considered themselves part of the ruling military oligarchy. This may raise a counter point to the notion that General Gowon's delay in organising a transition to elective democracy was a major under-current of the coup. Indeed, cycles of military coup in Nigeria mostly arose from competing interests that also found expression in the factions of the military oligarchy.

In an effort to address the crisis of the state, the regime of Murtala Mohammed promised to return the country to a democratic government and actually took practical steps towards realising the promise. At this period, there were hardly visible actions from civil society groups in terms of robust democratic activism. The process remained state-designed and directed beginning from Mohammed's regime through his assassination in a failed coup. The completion of the transition to civil rule programme in 1979 was led by General Mohammed's successor, General Olusegun Obasanjo. One associational layer of civil society that came into focus in the process was the political parties when partisan politics was permitted in the course of the transition to civil rule. Perhaps this specific experience of Nigeria's first transition to civil rule justifies Callaghy's (1994) cautioning against the view that links democratisation too tightly to actions in civil society. His point is that political transition can take place without the existence of viable civil associations. Ibeanu (2006) shares this view in noting that articulations that associate democratisation solely with activism in civil society ignore state-led political transformations that have led to civil rule in some countries formerly ruled by the military. To be sure, the return to elective civil rule in 1979 in Nigeria did not come as a result of significant pressures from social forces. Nonetheless, the transition emphasised only the aspect of democratic change related to elections and glossed over the creation of a framework for addressing fundamental sources of crisis of the state. Specifically, these aspects have to do with rights of citizenship. A return to elective civil rule expanded the space of political and civil rights but not social rights. However, the achievement of democratic citizenship should be built on political, civil and social rights (see Marshall, 1997).

Nigeria returned to elective civil rule in 1979 with Shehu Shagari as president. The completion of the procedural aspect of democratisation in that era, like the attainment of political independence raised the expectation that elective civil rule will transform other aspects of citizens' lives. But a combination of corruption by political elites, political exigencies and economic mismanagement combined to cause unusual economic hardship. The civilian government of Shagari was ill-equipped to deal with

the economic crises (Lewis, 1996). In effect, the government was incapable of providing the substantive elements of democracy. In the end the military removed Shagari's regime and seized power once more.

The return of the military to politics elicited initial public support not necessarily because it was desirable but because massive political corruption festered alongside the inability of politicians to democratically address citizen's needs. This kind of support for a military coup is not an approval for dictatorship. Instead it is a 'negative legitimacy' (cf Huntington, 1993). It symbolizes a vote of no confidence on the past elected regime which could not embed democracy. As General Buhari, who overthrew the civilian regime explained in reference to politicians, "...they were occupied with other matters of no benefit to the people whom they represented" (cited in Peters, 1997, p. 187). While the accusation by the military about the crisis of governance created by civilian politicians are correct, the military coup banished the procedural element of elective governance and the avenues of popular checks especially in civil society. More importantly its own failures are hardly challenged in any democratic way because politicized armies behave like "armed parties" (Luckham, 1994, p. 45). In the end, military rule that intervened to arrest crisis of the state achieved the opposite by trying to resolve the failure of politicians and crisis of political rule with military coups.

The long survival of military rules and the tendency of officers to repeat intervention in the political process sometimes draw from the impetus of actors in civil society. Apart from pronouncements to encourage continuity of military rule from platforms like the Nigerian Economic Society (NES) referred above, the press which is more salient in acting on the side of democratic forces inadvertently contributed to emboldening some elements in the military to intervene in politics. Its publications during the 1979 to 1983 civil rule tended to point towards historical memories of political blunders and misrule by politicians which invited earlier military intervention. Ette's (2000) assessment of the limited role of the press between 1978-79 transition to civil rule sees that the pattern of press reporting at the time always portrayed the politicians as corrupt while the military was corrective. The discourses

in the press that compared military and civil rule and implied a relative superiority of the former in governance was an indirect contribution from a civil society platform to the crisis of the Nigerian state.

Riding on the social image of being a corrective institution, the military returned to power in 1983. Authoritarian rule and economic hardship furthered the crisis of the state and led to further military coups within military regimes thus exposing their factional inclinations and undermining their claims of being a corrective force that is above politics. General Buhari's who came to power after the 1983 coup was overthrown on 7th July 1985, by General Babangida. The overthrown regime was accused of having lost its way because "it failed to come to grips with political and economic regeneration of the nation, had become very rigid and uncompromising and did not pay enough attention to the human rights of the individual Nigerian" (Peters, 1997, p. 200). But these reasons have been dismissed as superficial by Lt. General Domkat Bali, the Defence Minister under Babangida. He rather saw the coup as a matter of a power tussle between the new military leader and his predecessor. In spite of the failure of civil rule, military coups undermines the three essential functions of the military which include: representing claims for minimum security of the state; providing advice on military choices of the state and implementing state decision on military security (Huntington, 1957). These classic tenets of civil military relations were ignored with the consequence that the army was divided into factions of political interests. Once the armed forces became a platform for the attainment of political power, democracy and the elements promoting it in civil society were increasingly repressed. Poor governance, bad human rights regime and economic management policies, especially neoliberal reforms, caused the rise of multiple centres of contestation against military rule.

Neoliberal Reforms, Revival of Civil Society and Democratisation

Africa's encounter with neoliberalism and the linkage of neoliberalization and democratisation is related to World Bank's Berg report of 1981. This report is commonly known for its attack on post-colonial African states as corrupt, over-bloated, and incapable of driving development. The Berg Report recommended the

removal of government from economic roles including public welfare responsibilities. The report argued that damaging state action was killing the economies of Africa. These ‘damaging’ actions were said to be the reasons why African states did not produce proper market economies. It therefore recommended the pursuit of policy lines that would put African states on the path of market guided growth (Mustapha, 2006). The recommendation marked the beginning of the first generation of market reforms identified as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in Africa. The implementation of Structural Adjustment Programme brought most African states including Nigeria into the neoliberal project. This is part of the hard decisions that military regimes are claimed to be capable of making whereas politicians avoid them. The regimes of Babangida in Nigeria and Rawlings in Ghana successfully pushed through these economic adjustment programmes (See Luckham, 1994). Nonetheless, these are hard decisions which generated harsh economic consequences and never delivered on their promises as many studies like Kinadu-Agyemang (2000), Pfeifer (1999), Harvey (2007), Caffentzis (2002), Harrison (2005) have shown. If democracy is about popular sovereignty, then these policies which were pursued in spite of the people are anything but democratic whether or not they are carried out in a military or elective civil rule.

It was under the military regime of Ibrahim Babangida that a Structural Adjustment Programme was implemented in Nigeria. Earlier than that, a raft of policy reforms known as Austerity Measures was initiated by the civilian regime of Shehu Shagari to revamp the Nigerian economy. These measures were characterized by strict fiscal policies and sharp reductions on imports through restrictive measures. Shagari’s regime had initiated talks with the IMF in 1983 but the dialogue broke down over key neoliberal conditions specified by the IMF which Nigeria rejected and sought to internally manage the economic crises in the country. The presence of widespread public corruption appears to validate the indictment of political elite in postcolonial Africa by the Berg Report. The general economic decline occasioned popular resentment which was trailed in the end by a military coup on 31st December 1983.

The New Military regime of General Buhari tightened the Austerity Measures of the immediate past civilian regime and this resulted in improved budgetary and balance of payment positions. However, outstanding debt service continued to mount and a lingering impasse in discussions with the IMF prevented rescheduling. The regime tried to ignore the IMF and approached the Paris club of donors directly in addition to initiating counter trade with Brazil and some European countries. Counter trade is a modern form of trade by barter in which the country obtained technology, spare parts and other raw materials necessary for economic recovery while avoiding the need for IMF loan and at the same time not violating the rules of the Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) (Graf cited in Osaghae, 1998). These initiatives failed as the overtures to the Paris Club of Creditors were rebuffed while the economy continued to decline (see Lewis, 1996). This situation combined with the highly authoritarian posture of the regime, particularly in its human rights conducts to create uncertainty about the future of the country especially regarding issues of human needs and political democracy. In August 1985, the regime of General Buhari was ended through a palace coup led by General Ibrahim Babangida.

The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)

Given General Buhari's authoritarian style of leadership, the coup that ousted him was received with another 'negative legitimacy' in the form of mass enthusiasm. Babangida built his initial support on populist actions such as the release of political detainees, abrogation of obnoxious press Decree 4 of 1984 which was meant to muzzle the press. Besides, he promised to conduct a transition to civil rule which the preceding regime did not do. But Babandiga needed to reconcile his populism with the problem of economic management. Economic issues confronted him with the challenges of implementing the IMF conditionalities.

To wade through the minefield of the IMF loan and its corresponding neoliberal reforms, General Babangida set up an independent commission and charged it with the responsibility of conducting genuinely free and open national debate on the desirability of receiving the IMF loan. The debate was conducted in the media both electronic and prints, in public seminars as well as in faith-based organizations,

market associations, village and town assemblies. The consensus after this public debate was a massive rejection of an IMF loan on the grounds that most countries come out worse off after taking such loan. The government therefore openly announced a decision to comply with the wishes of Nigerians on the subject. However, it secretly went ahead without public consultation to take the loan (Afolayan, 2000).

Taking the IMF credit marked the beginning of its corresponding Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in Nigeria. The SAP became the core economic management framework under the regime of Ibrahim Babangida between 1985 and 1993. In summary, SAP was designed to reform the pattern of accumulation in a manner that a minimal state with a private sector driven monetarist economy is made operative. Specific policies applied to achieve these were devaluation of currency, removal of government subsidies, trade liberalization and privatization.

Okome (1999) presents the basic points of rationalization of the introduction of SAP by the Nigerian government and the crises that followed it. According to her account, currency devaluation from the government's perspective was expected to enhance domestic productivity because the relative value of foreign currency would make imported goods expensive in relation to local ones. As a result, consumers would settle for local products which would ultimately cause a boost in productivity and growth of the manufacturing sector. But currency devaluation occasioned spiralling inflation. Salary earners also came under severe economic crunch because there was no corresponding increase in wages, thus the purchasing power of workers also declined. The consequent economic crunch was a little surprising because Nigeria is import dependent. The rising costs of goods and services affected not only basic food commodities, but also transportation. Rather than achieve its desired outcome, currency devaluation diminished the ability of the workers' to access their basic needs.

The policy of removing government subsidies for the citizens was targeted mostly at the petroleum sector. It means the stoppage of government payment of part of the

petroleum costs on behalf of the citizens. The IMF conditionality in this regard was that the petroleum subsidy should be removed either in one single step or over a three year period. It was strongly held by the Babangida regime that the removal would balance the budget, encourage efficient utilization of a wasting resource and curtail smuggling and bunkering of petroleum products. Funds released by the removal of the petroleum subsidy were promised to be utilized in developing a mass transit system, creation of jobs and improvement of fiscal balance. Petroleum price increase was announced in the 1986 budget speech (see Okome, 1999).

Trade Liberalization was important to Babangida regime's economic management because it proclaimed faith in the efficacy of the free market and therefore phased out import licensing. In September 1986, duties on all imported finished and manufactured goods were reduced. The number of imported goods which were banned and those requiring licenses were reduced in the 1987 budget. Similarly, import tariffs were adjusted downwards. This included the abolition of duties on raw materials and components of manufactured goods that were meant for export in addition to various other incentives designed to attract foreign investment.

Trade Liberalization as part of the policy framework of SAP stands counter to the Economic Stabilization Act of 1982 in which the Shagari regime (the last civilian regime before the second phase of military rule in Nigeria) accepted the principle that economic recovery should be promoted through import-restricting Austerity Programmes. The regime started import restrictions, recalled unused import licenses for review and required an advance deposit of 50 to 250 percent on various imports. Building on this, the regime of Buhari placed a ban on all imports under license in the belief that import control together with aggressive local sourcing of raw materials was vital to the recovery of the manufacturing sector. Consequently, in 1984, only 20 items were exempted from payment of import duties and industries were allowed to import only essential raw materials and spare parts (Okome, 1999). But trade liberalization that came with the military rule of General Babangida substantially eliminated the level of government regulation of trade to create greater opportunities for international trade.

Privatization was quite prominent among the raft of policies that were introduced under the neoliberal regime of SAP. Prior to the implementation of SAP, the regimes of Shehu Shagari and General Muhammadu Buhari had expressed possibilities of divestment of state interests in some parastatals. However, none of these leaders adopted the privatization policy. It was the regime of General Babangida that implemented policy of privatization and commercialization. Concrete efforts in this regard were in the form of the creation of the Technical Committee on Privatization and Commercialization (TCPC) and the Industrial Development Coordination Committee (IDCC) whose shared goal was to expedite the application process for foreign investors. Further, the Babangida regime amended the Nigerian Enterprise Promotion Decree (NEPD) of 1972 and its 1977. This amendment allowed foreigners to own 100 percent of manufacturing companies instead of 40 percent as previously allowed by the NEPD. In addition areas previously reserved for nationals were opened up for foreign investment (Okome, 1999). The idea underpinning these reforms is that given a full window of access to capital into the country as a market is necessary for economic development of the country.

Civil Society and Responses to Structural Adjustment Programme

The Structural Adjustment Programme as shown by Okome (1999) did not elicit a uniform response from civil society groups, because civil society is a space contested by a multiplicity of interest-bearing forces. To this end, some actors in the space supported the SAP while others were resistant to it. The private sector was deemed a primary beneficiary of the programme of rolling back the state through market reforms. Yet, some of the most strident criticisms of SAP came from parts of the private sector. The source of this divide is intra class disharmony originating from divergent interests of comprador and national bourgeoisie. Creating institutional conditions around which social agents converge and engage with one another is one of the ways in which the state structures the core relations in civil society. By effectively introducing a new mode of regulation in the form of SAP, the Nigerian state crafted a context of relations of forces in which social classes and class

coalitions confronted one another. Basically, the element of trade liberalization would favour the comprador interests which articulate well with foreign capital. On the contrary, the national bourgeoisie which happens to be import-dependent for raw materials with insufficient competitive leverage with manufactured foreign goods found trade liberalization utterly disadvantageous and differed with the compradors. The Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industries Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Directors of Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) and chief executives of major banks while reckoning with possible challenges, all applauded SAP measures and thought that it was a mechanism through which multiple problems could be solved.

Among the national bourgeoisie, the Nigerian Association of Small Scale Industries (NASI) expressed fears that privatization would jeopardize easy and affordable access to raw materials. For trade liberalization, many local manufacturers saw its potential of making them vulnerable to unfair global competition from external producers. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria was also concerned that the removal of the oil subsidy could lead to inflation. Subsidy removal was also considered dangerous when combined with strict wage controls and the deregulation of prices. Besides, they believed that SAP could retard the recovery of the agricultural sector and accelerate the collapse of public transportation.

Currency devaluation caused a drastic reduction in the living standards of a majority of Nigerians. Workers were affected by under-employment, mass retrenchment and unemployment. Salaries became insufficient to meet basic needs. Reduced purchasing power caused a backlash of unsold goods for manufacturers whose production base equally began to diminish. Many of the industries especially the small scale category had to close down. Neilson and Stubbs (2011) demonstrated how neoliberalization increases the ranks of the unemployed, under-employed, drives the increasing and precarious forms of clandestine work that operate at the margins of society. They identified the group within these strata as the relative surplus population. This description fits the outcome of SAP and meant severe economic hardship thereby causing serious opposition to the neoliberal project.

Virtually all facets of the SAP adversely affected the masses, but among its major policies, the one that encountered the most thoroughgoing resistance was the removal of the government subsidy on petroleum products. This was explosive and caused one of the broadest coalitions of inter-class, sectional and group alliances known in modern Nigeria (see Okome, 1999). Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) had embarked on a media crusade to argue against petroleum subsidy removal. This was in response to a government sponsored media campaign to promote subsidy removal. In addition to this, there were demonstrations by organized labour groups. In reaction, the Inspector General of Police announced a ban on all forms of demonstrations, strikes and public processions. Some of the agitators including journalists, University lecturers and student union leaders were arrested, detained and charged with sedition and fomenting public discontent against the government. But the force of public opinion prevailed on the government to release the detainees. In continuation of its determination to forcefully implement SAP, the Military government “made it a criminal offence for anyone to suggest that there could be a credible alternative to SAP” (Afolayan, 2000, p. 136).

In April 1988, an increase in prices of petroleum products was announced which resulted in widespread demonstration by several groups across the country. Riots which were coordinated across several universities in Nigeria were carried out in May 1989 resulting in about 50 deaths (See Akintola, 2010, p. 10). The state responded by closing 31 educational institutions some of which remained closed till 1990. Students unions were banned and their leaders were arrested under Decree No 2 of 1989 and arraigned before the miscellaneous offences tribunals. Also Students Union Activities Control and Regulation Decree No 47 of 1989 was promulgated. The Decree made national student union illegal and the unions in individual universities subject to proscription if found to act contrary to national interest, security, public safety, morality and health.

In the face of growing internal resistance against neoliberal reforms and external pressure by International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the government increased its

suppression of groups in civil society such as student organisations and trade unions. It also began to subtly disorganise the labour union. In February 1988 the Babangida regime suspended the union leaders and appointed a sole administrator to handle its affairs. The Government was not only coercive but also cynical about the activism of organised labour. It qualified the workers' action as a selfish outburst of urban elite which lacked the support of the rural majority (Okome, 1999). Effort was also made by the Government to penetrate the students association and to replace the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) with a surrogate body, though this was not successful.

The image of society under SAP as described in the foregoing translates to a crisis of authority. The era marked a boiling over of the crisis of the state. Under these circumstances, it was difficult to find the basic legitimacy which justifies authority. This was particularly so because the impact of the nature of accumulation which SAP created was unbearably severe for the subaltern groups in the country. It simply undermined the value of government to citizens. An informed insight on the SAP was given by Egwu in his suggestion that:

SAP breeds authoritarian rule. Contrary to the neo liberal assumption that market reforms will inexorably trigger-off liberalized forms of politics, the experiences of Nigeria and several other African countries that have adopted the IMF/World Bank economic reform package have shown that such an outcome is hardly ever the case; political authoritarianism seem to be the flipside of structural adjustment. The authoritarianism induced by SAP stems from the fact that it is an inherently unpopular economic reform blueprint. Market-based reforms in Nigeria, as elsewhere in the Third World, have entailed efforts at rolling back the state. Severe cut in wages and social expenditure in the face of spiralling inflation led to a collapse in the living standards of many urban groups. Consequently, opposition to the adjustment came from students, workers and professional groups. Governmental response to this was to rely more and more on state coercion in order to push through most of the adjustment policies (Egwu, 1998, p. 11).

The correlation between neoliberalism and the increasing authoritarianism of military rule was a factor in the coalition of class forces in civil society for political democracy. The underpinning idea for this demand is that a democratic government is more likely to be responsive to how political rule affects citizens than a military regime. Hence, there was a gradual build-up of interests around demands for the commencement of a transition to an elective democracy. Essentially the neoliberal regime of economic management was the strategy of the dictatorial military regime to garner support from the International Financial Institutions that cared little about the undemocratic implementation of economic reforms. Having staved off a possible source of external pressure by adopting a monetarist policy regime; the military regime started delaying the process of return to elective democracy.

When General Babangida ousted the regime of General Buhari, he had promised a restoration of an elective democracy by 1990. Some processes of transition to civil rule were commenced at the time but later began to take a suspicious turn. Babandiga's prevarication began in 1987 when he received the recommendation of government-appointed Political Bureau. He argued that a two year extension of the transition to civil rule time-table was necessary for the purpose of a durable transfer to an electoral democracy. He postponed the transition time table two more times (Lewis, 1994). These intrigues were taking place amidst dictatorial implementation of neoliberal reforms. Thus it became a matter of doubt among democracy activists in civil society as to whether the military oligarchy was actually willing to relinquish political power to an elected civilian regime. Babangida appears to have been insincere with an earlier promise of returning the country to civil rule. Later revelation by some of his former close aides reinforces this suspicion. According to Peters (1997), Lt Col. Tony Otu-Nyiam, one of the leaders of the abortive coup of April 22, 1990, recalled that when General Babangida was Chief of Army Staff under General Buhari's regime, he had asked him (Otu-Nyiam) to do a study of the regime of Col. Abdel Nasser and General Pinochet of Chile. Babangida was interested in knowing how Nasser set up a system in Egypt where the military always produced presidential candidates with a civilian prime minister. He was equally interested in knowing how General Pinochet remained in power for as long as he did. Indeed

during his rule, one of the strategies he wanted to use to retain power was the introduction of a national guard which was like a parallel force to the army, but was committed to the security of the president. This was one of the grievances expressed by the officers who carried out a failed coup in April 22, 1990. In their judgment the introduction of the National Guard was a subtle attempt to undermine the conventional army for selfish ambitions of the military ruler.

The postponements of handover dates to the civilians and ultimate annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election reinforces the idea that General Babangida had a pre-conceived plan not to return the country to a genuine elective democracy. It was the annulment of the presidential election that heightened tensions in civil society. While the revival of activism in civil society, occasioned by the neoliberal turn in economic management, offered grounds for the intensification of demands for democratisation of the state, the truncation of the transition to civil rule and the annulment of the presidential elections of June 12, 1993 raised the agitation to a high pitch.

General Babangida's delay in completing the transition to a civil rule programme and the increased pressure from democratic elements in civil society draws attention to Gramsci's (1968) relations of forces, in particular, as it relates to what Gramsci (1968, p. 174) calls a "crisis of authority" or 'crisis of state' in all spheres. Essentially, Babangida's military rule caused a further deepening of a crisis that actually existed before the entry of the military into politics. But the military leaders' behaviour in politics reveals that it was part of the undemocratic elite of the country. So their political intervention and reluctance to return the country to an elective democracy is a specificity of domination that the ruling group both in the military institution and among civilians found most advantageous at the time.

Crisis of the Transition to Civil Rule

Annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election and crisis of the state

Nigeria's political crises in the better part of the 1990's among other historically linked factors could be largely traced to the annulment of the presidential election held on the 12th of June 1993. The election followed a long transition to civil rule programme that took place under the Babangida regime. The high point of the long transition to civil rule was an election in which Chief M.K.O Abiola, was widely believed to have won. Following pressures from local agitations and external sources, the military head of state, General Babangida was virtually forced to step down in August 1993 after constituting an interim government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. This palliative measure failed to stem the tide of political protests and agitations in the country. In fact the space of civil society became too charged for the ruling group that another authoritarian strategy was applied to preserve the structure of domination. This came in the form of another military coup in November 1993 led by General Sanni Abacha.

The coup that brought General Abacha to power commenced the despotism of an individual resulting from an uneasy equilibrium of forces in which it was becoming difficult for any particular group to impose its own project on others (cf Fatton, 1990). Ironically, Chief Abiola, the winner of the annulled election congratulated Abacha in an open embrace. Most political actors who were supporters of Chief Abiola and other political party loyalists became members of General Abacha's cabinet. They include Abiola's Vice Presidential candidate - Baba Gana Kingibe, former Senate President of the truncated transition to civil rule, Senator Iyorchia Ayu and other high-ranking members of the two political parties²² that contested the June 12, 1993 elections (see Ihonvbere, 1996).

It is striking that a leader emerging from a military coup could command the loyalty of political groups that are in a major contest with the outcome of the decision of an immediate past military rule in which the new military leader was a major figure.

²² The two government-established and funded political parties that contested the 1993 Presidential elections in Nigeria were the National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP).

General Abacha appeared like a genuine interventionist with the aim of breaking the stalemate between factions of a ruling group. He seemed eager to resolve the impasse in favour of those who laid legitimate claim to control of the state thereby cunningly achieving their support. There seemed to have been an understanding that Abacha was going to restore the annulled June 12, 1993 Presidential election outcome. Ihonvbere's (1996) account of the event observed that the civilian elite openly invited army officers to intervene and held consultations with them before they did so. Some of these invitations were expressed in letters and open statements specifically asking General Abacha to intervene and resolve the political debacle in the country. Ihonvbere narrative informs that Bolaji Akinyemi, a one-time Minister for Foreign Affairs, addressed a letter to General Abacha urging him to dissolve the Interim National Government, all democratic structures, re-adopt the 1960 constitution and form a transitional national government based on June 12 election. Also, Lateef Jakande called on Abacha to provide an answer to Nigeria's debacle. These calls may have been made with good intention. But it inadvertently became one of the props to the birth of another authoritarian regime. However the understanding and alliance between Abacha and the protagonists for the restoration of June 12, 1993 election outcome broke down and led to renewed agitation for the installation of the winner of the election Chief M.K.O Abiola as president.

Marx, concretely applying a relations of forces approach, showed how different "class forces could project their own hopes and fears onto Bonaparte; and he in turn skillfully manipulated and exploited this polyvalence for his own purposes"(Jessop, 1991, p. 87). Abacha's manipulation of the political faction that sought restoration of an annulled mandate with a promise that his political intervention embodies their aspiration casts his role in Marx's description of Bonaparte as

... an old cunning roué, he conceives the historical life of nations and their state proceeding as comedy in their most vulgar sense, as a masquerade in which their grand costumes, words and postures merely serve as a cover for the most petty trickery (Marx, 1973b, p. 197).

It is striking that civilian politicians who favoured the return of the country to elective civil rule could engage in an alliance with General Abacha who is associated with the

major military coups of the 1980s. The alliance is a strategic move by factions of dominant forces in relations of forces. In their competition for power, one faction retains political power with the military apparatus while a competing faction which feels denied of political victory which was won through the ballot negotiates with a member of the military high command to take over political power and remedy the situation. The civilian politicians in the competing faction were driven by the need to revalidate the result of a presidential election annulled by a military ruler.

When General Abacha achieved power, he was quick to rise above the entire coalition he claimed to represent. Marx's description could give a link between Abacha's coup and Bonaparte's ascendancy as representing "the victory of Bonaparte over parliament, of the executive power over legislative power, of force without phrases over force of phrases" (cited in Fatton, 1990, p. 463). Analyzing the Bonaparte phenomenon, Marx argued that France has escaped the despotism of a class only to fall back beneath the despotism of an individual and, beneath the authority of an individual without authority. The struggle seemed to have rendered all classes equally impotent and equally mute and brought them on their knees before the ascendant power (cf Fatton, 1990). The ascendant power in Nigeria was embodied in Abacha who later built new structures of support for the advancement of his political power. Part of the sites he exploited for building a new support base was civil associations.

Abacha's detour on the understanding that he would restore civil rule by recognising the outcome of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election was necessary for the advancement of his personal interest. This caused a renewal of tension in the political field because alienated political groups coalesced on the common ground of demand for democratisation. Consequently a lot of powerful forces were released into civil society for democratic activism. The interests in civil society then converged at the demands for an end of military rule and commencement of elective civil rule. This strengthened the kind of anti-regime forces in civil society which included mostly non-radical but highly activist pro-democracy actors. Labour and the press were also activist in support of democracy. Chapter six of this study covers the press during this

era of struggle for democratisation while the most significant action by an organised labour group, the 1994 oil workers' strike is treated separately from other anti-regime pro-democracy activist groups of the period. There were also pro-regime groups which include front organisations funded by the dictatorial military regimes. The two outstanding ones among the pro-regime groups are: Youth Earnestly Ask for Abacha (YEAA) and Association of Better Nigeria (ABN).

Anti-regime and Pro-regime Activists

The trend that became prominent in civil society when popular suspicion that the military rulers were unwilling to return the country to elective civil rule was the growth in the numbers of both anti-regime and pro-regime activists. Among the anti-regime activists, the uniting point of their actions was an end to military rule while some of them specifically demanded restoration of the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential elections. Sometimes they acted in coalition but each had its autonomy from others. This category of actors offered the kind of space which Gilley refers to as democratic enclaves in authoritarian regimes. He posited that “a democratic enclave is distinguished by its adherence to or espousal of norms and procedures that stress individual rights, due process, political equality, and popular control in contrast to the dominant norms of an authoritarian regime” (Gilley, 2010, p. 391). Actors in this space according to Gilley are not just nominally democratic but actually espouse and practice democracy. They engage the state against its undemocratic practices. Democratic enclaves are institutionalized, not necessarily illegal even if their actions make them vulnerable to legal sanctions by undemocratic regimes.

The anti-regime groups included organisations like the Campaign for Democracy (CD), the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP), the Committee for Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). These groups organised protests, legal actions, strikes and helped in publicising the breaches of civilised standards of conduct by the regime. Together with the press they exposed the authoritarian rule of the Abacha regime. The National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) at the time

established an unofficial broadcast media called Radio Kudirat in an unknown location. The media served as a critical voice of the opposition. This media operated outside of the legal requirements of electronic broadcasting in Nigeria. Indeed, it could not have been licensed to operate given its mission of opposition to the incumbent government. This kind of institutional impediment is one of the means by which government assumes the control of public information space. But this near monopoly was challenged by the unregistered activist broadcasting which disseminated the wrong-doings of the regime to increase its international opprobrium and attract international sanctions against the government (cf Stepan, 2001). Olukotun (2010) rightly justifies this defiant broadcasting by arguing that when institutions of popular culture are circumscribed by control against legitimate dissent, the duty of subaltern groups is to throw up subversive motifs to restructure the discourse map.

Members of oppositional civil society groups were targeted for assassination thereby forcing some of them into exile. Instances of assassinated opposition figures are Alfred Rewane, Kudirat Abiola²³ the wife of the winner of the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential elections. There were failed attempts to also assassinate Abraham Adesanya and Alex Ibru. Those who had the opportunity to flee overseas coordinated their activities by linking up with international democratic movements to further expose the misconducts of the military regime. The globalisation of this campaign was underscored by the need to increase the pressure on the authoritarian regime to give way to an elective democratic regime.

In the two different military regimes of General Babangida (1985-1993) and General Abacha (1993-1998) the dominant forces in control of the state responded to demands for democracy by penetrating the space of civil associations through rent-seeking pro-regime associations. The roles of such groups are exemplified by the activities of the Association for Better Nigeria (ABN) during General Babangida's regime and Youth Earnestly Ask for Abacha (YEAA) during the regime of General Abacha. ABN sought to undermine the transition to civil rule programme by using litigation to stop

²³ The oppositional broadcast media was named Radio Kudirat in her honour.

the presidential election of June 12, 1993. According to Lewis, ABN obtained a late-night court ruling only two days before the election, thus creating mass confusion. Lewis also observed a common feeling among Nigerians that the leader of ABN Chief Arthur Nzeribe was a proxy for senior military officers (1994, p. 326). This suggests that the reluctance to democratise led the military regime to create a supportive environment for groups that undermined the process of transition to civil rule. In General Abacha's era, YEAA was prominent among the various groups that mobilized support for the military leader to transform to a civilian leader. In a rally called the 'Two Million Man March' organised on March 3, 1998 to persuade Abacha to contest for the presidency, 500 million Naira of public funds and countless public facilities were put at their disposal including two helicopters belonging to Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (a government department). This was an attempt to create a semblance of public support for General Abacha's self-succession project (Mustapha, 1999). Groups of this nature provided a framework for counter action against others that opposed undemocratic rule. These competing demands from groups in civil society emanates from the ruling group's strategy of penetration and division of the associational spaces in civil society.

Thus, the penetration of civil society either by initiative of political leadership in the state or overtures by patronage seeking groups was one of the patterns of state/society relations during the authoritarian military rule. Under the regime of Sanni Abacha, the following groups were asking him to succeed himself in power:

1. NMPC - National Mobilization and Persuasion Committee (Godwin Daboh)
2. NMPS – National Movement for peace and Stability (?)
3. YEAA – Youths Earnestly Ask for Abacha (Daniel Kanu)
4. UAN – United Action for Nigeria (Godwin Daboh/Dr Asuquo)
5. NEC – Northern Elders Committee (Abdulrahman Okene)
6. GESAM – General Sani Abacha Movement for Unity and Stability
7. GESAM '98 – General Sani Abacha Movement for Peaceful and Successful Transition Programme (Chief Yomi Tokoya)
8. ASOMO – Abacha Solidarity Movement (Alhaji Chief Dr Abayomi Owulade)

9. NACYAN – National Council for Youth Association of Nigeria
10. MIDIA – Movement for Indigenous Democracy (Alhaji Mohammed I. Hassan)
11. RLC – Radio Listeners Club
12. NBYO – Nigeria-British Youth Organisation (Mr Segun Adeyemi)
13. NYDD – Nigerian Youth Democratic Diplomats (Abdulraheem, Barry Etuke)
14. NLGCCF – Nigerian Local Govts. Chairmen Consultative Forum (Apostle S.B Bello)
15. NAMAP – National Forum for Abacha Presidency (Chief Femi Aluko)
16. MID – Movement for Independent Democracy (Dr Nya Asuquo)
17. 21st Generation Insist on Abacha (Barrister Ladi Alao)
18. Vision '98 Abacha for President (Chief Sheudeen Adesina)
19. Abacha Committee of Friends (Chief Nelson Chudi)
20. Youths for Consensus Abacha'98 (Hassan Saleh Hassan)
21. Agenda '98 (Chief Sergeant Awuse)
22. NANS for Abacha (Oludare S. Ogunlana)
23. All-Nigeria Youth for Abacha '98 (Mallam M. Sani Akwashiki)
24. Vision 2010 for Abacha (?)
(Aluko, 2002).

LeVan (2011, p. 144) reports the existence of at least 157 such organisations linked to the military regime of General Abacha. This contrasting inclination of actors within civil society underlines the division in their projects and the double-edged nature of the space of civil society. The engagements between agents with conflicting projects suggest that the utility of the site in democratisation is contingent on continuous successful struggles by democratic forces acting within the space to achieve political, civil and social rights.

Organised Labour and the Struggle for Democratisation²⁴

The group that really shook the military regime at the early period of the Abacha dictatorship were two oil workers unions namely the National Union of Petroleum

²⁴ This section is illustrated with the 1994 oil workers' strike under General Abacha's regime and draws mostly from the work of Onyeonoru and Aborisade (2001)

and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) and Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN). These two organisations are members of the national central organisation of labour, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). The unions embarked on a strike with a number of demands including the restoration of democracy, particularly the result of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. The first strike by the oil workers' unions started on 28th August 1993 as a member organisation of the Nigeria Labour Congress. In the second strike which began with NUPENG strike on the 4th of July 1994 and later joined by PENGASSAN on 12th July 1994 did not involve NLC. The latter strike is described as "one of the most coordinated efforts by any segment of civil society in the country towards ensuring the exit of the military and return to civil rule" (Onyeonoru & Aborisade, 2001, p. 44). While accepting political motivation as the proximate cause of the strike the authors noted that the "conflict has its important interface with other social variables that have significance for social justice, political development and national integration in Nigeria" (Onyeonoru & Aborisade, 2001, p. 45).

From the point of view of politics as the motivation for the crises between the oil workers and the state, the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election led the unions to integrate political demands into their usual economic demands. Prior to the action of the oil workers union the Central Working Committee (CWC) and the National Executive Council (NEC) of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) issued press statements condemning the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election and calling for the official release of the election results and swearing-in of the winner. Some state councils of the Nigeria Labour Congress went on strike, lawyers boycotted courts in Lagos and Ogun states while the Campaign for Democracy (CD), a coalition of human rights organizations and pro-democracy groups, organized a stay-at-home protest.

The civil disobedience led by CD was significant because it was observed by workers in both public and private sectors in Nigeria. Workers including those in the oil sector were part of this strike. The Nigeria Labour Congress threatened a strike from 28 August 1993 if the military failed to quit power by its stated exit date of 27th August

1993. Ultimately, General Babangida disengaged from power. But rather than restore the annulled presidential election, he instituted an Interim National Government (ING) led by Chief Ernest Shonekan. Consequently, on 28 August 1993, the NLC declared a strike to press for a return to democratic rule. On the second day the strike was called off. Incidentally the oil workers (NUPENG and PENGASSAN) which are member unions of the central labour organisation (NLC) refused to call off their strike and actually continued the action till November 1993. NUPENG and PENGASSAN accused NLC of betrayal for calling off the strike without any significant gain on their demands.

The ambivalence of NLC is a little surprising because its leader at the time, Paschal Bafyau was believed to be a stooge of the military regime. In the government's bid to control labour, it tried to penetrate the leadership through various means. The government had backed candidates who were woefully defeated in the 1988 delegates' Conference of the NLC. The government's continued fear of opposition from organised labour led the Babangida regime to apply the National Economic and Emergency Powers Decree of 1985, and dissolved the leadership of the NLC and appointed a pro-regime sole administrator. Once the NLC was placed under a pro-regime leadership, the state sponsored an election believed to be phoney in which the pro-regime candidate, Mr Paschal Bafyau, emerged the leader of the Nigeria Labour Congress. As a co-opted leader, Bafyau leadership in NLC began to collaborate with the military government. But despite penetration of the leadership of the labour centre, members of the union were still able to compel its leadership towards a critical posture against the regime's undemocratic behaviour. The truncation of the process of return to civil rule was one of such events. However, the divide between the leadership and members of NLC became evident when a strike action demanding restoration of the annulled June 12, 1993 election outcome was quickly called off without achieving its objective. The weakening of the labour movement by the military government can be seen as a strategy of the ruling group to continue the suspension of democracy. Historically, the labour union in Nigeria has been an important context of struggles that embrace a broad range of democratic rights. The effort to control such an important context of civil society was calculated to diminish

the impact of both the labour union and other subaltern groups in the relations of forces involving political struggles. In this instance, the labour as usual deploys their traditional strategy of strikes while the government tries to undermine the central labour organisation (NLC) by penetrating their leadership.

Continuation of the strike by the oil workers (NUPENG and PENGASSAN), in spite of NLC's withdrawal caused problems in other sectors of the economy. This is because the strike by oil workers caused fuel shortage and induced a transport crisis thereby making it difficult for other workers and many businesses to operate. This development established the capacity of the oil workers to unilaterally engage the military regime outside the framework of NLC. In November 8, 1993, there was an announcement of 700 percent increase in the pump price of petrol from 70 Kobo per litre to 5 Naira per litre. This increment was done by the Interim National Government left behind by the Babangida regime. A strike was declared after a meeting of the Central Working Committee of the NLC on the 11th of November 1993. General Sanni Abacha took advantage of the ensuing confusion to stage a military take-over of government on November 18, 1993. He later reached a compromise with the NLC leadership by reducing the price of petrol to three naira twenty five kobo (N3.25) per litre with a promise to effect a corresponding increase in workers' pay. At the same time, Abacha made no pretence about his intention to apply repressive measures in dealing with the opposition. Shortly after the coup, the presumed winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election declared himself the president of Nigeria. This was when it became clear that General Abacha's coup was not meant to restore the annulled presidential election. Chief MKO Abiola, the presumed winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, was later arrested and detained by the military government.

In June 1994, the anniversary of the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election provided an atmosphere for workers to reinvent their struggle for democracy by articulating their grievances into a dispute with the military regime. The National Executive Council of the oil workers association, NUPENG met on 18th June 1994 and deliberated on issues of deteriorating political situation in the country, worsening

economic crisis in the oil industry as well as poor conditions of petroleum tanker drivers. It was observed at the meeting that “the prevailing political and economic situation has led to company closures, job losses and huge debt owed to oil industry companies, because of non-payment of contract bills by government” (Onyeonoru & Aborisade, 2001, p. 47).

A similar meeting of a section of the Private Sector Industrial Unions, involving NUPENG, took place on the 30th of June 1994. It resolved that:

the military should disengage forthwith, having failed to address the political and economic problems of the country. It also demanded an immediate and unconditional release of Chief MKO Abiola and reopening of all closed media houses...(Onyeonoru & Aborisade, 2001, pp. 47–48).

When the strike by oil workers eventually commenced, the effect was crippling on the Nigerian economy, as lack of petroleum products affected all other sectors of the economy, compelling other workers to join the industrial action. PENGASSAN actively joined the strike. The backlash from the military government was a high-handed response. The Abacha-led government branded the industrial action political and argued that:

labour unions must be apolitical and only concerned with their traditional role, the economic welfare of their members. This orthodox view was, however, rejected by the strikers, who insisted on the political component of the demand – the immediate exit of the military and the official declaration and installation of the winner of the 1993 presidential election (Onyeonoru & Aborisade, 2001, p. 48).

The workers strongly maintained that their protest had transcended the specific interest of the oil workers and extended to the interests of the entire Nigerian people. On this premise, the strikers insisted that the political aspects of their demands could not be separated from its other components. The NUPENG National President, Wariebi Agamene held that “it is very difficult under the present economic and political climate to isolate trade unions or economic struggles from political

struggles” (cited in Onyeonuru & Aborisade, 2001, p. 48). Luxembourg had earlier argued that economic mass strike constitutes an aspect of political struggle. She argued that

economic struggle is a transmitter from one political centre to another; the political struggle is the periodic fertilization of the soil for the economic struggle. Cause and effect here continually change places; and thus the economic and the political factor in the period of the mass strike, now widely removed completely separated or even mutually exclusive as the theoretical plan would have them, merely form interlacing sides of the proletarian class struggle....And their unity is precisely the mass strike for the purpose of getting at the ‘the purely political mass strike’...(Luxemburg, 1969, p. 47)

For Luxemburg, every victory in political struggle is transformed into a power impetus for the economic struggle. This argument points once more to the relatedness of aspects of society as an organic whole and also to the relations of forces in the ways which contesting social forces move across economic and political sites of struggle. The connection between aspects of society bears on the theoretical tradition of totality in which every part is necessary for understanding the whole. Thus the aspects of economy and politics which the workers demand represent are important moments of social practice in relations of forces.

The actions of the government aimed at containing the workers included the arrest and detention of Secretary-General of NUPENG Frank Kokori on the 20th of August 1994. This was followed by the arrest and detention of the President of NUPENG, Wariebi Agamene on the 11th of September 1994. This period in the history of state civil society dialectics was marked by increasing effort of the dominant forces to repress pressures for transformation from democratic forces in civil society. The use of incarceration and other forms of intimidation were parts of the indices of authoritarian closure by the state against democratic forces that contest the form of political rule in the state. Increasing coerciveness of the state simply demonstrates the failure of Legal, ideological and cultural dimensions of power in domination. Such failure was the situation in military rule, which led the regimes to rely mostly on

force for the mediation of social conflicts. In Gramscian terms, this could be seen as a crisis of authority.

Analysing Crises of State and Mediational Strategies: A Relations of Forces Approach

The crisis of the state is understood to draw from conflicting group interests in Nigeria. Thus social forces acting in different directions were bound to clash. While no particular bloc of interest made an explicit declaration of an anti-democratic objective, activities related to various groups in the political field either advanced democratisation or undermined it.

Within civil society, the press, labour organisations, students, professional, human rights and other specialized political activist organisations engage in actions and counter actions related to democratic struggle. The way the state moderates these actions defines the character of the unfolding relations of forces. In the period under review, the Nigerian state is found to mediate crisis with authoritarian laws and coercive instruments of power. At the political level, the political space was for the better part of the post-colonial period closed to elective democracy due to military rule. The neo-liberal project which was undemocratically introduced and implemented provides a context for a bundle of interacting practices that involve the economic, political, ideological and theoretical moments. The monetarist regime of economic management and its attendant withdrawal of social safety nets severally caused mass resistance. Unfolding in this process is relations between blocs of interest in which the dominant bloc acts in disregard of democratic rights while the subaltern bloc contests and resists the dominant bloc's action. Further struggles for democracy led the ruling forces concede to electoral competition but with little regard to other aspects of democratic rights. This did not give rise to democracy because it is an authoritarian adjustment by the ruling group in relations of forces, to enable them continue an undemocratic project. Gramsci (1999) refers to this as passive revolution which he viewed as a transitional compromise. In an earlier use of the concept, Vincenzo Cuoco, an influential conservative thinker of the early Risorgimento argued in favour of passive revolution through reforms, in order to prevent revolutions of the

French model.²⁵ Thus passive revolution is an adjustment strategy in which the ruling group makes a few changes to prevent a revolution from below that could alter the structure of power and domination.

In the post military era, the political space may have opened to some extent. Elections can be conducted. Media and other forms of criticism of government can take place without incurring a state-directed coercive response. However, engagement from civil society for democratisation has become less vigorous compared to the period of struggle for return to elective democracy. This is unsurprising because the dominant view of democracy tends to create the impression shared by some democratic groups in civil society, that democracy has been actualized because elective civil rule has been achieved. The actions of civil society groups have become more visible in election observation. Also opportunistic organising by rent-seeking pro-regime groups still takes place but in the forms of ethnic, regional and other narrow interest based associations. While these groups may not be so tightly linked with the governments, their continued existence shows that conditions favourable to authoritarian rule still persists in the activities of some civil associations. Thus, the sites of state and civil society are populated by elements which connect along the lines of shared interest to further the democracy project even as undemocratic elements act to undermine the same project.

At the economic level, Nigeria's ruling group is interested in the capitalist path of development. However, this interest in capitalism tends to emphasize accumulation, and hardly the regimes of civil and political rights that Western capitalist models specify. In the era of military rule, the effort to deepen economic practices rooted in neoliberal market capitalism was a matter of political decision which the rulers must take and implement with force. Neoliberalism and its corresponding withdrawal of the state from basic public provisioning unleashed the hard and harsh effects of capitalism on the citizens and led to mass resistance. Similar undemocratic implementation of neoliberal reforms in the post military era is a source of popular disaffection. The mixture of politics, economy and ideology are evident here.

²⁵ See the footnote of Gramsci (1999, p.217).

Political authoritarianism is a necessary tool for sustaining undemocratic economic practice. The forces involved in the dynamic process of relations of forces are the external forces driving global capitalism through International Financial Institutions, domestic ruling group in Nigeria comprising the military rulers and their allies in the civil realm. An alliance of subaltern groups cutting across, students, workers and trade unions, a section of the press and various other associational groups opposed the neoliberal agenda. In terms of strategy, decision-making on neoliberal policies was implemented in spite of popular rejection of it. At the same time, the political tool for responding to popular resistance was coercion.

Regarding theory and ideology, Nnoli's (2011) analysis of the middle class or petty bourgeoisie seems apt for their role as a part of the Nigerian ruling group. His argument is that this group is incapable of developing or sustaining an ideology due to their lack of a base in production. As a class sandwiched between the bourgeoisie and working class, a few of its members may climb further in social mobility while the rest either remain where they are or slip down to the working class or lumpen-proletariat. The result is that the petty bourgeoisie is in a kind of contradictory class location where it bears both bourgeois and proletarian ideological tendencies. They pick sundry values from all manner of ideologies in order to arrive at coinages such as pragmatic socialism, democratic socialism etc and attempt to make them their own. Petty bourgeois orientation to distribution rather than production is the reason why they were initially, not uncomfortable with public ownership of means of production because it increases the resource base of the state which they will allocate disproportionately to themselves. Thus their participation in anti-colonial struggle was primarily to place themselves in state posts. This outcome enabled privileged distribution of state benefits to the emergent political elite. Continuing from Nnoli's analysis, it could be argued that once the ruling group have achieved relatively strong economic base, it became attractive to make an ideological switch and accept neoliberal privatisation, withdrawal of state from welfare and other elements of neoliberal regime of economic management. The result is that common wealth is converted to privately owned properties. Some factions of the petty bourgeoisie organise consent for the ruling forces through civil society associations such as Non-

Governmental Organisations, Schools and Universities. However, not all factions of the petty bourgeois class articulate well with the existing project of domination. Some of them advance alternative ideologies that support more democratised political and economic practices. The alliance of the latter group with class forces of other subaltern groups and their struggles constructs the space of engagement for change.

It is political and ideological struggles between contending social forces operating across the different terrains of the integral state that may result in democracy or other political forms such as authoritarianism and totalitarianism. When authoritarian rule results in intense social resistance that banishes order, a general anomie or even state failure could result. The processes are driven by struggles between forces that form blocs of interest that either embed or undermine democratisation. The establishment of institutions of political representation offers grounds to claim that democracy is a work in progress in Nigeria. However, the practices that undermine democratisation still exist in the form of compromised electoral competitions, lack of transparent and accountable governance, poor human right regime, insecurity, neglect of human development, poor consultation with the citizens on matters of economic reforms such as withdrawal of government subsidy on petroleum, use of legislation to undermine the activism of labour for improved wages and conditions of living, use of laws to subdue groups demanding aspects of democracy etc. Thus, democratic forces are still in weak position to embed and generalize the rights of democratic citizenship.

Chapter 8

State, Civil Society and the Institutionalisation of Democracy

The institutionalisation of democracy is the process of building the norms of political practice which are facilitated by the laws, structures and conventions that structure and guide the processes. Institutional embedding of political practices creates the context for the preservation of the accepted norms of politics such as the existence of structures of governance, legal framework for choosing those who operate the structures and details of function within each established structure. Institutionalisation is an important part of the dialectics of democratisation because, while the struggles of social forces create the institutions, the institutions structure the relations of these forces within civil society. At the same time, interactions within civil society continue to restructure the institutions because they are not fixed and final. Within a democratised context, debates continue about the best institutional forms in line with competing political, economic and ideological practices. At the point of struggle to institutionalize the practice of democracy, debates are framed around the competing ideas of democracy and how to make them work.

In Nigeria, the conversations around institution building for democracy is an important level of democratic struggle. Even though the process has created minimalist procedural institutions of democracy, popular preferences and struggles incline towards the maximalist alternative. Political practices around procedural aspects of democracy still leave gaps to be filled. Citizens' struggles for democratisation in Nigeria are not confined to the elements of minimalist democracy. For instance, the Agbekoya peasant revolts of 1968-1969 in Western Nigeria was against resistance to exploitation and repressive measures linked to the state (see Adeniran, 1982). Also workers' demands in the 1945 Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) strike, 1964 general strike, 1994 oil workers' strike, various industrial actions by workers against increases in the official prices of domestically consumed petroleum products since the regime of General Babangida were not driven much by issues of minimalist democratic political rights. They largely revolved around social rights. However, the extant political practice in the country draws from the minimalist

democratic discourse to undermine the important aspects of social rights. The undermining of social rights is reinforced by neoliberal discourses on democracy (cf Tar, 2008). This chapter illustrates that the establishment of concrete institutions of elective civil rule is only a necessary but not sufficient condition for democracy. It also discusses the constitutional conferences and debates in Nigeria which were part of the processes of establishing the institutions of democratic rule in both the colonial and post-colonial era. In the end, it evaluates the constitutional dialogues and the kind of institutions that they achieved. Given the dialectics of these debates and the discursive paradigms that underpin them, this study views the process as an extension of the relations of forces. This is because ideas are made to reflect the interest of the agents that bear them. Ideas of dominant forces represent their interests. The process of dialogues for institution building is a process of struggle for the popularization of ideas which become the ruling ones. This dialectics continues in the form of 'war of position' between contesting social forces over the existing basis of state projects and institutions.

Undemocratic military regimes in most cases embark on establishing institutions of democratic procedures when they face dissent. This kind of dissent is a central driver of the reforms of colonial constitutions in Nigeria especially after the critical response from civil society groups to the 1922 Clifford's constitution and the constitution made under Sir Arthur Richards. The 1946 constitution was criticized for lack of consultation by the colonial government. Subsequently, constitutional changes were made open for contributions from civil society platforms. This marked the beginning of collaboration of the colonial state and indigenous civil society groups in the effort to institutionalize democracy by constitution making.

The post-colonial period was equally characterised by a level of opening for building institutions on the basis of involving some group of Nigerians. This is why there were debates leading up to the making of 1963, 1979, 1989 and 1999 constitutions. Also the post military political reform conference in 2005 was a National Political Reform Conference (NPCR) to enhance the structures and processes of political rule. Equally there are groups in civil society pushing for various forms of institutionalization and

democratic monitoring of political practices. In particular, civil society networks are starting to play vanguard roles over certain procedures of democracy including electoral and constitutional processes. Some of them are local expressions often linked to a globalized network for the advancement of liberal democracy. This network for the globalisation of liberal democracy is a rapidly expanding global trend. Keane (2009) described the roles of the forces that seek to institutionalize democracy as representing a phenomenon of monitory democracy.²⁶ Some of the bearers of the phenomenon of monitory democracy in the Nigerian civil society are local organisations like the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), the Electoral Reform Network (ERN), and the Citizens Forum for Constitutional Reform (CFCR). There are also watchdog organisations that seek to promote public accountability. These groups aim at institutionalizing democracy on the basis of certain procedural requirements.

The involvement of groups in debates for constitution-making and similar forms of actions to keep arbitrary use of power in check by civil society groups draws attention to Kant's notion of the emergence of the better idea in a democratic debate and that of Habermas regarding communicative rationality. Relying on the appeal which open democratic debate would have on the nationalist agitators for political independence, the colonial authority created limited openings for such conversations. The authoritarian military regime applied the same approach on politicians and democratic activists in civil society. Not only was the space narrow, but the kind of democratic discourse that it provided the context for, was one which merely institutionalized procedural political rule according to the preferences of the ruling group. Such preferences were integrated into the constitution. In a particular instance of dialogues for constitution-making, a popularly expressed wish by the majority of the citizens about the ideological path for development of the state was rejected by a few among the ruling elite. The subordination of popular wishes to the preferences of

²⁶ This is a development in democracy as Keane explains, in which the rules of representation, democratic accountability and public participation are applied to a much wider range of settings. It is characterised by the rise of new power-scrutinizing institutions. These bodies have wide-ranging monitory innovations and approaches to scrutinizing power. The list in Keane's work is quite extensive and some of its components include deliberative polls, independent religious courts, social forums, weblogs, electronic networking and civil disobedience websites dedicated to monitoring the abuse of power (see Keane, 2009).

the ruling group raises the question of power as the final arbiter of dialogues or debates. Here, power is expressed broadly to include the way it occurs in the contexts and language of the debate. In sum, the complex nature of power relations that underpin the struggles for democratisation are expressed in constitutional debates and other processes of institutionalisation of democracy that express relations of forces. In the process, social forces are divided around views that purvey limited democratic rights and those that articulate a broader view of democracy built on the political, civil and social rights of citizenship.

Constitutional Dialogues in the Colonial Era

The dialogical progress of constitution making has been an important aspect of the development of procedural democracy in Nigeria. In 1947 an anti-colonial political party, the National Convention for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) gave a major response to a constitution approved in 1946 under the Governorship of Sir Arthur Richards, by sending a delegation to London to protest the constitution. This constitution was preceded by the 1922 constitution that was introduced by Sir Hugh Clifford. Clifford's constitution was under attack by Nigerian nationalists because it was not based on popular consultation and had only four representations for Nigerians in the Legislative Council. Dissatisfaction about the constitution which was expressed mostly through civil society platforms led Sir Bernard Bourdillon, the Governor of Nigeria from 1935 to 1943 to assure Nigerians that they would have adequate opportunity to discuss the draft of their future constitution (Coleman, 1958). But Sir Arthur Richards who replaced Bourdillon in 1943 submitted his proposal for constitutional reform to the Legislative Council in 1945 and urged for a quick approval which was hastily done without any consultation with Nigerians. Irked by the lack of consultation and the objectionable features of the constitution, the Nigerian nationalists subjected it to intense criticism.

NCNC, a popular nationalist organisation mobilized in protest to the constitution. They organized a tour of the colonial provinces of Nigeria in 1946 to raise funds for the purpose of sending a delegation to London to protest against the obnoxious ordinances of the Richard's constitution. The delegation toured the entire provinces

of Nigeria making large numbers of people conscious of the existence of Nigeria as a state and informing them about Richard's constitution with its objectionable provisions. An amazing support was given to the delegation during their tour and rallies. On the whole a total of 13,000 Pounds was raised from the tour to support a planned protest delegation to London.

In June 1947, the NCNC delegation to London left Lagos to lodge a formal protest with the Secretary of state for the colonies. The delegation held its meeting with Arthur Creech Jones, Secretary of state for the colonies on August 13, 1947. They demanded revision of Richard's constitution and presented thirty three other grievances. In response, the Secretary of states for the colonies assured the delegation about the desire of the British to accommodate self-government and the possibility of later revision of the constitution. He however insisted that the constitution must go through a period of trial and urged the delegation to go back and participate in the trial. Despite the immediate outcome of the delegation's visit to London, the protest laid the background for increased consultation with the politically active group in later colonial constitutional reviews.

The Constitutional Conferences of 1953, 1954, 1957, 1958 and 1960

Following the London delegation of the N.C.N.C in protest of the Richard's constitution, the new Governor-General who came in 1948, Sir John Macpherson applied himself to the task of finding a lasting solution to the problems created by the Richard's constitution. In keeping with this mission, a federal constitution was introduced in 1951. However it was a quasi-federal constitution which still could not meet the needs of Nigeria given the wide diversity of the country. It was therefore decided that the constitution should be revised in favour of regional autonomy. The revision was done by the constitutional conference that took place between July and August 1953 under the chairmanship of The Secretary of State for Colonies. This was an important watershed because a democratic constitution should be a product of free debate as suggested by Kant and Habermas. Although a conference of a few educated elites and colonialists does not fully express democratic participation, it could be regarded as a step in an evolutionary process of institution-building for democracy.

In 1953, a crisis occurred in the Nigerian parliament due to a disagreement between anti-colonial groups who wanted immediate independence from Britain and others who preferred a longer colonial rule and a more gradual approach to independence. This led to the resignation of four representatives of the Action Group (political party) in the Council of Ministers. Following the 1953 crisis, constitutional conferences were convoked in London and Lagos as part of efforts to resolve Nigeria's political problems (see Ojiako, 1981). Prior to the conference, the colonial Governor had consulted with leaders of the three major parties in the country namely Ahmadu, the Saruana of Sokoto, Awolowo and Azikiwe. They agreed on the terms of the conference as follows:

- (i) Defects of the present constitution;
- (ii) Changes required to remedy these defects;
- (iii) Steps to be taken to put these changes into effect; and
- (iv) Question of self-government in 1956 (Ezera, 1964).

Essentially, the struggle of the nationalists drawn mostly from the middle class were about the expansion of local representation in government by the emergent educated middle class and reduction of the scope of political representation by traditional rulers whom they understood to be colonial stooges that blocked the chances of the educated elements. Their struggles hardly articulated programmes on substantive democratic issues and how to fulfil obligations of the state to the citizens. As can be seen from the agenda of 1953 constitutional conference, the debates focused on procedural issues.

The next constitutional conference of 1953 in London and the Lagos constitutional conference in 1954 achieved limited self-rule. This allowed the local ruling group to achieve wider political spaces in terms of representation.

In the run up to national independence, two major constitutional conferences took place. One was the 1957 constitutional conference held in Lancaster House from May 23 to June 26, under the chairmanship of the Colonial Secretary, Lennox Boyd. Earlier events at Ghana, a neighbouring African country were to have a strong impact

on the conference in London. Ghana became independent and generated passion for renewed agitation for self-rule in Nigeria. Therefore the Nigerian House of Representatives passed unanimous motion asking the delegates to the proposed conference to demand a firm date not later than 1959, for Nigeria's independence. From May 23 to June 26, 1957 the London constitutional conference held in Lancaster House with the Colonial Secretary, Lennox Boyd as the chair. The most important outcome of the conference was the acceptance by Britain to begin to relinquish control of Nigeria as a colonial territory.

Another historic event between the colonial state and civil society groups in respect of reordering the political sphere was the 1958 constitutional conference. It ran from September 29 to October 27. The conference commenced with the consideration of reports of commissions set up in the 1957 constitutional conference. The 106-delegate event recorded decisions on the following subjects:

Fundamental Human Rights

The Police

Self-government for Northern Nigeria

The Position of Lagos

The southern Cameroons

Electoral arrangements

Fiscal arrangement

The Minorities Problem

Nigeria's Independence and a number of other matters of purely constitutional routine (Ojiako, 1981).

The most crucial promise of the 1958 London conference was the indication by the British government to grant independence to Nigeria on 1st October 1960. Coming after the 1958 conference was the 1960 Nigerian constitutional conference which took place between the 10th and 19th of May. The conference marked a climax of efforts by the local petty bourgeoisie to replace their foreign counterpart in the direct political leadership of Nigeria. This is unsurprising because representation at the conferences were mostly by the petty bourgeoisie and some who were proxies or

allies of powerful feudal rulers. There was no mass mobilization to articulate popular interests and views about the constitutional basis of organising the society after colonialism.

The prospect of self-government by Nigeria was the main achievement of the constitutional dialogues that took place shortly before the country's political independence. However, the context of the dialogues did not reflect the democratic discourse ethics of Habermas.²⁷ The absence of a number of criteria of the discourse ethics translates to a narrow scope for articulating the full range of democratic rights. Indeed the more important gap in the entire discourse is that the framework for the fulfilment of the substantive elements of democracy was not part of the pre-independence conversations for constitution making. Thus the organised struggles for procedural aspects of democracy at the time tended to serve a narrow group interest. Once more, Nnoli (2011) is correct in suggesting that the constitutions that followed the debates were not a product of the people. The debates neither included the masses nor addressed conditions for their improvement after independence. Thus institutionalisation of structures of governance at this period had limited democratic significance.

Post-Independence Constitutional and Political Reform Dialogues

The collapse of the first post-independence elected civilian government in 1966 via a military coup did not arise from the absence of procedural institutions of democracy but rather from the inability to apply these institutions to democratic ends. The leader of the coup of 15th January 1966 Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu had remarked in his broadcast, that “our enemies are ...those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they remain in office as ministers or VIPs at least...” (Siollun, 2009, p. 55). Evidently, the concern of the coup plotters was connected with the failure of the procedural institutions through corrupt political rule which undermined the democratic aspirations of citizens.

²⁷ See p.56 on the requirements of discourse ethics by Habermas.

The military government in 1975 declared a commencement of a process of transition to civil rule. The background to the return to civil rule was laid around procedural institutional elements of democracy like the rules of political party formation and writing a new constitution. The elective civil rule that followed this procedural preparation was again removed in another military coup. Accusations by the coup leaders against the government revolved around its inability to meet the substantive democratic needs of the people. But transition to civil rule in each of the military regimes merely emphasized drawing up a new constitution and other procedural framework of democracy. Thus the military regime that handed over in 1979 introduced a new constitution. The procedural institutions under the restored civil rule did not lead to the emergence of democracy. The state could not be deployed to create conditions for the generalization of the democratic rights of citizenship. Instead the managers of state power misapplied public resources to private ends, thereby creating the military's alibi for another truncation of elective civil rule in 1983. The Nigerian leadership under the military designed a programme of transition to civil rule during General Babangida's regime. A major part of that transition to the civil rule programme was the writing of the 1989 constitution after a long national consultation and debates. This constitution never operated under any civilian regime because the succeeding military regime of General Sanni Abacha suspended it. General Abacha convened a constitutional conference in 1995. The current constitution of 1999 was supposed to be an outcome of the 1995 constitutional conference but debates and conclusions of the conference were not used for the constitution.

General dissatisfaction amongst Nigerians has led to calls for a national conference with sovereign power in which the citizens will express how they wish to be governed. This is a lingering demand that commenced during military rule in the 1990s. Unable to sway the intensity of these calls in the post military era, President Olusegun Obasanjo convened a different kind of conference in 2005 called the National Political Reform Conference. The conference was flawed both in the manner of representation and the thrust of its dialogues. The entire dialogues were circumscribed to procedures of the institutional forms of democratic government.

This again is a holdover of the political practices that prevailed in the later part of colonial rule where the state permitted limited development of democracy through gradual evolution of the structures of governance but not substantive concerns of democracy.

The making of the 1979, 1989 and 1999 constitutions

General Murtala Muhammed became the Head of state after a coup that removed General Yakubu Gowon in 1975. In October 1 1975, General Murtala announced a five-stage programme that would lead to a transfer of power to civilians. Thereafter, he appointed a 50 man Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) to write a constitution for the country. At the end of the committee's work, a local constituent assembly was put in place through elections and appointments. Twenty members of the constituent assembly were appointed to represent interests which might not be adequately represented through elections and these included: women, labour, commerce, industry, the press, education, student affairs, public service and traditional authorities (Ojiako, 1981). It is interesting to note that it was the military government that initiated this process and picked representations from civil society platforms such as the press, organised labour among other groups. Initiative from a military government to lead a process of democratic transition would imply that while the military is associated with non-democratic forces, its position is much more ambiguous. The failure to achieve substantive democracy through a civil process underpins military intervention. However, it is not necessarily the case that the problem simply lies with military intervention. It is more related to the unlikely possibility that the military can, despite the possibility of genuine intent, initiate a civil process of public debate and institutional reform that could actually facilitate genuine transition to democracy. The willingness of some military regimes to initiate and complete a restoration of elective civil rule implies in terms of relations of forces, that power may not always be exercised to non-democratic ends.

At the swearing in ceremony of the Constitution Drafting Committee, they were advised on the kind of constitution the government wanted and of course the provisions that should be avoided in the new constitution. For instance the Head of

state recommended a presidential type of constitution and advised the avoidance of institutionalised opposition in the legislature (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1995). Also after the deliberations of the constituent assembly and input into the draft constitution, the Supreme Military Council which was the highest decision making organ of the ruling military regime went on to make certain amendments in the constitution before signing it into law. Uma Eleazu who participated in the Constitution Drafting Committee noted that the final outcome of the 1979 constitution did not conform with the desires expressed by Nigerians on their constitutional needs (Eleazu, 2012). Tinkering with the outcome of the constitution-making consultations in line with preferences of the political leadership undermined the democratic requirement of the process. Besides, the terms of reference given to the constitution drafting committee was narrowly confined to procedural aspects of democracy such as forms of government, party system, electoral system etc but not substantive democratic needs that address the social rights of citizens. Even the procedural issues of the constitution already had a clear direction based on expressed preference of the Head of state that the constitution should be modelled after the American presidential system. Thus, dialogue leading to the constitution was one guided to generate pre-determined outcomes. Smith's (1996, p. 246) analysis of this kind of scenario is that "when military regimes hand back power to civilian politicians, it is often ...in a constitution of their own design". Thus discourses could be organised and guided to legitimize ends which may not conform with popular needs. The strategy is to arrange discursive contexts for the establishment of institutions that legitimate the interests of powerful political forces in the military. The above process represents relations of forces in which the ruling group acts with the military institution to set out the norms of political regulation. Though an assembly was used to articulate these norms, they already had a template for their discourses.

In making the 1989 constitution, the Political Bureau created by the regime of General Babangida played a crucial role. The body was charged with coordinating a political debate that would guide the framing of the institutions and structures of governance in the country. Thus public hearings across the country included opinions

on what the citizens wanted in the new constitution. The outcome of the nation-wide public hearing regarding the ideological path for the country was a popular preference for socialism. But the military regime rejected this recommendation on grounds that “Government rejects the imposition of a political ideology on the nation. Government believes that a political ideology will eventually evolve with time and political maturity” (cited in Tar, 2008, p. 82). Apart from this radical direction which the population wanted, there was no fundamental departure from the previous constitutions on procedural issues of governance. The importance of this ideological direction is that it tended to embody the components of what previous political rule had failed to fulfil for the citizens. This is not to say that social welfare expectations of the citizens may not obtain in other socioeconomic systems if they were made to operate well. But in the light of experiences in the country, successive neglects of citizen’s needs which the state can fulfil, was a compelling drive for a radical constitutional demand. The rejection by the military government of this popular wish that arose from the constitutional consultations expresses power relations which is skewed in favour of the ruling group.

The 1999 constitution was preceded by a constitutional conference in 1995 which was to guide another constitution. The deliberations and recommendations made by that conference did not guide the 1999 constitution because the South Western part of the country boycotted the conference, therefore it was set aside (see Ekwueme, 2011). Recommendations of the 1995 conference were largely on the formula for the distribution of political power among the component geographical regions of the country. Like other constitutions, there was little focus on the governance aspect of democracy. Following the rejection of the outcomes of the 1995 conference, a committee was hastily put together in 1999 to conduct public debates and hearings for a constitution in 1999. A member of the committee that participated in conducting public hearings for the 1999 constitution pointed out that what came out as the 1999 constitution did not reflect the consultations held in the process of the constitution-making (Eleazu, 2012). This is a further reinforcement of the futility of debates when the ruling group is reluctant to extend democracy to governance and institutions of political rule.

National Political Reform Conference (NPRC) 2005

The National Political Reform Conference was convoked in Nigeria by the elected government of Olusegun Obasanjo in 2005. It was an alternative to a Sovereign National Conference (SNC). Since the 1990s many groups including ethnic organisations and other civil society groups in Nigeria have been agitating for a Sovereign National Conference or a similar forum in which the component groups in Nigeria could voluntarily negotiate the basis of their continued membership of the Nigerian federation (Osaghae, 2001). This agitation arose from tensions concerning the principles and patterns of resource distribution in the country, which some component groups have viewed as inequitable. The blame for this inequitable resource distribution is laid on the colonial creation of the Nigerian federal state from a multiplicity of ethnic nationalities without consultations with them. At the height of military rule and its human rights abuses, the agitations for SNC increased. The underpinning notion for these calls was that “democracy should be based on the right of self-determination, guaranteed by a new constitution to be negotiated at the proposed Sovereign National Conference”(Ifeka, 2000, p. 122). The SNC is expected to dissolve both houses of parliament and render the president redundant. Its decision will be binding because as the name suggests, it will have a sovereign power. Representatives at the conference would be elected by the people.

The committee for the review of the 1999 constitution recommended to President Obasanjo’s regime to convoke a national conference in 2001. Differences arising from interests of the masses and those of elected politicians led to conflicting interpretations of the implications of such a forum. One strand of interpretation saw that the SNC was only proper because sovereignty belonged to the people. The other strand viewed the SNC as a possible invitation to chaos and therefore unnecessary. The basis of this view is that there was already an elected government with parliament which exercises sovereignty on behalf of the people. The Obasanjo regime chose to convoke a National Political Reform Conference rather than a SNC. The government’s rationale for the NPRC is that it cannot cede sovereignty to another body.

The shortfalls of the conference were outlined by Igbuzor (2005) as comprising a lack of inclusiveness, gender insensitivity and the undemocratic nature of the entire exercise. He reports that the conference was dominated by stalwarts of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). The conference consisted of 400 members with a representation of only 30 for women. But of greater concern is that delegates to the conference were appointed by the government (the President and Governors of the 36 states of the federation). The president appointed 50 members while each state Governor appointed 6 persons from his state. This nullified the original demands that the nationalities that comprise Nigeria should be the basis of representation at the conference. Government selection of the participants portrays it as another state directed forum which failed to attract public confidence. Igbuzor equally pointed out that there was neither a law that supported the conference nor was there any legislation that made its decisions binding on the government.

The consequence of the lack of legal effect to the recommendations of the conference is that a few worthwhile issues of governance which were addressed were not implemented. For instance the conference recommended free and compulsory basic education; pre and post-natal medical care and free medical care for children up to the age of 5 years, disabled persons and senior persons over sixty years (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2005). While this and other substantive issues of governance that verge on social rights were important advances in dialogue for democratic progress, they were not the main concern of the conference which was dominated by politicians. The core issues to the politicians were revenue allocation and the creation of more states which are centres of resource distribution through which corrupt political elites engage in inappropriate self-enrichment. Indeed the conference ended without achieving a consensus on revenue allocation in the country or creating a basis for government implementation of its few recommendations on social rights.

The national conference came to an infamous end when it was discovered that the incumbent President Obasanjo was planning to use the conference as a forum for projecting a constitutional amendment that would recommend a single six-year term

for the president. Under the amended constitution, the incumbent would be qualified to stand for election again even as he had exhausted his constitutionally permitted two terms of four years each. However, his plan failed. But he and subsequent presidents have ignored the recommendations of that conference on aspects of social citizenship. Thus the national political reform conference lines up behind other discourses for democratisation which had been conducted under the auspices of the state. The coordination of the dialogue by the state gave the ruling group the leverage to guide the discussion along a trajectory that will not fundamentally alter the arrangement of power or result in outcomes deemed unfavourable to the dominant political forces in the country. In each instance, relations of forces play out in the dialogues by the concentration of the discussions on procedural issues of power distribution while paying scant attention to the major concerns of majority of the citizens around material survival.

Beyond state organised discursive contexts, there are forums organised by groups in civil society without the involvement of the state especially in the post military era. These forums tend to be monitors of democracy in a sense similar to John Keane's (2009) monitorial democracy. They are mostly civil society organisations that arose with the end of military rule in Nigeria and fitted their roles into watchdogs of democratic procedures in the country. They aim to monitor institutions of election, electoral reform processes and the constitution in line with conformity of government to best practices. Some of the major coalitions arising from such groups include Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Electoral Reform Network (ERN) and Citizens Forum for Constitutional Reform (CFCR).

Civil Society Engagements for Institutionalizing Democracy in the Post military Era

Transition Monitoring Group (TMG)

The Transition Monitoring Group is a coalition of 170 human rights and civil society organizations in Nigeria. It came into existence in 1998 in response to the transition to civil rule programme organized by General Abdusalam Abubakar. As its core objective, the coalition aims at monitoring elections and ensuring that conditions

exists for the free expression of choices by Nigerian electors. Subsequently, it expanded its objective to include fostering civic education and promoting democratic norms (TMG, 2003). The deepening of democratic principles requires engagement of the kind which the TMG does with the state on matters of election. Guided by past experiences in Nigeria's electoral contest and desperation for political power shown by politicians, the Transition Monitoring Group emerged as a civil society forum intended to monitor these trends as one of the watch-dogs of democratisation. It has given publicity to electoral practices in Nigerian elections since the end of military rule in 1999. However, it is not easy to gauge the extent to which electoral malpractices have been abated by the reports of groups like the TMG.

Citizens Forum for Constitutional Reform (CFCR)

The establishment of elective civil rule in 1999 was followed up by civil society groups on the need for institutionalization of democratic practices. A think tank organisation, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) saw that the gap between the constitution and citizens is a democracy deficit that needed to be remedied. The idea is that a democratic constitution should reflect the needs and aspirations of citizens. The operative constitution in Nigeria leaves a gap between these two ends. Thus a conference was convened in 1999 as a kind of citizen forum for engagement with the constitution vis a vis the necessity for democratic transformation of the constitution. The outcome of that conference was the establishment of a coalition of civil society organisations which was named the Citizens Forum for Constitutional Reforms (CFCR), to engage with government on the need to bridge the gap between citizens and the constitution in Nigeria. It has grown to a coalition of over 100 civil society organisations working on the reform of the 1999 constitution. The idea underpinning the CFCR is that the existence of a constitution that freely draws from citizens democratic input is fundamental to the building of democracy. It contributes to democratisation by noting aspects of the constitution requiring changes and also submitting memoranda to government committees on matters of constitutional reforms.

Electoral Reform Network (ERN)

The ERN is a network of over 100 Nigerian civil society organizations established in response to the call by the Nigerian parliament for input of civil society organisations into the Electoral Bill in 2001. The network has since then facilitated the input from civil society into the national discourse on electoral matters and constitutional reforms.

The TMG, CFCR and ERN are coalitions with overlapping membership. But it bears mention that there are several other civil society groups not related to these coalitions which are also committed to the institutionalization of democracy in Nigeria. The interesting point about these emerging forums of democratic institutionalization in the post-military era is that they are not state-facilitated or organised. Their discourses are not constrained by terms of reference or areas of debate. Perhaps this may be the kind of context of debate which to a good extent reflects Habermas' specification of discourse ethics. Nonetheless, there is still the need to see how the outcomes of democratic debates in civil society guide the action of actors in the realm of the executive state. It is in that later realm that the relationship between democratic rationality and power comes to the fore and once again draws attention to relations of forces for interpretation.

Explaining the Politics of Institutionalization of Democracy: Relations of Forces

The establishment, embedding or revision of norms that guide democracy continues at every stage of development of democracy. From colonial to the post-colonial struggles of establishment and institutionalisation of democracy, relations of forces materialize at various points including that of constitutional discourses in which institutions that structure domination at various levels including politics, economy, theory and ideology are constructed. The debates as the accounts show, were confined to issues related to expanding the participatory space for the indigenous power elite during the colonial period. The constitutional dialogues from 1953 to 1960 did not have an agenda on substantive issues of democracy or social rights. Thus the notion of democracy was limited to the procedural type. The dialogues

probably took it for granted that the existence of procedural institutions of political rule translates to democratic governance. As various experiments with democracy failed, efforts were made at the remaking of institutions, while emphasis continued to centre on the same procedural aspects and ignore the integration of broader issues of governance into the discourses.

The strategy of the dominant group to confine the dialogues for democracy to the building of formal institutions of political rule could be understood by looking at the Marxist critique which captures this strategy in terms of the restrictive nature of the dominant discourse on democracy. This discourse obscures material exploitation and provides the best possible political shell for the project of the dominant group (see Roper, 2013). Political dialogue in this form of democracy is one of the strategies of the ruling group in relations of forces to create the impression that democracy is evolving. Such dialogues fail to integrate the social rights which Marshall (1997) describes as guaranteeing economic welfare that is necessary if all are to share in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standard prevailing in the society. Consequently, the discourse of the hegemonic project on democracy is put forward as the objective one. In effect, there is an important intersection between the prevailing dominant discourse and the project of the dominant political forces. Buttigieg, showed in the tradition of Gramsci, that there exists an important intersection between the dominant discourses and the norms (*forma mentis*) used as the basis of order in society (1995). Similarly, the importance of discourses in relations of forces is demonstrated in Foucault's practice of seeking the meaning of historical discourses through power, strategies, rules and tactics which in themselves appear to have no meaning (Bielskis, 2009). Power for Foucault, is more than political acts involving force. It is also "linked to discourse, knowledge and a variety of 'regimes of truth'" (Bielskis, 2009, p. 80). In democratisation, there is a systematic projection of the notion that the existence of the institutions of political representation defines democracy. Thus during the colonial era, the dominant forces confined democratisation to constitution making processes and other institutional aspects of representative democracy. This process merely indigenised

political domination when Nigeria achieved political independence, and never led to sustainable democratisation.

The Foucauldian idea converges with Gramsci's relations of forces because power frames discourses and discourses reproduce power as dialogues for constitution-making and other levels of institutionalization of democracy demonstrate. This common ground validates their joint application in interpreting the institutionalisation of democracy in the postcolonial era. The trajectory of the process was basically the same as in the colonial era. The constitutional dialogues of 1979, 1989 and 1995 were state organised processes with clear specification of the areas outside the remit of the constitutional deliberations. In instances where other areas of deliberation lead to far-reaching preferences by Nigerians like in 1987 when the population made a radical ideological demand to go the socialist path, the government nullified the outcome. The import of this is that state power is placed above popular interest. But democracy ought to draw strength from popular legitimacy. Discourses for the institutionalisation of democracy through constitution-making in Nigeria's post-independence era bow to the practices of power in which the ruling forces who set the agenda for political dialogues. Also the dominant democracy epistemology upon which such dialogues are based represent the minimalist democracy. This may account for why civil society groups engage the state around issues regarding such a theory that is confined to considering democratic institutions and procedures. Increasingly, this practice frames the meaning of democracy in the consciousness of citizens only in terms of the existence of certain institutions. But in so far as the dominant forces advance a form of democracy which does not address the fundamental concerns of citizens, the discourse applied for the spread and survival of such project is a tool to maintain the power of the ruling group via an ideological 'war of position'. The relations of forces around Nigeria's democratisation indicate that the ruling group's political project differs from popular democratic preferences especially ones which require political rule to actively support the material well-being of citizens.

In the post military era beginning from 1999, the contexts of debates presented here are mostly different from earlier ones in the sense that they are increasingly non-state-constituted platforms. Therefore there is minimal constraint on the range of their discourses. However, the selected cases are coalitions around specific aspects of democratisation viz constitution and electoral concerns. To be sure, these are aspects of democracy whose proper functionality are equally necessary. Nonetheless the outcomes of debates and contributions from these civil society coalitions to the democratic process are subject to either acceptance or rejection depending on the interests of the ruling group in the state. In cases where compromises are made for the integration of democratic reforms into the legal norms of the state, they are violated in practice. In electoral practices for instance, only the 2011 presidential elections was reported as a marked improvement over the previous ones (Lewis, 2011). This is not to say that electoral malpractices were absent in the 2011 polls. However, in comparison, the ones held between 1999, 2003 and 2007 were characterized by major violations of electoral democracy (Mole, 2003; Suberu, 2007). These flaws in political practice show that procedural institutions in themselves do not translate to democracy.

Foucault has a strong case in the argument that power does not bow to democratic rationality. His idea offers useful lead to understanding discourses for constitution making and political reform in Nigeria. But it is also necessary to fully represent his viewpoint by drawing attention to his observation that power can sometimes be positive, can produce, make and shape rather than mask, repress and block (Wandel, 2001). Nonetheless, this quality of power is possible only with the dominance of democratic forces in the political field. The ascendancy of such democratic forces can only be attained if they successfully structure social institutions to fulfil outcomes which correspond to political, civil and social rights.

This chapter has argued that the effort to institutionalise democracy in Nigeria by political forces in state and civil society was in the colonial time marked by the setting of a limited agenda for procedural democratic changes by forces in control of the state. This agenda was for the accommodation of local politicians and ultimate

transfer of power to them. Similarly, the post-colonial era was characterized by the defining of the agenda of dialogues about building democracy. These dialogues end up reproducing the dominant form of power and political actors. Popular preferences expressed in such deliberations may be relegated to the background of the interest of the ruling group. Thus the institutions produced in each case fail to represent popular aspirations for institutionalizing democracy beyond the perspective of minimalist democratic discourse. In general, popular contributions remain only suggestions which the ruling elite accept or reject depending on political expediency. Thus the balance of contesting social forces has yet to tilt in favour of democratic forces in both the apparatus of political rule and civil society.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

At the heart of history is change, motion or dynamics. It is inherent to social phenomena, and is responsible for social progress or regression. In other words, no social phenomenon is static. It is constantly changing into forms that are better or worse, moving forward or backwards. From the point of view of science ...this motion is not possible without an agent that initiates it. When the initiating agent wishes to move forward and succeeds, it is forward movement or progress. Otherwise, there is stagnation or worse still backward movement or retrogression. In the social sciences, this contradictory relationship is represented by the concept of contradiction or struggle. It is through struggle that progress is achieved in the social realm. Also, it is through it that social decline, relapse or retrogression occurs. Democracy is a social phenomenon. Therefore it is characterized by struggles complete with agents that push for progress and others that either resist this push or push back to a retrogressive condition (Nnoli, 2011, p. 279).

This thesis extends the dialectical perspective in the analysis of democratisation to Nigeria by organising existing meta-narratives around a broad framework (relations of forces) and applying the country's experience to it. The thesis challenges the dominant epistemology on democracy which takes a technicist view of the concept as a package of procedural conditions such as elections, constitutionalism, and regimes of civil and political rights. This study in contrast, is based on a dialectical reconceptualization of democracy that combines its substantive and procedural elements. The objective of the thesis has been to investigate dialectical theories of change in relation to social forces in state and civil society as they affect democratisation in Nigeria.

The spatial view of civil society used in this study has permitted the flexibility to separate structure and agency and enabled a clear explanation of their relationship.

This was done by demonstrating the structure of social regulation has its origin in the interaction of social agents. In other words, institutions are products of social struggle. However, the social agents are regulated by the institutions which they created. This process continues in an on-going basis whereby the structure continues to be adjusted to reflect the changing outcomes of engagement of social forces who act as agents of contrasting social projects. The struggle in state and civil society revolves around the rights which define democratic citizenship namely political, civil and social rights. Since the actualization of these rights is a matter of contestations in the political field, the concept of 'relations of forces' materialized as an appropriate resource for interpreting the various levels of these dialectical interactions.

Dialectics is the overarching principle that informs this study of state and civil society. The state is understood in the integral sense which views it as comprising the apparatus of political rule and other apparatuses and processes that are not directly engaged in the exercise of political power but have pertinent effect in conditioning the character and form of the political structure. The state therefore includes both government and ideological apparatuses of the state, legal structuring of social relations and associational expressions of social forces. The work presents the integral state as a political field which provides structures upon which a dialectical logic unfolds in the process of struggles between competing agencies seeking to institutionalize and embed political practices that suit their interests. This includes contest for different institutional forms or political procedures for organising political rule. It also may include issues like the electoral system, political self-determination or independence and welfarist or neoliberal organisation of the state. In transitional states, especially those recently emerging from authoritarian military rule like Nigeria, the contest during the preparations for the restoration of elective civil rule indicates more of divide between forces arrayed for democratic progress and elements among the social forces that retard this progress in line with their interests. These varieties of struggle were illustrated in the thesis with the divide in the colonial state between local nationalist groups that agitated for political independence and groups that acted in alliance with the undemocratic colonial state. In the post-colonial era,

varieties of struggles presented in this study illustrate the conflict of interests between anti-regime pro-democratic forces in state and civil society and pro-regime social groups within the same sites during both military rule and in the post military era. What becomes clear is that while the essential meaning of civil society remains constant, the actually existing form of civil society as expressed in the nature of struggle between social forces in each formation changes and is dependent on the specific history of the political formation in which the structures and agencies are located. Democratic forces in civil society of formations with recently restored civil rules and on-going military rules build their struggles around the need to establish acceptable democratic institutions and norms that support these institutions. The relations contain socio-economic, political and ideological dimensions. Following the trajectory of such relations in Nigeria warranted historical investigation.

Nnoli's (2011) justifies the use of history in understanding the dialectics of democratisation because it reveals the important issues of democracy including those that have been resolved and those needing further attention and the path of future struggles. On the basis of the importance of history, this thesis begins with the seminal elaborations of dialectics of social change as developed by Hegel and Marx. Going further, on the trajectory of dialectical theoreticians of state, civil society, democracy and power, the work reviews the ideas of Gramsci, Habermas and Foucault. Emerging from the reviews is that the Hegelian theory of the state is useful for understanding the origin of the Nigerian state. The establishment of modern state in Nigeria is connected to the interest of an external state in search of overseas colonies for the welfare of its own civil society (bourgeoisie). Colonialism was a specific prescription of Hegel as a solution for remedying poverty in civil society (perhaps for Western formations at the time he wrote) (see Hegel, 2001a). The exploitation of local resources by British colonial government and selective distribution of privileges conformed with the intention for establishing a colonial state. Domestic social groups in Nigeria arose in contest against the colonial state because of its authoritarian character and the absence of any legitimate basis. Thus the emergence of the Nigerian state preceded that of social groups who represent the associational expression of civil society. This order conforms more with the Hegelian

logic that the state creates civil society and less with Marx whose earlier writings was on how civil society constructs the state. Hegel's ideas may have different meanings among different interpretations of his thesis, but in so far as his theory advances a need for colonization, it is a formulation that negates democracy. His idea of an ethical harmony between state and civil society refers to the rise of institutional regulations from the state for the moderation of relations in civil society. But since institutions are products of struggle in which the dominant forces set up conditions for the continuity of their social project, ethical harmony expresses the institutionalized interest of the dominant forces in state and civil society. In the colonial state, such harmony was that of the ruling forces that controlled the colonial government, British business in Nigeria, local conservative forces in the executive state (mostly traditional rulers who were used for the extension of colonial authority to the local state) and the pro-colonial media. In the post-colonial period, the prevailing harmony is that of the forces in control of the government with the collaborationist groups in civil society seeking to institutionalize their interests. None of them created conditions for generalised political, civil and social rights. Accordingly, the nature of state and civil society in the colonial and postcolonial epochs fall short of the generalized democratic conditions that equate with social citizenship (cf Marshall, 1997).

Marx's thesis exposes the economic underpinnings of political actions. His theory shows how the dynamics of material domination set the basic terrain on which occurs the political and ideological struggle between social forces. Alienation is central to Marx's critique of capitalism and its political contestation, in that it sees the system as based on social relations that deprive the majority of access to the means of production (and hence subsistence) and subject them to domination not just in the workplace, but also throughout society (Roper, 2013). The dialectics of these relations creates interest groups with distinctive logics of collective action connected to class interest (Offe 1985, cited in Roper, 2013). Such logic of collective actions are expressed in various group contexts which penetrate the state and civil society in ways that have various implications for democracy. Marx's critique of the capitalist system and the alienation it generates led him to place the task of human

emancipation on a class of civil society that is not of civil society. Though he was writing about the working class, this study takes that socio-economic group for a metaphor representing the broader masses alienated from conditions of democratic citizenship through denials of political rights and social justice. It was the contradictions of the colonial state that led to anti-colonial struggle. The same on-going contradictions are the basis of democratic activism under military rule and in the post military era in Nigeria.

The core theoretical framework that underpins this historical study of the struggle for democracy in Nigeria is drawn from Antonio Gramsci's work. His intervention on state, civil society and change combines the best in Hegelian and Marxian theory. He raised the cultural element of the superstructure to a level of importance that was absent in Hegel and Marx. Gramsci particularly showed how the ideological apparatuses are deployed in the construction of hegemony. He equally reckoned with the double-edged utility of the site of civil society arising from the prevalence of dominant social forces that constructs hegemony and simultaneous existence of groups that construct counter-hegemonic projects within the same political field. It is quite interesting that Gramsci brought in the dialectical element in civil society theory to show that the emergence of institutional conditions to regulate social relations is not sufficient in thinking about civil society. The integral state perspective he offered includes the dialectics of engagements in civil society, for maintaining or restructuring institutions of the state. These processes obtain in the relations of social forces with one another and with the political structure on which they act. In the various contexts in which their struggles take place, such as framing the constitutional basis of the state, control of institutions of political rule, the press, organised group framework such as labour unions and other civil society groups, there is a constant dialectical engagement between the contrasting forces. In framing the constitution, the dominant forces apply the strategy of outlining the agenda of debates and eventually creating a constitutional order that conforms with their project. In the struggle for power, they apply methods which undermine the basic democratic rights of subaltern groups. These methods may be fraudulent elections, annulment of freely contested elections, refusal to recognise the rights of existence of

the contesting groups. In the site of the press, restrictive legal regimes are applied to limit the capacity of alternative forces to widely articulate and popularize their projects. In the entire dialectical encounter, the subaltern forces also devise ways to continue engaging the ruling forces.

Gramsci constituted the integral state as the political field where war of position takes place between contending social forces. In this war, social groups or agents are divided along the lines of the social practices they seek to embed in society. By underlining the importance of political agency, Gramsci more clearly enables an understanding of why there exist various modes of regulation of the state in more developed societies. The war of position between social agents in these societies take the form of ideological struggles between social forces or even struggles between various strands of a particular ideological form such as the welfarist or neoliberal strands within the capitalist project. Beyond the more developed liberal democracies, Gramscian theory is applicable to less developed societies that are still building the institutional structures of liberal democracy. Gramsci's dialectical view of the political field and the processes that take place in it offers a basis to see how social forces engage in struggles to advance or retard democratisation depending on their interests. This is illustrated by the divergent interests of civil society groups in Nigeria during the struggle for the end of colonialism and also, during the struggle to end military rule and establish institutions of democratic rule. Similar divergence of interest among groups in civil society is manifest in the post military era in the struggles to deepen democratisation.

Habermas and Foucault were reviewed because Habermas is a contemporary theorist of the ideal that stands in the Kantian liberal tradition. His narrative on the historical transformation of the public sphere deepens the importance of communicative spheres like the press as a vital framework of civil society. Drawing on Immanuel Kant's tradition of debate and principle of the prevalence of the better idea, Habermas advanced the thesis of communicative rationality which has to be supported by certain discourse ethics. It is in the terrain of these rational debates which are ruled by certain norms that he finds civil society. According to Habermas the processes of

legitimation take place within this terrain of debates. To that extent, civil society is seen as the essential structure for democracy. However, Foucault critically interrogated the place of discourses in power and advanced the idea that they provide a framework for different forms of power because discourses structure knowledge and power and vice versa. Accordingly, a notion that is constructed as objective at the realm of discourse may actually be advancing a particular form of power which may not necessarily move democracy forward. On this note, the rational discourses of Habermas and its ethics becomes a source of an ideal model of a fully developed civil society. But in Nigeria as every other place, his thesis does not capture the dynamics of power in actual civil societies that always fall short of the ideal. Foucault on the other hand draws attention to the intricacies of power but hardly shows what is to be done about the complex and ubiquitous character of power. Ultimately, the two theorists provide important resources for analysing the various debates or discourses for framing Nigerian constitution in the colonial and post-colonial constitutional conferences and the dialogue for political reforms. More importantly, they demonstrated that discourses provide a platform for thinking about relations or struggles by social forces. For instance, the dialogues of constitution making in Nigeria are discourse contexts in which a certain form of power is framed. On the one hand, those constitutional debates advanced liberal democracy as though it is the end of democratic struggle. Secondly, they provided a space for the local dominant forces to engage in struggles for their own political inclusion without institutionally establishing political and economic practices that generalize democratic rights. In that connection, historical analyses tend to bear Foucault out that discourses are instruments of constructing power because all power structures have a discursive dimension. Thus the contexts of debates are dimensions of the 'war of position' or struggles by contending forces. The convergence of political discourses and 'war of position' sets up the important intersection between Gramsci and Foucault and underpins the dialectical nature of their ideas.

In relating all the discourses to the engagements that are involved in the process of democratisation a common thread connecting them is the dialectical principle. Thus, the concept of relations of forces as an embodiment of the complex and inter-locking

relations in the structure and superstructure of society is applied as a unifying concept to explain the process. Guided by the dialectics of Hegel and Marx, Gramsci advanced a number of conceptual resources including 'relations of forces' to interpret praxis. There is an important link between Hegel's and Marx's philosophies and Gramsci's 'relations of forces'. This is the principle of totality which is at the core of their dialectics. The idea of totality suggests that in the dialectical development of society, all aspects (which in this study include politics, economy, ideology and theory) are parts of the unfolding of the idea. Althusser (1966) interpreted the relationship between these aspects and posited that at each point in time, one of the moments rises to become dominant, even as other moments remain present in every conjuncture. Investigating the relations between state and civil society also warranted a return to Hegel due to his idea of ethical unity between the two terrains. In political practice, ethical unity does not exist as such, because state and civil society are acted upon by social agents with contrasting interests and projects. The approximation of ethical unity in these sites is the harmony of interest between social forces that bear similar interests in state and civil society. This is underscored in Marx's argument that it is bourgeois domination of civil society (bourgeois society) that is extended to the structure of political rule (the state). In the course of social struggles, social forces with common interests (perhaps bourgeois class forces or others) that inter-penetrate the realms of state and society strive to harmonize the two realms by constructing the norms of relations in the two spaces and embedding them as the dominant one.

Gramsci's work was more illustrative of the idea of ethical harmony with the use of the idea of the integral state which he explains as consisting of the executive state and civil society. Here, he tries to show that state and civil society intersect each other. That intersection is sustained by social forces that act to maintain the form and character of the two terrains or even alter them for a new one. In addition, Gramsci, elaborated the dialectics of social forces in their contest for domination and hegemony by bringing in the various levels of contestation in the process. Using the 'war of movement' and 'underground warfare' he illustrated the stage of physical struggles by social forces. With the 'war of position' Gramsci illuminated the ideological phase of struggles in which social forces engage in ideological

competition around contrasting social projects. To capture the entire levels of these struggles, this study abstracted the concept of 'relations of forces' from Gramsci and applies it as a macro concept that accommodates the 'war of movement' 'underground warfare' and 'war of position'. This is meant to capture the entire dialectical struggles because each of the levels of engagements contains elements of others. Struggles for political independence for instance combined a certain level of physical agitation and threats of violence with negotiation. None of these aspects should be neglected in a dialectical account. Habermas and Foucault provided the supplements for elaborating the concept of 'relations of forces' at the level of discourses. In particular, Foucauldian critique of Habermas's deliberative thesis leads to the understanding that domination extends to the level of discourses because the dominant language and agenda of discourse are framed in correspondence with the dominant order.

Although the concept of 'relations of forces' is drawn from Gramsci, it is applied in this study in a novel manner to integrate theoretical perspectives and to analyse a novel situation namely, Nigeria. The deployment of the concept in this study went back to Hegel and Marx to demonstrate the elaborations of their dialectical systems as specificities of relations of forces. Hegel put forward the notion of ethical harmony between state and civil society. Marx suggested that the state is simply a projection of the interest of dominant forces in civil society. This work shows how Gramsci pulled together the two dialectical theses in the idea that the state is a composite of government and civil society. He went further to actually apply the concept of relations of forces in his writings to also illustrate that apart from state and civil society as structures of action, political agency is also crucial for understanding the dynamics of political change. Also, the study draws on the deliberative thesis of Habermas and Foucault's critique of discourses as one of the context of relations of power. These later works are meant to show that democratic struggles also exist at the levels of debate both in terms of framing the agenda of such deliberations and the interests embedded in such agenda, the language of deliberations and the project which is ultimately embodied in the framework of political rule (constitution) that emerges from such deliberations. Central to the struggle in Nigeria since the

beginning of the modern nation state under colonialism is the struggle to establish and successfully operate institutions that guarantee the procedural and substantive elements of political democracy. This is illustrated in the contribution of this work at the level of praxis, using the various forms and contexts of engagements in Nigeria including the press, organised labour and social movements. Essentially this is an effort to advance the frontiers of analytical relevance of the Gramscian theory of political change. The fittingness of the neo-Gramscian use of 'relations of forces' lies in its ability to embrace 'war of movement', 'underground warfare' and 'war of position' as dialectical stages of struggle for democracy.

A historical survey of relations of forces in Nigeria beginning with the context of the press reveals the use of institutional framework of the state by the dominant forces to unduly constrain dissent. This behaviour cuts across the colonial and post-colonial periods. The institutional forms of these constraints are usually presented as laws and government policies on public media, but in reality, they are meant to restrict critical public information that may challenge undemocratic political authorities. Some instances of restrictive press laws in the colonial era include Newspaper Ordinance No 10 of 1903, Seditious offences ordinance 1909, 1955 Newspaper Law of Eastern Nigeria, Western Nigeria Newspaper law of 1957. Legislations meant to suppress the press also found expression in post-colonial laws such as 1964 Newspaper Amendment Act; Decree No 4 of 1984; Decrees 33, 35, 43, 48 of 1993; Decrees 6, 7 and 8 of 1994. Many of these laws were meant to control the press and limit opinions that may excite the citizens into mass action against undemocratic political rule.

In state relations with organised labour, important historical illustrations indicate undemocratic behaviour against demands of workers for minimal remediation against exploitative working conditions. In the colonial era, major incidents that express this are the general workers strike of 1945 caused by government refusal to fulfil an earlier promise for wage improvement in the form of Cost of Living Allowance (COLA). A similar incident took place in the Iva Valley massacre of 1949 in which state authorities shot and killed several colliery workers over disagreements connected to wages. In the post-colonial period, the state carried over the penchant of

the colonial state to dishonour agreements with workers and this led to the 1964 general strike. The uneasy relation between state and labour was also a prominent feature of the period of military rule. State response to the agitations of organised labour groups included the use of laws to limit the engagement capacity of the organised labour. In both the military and post military era, labour laws have been used to undermine organised labour. Instances include the labour unification decree of 1978 and the labour laws of 2005. The use of legislation strategy to weaken organised labour enables the government to renege on wage related agreements freely negotiated with labour. In addition to the use of legal instruments to suppress organised labour, the government applies unwarranted coercive measures to quell labour activism. Such measures have included the imprisonment and harassment of leaders of organised labour groups. The narrative in the study also recognised that the top leadership of organised labour sometimes became part of the corporatist network of an undemocratic regime in Nigeria. Nonetheless, the progressive forces which remain comparatively weak have continued with democratic activism in spite of constraints imposed by the state. Overall, there exists an undemocratic use of apparatuses of the executive state by the ruling forces to subjugate the subaltern forces contesting for democratic transformation. This practice lends support to a proposition of this study that, if the dominant forces controlling the executive state subjugate democratic forces in civil society, then authoritarian change is likely to occur.

In historicising the state mediation of conflicts in Nigeria, the study explored the post-colonial crisis of the state which first became prominent in 1964 during the first post-independence general elections. The inability to manage the crisis created a Bonapartist scenario that drew the military into politics. This laid the background to a long stretching crisis of the integral state by way of constituting a precursor to further military intervention in politics. For civil society, authoritarian military rule provided a ground for political relations which divided the actors into forces and institutions that inclined towards undemocratic government and those that opposed such rule in preference for the restoration of not only elective civil rule, but also democracy. In the era of military rule, the government undermined democracy through unilateral

imposition of public policies. The implementation of neoliberal reforms stands out in this regard. The typical mass response was a resistance against the economic practices embedded in neoliberalism. Above that arose an intense demand for democratic political practice with an anticipation that it was going to offer an opportunity for a democratised economic practice that would extend social rights. Intense pressures from democracy activists compelled the unwilling military rulers to commence a process of transition to elective civil rule. This was in the form of establishing institutions of liberal democracy. However, the end of the processes that would have set up elective civil rule was truncated through the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election by political forces in the military. The annulment of the election and other acts of the military leaders that undermined democratisation had the support of collaborationist interests in the state such as politically interested rent-seeking associations, pro-regime traditional rulers, and other coalitions of the ruling group.

Continuing on the state trajectory vis a vis mediation of conflicts, the study explored specific incidents that arose with the annulment of the results of the June 12, 1993 presidential elections. The annulment touched off a high level of activism in civil society involving the press, human rights groups, organised labour and other political interest groups. The major demand from these groups was the revalidation results of the annulled election. In mediating the crisis of transition to civil rule the state applied coercive approach against contending interests. Laws were made to repress oppositional groups that persisted in democratic demands. Ultimately, the state could not act as an objective force in the crisis. The evidence presented in the study regarding how the Nigerian state mediates crisis supports one of its propositions that if the state is incapable of objectively mediating crisis in civil society, de-democratisation results.

Mass resistance and active demand for the end of military rule following the economic hardships occasioned by the neoliberal economic practice illustrates the importance of social justice in discourses about democratisation. The inability to remedy this condition, annulment of an election acclaimed free and fair, and an

increasing impasse between progressive democratic forces and undemocratic ruling forces in the state created conditions of de-democratisation.

On the rise of institutional norms and outcomes that result from the political and ideological struggle for democratisation, this study sees that despite the authoritarian nature of the colonial state, it made compromises with democratic forces that offered some space for democratic activities to take off. It permitted the existence of political interest groups including political parties. The activities of these groups led to the accommodation of local input into the making of national constitutions. Nationalist organisations that were mostly political parties were well represented in the constitutional conferences of 1953, 1954, 1957, 1958 and 1960 before political independence. This level of institutionalization achieved the creation of a framework for procedural democracy. Nonetheless, representation in these conferences was mostly a petty bourgeois affair. Constitutional deliberation concentrated on issues of interest to this class whose members were largely seeking political accommodation in the colonial order or replacement of the colonial governing personnel at the end of colonialism. Their struggles and deliberations did not address substantive issues of social justice.

In the post-colonial era, the effort to institutionalize democracy has been and continues to focus on the achievement of minimalist procedural democracy. The 1979, 1989 and 1999 constitutions which interestingly were made during military rule were fashioned along the same proceduralist trajectory as the ones made during colonial rule. What is rather striking is that some of these post-colonial constitutions slightly indicated recognition of the importance of social justice by including fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy as ideals to be pursued in governance. Curiously, these parts of the constitutions provides for social justice but are only expressed as aspirations of the state. Thus the social rights expressed in them were not made justiciable. This means that there is no sanction or remedy to be sought if the state does not fulfil this important aspect of the constitution. Later, the National Political Reform Conference of 2005 gave the most important thrust to some matters of political procedure especially revenue allocation and distribution of

political power among different regions of the country. It also made important proposition around aspects of social justice. Nonetheless, the conference came to an end when the sitting government at the time, tried to manipulate it for the extension of the regime's constitutionally approved tenure of office.

Due to the kind of framework which is set out for the practice of democracy, civil society organisations, especially Non-Governmental Organisations direct their engagement majorly around the procedural components of democracy such as electoral reforms, constitutional reforms, free and fair elections, human rights and other procedural issues. At the same, labour struggles for improved pay and good working conditions is hardly considered as an important element of democratic struggle. Hardly is it reckoned that debates about projects of changing economic practices verge on democracy. Thus democracy activists in Nigeria unwittingly play along the lines of the dominant liberal democratic epistemology. While liberal democracy can be a basis for further democratic progress, it has gaps because it portrays the political sphere as another free market for competitive struggle for votes and limits its roles to the preservation of the rule of capitalist market (Nwosu, 2012). In this regard, it sees the existence of certain formal institutions of politics as the defining indices of democracy. Ultimately, the importance of popular will is lost in democratic thought and practices.

The path to democratisation beyond a checklist of procedures is to primarily recognise that democracy cannot be confined only to the political aspect of social practices. Macpherson (1977) offers the important guiding light to the meaning of democracy by suggesting that a democratic society is one where individuals have the greatest conceivable opportunity to develop and use their human attributes. It combines the essential indices of a representative government with effective popular participation in decision making, free and fair elections, fundamental human rights, citizen control of the state, political equality of citizens, rule of law, protection of citizens against invasion by others and the state itself, plus the utilization of political rule for development of citizens. Roper (2013) similarly envisions the possibility of a democracy characterized by civil liberties, participation and democratised judicial

decisions and administration. His anticipation translates to a fully democratized civil society as a radical goal of the democratic project. A condition for this he correctly suggests is the elimination of inequalities, exploitation and oppression. Achieving such conditions will translate to the prevalence of political, civil and social rights and will create democratic citizenship.

Democratic citizenship does not arise on its own. It is a product of struggles at all levels of social practice. Thus to realise this in the Nigerian context, democratic social forces have to see one another as partners in progress irrespective of the levels of practice in which they carry out their various struggles. The intellectual who theorizes democracy from the perspective of social citizenship has to identify with the democratic relevance of workers struggles, women struggles, environmental struggles, the struggles against suppression of ethnic minorities; democratic struggles of various rights groups and of course other ranges of political struggles. Each of the groups in turn should see the relevance of the progressive intellectual in the social engagements for democratic change (cf Nnoli, 2011). It is the absence of this coalition and alliances that gives leverage to undemocratic forces in Nigeria's political struggle. The existence of gaps in democratic struggles links up with the gaps in the dominant theory that informs political practice. The undemocratic forces exploit such weaknesses to win state power and use it with impunity for personal enrichment, deploy ethnicity in political competition, repress organised labour and other rights groups with laws and coercive institutions of the state, suppress legitimate dissent against environmental degradation and concentrate on creation of secure conditions for the extraction of resources that benefit mostly the dominant elites. This notion of democracy opens a fault line which is exploited by the ruling forces to legitimize their domination with fraudulent elections and provide for constitutional rights which are not observed. In the end procedures meant for democracy are used to reproduce undemocratic rule which recent democratic scholars regard as illiberal democracy.

At various stages of elaborating the theme of this work, some issues that have not been addressed on civil society and democratisation in Nigeria emerged but could not

be given a detailed attention here, because the focus of this study is defined around investigating democratic struggles that involve an existing but a fragile space of civil society in the country. One of such issues is ethno-politics which is a politicization of ethnic struggles due to the centrality of politics in determining the general circumstance of ethnic groups in their competition for space. This study reveals that ethnicity has an ambivalent value because; it is based on exclusive group interest and could degenerate into fascist forms of nationalism. Nonetheless, there are times when ethnically driven struggles demonstrate clear bearing on democratic rights, like the case of environmental rights movement, namely Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), led by Ken Saro Wiwa. This group was narrowly focused on the interest of the Ogoni ethnic group and therefore narrow in democratic consideration. However, their struggle bears on democracy. This ambivalence of ethnicity in relation to democratic struggles manifests in various forms of communal organising in Nigeria and offers an opening for future research.

Another important point of interest that is emerging in Nigeria's recent history is the invasion of the space of civil society by groups that deploy non civil approaches for political bargains. For instance, groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) engaged in armed struggle as part of the environmental social movements in Nigeria. Also groups emerging from religious background such as the Islamist *Boko Haram* deploy violence to challenge both the ideological basis of the state and the regime in power. These are important issues that bear further elaboration for the advancement of civil society theory.

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