Militarization and the Crisis of Democratization in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Reconsideration of the Fourth-Arm Theory

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Abstract

The reconsideration of the relevance of proposal for the practice of diarchy in Nigeria is the thrust of this paper. This becomes necessary due to the recurring features of militarization and crisis of democratization which have plagued past democratic projects in the country and evidently constraining efforts at sustaining the democratic process of the current Fourth Republic dispensation. The essence of the fourth arm theory is drawn from the diarchy proposal that seeks to incorporate the military institution as the fourth arm of the state, beside the legislature, executive and the judiciary. The diarchy option proposed by Nigeria's first president, Nnamdi Azikiwe, gained ascendancy in the 1970s, as a constitutional arrangement of power sharing between the military and political class, to resolve the intractable political instability and challenges caused by apparent lack of capacity of the political class to sustain democratic culture in the country. Therefore, in view of the prevailing political challenges that have characterized the Fourth Republic democratic experiment in Nigeria and the expediency of a constitutional reform, this paper makes a strong case for a reconsideration of the fourth-arm theory of diarchy, as an operational template for ensuring political cohesion and stability in the country.

Keywords: democratization, militarization, diarchy, fourth-arm theory, Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

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Introduction

The reconsideration of the diarchy proposition that gained ascendancy in the 1970s in explaining the element of militarization that has characterised the crisis of democratization in Nigeria's recent political history is the thrust of this paper. As advocated by Nnamdi Azikiwe, a foremost nationalist and first president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, diarchy simply advocates the incorporation of military hierarchy on a more active and constitutional basis in a civil rule dispensation (Azikiwe, 1974: 24).

Though, the proposal was made as an examination and response to what was conceived to be the bane of effective governance and political stability in Nigeria as well as other African states, a decade after independence, it is nonetheless, very relevant when situated in the current Fourth Republic democratic in which, there is symbiotic relationship between military and civil leaders and soldiers in dispensing the affairs of the state, political parties and electoral process. Indeed, the civilians have become highly militarized, while both active and retired military actors are strategically infused into the democratic process.

Militarisation, as conceived, is associated with military rule and military factor in societal affair such as resort to force and unconstitutional exercise of political powers. This is antithetical to democratic practice of institutional and constitutional approach to governance that incorporates popular participation and freedom of choice in political recruitment and governance. In preference to military rule, democracy has acquired legitimacy and moral authority as a form of governance because of its inherent virtues, which include respect of human rights and freedoms, self-government, accountability, the rule of law and transparency. In reference to Nigeria and similar African states, there is, undeniably, blatant denunciation of its democratic practice because of the political ecology with unwholesome admixture of militarization with democratization. This is because, the political experience of Africa has shown that the long history of frequent military interventions in their politics, has laid the foundation of practices that are antithesis of democracy, and, that have as well, impeded the progress of democratisation on the continent.

To this end, the political history of Nigeria has been described as one of "a litany in brinkmanship, incoherence and uncertainty" resulting in perpetual transition – a sort crossroads – rather than an assured path to democracy and good governance (Agbaje, Onwudiwe & Diamond, 2004: ix). Though, when the event of May 29, 1999 produced widespread excitement and expectation because of the country's successful transition from a military regime that had lasted for over 30 years into the league of democratic states, historically-minded Nigerians were not oblivious of the intermittent interposition of military factor in the chequered political history of the country. Beginning from the democratic transition that accompanied the emergence of Nigeria as a sovereign state, the military take-over of government of 1966 put an abrupt end to the democratic governance of that phase barely six years of independence, The first era of military intervention in Nigeria politics during which a wind of civil war of secession that lasted between 1967 and 1970 was blown, ended in 1979, after a three-year military supervised, transition to democratic rule of the Second Republic. The succeeding civilian dispensation was ousted in a military coup d'état of December 1983, thereby paving the way for the military to return to power (just about four years of quitting). The latest, in difference to previous democratic projects, is significant because of the prevailing global convention that disallows military or other elements of tyranny to feature in governance. This was borne out of the trend that accompanied the triumph of global liberal order in the aftermath of Cold War, termed "the third wave of democratization (Huntington, 1991), occasioned by widespread internal end international pressures for adoption of democracy as a universal framework of governance. With the new dawn of democratic governance in Nigeria in 1999, therefore, it was hoped that the militarization tendencies that were conspicuously ingrained in the country's memory during military would gradually evaporate and superintended by the emerging liberal values. However, such hopes are increasingly dashed as the democratic process that set in is riddled in crisis caused by unwavering elements of militarization. This is why some political commentators have opined that since independence

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to putatively democratic rule, Nigeria has had a succession of regime change whose main "added value" had been mainly the mere change of leadership (Ibrahim & Garuba, 2008:11). Contemporary discourse of liberal democracy has recognised and appreciated the place of a free and fair electoral process as a critical component of any effort to democratize and enthrone a democratic culture that gives effect to the right to govern by consent as opposed to military approach of forceful takeover of power. However, elections and electoral process, characterized by internationally acceptable standard that are expected to be the pillar of democracy are deficient in and, disappointedly, not feasible in Nigeria:

> The result has been a sad feature of a political history in which the outcomes of every general election, beginning from 1959, have been disputed and contested. Every election is followed by controversy from real and perceived flaws; structural and institutional inadequacies; and deficiencies in the electoral laws, including the Constitution. (Ibrahim & Garuba, 2008:15)

Deriving from this unwholesome situation is the concern and constant clamours for establishing an acceptable and enduring constitutional model for the political stability of the country, which must consider the interplay between elements of militarization and democratization, as well as, the conspicuous protrusion of the military actors into Nigeria's democratic space.

It is therefore in view of the foregoing that this paper attempts to examine the features and relevance of diarchy in Nigeria political trajectory, in the recurrent and peculiar challenges of militarization and democratisation Nigeria politics. The paper essentially makes a strong case for a critical reappraisal of the diarchy option within the context of Fourth Arm Theory from a perspective of constitutional and political reform. After, the introduction, the second part examines the concept and extent of militarization in Nigerian politics. The third part appraises the crisis of democratization in Nigeria while the fourth part focuses on the idea and

application of the Fourth Arm Theory to the country constitutional and political reform process. The fifth and final part is the conclusion.

Militarism in African Politics: Background to the Fourth Arm Theory Proposition

Militarism, from which the act of militarization is derived has been defined as the institutionalization of organized (military) force [and military means] to serve as an instrument of politics, trough the resort to force to resolve political problems (Aning & Hutchful, 2001:2). The idea of militarism goes beyond its conception in classic form as the domination of national politics by the armed forces. This is because, as contended,

> "it is not all officers that are of militaristic or authoritarian bent, on the other hand, civilians have been not only been deeply implicated in (he militarization of national politics (instigating and financing coups) but have been indispensable to the functioning of military regimes′ civilian leaders have often misused the armed forces… Civilian regimes are often among the most militarized on the (African) continent. in terms of their willingness and ability to use repression (Aning & Hutchful: 2).

The complex web of civil-military relations in the post-colonial political trajectory of African states and the recurring trends of militarism, provided the premise for the proposition of the diarchy arrangement by Dr Azikiwe. As a novel constitutional model of civilian military-diarchy in Nigeria, it is a framework of synthesis of military and democratic factors in governance and political power arrangements. Given Azikiwe's political and intellectual pedigree, the idea was originally proposed, as his pivotal contribution to the political blueprint to herald a constitutional and institutional arrangements for a transition to civil rule proposed by the then military government headed by Gen. Yakubu Gowon. However, the relevance of the diarchy proposal in terms of time and space, outlived the political expediency of the period, as well as, extending beyond the scope of Nigerian political scene (as it is applicable to the general political

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development in Africa). This is because of the prevalence and persistence of militarization in the polity, as a result of military incursion into politics and the antics of civil leaders which manifested in the erosion of democratic values in Africa.

A major political challenge emerged which emanated from a deviation of a theory of new national armies that were created in independent Africa to ensure defence and territorial integrity and to contribute to the nation-building project, but which in practice, has evolved to play other roles, including involvement in partisan politics. Consequently, a few years into self-government, Africa became a theater of military coups in which governance by the barrel of the gun took centerstage, postponing democratisation and jettisoning rule by the ballot (Matloza & Zoumenou, 1993:95).Thus, at independence, most emergent African states took the path of popular elections to choose their first national leaders as part of their decolonization process. After the celebrated transition from colonial rule to independence, a dramatic twist to the democratic consolidation of the nascent states soon evolved as, such that the legitimacy of those new governments shifted from being products of popular choices to those decided by the barrel of a gun as one country after another experienced military coups. The military usurped political power and entrenched itself by convoluting the course of governance in the series of coups d'état, that took place especially between the mid-1960s and the late 1980s. This development led to general disillusion about the feasibility of democratic project in Africa.

The historical justification for the involvement of the army in national politics in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular is structurally rooted in colonialism itself, whose authority was predicated upon conquest, coercion and violence in which the security forces were systematically used to impose foreign domination on the African people, who were considered to be colonial subjects (Matloza & Zoumenou) thereby turning the military to an instrument of social and political oppression and repression. According to Osabiya (2015: 45),

> During the days of colonialism, the colonial powers needed to use

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military force to pacify and capture the conquered territories of Africa in the course of the arbitrary rule perspective by colonialism, military came in handy (as a useful instrument) and all through the period of colonial rule the military related to the people without civility and they were accustomed to the practice of using the language of force and intimidation. The African military came from the background of relating to the people as enemies and not as friends. Indeed, the military sees itself as been completely different from the bloody civilians." From this foundation, the military had perfected its strategies of subjugation of other groups, and dislodging it from governance has remained a tall agenda.

Upon independence African states inherited weak state apparatuses predicated upon military repression and, in many senses, detached from the people. In many countries post-independence leaders failed to transform the state by, for instance, developing with their people a "social contract" that might have served as a basis of state legitimacy and sustainable democratic governance. In a word, the necessity for political survival compelled most leaders to manipulate the army or to be manipulated by it (Matloza & Zoumenou; 95)

It was against the incessant military intervention in the polity, which triggered political instability and general disillusion about the feasibility of democracy in Africa that informed the proposition by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. While arguing that that majority of African had become disillusioned with the poor performance of due to poor leadership, absence of organized opposition, decay of political institutions and practice, incessant military coups d'état and emergence of cabal dictatorship, he then declared unambiguously that: "I can see no hope for democracy in Africa but a lapse to tyranny with its cyclical recurrence of armed and violent revolution" (Azikiwe;24). It was against this declaration that Nnamdi Azikiwe went further to revolutionary change interpretation was necessary, and as a matter of exigency, he advocated a new constitutional arrangement that would bring both the military and civilian ruling class under a political accord for power and responsibility sharing.

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Indeed, there is no doubt that Nigeria has been confronted with protracted crisis of democratization arising principally from militarization of its polity which has threatened foundation of its statehood. An insight into the extent of the crisis can be helpful in determining expediency of the Fourth Arm Theory in ongoing debate on the viable governance framework for the country.

An Overview of the Crisis of Democratisation in Nigeria

Like its parent concept, democracy, the term democratisation has attracted substantial scholarly attention and subjected to extensive usage. While democracy, given the popular definition attributed to Abraham Lincoln as the government of the people, for the people and by the people, denotes a political practice that embraces freedom of expression, right to life, right to dignity of the human person, right to personal liberty, free press, peaceful assembly and association, freedom of movement, political participation, right to fair hearing, right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, etc (Oddih, 2007: 147-148), democratization has often been described as a process for attaining the ideals of democracy. In the view of Donnel and Schumpeter (1986), for instance, democratization is defined as a process whereby rules and procedures are of citizenship are either applied to political institutions. Previously governed by other principles (such as coercive control, social tradition, expert judgement or administrative practice), or expanded to include persons not previously enjoying such rights and obligations (as non-tax payers, illeterates women, youth ethnic minorities, or extended to cover, issues and institutions not previously, subject to citizen participation, such as state agencies, military establishments, partisan organisations, interest groups, productive enterprises, educational institutions, etc.)

As a process, Nwabueze avers that the democratization is geared towards making the society, the politics, the state, the electoral system, and the practice of government fulfil the conditions of virile civil society, a democratic society a free society, a just society, equal treatment of all citizens, an ordered, stable society, a society infused with spirit of liberty,

democracy, justice and equality, and independent, self-reliant, and prosperous market-economy (Nwabueze, 1993)

From the foregoing, it is obvious that, societies that are hitherto under authoritarian rule have to place a high premium on democratization which requires the nurturing and expanding of the democratic space, in order to achieve the ideals of democracy, This has become particularly, with the advent of the so called third wave of democracy which became pronounced in the 80s and 90s following the end of the Cold War, by which, many hitherto undemocratic and authoritarian governmental units were transformed into democracies, with majority of the states, particularly in the Third World, now qualified to belong to community of liberal democracies.

It has been over three decades of democratic experience since the end of the Cold War. States on the continent have purportedly embraced the worldwide frenzy towards political systems based on democratic norms including: adopting a culture of regular multiparty elections; establishing democratic institutions of varying degrees of effectiveness and also putting in place institutional, constitutional and legal mechanisms for orderly civil–military relations, as well as civil control over the armed forces; and, effected transfer of power from one elected regime to another. However, for many of the African states, the military still remains a major factor in the national polity and in control of the state.

Nigeria rejoined the league of democracies after the cessation of military rule in 1999, to usher in a new phase of democratic rule in the country. After over two decades of uninterrupted civil rule, the current Fourth Republic has not only outlasted previous civilian dispensations in the country's history but also indicated that there is an apparent elite consensus on the utility of democratic institutions (Lewis, 2011:2). However, despite the apparent consensus of the elites and the belief by the majority of the people in democracy as the most acceptable form of government, as indicated by the sustenance of the Fourth Republic so far, however the crisis of demoncratisation in Nigeria has continued to fester with the increasing frustration of the voting public over the inability of

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democracy to yield desired dividends. The lack of democratic culture has been a source of instability and in the country. According to this verdict:

> The repeated cycles of frustrating Nigerian voters have been central to the country's tortuous history of political instability and the recurrent incursions of the military into governance. This is the sense in which Nigeria has managed to merely survive since independence. The First Republic merely survived up to 1966 when the military, through a coup d'etat, initially struck to introduce organised violence into governance. Since then, the country has oscillated between military rule and civilian rule, with the Second Republic running between October 1979 and December 1983. This was followed by a protracted transition to the Third Republic, which was eventually botched in 1993 following General Babangida's annulment of the June 12 1993 elections and the resumption of full-blown military rule. What is presently described as the Fourth Republic came into existence in May 1999 following yet another return of Nigeria to civilian rule. While the country appears to have survived all of the threats around its pathways to democratic development so far, it has been at a serious cost to democratic culture (Ibrahim & Garuba:15)

One of the misgivings about the democratization process in Nigeria is the control of the political space by a handful selfish elites who constitute themselves into an oligarchy that ceaselessly hold the country to ransom by abusing and manipulating the democratic institutions in order to achieve their narrow interests. A damning report on the structural obstacle to deepening democratic rule in Nigeria, by identifies the manifestation of authoritarian rule by an institutionalized oligarchy (comprising of self-serving politicians, businesspersons, political fixers, "godfathers," former military officers, and elite bureaucrats) who share a common interest in sustaining oligarchic power. The report further indicted the oligarchy of falling far short of their claims to represent democratically based regional, professional, and ethnic constituencies, through their activities and records (Omilusi, 2015: 20) The oligarchy perpetuates themselves in

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power by subverting the popular will of the people through manipulation of elections by political parties operated by gladiators who are sponsored by them. The stylishly employ the use of money, deployment of thugs, intimidation, maiming and killing of opponents and perceived opponents to subvert the electoral process, leading to the imposition of the preferred candidates of the godfathers. The selected candidates only pursue the narrow and selfish interest of their sponsors, rather than pursuing. The report also explains that, in practice:

> the members of the political oligarchy switch political parties, form new ones, or change party affiliations according to shifting opportunities to gain access to petro-rents and political privileges regardless of professed political principles, or regional or ethnic affiliations. The outcome is a patrimonial, patronage system that tends toward unstable authoritarianism without accountability, transparency, or democratically organized political parties (Omilusi).

The custodians of the democratic project explore the ethnic, religious, racial or class divisions in the Nigerian society leverage democratic competition. The fault-lines are readily triggered to and ignite political violence as a tool to wage political struggles—to exert power, rally supporters, destabilize opponents, or derail the prospect of elections altogether in an effort to gain total control of the machinery of government (Omilusi, 6). As a consequence, Nigeria in its Fourth Republic has become a theatre of various forms of violence ranging from ethnic, religious and communal unrests to organized terrorism and insurgency.

The vast majority of Nigerian citizens having been left disappointed about the feasibility of democracy to meet their expectations for improved living conditions, as well as guaranteeing them justice, equity, fairness, social economic and political rights, have also realized that democracy, as practiced in Nigeria does not offer much respite from their harrowing experience of military rule. It is also a bitter pill to swallow by them that there is no prospect for civil liberties as the oligarchy and the state

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apparatus at their disposal do not have absolute control over the use of force as well as the political will or judicial control, as indeed, a common feature in the Nigerian scene to have non state actors such as militias, vigilantes, religious fundamentalists and criminal gangs regularly violate civil liberties while security forces employed by the state habitually violate human rights and routinely engage in extrajudicial killings of the citizens. Thus, given the contention that, "democratization frequently stimulates a surge of demands on the part of previously quiescent and perhaps even actively repressed groups such as those in the lower classes, excluded ethnic or racial groups," the path to survival and ventilation of accumulated grievances by these groups assumed combative, often militarized engagement against their tormentors, "that is why the history of the country is that of epic bloodletting arising from civil wars, coups, counter-coups, civil uprisings, religious insurgencies, invasions, massacres, pogroms, tribal feuds, state executions and economic genocide (omilusi: 6). The militarized segments of the society and the militarised political environment thus sets the basis of the crisis that Nigerian democratization project is bedeviled with.

It is usually convenient to attribute the roots of the failure of sustaining democratic practice in Nigeria to the combination of colonial heritage and legacy of military rule. However, it is equally expedient to add lack of democratic temperament by political elites and poor exhibition of democratic culture by the general populace as the bane of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It is agreeable that the nature of colonial system of occupation nurtured the militaristic features in the political system of Nigeria just as the several years of military intervention in Nigerian politics sustained the tendencies of militarism and authoritarian control of the Nigerian political space. However, the attitudes of the political class including the intergenerational stimulation of oligarchic ascendancy as demonstrated from the first republic to the unfolding fourth republic are good basis for interrogating the causes of instability arising from faulty democratic experiments in Nigeria and particularly as a way of finding lasting solutions to perennial political crises, development deficits and

poor governance in Nigeria. In the light of estimating the depth of crisis of democratization and militarization which signposts a relapse into anarchy, of Nigerian polity, perhaps, a reconsideration of the diarchy option is worthwhile.

Fourth Arm Theory of Diarchy and the Challenges of Political Reform in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

When it was espoused and proposed about for decades ago, the circumstances of the 1970s under which the Diarchy proposal was advanced are not considerably different from the prevailing political environment of Nigeria in the Fourth Republic. The spate of militarisation that has militated against democracy and democratization in Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, has necessitated the demands for political reforms as a way of overcoming the seemingly insurmountable political challenges of the past and present. Thus, as remarked earlier, the proposal of a brand of diarchy proposed by Azikiwe was for the purpose of a constitutional arrangement to address the intractable political crisis caused by incessant military intervention and militarism that characterised the political affairs of Africa- in general- and Nigeria, in particular after independence. Diarchy or co-rule is a form of government in which two people or institutions jointly administer a polity either by agreement or force. The term is derived from the Greek words *di*-'double" and *arkhia-* "ruled'; or *duumvirate* from the Latin word, *duumviratus*, meaning office of two men. Duumvirate was originally practiced by the Roman republic and the idea of diarchy became popular when it was established through the Government of India Act, in British India between 1919 and 1935 and has been practiced at various times in various societies with varying form, depending on the political circumstances that demanded for such.

As a foremost participant in the politics of First and Second Republic, it is difficult to fault the insight and hindsight of Azikiwe offered on issues of national importance, such as his proposal for diarchy. Prior to military incursion into African politics, the First Republic politics of which Azikiwe was an active participant, collapsed when the political actors of the era,

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instead of consolidating democracy, embarked on rampant destruction of democratic principles and ethos by hounding opponents, falsifying census figures, manipulating the 1964/65 elections and inflaming violence and chaos leading to military takeover of power in order to save the situation Dudley (1982). The position of Azikiwe has found justification in the revelation by Chinua Achebe of events that preceded the military takeover of government in 1966 (2012:71-72) has since revealed how the aforementioned events preceded military take-over of government. He explained the general feeling of frustration and disillusionment that permeated every segment of the Nigerian society, including the military and the intelligentsia, prior to the coup, while the political class were indifferent t this ominous signals, as they were blinded by their selfish and ethnic inclinations, as well as inordinate quest for power and accumulation of resources. As hopelessness and disenchantment grew, with no respite in. Nigerians began to literally take laws into their hands and the Police became powerless in the face of anarchy that was descending. Many bewildered Nigerians believed that the military was the only institution in the country restore stability and order and stability, as well as public confidence in the polity (Ojibo, 1980). At this point, leaders like Azikiwe who could have mitigated the impending doom were overwhelmed by the intensity of the political crisis that made it expedient for military to intervene. According to Achebe:

> Many within the military leadership were increasingly concerned that they were being asked to step in and set things right politically. In the first six years of post-independence, Nigeria found itself calling on the armed forces to two Tiv riots in the Middle Belt, crush the 1954 general strike, and establish order following regional elections in the Western region in 1965. In hindsight, it seems as though President Azikiwe may have been aware of the sand shifting beneath the feet of the political class, and he tried to gain the support of the military brass during the constitutional crisis, following the 1964 federal general election. The failure of Azikiwe's

attempt perhaps should have been the first sign to many of us that trouble lay ahead for our young nation. (Achebe: 71)

The state of fragility and anarchy that precipitated the military intervention could only plunge the country into deeper crisis of the civil war of 1967 to 1970 soon afterwards. In the aftermath of the civil war which ended with the rhetoric of "no victor and no vanquished," that the military then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, encouraged debates on transition to civil rule programmme and an ideal form of government that would help in stabilizing the Nigerian polity. It was against such background that diarchy option was proposed by Azikiwe, as the major theme of his contribution to the debates. Though, it has been recorded that the diarchy proposition by Azikiwe was influenced by his anticipation of the "hidden agenda" of Gowon's military administration to pave way for diarchy. The administration was not only dominated by leading politicians and technocrats such as Obafemi Awolowo, Tony Enahoro, Aminu Kano, Ahmed Joda, Shettima Ali Monguno, Joseph Tarka, Phillip Asiodu and others, certain utterances were revealed to have emanated from some of them toward advancing the adoption of diarchy. One of such as credited to Alison Ayida, the supersecretary, who claimed that:

> Nigeria no longer has a ceremonial army. We are building a large modern army of well-trained, self-conscious and intelligent young men who will not be content to be relegated to the barracks and that the "constitutional settlement" must take into account the "new and crucial factor" of the military leadership who "in the new set up is of necessity obliged to conceive an interventionist role for itself" (Osaghae, 1998:70).

In view of this, the contention could be justified that Azikiwe merely reechoed what had been put in the public glare and associating him with the diarchy proposal, given his pedigree, was one of Gowon's ways of attempting to achieve legitimacy mobilization for its "agenda," which

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was why it generated considerable debate and was "well received by top-ranking military officers . . ." (Osaghae, 1998:70-71).

An alternative view on the inspiration for the diarchy proposal is that the contention was a product of deep reflection and introspection given the trend in post-independence African states. The proposal was sequel to a expression of disappointment by Azikiwe, about the anti-democratic antics and poor leadership records of his contemporaries which he blamed om the political and economic declines of African states, when he lamented that:

> As one who spent a lifetime fighting against imperialism, I feel ashamed at what is happening today. I shudder when I read what some of my former freedom fighters are doing to repress opposition and to destroy the last vestiges of democracy in Africa. (Azikiwe; 18). .

Azikiwe maintained that he and other nationalists were driven by the need to put an end to colonialism because they felt the system should represented bad governance and should therefore not be tolerated. Surprisingly however, the indigenous rulers who succeeded the colonial rulers, most of whom were at the frontline of fighting against colonialism, continued and became worse administrators. The poor performance of indigenous rulers that led to political instability and social convulsion that necessitated incessant military incursions into the governance of African states was the basis on which Azikiwe advanced his proposal.

Azikiwe's position and proposition were justified about a decade later, after the the democratic dispensation of the Second Republic which became a product of the military transition of 1975 to 1979 collapsed. Azikiwe as a principal actor in the democratic project could only be disappointed by the confirmation of his earlier fears in the new dispensation. This is due to the anti-democratic tendencies of his fellow civilian rulers which apart from the massive rigging of the post-military elections of 1983 that gave landslide victory to the ruling party, political violence, abuse of judicial process, militarization of security apparatus, etc., also characterized the

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democratisation process, which once again, attracted the intervention of the military on 31 December 1983. After carefully observing the scenario, Richard Joseph (2001:170) blamed the nonexistence of requisite social terrain for competitive party politics for failure of democratic culture and seeming unsuitability of constitutional democracy in Nigeria or any other African nation. According to him:

> the individuals who emerged to win control of machinery of the political parties, which were able to gain registration, and subsequently to win offices at the state or federal level in Nigeria, displayed the range of skills that competitive party politics calls for in any election. However, the Nigerian social context...ensures that such individuals carry into the legislative halls and ministerial offices certain attitudes and priorities that which eventually convert democratic politics into a system characterized by greed, sectionalism, and disregard for stipulated procedures. Instead of democracy being a mode of collective self-representation, a way of harmoniously pursuing divergent interests within the bounds of the law, it becomes a mere ordeal, a tragedy in which government leaders and the masses of the people are increasingly trapped until rescued by military officers once again to extend the walls of their barracks to the nation's boundaries (Joseph: 171).

The attempt to put diarchy into practice dominated the military administration on General Babangida who came to power in August 1985 after successfully leading a palace coup that overthrew the government of General Muhammadu Buhari in which he served as Chief of Army. Babangida, who exhibited the character of a reformer and populist "general," accused his predecessor of failing to commit to transition to democratic rule, in order to appeal to the sentiments of democracy enthusiasts. Babangida encouraged open debates on virtually every issue of national importance and established a political bureau drawn from the intelligentsia many of whom previously would rather have nothing to do with military government. Indeed, Babangida's liberal initiatives

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at the beginning of his regime earned his administration some praises. According to Ugboajah (2013: 63),

> . . . In the political bureau and the general political orientation debate... a sizeable pocket of informed Nigerians, in re-echoing Dr Ninamdi Azikiwe thesis, may have been persuaded that the Babangida junta had some inherent qualities that could facilitate civil polity and enduring democracy. . . .

This is an educated guess from a highly charismatic and euphoric early period of the administration. To further earn legitimation from a wide spectrum of the civil society for legitimization of his government, Babangida soon embarked on what would later become "transition without end," which eventually ended with the annulment of 1993 presidential elections. During the eight years of his "reign." Babangida assumed the title of president while his military deputy also earned the title of vice-president. His transition program was implemented in phases: by installing civilian governments at both local government and state level and constituting the National Assembly at the national level. Consequently, it has been claimed that:

> the Babangida administration assumed a diarchical dimension in 1992, when he inaugurated the National Assembly which was to exist concurrently with the National Defence and Security Council. . . . The National Assembly (Basic and Transitional Provisional) Amendment Decree Number 53 of 1992 gave General Babangida the power to inaugurate the National Assembly. It also provided for the convening of the National Assembly by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Babangida (Okike, 1998: 29)

The last phase was the presidential election that held on the 12th of June 1993, which was believed to have been won by MKO Abiola, before it was annulled by Babangida. The upheaval that greeted the annulment of the led to the exit of the regime of General Babangida and the composition

and the swearing in of Interim National Government (ING), comprising of 32 military and civilian members, on Aug. 27 1993. The ING led by Ernest Shonekan only lasted for about three months, following the purported resignation on Nov. 27, 1993, orchestrated by Gen. Sani Abacha, who was the de-facto second in command to Babangida and the most senior military officer in ING to emerge as a new military ruler. After settling down, Abacha dissolved the democratic structures that had been put in place during Babangida's transition period and instead, embarked on another round of democratization process that was only aimed at his transmutation from military to civilian head of state (Ugboajah: 69). With elections already conducted into councils, states and federal legislatures. Abacha was poised to emerge as a civilian president, going by indication of his adoption by politicians in the five registered political parties as their consensus candidate for presidential election scheduled for 2009, but for his sudden death on June 8, 2008. Thus, another era ended with its own façade of democratization.

The regime of Gen. Abdusalam, who succeeded Abacha, invalidated all the elections conducted under his predecessor and dissolved all political structures. He thereafter initiated a fresh democratization which lasted eleven months and ended the transition that lasted between 1985 and 1999. Thus, the political class, apart from exhibiting attitudes that eroded the gains of democratization in the Second Republic which enabled the military to intervene, they were involved throughout the period, of military rule by, by participating and aiding the process involved in prolonging military rule and collaborating with military rulers to compromise democratization projects such as the role played in the annulment of June 12 presidential election and manipulation of electoral process to ensure that Abacha emerged as civilian president, unchallenged.

The current Fourth Republic dispensation came into existence on May 29. 1999, after a transition program that was teleguided and decreed into existence by the departing military rulers who were rather compelled by the internationally-induced pressures for conforming with the emerging post-Cold War liberal dictates that prohibit any form of authoritarianism

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in order to "make the world safe for democracy" (Jackson, 2021). The democratization process was severely tinkered with, and the outcome resulted in the emergence of Olusegun Obasanjo (a retired General and former military ruler) as president whose regime (1999-2007) was dominated by many retired military officers including Aliyu Gusau, Theophilus Danjuma, Bode George, Ahmadu Alli, Olagunsoye Oyinlola, David Mark, Jonah Jang and a bulk of politicians who played prominent roles in during the military rule. The 2015 elections produced, Muhammed Buhari, a retired general and former military dictator, as president. Before the emergence of Buhari, who had been a leading political force in the country, the departing President Obaasanjo ensured that Alhaji Umaru Yar Adua, who was a younger brother of his erstwhile de facto second in command as Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters during their military regime, emerged president. The death of Yar Adua only paved the way for his former vice, to become president, Goodluck Jonathan to be president. Meanwhile, from 2007 to 2015, the position of the senate president was occupied by David Mark, another retired general who played prominent role in the aborted transition period of the Third Republic.

Indeed, a "covert diarchy" that manifested in the regime commenced with the release of the current Constitution to the public on May 29, 1999 which "other than the conscripted drafting team, no one had previously set an eye on its contents" (Soyinka:2019). The content of the constitution was later found to reinforce the system of diarchy as the political arrangement once proposed by Nnamdi Azikiwe... as a solution to the power struggles that had roiled Nigeria since 1966." This has been confirmed by Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka (2019), thus:

> The military had mothballed the idea at the time, only to roll it out in 1999, camouflaged as democracy. The true name of this governing structure is diarchy and it describes a government jointly ruled by military and civilian, with or without the latter's content. According to the perspective, as an embedded force of internal colonialism, the Nigerian military will never quit the political stage. Military coups may no longer be fashionable in Africa, but that doesn't

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mean that the military has removed its hands from the wheel. In the last couple of decades, the managers of power in Nigeria" s "democratic" system have learned not only to secure approval of their political preferences, but also to plant their enforcers in key positions before quiting the scene. These enforcers appear in the Senate, House of Representatives, as well as the security services, as well as in various committees, state assemblies, parastatal organisations and important economic agencies. It is however at the very center of the government that the military has built and effectively garrisoned its control tower in Nigeria .

Earlier before the implementation of the transition programme of the fourth republic, in September 1998, a statement credited to the Northern Elders Forum (NEF), after a meeting in Kaduna in a communiqué signed by its secretary, Senator A.M. Gani and chairman, Aliko Mohammed said "more realistic civilian/military relationship should be considered in order to ensure a stable polity" (Oluwajuyitan, 2013).

There is no doubt that the above picture indicates that diarchy is already in practice in Nigeria. There are obvious attestations to this. First it was widely expected that the electoral process that ushered in the Fourth Republic could best be seen in the broader impetus to end military rule and begin a process of democratization and the rebuilding of political institutions to sustain and broaden the efficacy of civilian rule. The process that were characterized by obvious flaws, tainted towards a predetermined outcome were largely overlooked or otherwise tolerated by the population and the political competitors (Ibrahim & Garba, 52) rather than been vigorously contested as a way of deviating from inherited military legacies and chart a direction for the running of democracy in a liberal fashion, Also, it is confounding that over two decades after the commencement of the democratic experiment, the political elites are still finding it difficult to effect serious political reforms to structural and institutional deficiencies that the 1999 constitution features despite popular agitations for constitutional reforms and the restructuring of the polity. This suggest that there is an tacit agreement between military and political leaders

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about the preservation of the system of diarchy already in place, which is implicit in the contents of the constitution, but mostly experienced in the "in the form of explicit government actions (Soyinka, 2019). The spontaneous deployment of troops by Nigerian leaders since inception of the Fourth Republic to intervene in even petty and completely civil matters, including peaceful protests, elections, private land disputes, etc., that made military operations under different guises to be conspicuous across the country suggest that the path of diarchy is undertaken in preference to full-fledged democracy. Despite being operated in denial, it is an undeniable fact that the Nigerian political scene is replete with elements of diarchy as evident in the Nigerian presidents being flanked publicly by a fully decorated, army colonel serving as military aide de and the address of the civil populace and political leaders on issues relating to governance,. As a recent observation in a leading Nigerian newspaper, averred:

> Those who have long suggested that Nigeria democracy exhibits diarchical overtones may not be far dronm the truth. Increasingly, diarchy which is defined as a form of government in which power is held by two supreme rulers or two governing bodies, is manifesting in a way that it is no longer dubitable. Both the Nigerian military and the Nigerian police made their presence powerfully felt in the polity, so much so that the people have become accustomed to their imperious and periodic interventions in governance and politics (*The Nation*, 2019)

A sincere appraisal of the current Nigerian situation must acknowledge the latent existence of the diarchy system in in the constitution, as well as state, institutional and general political behavor of the country's political system, of which framework, pragmatically requires further modification or outright repudiation in ongoing political and constitutional reforms efforts. Thus, as emphatically declares Adekanye (1999: 159) in the context of Azikiwe's proposal for diarchy, a meaningful reform must therefore consider the significance of his admonition that:

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> In addition to the legislature, the executive and the judiciary forming the three arms of the state, the armed and security forces shall constitute the fourth arm (Azikiwe: 24).

The fourth arm theory, in the context of Azikiwe's diarchy proposal, seeks a constitutional recognition of the military institution as a distinct arm of government, to coexist and co-function with the executive, legislature and judiciary. With this, the military would assume the mandate to check and correct the institutional indiscretions of the other arms whose manners have been responsible for failed democratic projects and instability in Nigeria, by which they become guardian of the state. The fourth arm theory, as explained by Okike, is predicated on the fact that since states are governed by human beings, soldiers as human beings also possess the requisite capacity to govern (Okike: 29). The need to give the fourth arm theory a prime consideration as a de facto political condition, even when it is currently practiced covertly in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized.

Conclusion

The proposal for the adoption of diarchy as a complex hybrid political arrangement is expedient for addressing the peculiar challenges of militarization and democratization since Nigeria became independence. Before the proposal was made in the 1970s, Nnamdi Azikiwe, who was a major stakeholder in Nigeria's democratic project, the situation had generated general disillusion and pessimism about the feasibility and suitability of democracy in the country and in other African states which led to persistent military incursions. There is a notion that "If Nigeria reverts to military rule, descends into political chaos, or collapses, it will deal a harsh blow to democratic hopes across Africa. Indeed, the many African countries that remain blatantly authoritarian will never liberalize if the continent's new and partial democracies cannot make democracy work" (Diamond 2021). Though military rule is farfetched as a result of the prevailing liberal intentional convention, but the fears and pessimism about democratic experiments still subsists even since

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the commencement of the Fourth Republic in the country. "Nigeria is regularly haunted by a "ghost of the past," a cloud of fear organised around perceived uncertainties and a constant fear of repeated violence and election rigging producing electoral failures and undemocratic rule" (Ibrahim & Garuba, 2008: 9). Consequently, the political situation arising from unbridled militarization and crisis of democratization, has been likened to anarchy, and a suggestion that,

> If diarchy with restricted freedom guarantees "responsiveness of government to the people, justice, and civil liberties of thought, speech writing, and worship, we will still not be too far away from the initial concept of democracy by the Greeks." (Oluwajuyitan).

This contention is not out of place. Indeed, evidence abound about country's that have adopted diarchy to mitigate anarchy in their systems. The result of the overture made by Charles de Gaule to initiate the process that would steer France away from anarchy and doom has stabilized and sustained the polity since 1960s, when a serving general resolved what five previous revolutions could not achieve. Similarly, diarchy arrangements have been experimented in African countries like San Marino, Sudan, Egypt to navigate the country out of crisis. In the case of Nigeria, since the failed democratic experiment of the First Republic, the military has surreptitiously wielded power and influence, and controlled the commanding heights of the economy with the active collaboration of the political class and the process of democratization and democratic consolidation in the country have been embellished by highly militarized attitudes by all and sundry. In the ensuing scenario and with the clamour for comprehensive constitutional reforms and political restructuring of the country, it is necessary to reconsider the diarchy proposal of Nnamdi Azikiwe by formally constituting the military institution as the fourth arm of government in order to enable them play a guardian role that would enhance the stability and progress of the country.

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