



EUREKA

A Journal of Humanistic Studies
(Special Russian Edition)

Vol. 4: 2, April 2015

A Publication of the
Department of European Languages
University of Lagos,
Nigeria.

EUREKA

UNILAG

A Journal of Humanistic Studies, Vol. 4: 2, April 2015
(Special Russian Edition)

A Publication of the
Department of European Languages,
University of Lagos,
Nigeria

© Department of European Languages
University of Lagos
Nigeria.

Eureka

All Rights Reserved

No part of this journal may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior permission of the Department of European Languages, University of Lagos and the editor.

Published by

Department of European Languages
University of Lagos
Akoka, Yaba
Lagos Nigeria

ISSN: 2015-9415/ ISBN 978-978-3308-4-9

Gill Oluwatosin ADEKANNBI, Ph.D

Department of Classics, University of Ibadan.

DEMOCRACY AND PEOPLE EMPOWERMENT (PART II)

Аннотация

Концепт Расширения полномочий людей понимается как политический процесс, включающий людей в выборы своих лидеров. Внесение конструктивного вклада в процесс принятия решений в качестве членов популяции и обретения абсолютного контроля над системой, которую создают их представители. В статье кратко рассматривается, каким образом была организована структура политической власти в Афинах. Отметим, что в Нигерии, хотя люди по закону имеют избирательное право, политическая система почти не обеспечивает его обычным гражданам, продолжает препятствовать расширению прав человека и изолирует народ от демократии.

Ключевые слова: Демократия, люди, расширения прав и возможностей

Abstract

The concept, of empowerment of the people, is understood as a political process that involves the people selecting their leaders, making meaningful contributions to decision-making as members of a population and gaining absolute control over the system that produces their representatives. This article is a continuation of 'Democracy and People Empowerment (Part I)' published earlier, briefly reviews how power developed or was acquired by the people of Athens. The work emphasises to what extent the non-altruistic background to the emergence of the *demos* as a political force in the Athenian direct democracy threatened the supremacy of the people. As the *demos* stirred the political ship of Athens, evidence of their being manipulated by selfish elements of undemocratic descents persisted and this ancient trend provides a parameter for explaining what sometimes undermines the empowerment of the people in modern representative democracy where broader participation is encouraged. While people may have the power to thumbprint in elections or express their wishes through speeches, the article, using contemporary examples, particularly from Nigeria, indicates how the 'original impetus' that is scarcely selfless continues to impede empowerment of the people. This is a picture of the power that marginalises, disenfranchises or refuses to let the power of the people out in a democracy.

Keywords: Democracy, People, Empowerment

Introduction

Democracy has near universal acceptance and the appeal of democratisation in Africa continues to grow. Politicians eagerly wear its tag to gain the acceptance of the people and all categories of citizens: peasants, civil servants, professionals, human rights activists and others see no reason why democracy should not work in Africa if it has worked elsewhere. However, the belief is: 'the penchant of our key political actors to manipulate the system for selfish interests has crippled the growth of democracy and alienated people from effective participation in the political processes' (<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/06/criticism-and-the-growth-of-democracy-in-nigeria-2/> On June 9, 2013. Accessed November 12, 2014). Interestingly, the problem of manipulation in democracy reportedly occurs in so-called 'advanced democracy': 'American elections are manipulated, British parliamentarians are bribed, scientific research is financed by companies who are interested parties, energy crises are rigged, and a score of other varieties of modern-day sleaze' (Blum W. <http://williamblum.org/essays/read/book-review-the-best-democracy-money-can-buy-by-greg-palast> April 2002. Accessed December 8, 2014..

For example, Palast, an American writer for *The Guardian* and *The Observer* of London, alleged that 'Governor Jeb Bush and his team shamelessly contrived the removal of thousands of voters' names from the election rolls; voters who were in large measure black (read Democratic voters)' (Ibid). In Florida at the 2000 US presidential election. 'The result was nothing less than the placing in the White House of Jeb's brother George' (Ibid). Responding to what prompted his investigating electoral fraud, Palast mentions 'the smell of money and the scent of mendacity,' (Palast G: https://suicidegirls.com/members/nicole_powers/blog/2680053/greg-palast-steal-back-your-vote/ Oct 24, 2008. Accessed December 8, 2014.) and adds:

I was investigating the Bush family fortunes and wrote an article for the London *Observer*, where I had a column called *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*. Going through the Bush family fortune, like their bloody little gold mining operation in Africa for example, I came across a connection to a company called *ChoicePoint*. That led me to discover that that company was purging the voter rolls of Florida under a contract with a lady named *Katherine Harris*, the Secretary of State. They won a contract, a bid contract with the state, with the *highest bid*. Then I noticed, this was the week of the 2000 election, that black people were coming before the BBC cameras and saying, "We can't vote. Our name is

missing from the voter role." So, in my conspiracy nut mind, I said, "Gee, there must be a computer program wiping out black voters off the voter rolls." I got the computer discs from Katherine Harris' office and there it was: voters matched by race and tagged as felons. Their only crime was voting while black. Ninety-four thousand people; not one single criminal voter out of ninety-four thousand voters. That was the election that was decided technically by five hundred votes. So it was about following the money; it was not about following the votes(Ibid).

While someone may not be inclined to use this instance to label the American democratic system as mere fraud, allegations of this nature leave behind some mistrust; indicating how sovereignty of the people could be undermined. In an atmosphere that was not devoid of similar concerns, a consideration is now given to how the power of the people evolved at ancient Athens, the cradle of democracy.

The article entitled 'Democracy and the People Empowerment (Part 1)' raised a question: 'reflecting over the Athenian democracy, especially its 'people', what factors have determined 'the people of the African democracy, Nigeria, in particular?' The article generally considers the circumstances surrounding the Athenian 'people's' securing power and notes that 'no history of democracy suggests a willing submission of the few...rich and influential...to the many who are poor and lacking in influence'(Ibid). Later, in the present article, by citing relevant cases, attention is drawn to the bearing that the foregoing notion has on empowerment of the people also in Nigeria. First, a brief review of the background to the Athenian democracy that follows exemplifies how democratisation can be a mere strategy for power.

Democracy: Athenian Aristocrats Got a New Approach to Power

The rule of a hereditary nobility or aristocracy known as the Eupatridae prevailed at Athens during the seventh century B.C.E. Men of this class who were in the minority did not only have a monopoly of the executive power but also wielded both the legislative and the judiciary powers. The

monopoly of political offices at this time is well captured by the words of Aristotle: 'Appointment to the supreme offices of state went by birth and wealth; and they were held at first for life, and afterwards for a term of ten years'(Athenian Constitution 3.1.). But the aristocratic group would not continue to be a homogenous group. The natural wealth began to change and Cylon who attempted a coup in 632 B.C.E evidently found supporters among the middle class hoplites who were denied roles in political decision making despite the potentials their new wealth afforded them. More political developments at Athens further split the ranks of the aristocrats and reinforced the demand for a political system that would make them recognise the rights of others outside their fold and submit to written laws for all. In this light, the early part of the sixth century B.C.E. witnessed constitutional reforms of Solon, the Athenian lawgiver, which gave some attention to the socio-economic needs of the majority poor. However, Solon's reforms only exposed the unwillingness of the nobility to share political rights with the lower classes, and in the ensuing dissensions between two aristocratic factions of the Plain- led by Lycurgus, and the Coast- led by Megacles, the ambitious Peisistratus rose to become a dictator at Athens.

Within the aforementioned context, Peisistratus got the support for his course from what seemed a third political party, among the poor living around his estates, whose affection he won with his amiable personality and unmatched acts of generosity. He wanted power, and in a most subtle way, he made himself the champion of the people who supposedly ensured his safety by a guard when he feigned attack by his political enemies. Despite opposition, Peisistratus established his rule as a tyrant, engaged in people orientated programmes, enforced the reforms of Solon, upheld obedience to law. Paradoxically, as a dictator, Peisistratus further laid foundation the Athenian Democracy. However, while Solon's reforms and the activities of Peisistratus continued to weaken the archaic political structures that fostered the power of the aristocrats, it is important to note that their intention was never that of enthroning 'the people' or deliberately putting up a structure for expression of 'the people's' . Hence, what followed was the tyranny of Hippias which culminated in his expulsion and set stage for another turning to 'the people' in the aristocratic quest for power. According Aristotle:

When the tyranny had been put down, there was a period of faction-strife between Isagoras son of

Teisander, who was a friend of the tyrants, and Cleisthenes, who belonged to the family of the Alcmaeonidae. Cleisthenes having got the worst of it in the Comradeships *enlisted the people on his side*, offering to hand over the government to the multitude. Isagoras began to lose power, so he again called in the aid of Cleomenes, who was a great friend of his...Cleisthenes secretly withdrew, and Cleomenes with a few troops proceeded to expel as accursed seven hundred Athenian households; and having accomplished this, he tried to put down the Council and set up Isagoras and three hundred of his friends with him in sovereign power over the state. But the Council resisted, and the multitude banded together, so the forces of Cleomenes and Isagoras took refuge in the Acropolis, and the people invested it and laid siege to it for two days. On the third day they let Cleomenes and his comrades go away under a truce, and sent for Cleisthenes and the other exiles to come back. *The people having taken control of affairs, Cleisthenes was their leader and was head of the people...* (Italics are mine) (Aristotle, *Athenian Politics* 20.)

There is no gainsaying the fact that Cleisthenes was neither a theorist who envisioned a just state with 'the people' in control. Rather, as a 'democrat', he chanced on democracy when he turned to the common people for the support needed in urgently filling the vacuum left in the aristocratic jostling for power after Hippias, the son of Peisistratus, was deposed. Hence, it is pertinent to quickly note that the Athenian democracy was never borne out of the benevolence of the rich and the powerful toward the poor and the weak. Again, It was neither out of any sense of moral obligation to satisfy the common people's yearning for some share of political power. Besides, when Cleisthenes 'reforms' earned him acceptance of 'the people', the direct democracy that followed did not bequeath political rights to all adults; it excluded women, foreign-born residents and slaves who altogether constituted a larger section of the population. Slaves, who formed as much as one third of the populations of many city-states, rather than being part of 'the people' at Athens, only produced the labor force that made possible the leisure time spent by the 'free citizens' in debates at the Assembly. Ironically, the new political freedom for only male citizens over the age of 18 went hand in hand with the enslavement of others and gave birth to an exclusive democracy.

'The People' and the Paradox of Athenian Democracy

Having reiterated the point of the previous work in the preceding paragraphs, attention is now given to the issue that is involved in the process of empowering 'the people' or democratisation. The concern over the source of the power wielded by the *demos*, the Athenian people, is aptly expressed thus:

But democratisation in itself brings us face to face with the great paradox of democracy- the fact that while democracy can be abolished democratically, it *cannot be instituted democratically*: creation necessarily means that *the original impetus comes from a group or single individual functioning in a non-democratic system*. It is the original impetus that sets up constituent and establishes mechanisms for expression of the popular will. In ancient Athens (the location of the world's first known democracy) *the original impetus was hardly altruistic*..(Thompson L.A. 1994: 6.)

The above statement, with emphasis on the italicised words, typically describes the circumstances surrounding the emergence of the Athenian democracy. 'The original impetus' came from the Greek society where the nobles sought to maintain their honour and distinction of the class by monopoly of political power. The unchangeable fact of history is that, democracy, no matter how glowing its bridal robe, was born in a 'non-democratic' setting; midwived by the nobles who saw this as the new inevitable outlet for their crave for political dominance. The Athenian legacy to the modern world is a product of a society where '... many tyrants at least began as the people's men, supported or even put forward by the *demos* to defend them against aristocratic abuses and the impact of destructive rivalries, and securing communal peace and prosperity'(Raaflaub K.A., Ober J. Wallace R.W., 2007: 42.). Although the above fact registers the background to the emergence of the ancient democracy as non-altruistic, nevertheless, the aristocratic clans (*genei*) who controlled large areas of Attica with the territory around Athens

seemed to have understood the political realities of the 5th century BCE as inevitable. Holding offices, wielding political influence and being considered worthy of participation in state's affairs would simply no longer be determined by property ownership but very much by eligibility for military service. The new dimension of the Athenian political life necessitated enlisting the help of 'militant groups' from among 'the people' (male citizens, 18 years and above who came to be known as the demos; the citizens who governed the state) to achieve political goals. The action of the dictator, Peisistratus, turning to some common people to forcefully rise to power, could be taken as an earlier hint of how practical this approach could be and from which Cleisthenes arguably took a cue. By the 5th century BCE, the price paid by the aristocratic class for turning to 'the people' was yielding to the clamour of the common people (demos) for more political participation. The period was no longer an era of insecurity when the aristocrats protected their dependents and as a result dominated them. Therefore, while the democracy sprang from a non-democratic setting of ambitious, power-thirsty and non-altruistic leaders, the demos' right to power appeared most inalienable, as the following statement shows: 'It is right that in Athens the poor and the common people should have more power than the nobles and the rich, because they provide the rowers for the fleet and thus give the polis its strength' (The Oligarch 1, 2.)

As soon as the demos got some political recognition, they did not only become deeply involved in making decisions on declaring wars, but they were also heavily relied on to execute such wars. Consequently, the understanding of how the military role of the demos was linked to their political rights provides some insight into the exclusion of Athenian women from 'the people' of the democracy (Thucydides I. 99.) Interestingly, against the backdrop of what was considered a civic duty of 'the people', Pericles, who was reputed the foremost Athenian statesman, appears as justifying disenfranchisement of women in his funeral oration:

If I am to speak also of womanly virtues, referring to those of you who will henceforth be in widowhood, I will sum up all in a brief admonition: Great is your glory if you fall not below the standard which nature has set for your sex, and great also is hers of whom there is least talk among men whether in praise or in

blame (*Thucydides* 2.45.)

While the above statement may imply a paternalistic protection of women, modern scholars would also interpret the statement of Pericles as a stern warning for Athenian women to stay away from the politics of their state. This advice, beyond a cultural bias seemed politically expedient: women were neither rowers nor hoplites; therefore, they were not expected to vote on matters of war and foreign policy which were the major fields of the democracy. Even when some hetairai (courtesans) such as Aspasia significantly influenced principal politicians, the womenfolk never became part of 'the people' of Athenian democracy.

The political status of slaves and metics might be expected to be different when considering the following excerpt:

This, then, is why in the matter of free speech we have put slaves and free men on equal terms; we have also done the same for metics and citizens because the city needs metics because of the multiplicity of her industries and her fleet; that is why we were right to establish freedom of speech for metics as well (*Xenophon, Constitution of the Athenians* 1.12.)

Slaves and metics were generally not socially discriminated against; indeed, there were no physical signs to distinguish them from the citizens. Athens was so well known for her fair treatment of slaves that the state legislated against beating slaves, who were commonly ordinary in appearance like an average Athenian, in order to avoid inadvertently beating an Athenian citizen. However, it ended at that; as chattels, slaves worked largely under private ownership and functioned politically only to the extent that they provided leisure for the demos who actively participated in politics.

The metics who were attracted to the cosmopolitan life at Athens than that of their homelands got actively involved in the economic life of the polis. Although they could not own houses or land except through a special rare grant, they administered property for the Athenians, paid tax and shared the burden of citizenship. Yet, the metics were barred from

the Assembly and from serving on the jury. Even when the Athenians would profess the best human right record in the Greek world, it remains that no matter the amount of socio-economic contributions of slaves and metics to the state, they were not deemed necessary part of 'the people' Athenian political community that emerged during the classical period. This only shows that democracy was never viewed as 'a free gift' that should naturally go round. Hence, the motive of 'the original impetus' of the democracy evidently determined those who constituted 'the people'.

The Paradox of Athenian Democracy and Its Implications

As shown by the developments in the Delian league, the outlook of the 5th century Athenian democracy continued to reflect the non-altruistic values of its 'original impetus'. When Athens dictatorially turned the anti-Persian league into Athenian Empire, reportedly, the ancient 'democrats' in a statement credited to Thucydides said:

We have done nothing surprising, nothing contrary to human nature, if we accepted leadership when it was offered and are now unwilling to give it up. There are three very strong reasons why we should not do so, honour fear and self-interest. Nor are we the first people to be in this position: it has always been a law of human society that the weak are controlled by the strong (Thucydides I, 76.)

If 'the people' of the Athenian democracy saw 'nothing contrary to human nature' in tyrannically leading the league, and when, among other factors, 'self-interest' would make them 'unwilling to give it up' even when the leadership provided became discomforting to the majority of their allies, then the notion of the democracy being a tyranny of the majority becomes the issue. This posture may suggest that the demos, having become united fellows supposedly under the banner of freedom, shove aside the rights of others: 'the people' trampling on the right of other people. Such deficient democratic culture may depict the dire consequences of the narrowness of the Athenian concept of 'the people'.

Non-altruistic elements continued to influence the nature of 'the people' of the Athenian democracy who believed and demonstrated that it has always been a law of human society that the weak are controlled by

the strong'. Unwillingness to let go the control of the leadership of the Delian League would only amount to an overbearing attitude of a dictator (See Thucydides II.62; Thucydides VIII.2; Thucydides III.39.) This explains why were allies were made to swear oath of allegiance to Athens and when states such as Naxos, Carystus and Thasos, revolted, they were forced to surrender. The 'democratic' Athens imposed her constitutions on her 'allies', forcing them to use the Athenian coinage, weights and measures. The demos, goaded on as agents of imperialism, reinforced the Athenian fleet, garrisons, and subjected other Greek states to another yoke when they should enjoy freedom from the Persians' domination. The 'democrats' confiscated lands and established Athenian colonies on such lands to sustain their tight undemocratic grip over the allies who were made unwilling partners in the league (Plutarch, Pericles XI.)

The above political ambience the inclusion of the demos in the politics of Athens may hardly be synonymous with emergence of a state that was intrinsically governed by democratic values everywhere and anytime. Rather, the above statement in Thucydides rather evokes the picture of an individual who claims to be a 'democrat' at home but brandishes the authority of a brute when outside. The self-seeking interest of the minority aristocratic class found its way into the broader Athenian political terrain and dictated the pace and values of 'the people'.

It is also instructive to note that, when supposedly empowering the demos, the Athenian leaders who were mainly of the aristocratic class also had 'the people' as most effective tools to advance their power, ambition and fulfil their crave for wealth. The following account of Plutarch relates this aggrandizement that caused others to groan:

"The Greek" they shouted, "must consider this an unendurable insult, they must regard themselves as subject to open and flagrant tyranny, when they see that we forcibly exact contributions from them for the war against Persia and then use these moneys to gild and beautify the city, like some vain woman, all dolled up with precious stones and statues and temples worth millions of pounds". In reply, Pericles said to the people that they did not have to provide their allies with any

account of how the money was spent, provided they continued to fight the war for them and keep the Persians away (Plutarch, Pericles, XII.)

Expressions such as the foregoing clearly demonstrate the non-accountable disposition of a tyrant. That 'the people' of a democracy could just be no more than a crowd that is organised and sometimes manipulated for selfish ends became more manifest when Pericles who had tried to moderate the excesses of the demos with his skills and experience died in 429 BC. Pericles' cautious policy of consolidating allies who were closer home was undermined by the by popularity-seeking leaders who swayed 'the people' by oratorical skills.

The ultimate power of the Athenian democracy was believed to be in the hands of 'the people', however, the use of the power in reality went beyond the control of the masses, such as farmers, sailors and shopkeepers. The emergence of demagogues who misled the people with the use of rhetoric shows that 'the people' who served as the custodian of the democratic power could be the majority in an Assembly whose base values are appealed to by deceitful and selfish orators. When the demos appeared invincible, they became a mere source of power that was subject to all forms of abuse. Lacking information and skills needed on how best to utilise their power, they sometimes eagerly gave consent to the proposal of those who stirred their emotions. Such was the case with the Athenian Sicilian expedition. Although the Athenians thought about the material prospects at Sicily, in line with Pericles' policy of consolidating closer alliances, Nicias sought with all logical reasoning to make the Assembly believe that the expedition would not succeed. However, the brilliant but unscrupulous Athenian politician, Alcibiades who was known for his rhetorical skills got the people to his side with the lure of rich rewards. Just as Cleisthenes, the leader of an Athenian aristocratic political faction, earlier knew what to do to have 'the people' on his side as he stumbled on democracy, Alcibiades also knew how to gain support from 'the people' for a mission that was a dismal failure (See Donald Kagan, 1981).

The far-reaching effect of the non-altruistic motive of the source of the original impetus of democracy indeed took another turn with the emergence of the self-seeking demagogues who were misleaders of the people. The activities of such men demonstrated how the ultimate power

in the hands of 'the people' who are generally poor and, perhaps, uninformed can be the fundamental weakness of democracy. To gain support of 'the people', demagogues frequently employed blatant lies, violence; stirred up panic, used crisis situations to gain popularity and made immediate benefits for the poor their concern. Cleon, for instance, strengthened his position amongst the Athenian poorer citizens by adding to the pay of jurymen.

Nonetheless, despite the ulterior motives that various leaders of the Athenian democracy may have, the democracy was generally held as sacrosanct, and for the most part, as a system of government wherein the people elected their rulers; a direct democracy that allowed all male citizens to vote in an assembly and make decisions by majority votes. It is deemed better than dictatorships or oligarchies, where one man or minority group makes decision without imputes from the majority. However, the paradox of the Athenian democracy, that 'the original impetus' that produced democracy acted in an 'undemocratic setting and was hardly altruistic,' suggests the existence of forces that are always capable of and are interested in undermining the sovereignty of the people. Such forces tend to define who 'the people' are, as it is shown, not only by the history of the Athenian democracy but by recent political development in Nigeria that are now cited.

When the results of the gubernatorial election that was held on June 21, 2014 in Ekiti State, Nigeria, were announced, the governor elect, Ayodele Fayose claimed his victory was owing to his closeness to the grassroots people of the state or 'grassroots democracy'. However, Governor Babatunde Fashola of Lagos State rather saw Fayose's victory as fraught with manipulation of 'the people':

But it must be a very dangerous message to simply suggest that once you give people money, then this is the way it will happen. It is frightening for me in a democracy. They have not told us what will happen to that case. Is that consistent with the behaviour of the people? However, the governor- elect still has criminal case to answer. So, the lessons that are supposedly coming out of Ekiti are frightening lessons for me. Lesson

about *whether the people of Ekiti are really saying that this was all about money and rice.* (Akinsanmi G., <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/fash-ola-ekiti-governorship-election-result-frightens-me/181933/26> June 2014. Accessed February 10, 2015.) (Italics are mine)

Worsening fear about manipulation and the threatened position of 'the people' is further heightened on February 5, 2015 when it was reported that the ruling party used some military officers to rig the Ekiti election:

Sahara Reporters has received unimpeachable documents and audio recordings providing substantial evidence that major Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leaders planned and successfully rigged the gubernatorial elections in Ekiti State, and plotted a similar scenario in Osun in 2014. The audio recordings and affidavit were provided by Sagir Koli, a Captain in the 32nd Artillery Brigade stationed in Ekiti State, who has since fled the country for fear of retaliation. Capt. Koli recorded the conversation on 20th June 2014 when he was asked to accompany his Commanding Officer, Brigadier General Aliyu Momoh, to the meeting. The venue was held at Spotless Hotel in Ado-Ekiti. The audio recordings depict the meeting as being attended by the eventual "winner" of the election, Governor Ayo Fayose of Ekiti; Senator Iyiola Omisore; a man identified as Honorable Abdulkareem; the Minister for Police Affairs Caleb Olubolade; and Senator Musiliu Obanikoro who was at the time the Minister of State for Defence. Mr. Chris Uba came to Ekiti with huge stash cash and soldiers from the East to carry out

the assignment. The 37-minute recording details the conversation between these men as they bribed Brigadier General Momoh with a promotion for his assistance in carrying out election fraud in Ekiti. In it, Obanikoro is clearly heard informing the group of men, [I] am not here for a tea party, am on special assignment by the President."Sahara Reporters further received credible intelligence that President Goodluck Jonathan had instructed the Chief of Defense Staff, Alex Badeh, to use the army in arresting and intimidating opposition politicians before and during the election. The audio recording provides exact details of the plot, with the collaborators almost degenerating into physical combat. (Saharareporters, <http://saharareporters.com/2015/02/05/how-obanikoro-fayose-chris-uba-and-brig-general-momoh-rigged-ekiti-governorship-election> Accessed February 15, 2015.).

Sahara Reporters would not present these allegations of the ruling party's grand plan to determine the electorate with any reservations, it seeks to provide basis for authenticity:

The audio recordings were analyzed and authenticated by Guardian Consulting, an independent US-based security consulting company. According to a report authored by Guardian Consulting, also in the possession of Sahara Reporters, the independent company used Forensic Voice Frequency Comparison technology to identify all voices on the recording with audio available in the public domain. The then Deputy Defense Minister, Obanikoro clearly states to

General Momoh that he was not only sent to the meeting by President Jonathan, but “you can't get a promotion without me sitting on top of your military council. If I am happy tomorrow night, the sky is your limit.” Governor Fayose revealed that he had already bribed an official of the Independent National Election Commission (INEC), the non-political commission charged with organizing elections in Nigeria, to bring copies of voter ballots with the INEC logo to him that day. Fayose, upset that his INEC contact was caught in traffic, narrated his day's frustrations: “Where are we supposed to be collating the thing INEC gave to us? Soft copies we now printed? Why is my [INEC] contact not with [the ballots]...my contact man [was] sitting in the check point...it took me more than two hours to get this man.” As the plotters began to argue, Omisore, who was running for Governor of Osun State on the PDP ticket, tried to calm the room: “I would just say that we don't have to argue so much, we have seen some lapses [today] yes. It's just this evening, there is nothing happening now that we cannot contain before tomorrow morning.”(Ibid.)

The report further portrays a picture of the possible extent of manipulation of 'the people' under the banner of democracy:

The eyewitness testimony and sworn affidavit by Capt. Koli corroborates the audio recordings of the PDP officials' plans to manipulate the Ekiti elections. The plotters devised several plans intended to bring about an unlawful victory for PDP candidates in Ekiti State

ances, including the forging of INEC ballots, the use of the military to facilitate access for PDP operatives and supporters, the creation of a list of APC members to be arrested, and the deployment of a Special Team of military personnel to prevent APC voters from reaching the polls. The PDP officials told General Momoh that those soldiers on election duty “must work hand-in-hand with the PDP agents” and ordered the arrest of selected APC stalwarts as that could “greatly assist the party during the election including DG campaign organization for Dr. Fayemi, Mr. Bimbo Daramola,” Capt. Koli said in his affidavit.(Ibid.)

The next part of the story indicates other alleged efforts at constituting 'the people' on the Election Day:

General Momoh, confronted with criticism by the group, defended himself by saying that “we have done a lot of [APC] arrests.” It would be recalled that there were arrests of APC members in Ekiti during the period. It would also be recalled that many members of the security offices paraded around Ekiti in disguise. The PDP collaborators also demanded that the military block APC members' access to the electorate and that moles should “be careful because the consequence will be severe.” Soldiers were instructed to set up roadblocks leading to the polling stations and prevent APC supporters' access. Additionally, vehicles and individuals with a special sticker labeled “National Security Task” were allowed movement anywhere, and

were only distributed to PDP agents. General Momoh informed the group that there were “about 6 special teams. I have one strike force. I have almost forty soldiers after deployment,” evidently an organized system *being used to manipulate voter turnout*. Capt. Koli's statement explained that based on these strategies, “they succeeded in rigging the Ekiti State election with victory in all the 16 Local Governing Authorities (LGAs). These really inspired them and they were with the euphoria that same would happen in Osun State.”(Italics are mine)(Ibid.)

More allegations are made about the role the military had been emboldened to play in future manipulation:

Indeed, leading into the Osun State elections the Brigadier General posted there was told to take a three-week leave during the elections. His position was temporarily filled by General Momoh, who then repeated the same fraudulent tactics in Osun. Sahara Reporters was provided with additional evidence that proves the military retaliated against Capt. Koli when he released this information. Capt. Koli fled before he was arrested, but the military arrested, secretly detained, and chained his brother Adamu to a bed for nearly five months at the Adekunle Fajuyi's Cantonment. In an exclusive phone interview with from his hideout outside Nigeria, Capt. Koli told Sahara Reporters that his brother was starved for periods of time and sometimes “fed worms.” Adamu was only released after a petition, which is also in possession of Sahara Reporters, was submitted to the National Human Rights Commission by

Barrister Chief K. Akinola Ajayi. The treatment of Capt. Koli's brother was so poor during his illegal confinement that he had to be hospitalized due to malnutrition. Sahara Reporters contacted Nigerian Defense spokesperson, General Chris Olukolade as well as Nigerian Army spokesperson, Col. SK Usman, for comment on this story. Both officials promised to get back to us but never did. (Ibid.)

The report above is yet to be investigated by the government and, in fact, may be dismissed by the accused as mere propaganda from the opposition party. While there is no point joining issue here, it suffices, though, to note that the anxiety created by allegations over the role of the military in Nigeria's democratic process has become an interesting subject:

The gubernatorial elections in Ekiti might have come and gone, but it has certainly left series of posers behind. In the week preceding the elections, helicopters hovered the skies. In almost every corner of the state, heavily armed policemen and military personnel became very visible in almost every entry and exit point, parading the length and breadth of the state ahead of the elections. It was not the first time military personnel were being deployed to states for elections. Edo, Ondo and Anambra gubernatorial elections witnessed same, but in the case of Ekiti, there was a general consensus, suggesting that no state in Nigeria had witnessed such military presence during an election as Ekiti did penultimate Saturday. One week before the election, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Abubakar, deployed three helicopters for surveillance in the three

senatorial districts in the state with one Assistant Inspector General of Police and four commissioners of Police for effective coordination of security operations. Abubakar confessed that the number of troops, armoured tanks and helicopters deployed in Ekiti was the highest ever to be deployed in a state, saying it was part of the resolve of the police to do anything humanly possible to provide security for election materials and personnel of INEC. *Like a war zone, the troops took their positions.* Almost every 100 metres from the entry point of the state, police officers and soldiers mounted various check points, with blood-hound dogs sniffing for any likely breach of peace by supporters of the various political parties. *On the eve of the election, there was tension.* More troops were deployed to the state. Some visitors into the state coming in through Efon Alaaye-Ekiti, the first point of entry into Ekiti State on the Osun-Ekiti border, encountered at least eleven checkpoints before getting to Ado-Ekiti, the state capital. (Italics are mine) (Okoro E

<http://dailyindependentnig.com/2014/06/militarising-elections-nigeria/> Accessed February 20, 2015.)

The *Daily Independent* also describes alleged use of the military by the ruling party to stifle the opposition party:

Rivers State governor, Rotimi Amaechi, and his Edo counterpart, Adams Oshiomhole, were prevented entry into Ekiti State to attend the last APC mega rally by military personnel purportedly acting on the order of the Presidency. Some leaders of the party, including the Imo State governor, Rochas Okorochoa, and the former governor of Lagos State, Bola Tinubu, also

had their fair share of frustration as they were barred from taking off at the Akure airport after the rally, leaving them with the option of travelling by road. Oshiomhole, who intended travelling by helicopter, was prevented from taking off from the Benin airport, while the plane flying Kwankwaso to the Akure airport was not allowed to land. But, Amaechi was the most frustrated of them. He had managed to fly to Akure in a chartered plane, but could not reach Ado-Ekiti as soldiers laid siege for him in Iju, Ondo State, and forced him to turn back, condemning him to a four-hour trip to Lagos by road. His aircraft was reportedly grounded in Akure. Oshiomhole, it was learnt, could however not get to his destination as the Federal Government aborted his trip midway. His chartered chopper was not allowed to take off at the Benin Airport. The action of the military on its members drew the ire of the APC. *The party lamented that the Federal Government was using its security apparatus to harass its governor and had thus turned Ekiti State into a war zone where constitutional guaranteed rights have been suspended* (Italics are mine) (Okoro E. <http://dailyindependentnig.com/2014/06/militarising-elections-nigeria/> Accessed February 20, 2015.)

An account of 2009 election in Ekiti State further indicates who 'the people could actually be, in view of the non-altruistic elements that often propel democracy:

What happened in Ekiti State on April 25 and May 5 could not be passed as an election but an electoral war between the ruling PDP and AC. Huge resources and Warriors were heavily mobilized by both parties from outside Ekiti to impose their candidates on the people at all cost. The number of thugs imported to Ekiti during the re run outnumbered the voters; they were used by politicians to unleash violence on the hapless citizens of Ekiti

State. Guns and charms were freely used by the politicians to achieve their selfish interest... The thugs that were hired to torch the INEC office in Ido-Osi, instigate violence in Oye-Ekiti, hijack ballot boxes in polling booths, harass, and main voters were agents of politicians. They worked for them and forced the exercise to end in controversies. (Nasiru S. *10 years of democracy: Is Nigeria making headway?* <http://ngex.com/news/public/print.php?section=article&ArticleID=1298> May 21, 2009. Accessed February 20, 2014).

The above reports illustrate the notion of how 'the people' of democracy are constituted or reconstituted; enfranchisement or disenfranchisement of 'the people', hence, empowerment or, rather, disempowerment of the people. A lot of questions arise over what power is left in the common people that are generally understood as 'the people' when lethal weapons are brandished on elections day and show of force permeates everywhere. 'A genuine democratisation process should be, above all, a creation of an effective system for the expression of the sovereign power or will of the people' (Thompson L.A. Op. cit. p. 6). Pseudo sovereignty of 'the people' often results from desperate and non altruistic quest for power which turns the society into a hot-bed of violence and assassination, or from a system bereft of 'economic conditions that permit the great mass of the citizenry at least a reasonable expectation of security with respect to human basic needs...' (Ibid p. 7) Reports such as the preceding ones make an ideal democratic setting elusive.

Conclusion

The 'original impetus' for democratisation usually comes from an individual or individuals who often shout the slogan: 'power to the people'. Individuals' seeking support from a majority to actualise struggle for power was the foundation laid by the Athenians for the democracy later came to have enough of public speakers or rabble-rousers who continued to subject the will of the common people to manipulation; by stirring their emotions, appealing to their fears, prejudices and ignorance, in selfish pursuit of power. Ironically, although the democracy added to the military strength of Athens, it was not synonymous with an enduring political stability and was not destined to last. The democratic Athens

was foremost in the conflicts of an age of war and conquest, which climaxed in decline of the polis. It is certainly tasking to present the Athenian democracy as an utter political failure, besides, that is not the thrust of this article. However, the big flaw in the system has been highlighted: the foundation of, and the continuous presence of manipulative elements that forever undermines the empowerment of the people.

'The people' of democracy should be a mass of citizens, and not a section of it, that is able to wield power and influence. Even when this ability does not imply being immune to manipulation, such people should exude power in all its sense to avoid being helpless in the face of exploitation. No matter how strong its claim at being is, a group ceases to be among 'the people' in a democracy when the system is supervised by individual or individuals who successfully control and use all the state apparatuses to gain electoral victory for selfish ends. Hence, sovereignty of the people remains a myth when democracy is midwived by non-altruistic elements that entrench themselves as the major financiers of the political system, employ all the resources, weapons or devices at their disposal to recruit 'the people', their own people, to enthrone them. In such situations, 'the people' do not have to be a majority, since power seekers would not hesitate to act in undemocratic settings, 'the people' could in reality be the minority, as critics note about the Athenian democracy.

There continue to be claims in Nigeria that to reinforce the concept that democracy is no more than a strategy for power. Bags of rice are shared among the poor majority; money shared among the few who oversee the security and supervise the election. As in a selfish and corrupt system, the picture is that of more reliance on bullet than ballots. It remains undisputable that no democracy has freely deposited power at the doorstep of the common people.

References

- Anele D. *Criticism and the growth of democracy in Nigeria* (2)<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/06/criticism-and-the-growth-of-democracy-in-nigeria-2/> On June 9, 2013. Accessed November 12, 2014.
- Blum W. Book review: *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy* by Greg Palast <http://williamblum.org/essays/read/book-review-the-best-democracy-money-can-buy-by-greg-palast> April 2002. Accessed December 8, 2014.
- Ibid.
- Ibid.
- Palast G: **Steal Back Your Vote**https://suicidegirls.com/members/nicole_powers/blog/2680053/greg-palast-steal-back-your-vote/ Oct 24, 2008. Accessed December 8, 2014.
- Ibid.
- Adekanmbi G.O. *Democracy and People Empowerment* (Part 1) in Ibadan Journal of Multicultural and Multidisciplinary Studies, Vol. 5/ii, December 2000, p.90-99.
- Ibid.
- Athenian Constitution* 3.1.
- Aristotle, *Athenian Politics* 20.**
- Thompson L.A. *Observation on the Concept Democracy and the Democratization Process in Democracy Democratization and Africa*. Ed. L.A. Thompson. Afrika Link, Ibadan. 1994: 6.
- Raaflaub K.A., Ober J. Wallace R.W. *Origin of Democracy in Ancient Greece*. University of California 2007: 42.
- The Oligarch 1, 2.
- Thucydides I. 99.
- Thucydides* 2.45.
- Xenophon, *Constitution of the Athenians* 1.12.
- Thucydides I, 76.
- Thucydides II.62; Thucydides VIII.2; Thucydides III.39.
- Plutarch, Pericles XI.
- Plutarch, Pericles, XII.

Donald Kagan, *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition*. Cornell University Press, 1981.

Akinsanmi G. Fashola: *Ekiti Governorship Election Result Frightens Me* <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/fashola-ekiti-governorship-election-result-frightens-me/181933/26> June 2014. Accessed February 10, 2015.

Saharareporters. *How Obanikoro, Fayose, Chris Uba And Brig. General Momoh Rigged Ekiti Governorship Election In Collusion With The Nigerian Army* <http://saharareporters.com/2015/02/05/how-obanikoro-fayose-chris-uba-and-brig-general-momoh-rigged-ekiti-governorship-election> Accessed February 15, 2015.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Okoro E. *Militarising Elections in Nigeria* <http://dailyindependentnig.com/2014/06/militarising-elections-nigeria/> Accessed February 20, 2015.

Okoro, E. *Militarising Elections in Nigeria*. <http://dailyindependentnig.com/2014/06/militarising-elections-nigeria/> Accessed December 20, 2015.

Nasiru S. *10 years of democracy: Is Nigeria making headway?* <http://ngex.com/news/public/print.php?section=article&ArticleID=1298> May 21, 2009. Accessed February 20, 2014.

Thompson L.A. op. cit. p. 6.

Ibid p. 7.