

## DYNAMICS AND CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY AND MASS POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA: A DISCOURSE USING AMINU KANO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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### **Abstract**

*The study analyses how Aminu Kano's political philosophy relates to Nigeria's mass poverty reduction and democratic practices. In order to achieve the greatest happiness for the largest number of people, societies can now follow the road provided out by Kano's philosophical views. Through the use of descriptive analysis and data produced from secondary sources, it was realized that the ruling class's version of "democracy" in Nigeria did not seem to improve the wellbeing of the general populace. The study discovered that, incessant labour strikes in crucial industries like health and education, social welfare institutions, the health care system, and education have all continued to deteriorate, poverty has only gotten worse, unemployment is rising, and corruption is rife. The study's conclude, these are the reasons why Nigeria's political system does not substantially embody Kano's conception of democratic humanism. It recommend that focus be given to the effective and efficient use of human and mineral resources through the implementation of a system that guarantees resource allocation equity, raises the standard of living for the majority, and defends the rights of the vast majority. The rule of law ought to be upheld since it would, in most cases, guarantee an efficient form of government.*

**Keywords:** Africa, Aminu Kano, Democracy, Poverty, Governance

### **Introduction**

Scholars with backgrounds mostly in social sciences have been interested in the prevalence of poverty in developing nations in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Poverty is a multifaceted problem. The World Development Report (WorldBank, 2001) enumerates the deficiency of opportunity, empowerment, and security as the three main components of poverty. The impoverished majority continue to have few opportunities, which renders them essentially passive in society. Their lack of security leaves them open to illnesses, violence, and other problems, and their lack of empowerment restricts their options in practically every area of their lives.

Democracy is a form of government that encourages citizens to have a sense of loyalty to the state's programs and policies and places the people at the center of power (Ake, 2000). It is widely accepted that a nation's government structure can have a significant impact on improving and elevating the general well-being of its citizens or making the vast majority of them even more miserable.

There is no question about the theoretical connection between democracy and progress. In establishing this connection, Osuntokun (2002) contended that there is an inherent connection between the political freedom that democracy may bring about and the freedom from poverty, unemployment, hunger, and illiteracy that arises from socioeconomic progress. Because of this connection, democratic governance has become the most valued and preferred democratic value and is presently embraced by the majority of sensible people worldwide.

It's possible that the relationship between democracy and widespread poverty reduction made it necessary for successive democratic administrations in Nigeria, both at the federal and state levels, to introduce a

number of programs aimed at reducing or eliminating poverty. For example, in 1999, the democratic era under Obasanjo created the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), which was later renamed the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). Under the same administration, three new strategies were introduced in 2003: the federal National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the state-level State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS), and the local government-level Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS). With the goal of ending poverty, President Yar'adua's short administration unveiled the Seven Point Agenda. The NDE, NAPEP, NEEDS, and Millennium Development Goals are just a few of the outdated initiatives that President Goodluck Jonathan's administration kept in place. It also just introduced Youth Enterprise with Innovation "You Win" and maybe SURE-P, among other initiatives.

In 1999, the UN Human Poverty Index listed Nigeria as one of the 25 poorest countries in the world, despite all of these. The percentage of people living in poverty was 54.4% in 2004, and it rose alarmingly to 95.0% in 2010 after that. 68.7 million people, out of an estimated 126.3 million people, lived in poverty as of 2004. By 2006, that number had increased to almost 80 million people (NBS HNLSS, 2010 & Ali, 2006). Taking into account that Nigeria has earned over \$300 billion in oil and gas since gaining independence, this scenario is extremely unfortunate (Ali, 2006).

The nation suffers from widespread unemployment, insecurity, restlessness, and most crucially, uncertainty about the future, in addition to enormous poverty. Based on the aforementioned, it seems that the ruling class's version of "democracy" in Nigeria does not improve the lot of the general populace. The failure of democracy as it is currently implemented in the nation to enhance institutions, structures, and the general welfare of the majority of its residents is now a real source of concern. The paper looks at Nigerian democracy and poverty alleviation given this backdrop.

Aminu Kano is portrayed in his writings as both a radical reformist and a philosopher. His creative ability and astute understanding of social reality are evident in his literary works. Malam had been preoccupied with the elimination of social evils in his community back then, including depravity and the detrimental effects of colonialism, such as cinemas and intoxication, as well as ignorance, sloth, begging, prostitution, injustice, bribery, corruption, poverty, diseases, and inflation. He addressed these topics in poems like *Wakar Zamani* and *Wakar Yanci Sawaba*. He was a well-respected politician, reformer, and educator from Nigeria. He put in a lot of effort to promote women's emancipation, democracy, and free expression. He was the leader of an Islamic movement in the country's north that opposed British administration in the 1940s. Abba (1993). The social and political theories of Mallam Aminu Kano are a meager attempt to bridge the information gap about the great statesman, scholar, and ideology who dominated Northern Nigeria's social and political scene and the nation at large during his era.

Severe and pervasive poverty is a reality in Nigeria. It is a reality that shows a dearth of basic utilities, clothing, food, education, and a stable democratic government. People who are really impoverished are so lacking in the bare needs, one may wonder how they make ends meet. Poverty in Nigeria has a number of repercussions and shortcomings. Poor health is a major consequence of poverty, as evidenced by Nigeria's short life expectancy and high infant mortality rate. Because they lack access to basic healthcare facilities and qualified medical professionals, Nigeria's poor are plagued by a number of health problems. Because most kids don't get the chance to get immunized, some of them end up with specific physical deformities. They no longer prioritize their health, and since they have few or no options, they make do with whatever is given to them, whether or not it is healthy. Furthermore, a weak democratic system, fragile institutions, and a poor political culture are some of the terrible consequences of poverty in democracies. The implication of these circumstances is that Nigeria's democracy may not survive. Against this context, the study used Aminu Kano's political philosophy to highlight the threat that poverty poses to Nigerian democracy and the ways in which democratic practices exacerbate poverty.

### **Structures of Biographical and Social Experience**

Aminu Kano was born in 1920 into the family of Mallam Yusuf, a mufti at the Alkali court in Kano and an Islamic scholar belonging to the erudite Gyanawa Fulani tribe. From 1930 till 1937, he attended Kano Middle School and Sheuchi Primary School. In 1937, he enrolled at Kaduna College (now Barewa College, formerly Katsina College). In 1942, he started teaching at the Bauchi Training College after receiving his teaching credential. He was given the opportunity to study with Nigeria's first and only prime minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, at the University of London's Institute of Education in September 1946, sharing one of seven scholarships. Rabi'u (1988). Kano established the Northern Teachers Association (NTA) in March 1948 after his return from England. This was the North's first regional organization to achieve success. Because of his anti-colonial views and reformist ideas, he was concerned about getting into trouble with the authorities, so he chose to include conservatives like Shettima Ajiram and Tafawa Balewa in the organization's leadership (Ajiram served as the organization's first president and Tafawa Balewa as its first vice president). Kano served as the group's general secretary. Kano sought to form an organization that would be independent of any potential southern dominance, despite the fact that the Nigerian Union of Teachers already existed in the southern part of the nation. But with Kano's departure, the northern faction finally merged with the southern union. Omoruyi (1991).

**Anti-Colonial-Campaigning:** Kano and the colonial authority frequently disagreed. He criticized it for abusing taxpayers and using Nigeria to further Britain's interests. Because of his adamant opposition, the British had to come up with several strategies to put an end to him. Offering a scholarship to study in England was one such strategy. Sadly for them, he brought stronger anti-colonial feelings with him when he returned to Nigeria. Kano considered the colonial authority's attempts to buy him off with various positions, such as editor of a newspaper and government financial accountant, as a ruse. He engaged in a variety of political and educational activities outside of his assigned teaching responsibilities at the Teaching College in Bauchi, expanding his educational horizons and allowing him to freely discuss political topics. When his father, Yusufu, was not appointed Chief Alkali of Kano, he vented his frustrations with British control in his first book, *Kano, Under the Hammer of the Native Administration*. He started writing for a couple of the nation's newspapers and periodicals around this time. In addition to being Tafawa Balewa's fellow member of the Bauchi General Improvement Union, he served as secretary of the Bauchi Discussion Circle, an organization whose operations were later curtailed due to Kano's criticism of British indirect authority. Feinstein (1987).

He was assigned to be the headmaster of the Teacher Training Center in Maru, Sokoto in 1949. This center is currently the College of Education in Maru, Zamfara State. He swiftly declined the British offer to become a Hausa lecturer at the University of Oxford after they realized he had intensified his anti-colonial protests. He also founded an association to raise the standard of northern Koranic schools during this time. Ejifor (year 2002).

**Pre-Independence-and-First-Republic:** Aminu traveled to Sokoto after the British government's pressure compelled him to resign from his position as a teacher in November 1950. He joined Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa, a cultural organization in Northern Nigeria, while he was living in Sokoto. This organization later changed its name to the Northern People's Congress (NPC) in reaction to the 1951 Macpherson Constitution. During the First Republic, the NPC went on to take the lead as the main political party in Northern Nigeria. Nonetheless, he spearheaded the formation of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) that year with a splinter group of young radicals from Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa. Dambatta (1993).

However, to fill the void in political radicalism in the area, a new progressive union founded by Aminu Kano and made up of progressive-leaning educators and some radical intellectuals like Magaji Dambatta, Abba Maikwaru, and Bello Ijumu (a Yoruba) arose. The members were united by their disapproval of the native administration's management approach in Northern Nigeria. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the NEPU, two rival political organizations in the North, were created in the 1950s. Sule (in 2001). NEPU ran in the 1951 Kano primary elections and had some degree of success. But once the Northern People's Congress was established, Kano faced many difficult obstacles, particularly in the two

federal elections. Aminu lost to Maitama Sule in the federal House of Representatives in 1954, and he was not able to secure enough votes in 1956 to be elected to the Northern Regional Assembly. Nonetheless, he managed to secure a significant regional seat in the 1959 legislative election. As a candidate for the NEPU, which was already allied with Nnamdi Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC – eventually the National Council of Nigerian Citizens), he won the federal seat for Kano East. In the federal House of Representatives, he held the position of deputy chief whip. Kano's friendly relationships with Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the 1959 prime minister, and the other NPC luminaries allowed him to accept positions of national importance in spite of opposition from the local populace. He served as one of Nigeria's delegates to the UN, for instance, upon the country's independence in 1960. The First Republic was marred by turmoil, which on January 15, 1966, resulted in a military coup. Aminu Kano later held the position of Federal Commissioner for Health in General Yakubu Gowon's military administration. Dambatta (1993).

**Second-Republic:** In September 1978, the military government repealed its twelve-year ban on political parties. The Nigerian People's Party, the Unity Party of Nigeria (headed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo), the Great Nigeria People's Party, the National Party of Nigeria, and the People's Redemption Party were the five newly created groups that surfaced in the next months. The leaders of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) were Edward Ikem Okeke, Sam Ikoku, and Kano. Conceived as the Second Republic version of NEPU, the party leaned toward a populist framework and was supported by well-known labor leaders like Michael Imoudu. Aminu Kano was its presidential candidate in 1979, and he selected Bola Ogunboh, a woman, to be his running mate for vice president. Despite his defeat, the party secured two governorships. (1993); Dambatta; (2002) Ejifor.

In Northern Nigeria, Mallam Aminu Kano is a well-respected politician. He stood for women's emancipation, democracy, and free expression. In Kano, he is also honored with the naming of an airport, a college, and a significant roadway. The Bayero University Kano Center for Democratic Research and Training now occupies the house where he was born, raised, and buried.

## **Conceptualization of Democracy, Poverty and Development**

### **Democracy**

Three concepts have been used to conceive democracy as a political concept: democracy as a process, a value, and a practice. Democracy is regarded as a moral imperative, or a fundamental human need that is consequently a political demand of all people who cherish freedom. This imperative is viewed as essentially the ongoing human desire for freedom and a better social and political structure that is more equal and more humane. It is maintained that democracy is a social process that is always working to ensure that everyone has equal access to fundamental human rights and civil liberties, and that it is never flawless. It is noted that these freedoms include the following: the unalienable right to self-determination of people; freedom of religion, assembly, expression, press, and association; and the fundamental rights of every human being to life and security. Ultimately, democracy is defined as a certain way of organizing and using power in conformity with certain standards and ideals. It is argued that among these principles are the following: the notion that the people are the source of legitimate power or authority; the idea of the rule of law; the idea that citizens elect their leaders and hold them accountable; the right of citizens to engage in the governance of their country through free, transparent, and democratic elections; and the right of the people to overthrow a government that no longer serves their interests or to stage revolutions (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1997).

Democracy, according to Rousseau, is the people's government acting in accordance with their collective will. According to Rousseau, in order to fulfill the general will of the populace, the state must grant liberty under the law and establish a public education system that instills in kids a sense of individuality limited to their relationship with the state (Sabine and Thorson, 1973).

Hood (2004) defined democratic centralism as the rule of the peasantry, which subjugates the minority to the majority by means of a robust party apparatus that transfers decision-making authority to higher party organizations. Lenin contends that under this democratic centralism, the populace will not tolerate criticism,

dissent, or demands for individual liberty. They may hold seemingly different opinions about democracy, yet they all agree on a few fundamental ideas. These include, among other things, the supremacy of the law, the equality of all citizens before the law, individual freedom, the popular will, the fair distribution of resources within society, and equal opportunity for all individuals. Democracy is an administrative form of governance in which the people maintain their political sovereignty, which they then actively exercise. Continuing from his definition, Abba (2006) asserts that the ability to act, rather than majority rule, was the original meaning of democracy. In the Nigerian context of democracy and sustainable national development, this is illuminating. This is due to an apparent Nigerian ideology that holds that majority rule translates to democracy. Nonetheless, a fundamental tenet of democracy is that the well-being of its constituents must be ensured. However, studies conducted in Nigeria (Jega, Wakili, & Ahmad, 2002) have shown that democracy in that country disregards the wellbeing of its people. Therefore, it will be challenging to sell any form of governance as democracy if it cannot ensure the wellbeing of its constituents. A more appropriate term for such a regime would be ceremonial democracy. Nonetheless, it seems as though the foundations of African democracy clearly demonstrate the characteristics of democratic capitalism, also referred to as capitalist democracy.

In the context of this research, democracy is defined as a form of government established by the people that respects the principles of the social contract between the state and the people, guarantees equal opportunity and resource distribution to all of its citizens, and operates under the rule of law.

### **Poverty**

Poverty is a multifaceted, all-encompassing concept that refers to deficiencies, lacks, or apparent or concealed inadequacies in particular spheres of human existence. There are several types of poverty, including material and financial poverty, moral and physical poverty, and social and mental poverty. One type of financial poverty is when there is not enough money to cover one's fundamental necessities on a daily basis. The scarcity of the tangible goods needed to make life comfortable is the main cause of material poverty (Nyong, 2004). A condition of moral vacuity is expressed by moral poverty, a condition of maladaptive behavior in which a guy finds it difficult to act morally. Physical poverty highlights a person's inability to perform tasks in the manner in which they would have preferred. Physical poverty highlights a person's inability to perform tasks in the manner in which they would have preferred. A condition of mental impairment is mental poverty. In this condition, a man is unable to respond or be stimulated appropriately to changes in his surroundings. Financial and material poverty is the only type of poverty that has trapped and held Nigerians captive among all the others mentioned above (Anyanwu, 1997).

According to Onibokun and Kumuyi (2006), living in poverty is defined as consuming few calories, having limited access to health care and education, and being unable to access a variety of housing options and social amenities. The definition of poverty includes degrading reliance, a condition of deprivation, the absence of fundamental necessities, the incapacity to meet basic demands for human survival, and insufficient satisfaction of basic needs.

Inductively, the World Bank (2000) defined poverty as the absence of necessities for material well-being, including food, but also assets, shelter, and land. Put another way, poverty is the absence of certain resources, which results in physical hardship and hunger. These essential resources or elements include things like purchasing and consumption power, accessibility to and availability of high-quality education, health care provision, fundamental infrastructures, and welfare amenities. In this sense, mass poverty results when a significant section of the populace in any nation lacks adequate access to these resources.

Poverty can be defined as a situation in which an individual's resources are in conflict with the demands and circumstances of their surroundings. The dreadful state of being unable to support at least a minimal standard of good life is known as poverty. It's a multifaceted illness that often prevents people from taking advantage of socioeconomic chances. Poverty is a multifaceted and intricate phenomena that extends beyond the state of material scarcity. It includes limited or nonexistent opportunities for personal development and self-realization, as well as social injustice, insecurity, illiteracy, bad health, and so forth.

### **Absolute Poverty**

The absence of a person's or a household's basic physical needs for survival is referred to as absolute poverty, and it is so severe that the affected individuals are unable to lead lives deserving of human dignity. Absolute poverty is when a person's physical or sociocultural needs interfere with their ability to live their life. (Adewoye, 1996). Put another way, absolute poverty is the state in which an individual or a group of individuals cannot meet even the most basic needs for human survival, such as those for food, clothes, shelter, health, transportation, education, and leisure. In other words, someone is living below the poverty threshold. In the developing world, absolute poverty is a familiar sight because of disparities in the allocation of resources and access to political and economic power. The high degree of corruption, the mishandling of public funds, the spread of HIV/AIDS and other linked diseases, and population growth all worsen this situation. Absolute poverty used to be more pitiful in rural villages where agriculture was the main industry; but, these days, the urban center shares some of this. In developing societies, a significant section of the labor force is being silently destroyed by absolute poverty. For instance, there are numerous reasons why extreme poverty exists in sub-Saharan Africa, the most important being military control, neocolonialism, and natural and man-made calamities. They were held accountable for the exploitation, waste, and devastation of the continent's natural and human resources. One question that immediately springs to me is: How have African leaders responded to the problem of extreme poverty on the continent since colonialism and military control have crumbled? This attempt brought us to the next category of poverty.

### **Relative Poverty**

The state of having fewer resources or income than others in a society, a country, or when compared to global norms is known as relative poverty. Relative poverty only indicates that some economic subjects are disadvantaged to an undesirable degree as a result of the distribution mechanisms in a society; it does not imply that the individuals involved are incapable of leading lives deserving of human dignity. Thus, a comparative state of hardship among people or groups is called relative poverty. The impoverished are kept in a condition of destitution by a vicious cycle (Central Bank of Nigeria, 1999:40).

Relative poverty is the state in which a person can hardly meet their most basic requirements and has so little resources that they are unable to participate fully in society. The socially and politically marginalized groups are the human categories found within these strata. Their capacity to meet certain necessities does not necessarily imply that they are in a position of economic or social power. The adoption of the colonizer's language was a component of the framework of colonial control, but in the post-colonial era, it has evolved into a tool of both disempowerment and domination, according to Ake (1994) in his democratization of disempowerment thesis. "He further argued that every state and political system has its own grammar of politics; political contestation and competition, as well as navigating the political minefields, meaning-sharing and value-appropriation all require mastery of this grammar" (Ake, 1994). The political, inherited, disarticulated structures that have been in place since independence and that support unequal relationships. if there is disagreement among academics on consensus. The majority of urban residents, especially those from the working class who have received a Western education, are not financially better off than firms that are only somewhat skilled or completely illiterate. Working-class and unemployed people are both victims of the same situation: poverty has gnawed so deeply into society's fabric that racial, ethnic, and religious attachments, as well as innate loyalty, have effectively made it impossible to escape. The "god fatherism" or "good connection" theory paints a clear picture of this situation. Nobody in Nigeria today can claim that the position they now hold was earned via merit. It's clear that the earth has been padded by someone. Profitably employed in both the public and private sectors, entrance to universities is now determined on your connections or acquaintances. Despite their merits, the unconnected fade away in this competition between "good connection or god fatherism."

### **Subjective Poverty**

The term "subjective poverty" describes how someone or a group feels about their financial situation. Put differently, it refers to how the general public views poverty. Since those who are considered impoverished

by today's standards will likely perceive and experience themselves as impoverished, subjective and relative poverty are intimately related (Abdullahi, 1993:6).

iv. Poverty, Both Urban and Rural The term "urban poverty" describes the conditions seen in urban slums and ghettos, which are typically marked by poor welfare services, overcrowding in housing, low levels of education, and limited financial resources. Conversely, rural poverty is defined by inadequate material circumstances, a high percentage of illiteracy, a lack of infrastructure, unemployment, and so forth (Abdullahi, 1993:6).

Examining the ideas of poverty line, incidence of poverty, and poverty gap is equally crucial in order to establish a wide range of measurements for the study of the research subject. First of all, a poverty line is a metric used to distinguish between the impoverished and the non-poor, whereas the incidence of poverty is the percentage of a population whose consumption is below the poverty line in that particular population. The difference between the typical poor person's income and the poverty line, on the other hand, is known as the poverty gap. It is the degree to which the impoverished's income falls below the federal poverty threshold.

### **Development**

As to Seers (1971), the answers to the following queries ought to reveal whether or not progress is taking place: what is the status of poverty? What is the state of unemployment? What is the state of inequality? In a similar vein, Todaro (1979) proposed three dimensions of development.

- (a) Improving people's standard of life by using appropriate economic processes to increase their income and food, healthcare, and educational consumption levels.
- (b) Creating social, political, and economic structures and institutions that uphold and advance human dignity and respect in order to foster the development of peoples' sense of self-worth.
- (c) Expanding people's freedom of choice by offering a wider range of options, such as a greater selection of goods and services for consumers.

Academics studying African literatures claim that, among other things, corruption, underdevelopment, poor leadership, a lack of political cleanliness, and economic dependency are the hallmarks of African politics. It has also been argued that there is some cultural deterioration in Africa. It's common knowledge that when it comes to economic prosperity, Africa is lagging behind the rest of the world. Africa's contribution to this drop is discouraging, despite the fact that worldwide poverty is reducing as a result of the world's economies growing quickly in China, India, and other countries. In fact, absolute poverty is getting worse in many African countries (Sachs, 2005).

The African desire for development was met with only patchy success for more than half a century. The majority of African nations are in worse shape than they were a generation ago; widespread issues with health and nutrition, crumbling infrastructure, coups, ethnic and religious conflict, corruption, poverty, unemployment, and disease are the hallmarks of the third world (Ibrahim and Cheri, 2013). The study focuses on political instability as well as other linked crises like terrorism, inadequate democratic governance, poverty, and corruption.

### **Theoretical Issues**

Any academic endeavor of this size is only as good as the theoretical framework that best explains the study's position. To appropriately synthesize the problems of poverty and the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, this discussion, however, drew on Marxist perspectives.

Marxist philosophy's two main proponents are Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel. German-born Marx's theory emerged during the industrial revolution of the 17th century, when capitalism was attempting to take over the world. Three of Marx's excellent books *Das Kapital*, *Philosophy of Poverty*, and *Communist Manifesto* all contain elements of his philosophy. Marx's theory was a radical reaction against capitalism, which he saw as exploitative and inimical to the interests of the general populace. Marxist theory's core tenet, however, is that materialism and economy are what make humans possible. He went on to say that the superstructure of politics, ideas, thinking, religion, and so on is dependent on the substructure of the economy, which is

extremely important. Marx argues that a person "must eat before he thinks of politics, religious, ideas, etc." in a cumulative manner.

Marxist theory implied that society should be viewed through the lens of class relations, which essentially provides an explanation for the social stratification that characterizes human civilization. Marx believed that there were two classes in every human society: the proletariat and the capitalists. However, it becomes clear that dialectical materialism is the reason behind the hostile relationship that exists between the two opposing classes. As a result, the proletariat, or "Talakawas," are not happy with the status quo and are working to overthrow the bourgeois hegemony, or "Attajirai." Conversely, the bourgeois capitalists are putting in a great deal of effort to keep things as they are because the system benefits them and gives them an edge over the mass of those who do not (Marx, 1970).

Marxist theories of poverty emphasize separating the impoverished from other working-class people less than most other theories do. Ralph Miliband (1974) thinks of them as just the most disadvantaged segment of the working class, not as a distinct category. Going a step further, Westerganard and Resler (1976) contend that focusing on the unique disadvantages faced by the poor draws attention away from the larger system of inequality within which poverty is situated. Marxists would argue that Townsend did not go far enough in highlighting these larger institutions.

The primary fact is that the poor are an essential component of the working class—its most disadvantaged and impoverished layer, according to Miliband (1974: 21). They must be understood as part of a continuum, all the more so given that a large number of workers who are not considered "deprived" in the official sense are always at risk of falling into the category of the deprived and that they yet experience many of the same disadvantages as those who are. Poverty is a class issue, intimately associated with a broader context of class disparity.

Marxists believed that the reason why poverty exists in a capitalist society is because the ruling class gains from it. Because it advances the interests of those who control the means of production, poverty persists. They are able to maximize their earnings while upholding the capitalist system. The only property owned by members of the subject class is their labor, which they sell on the open market for compensation. In every capitalist society, the state is frequently viewed as an instrument of exploitation and works to safeguard the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Given the arguments above, it is clear that poverty and life in general have a connection that transcends politics and is the antithesis of democratic processes in any human society. Marxists believe that politics is a reflection of the economic system and vice versa. This is demonstrated in the majority of Third World democracies, particularly Nigeria, where the wealthy and powerful tend to hold political office and the fortunate poor who do so become wealthy and eventually join the bourgeois class.

### **The Social and Political Thoughts of Malam Aminu Kano Aminu Kano's Political Thoughts on Reformist-Ideas**

In order to oppose the Native Northern government's what he perceived to be dictatorial and feudalistic policies, Kano co-founded the Northern Elements Progressive Union. He was particularly critical of the Fulani emirs and other members of the ruling class. His background contributed to the strength of his platform: his father was an Alkali in Kano who sprung from a family of Islamic clerics; as such, he had extensive knowledge of Islamic concepts of equality, which he effectively employed in his political campaigns. His statement was endorsed by a large number of migrant small traders and talakawas (commoners) in the north. Afterwards, a few of the craftsmen worked at NEPU's offices. Additionally, he tried to use politics to establish social equality in northern Nigeria. Dambatta (1993).

Throughout the pre- and post-colonial eras in Northern Nigeria, there existed a socioeconomic divide where the aristocrats and feudal class oppressed and exploited the talakawas. The common people were obliged to work as free laborers by cultivating land controlled by the feudal class and to pay a variety of excessive taxes. Kano urged the populace to oppose oppression and struggle for recognition as free and deserving human beings. When the talakawas flocked to NEPU, the traditional leaders and local government found the party's ideologies particularly unsettling. Thousands of NEPU members and

sympathizers were tortured, sent into exile, and imprisoned without charge or trial as a result of the party's demand for the emancipation of the talakawas. A well-known example of a NEPU member being executed without a trial was Mallam Audu Angale, who was executed on a cross and left to die in public after it was claimed that he had abused the feudal lords' fathers. The party was Nigeria's first truly widespread movement in the country's contemporary history. Omoruyi (1991).

Kano's primary goal in entering politics was to free the talakawas; he did not do it in order to amass fortune. Until the end of his life, he battled for everyone's freedom, equality, and decency. Kano left behind an eleven-year-old daughter and just N14 in his bank account when he passed away. Serving the people was what he had done all of his life. Among the many victories he helped bring about was the elimination of the requirement for unpaid labor on any feudal land. The official tax known as asharaji and the cattle tax known as jangali were eliminated. Political positions were made available to everyone, and children of talakawas were granted access to education at any level they chose. Previously, only the aristocracy and feudal class had these rights. Yahya (1989). Kano urged citizens in Northern Nigeria to be aware of their rights and to take an active part in the country's democratic process. They had freedom of speech and expression, as they had been intended in the past.

The division of parties based on ethnicity was another of his key concepts. His base of support, which consisted primarily of men and women who were migrants looking for commercial opportunities and who had little in common with the host towns' ethnic backgrounds, was receptive to this idea. Moreover, he advocated for a fiscal framework that heavily taxed the wealthy in the area and was one of the few prominent Nigerian politicians who backed women's equality. Rabi (1988).

#### **Aminu Kano's Political Thoughts on Women**

Initially, it is essential to study, in brief, about the status of women's political engagement in the years immediately before Mallam Aminu Kano's entry into active politics in 1950 in order to understand and appreciate Aminu Kano's ideas and thoughts toward womenfolk. Regarding women specifically, it is documented that they were denied all political rights. In actuality, the political field was purposefully narrowed to favor men and the Native Authority candidates in particular. Women were denied the right to vote, let alone the ability to run for office in any of the twelve provinces that made up the Northern region at the time, so they were all deprived of their right to vote. In actuality, male candidates and properly paid taxes were requirements of the electoral statute in effect at the time. Thus, politics was intended to be the sole domain of men, just like other socioeconomic endeavors. Mallam Aminu Kano and the NEPU first emerged on the political scene in the Northern Region during this period, and they fought to alter the status quo. Rabi (1988).

In his essay on the issues with girls' education in Kano, which he submitted to University College, London, Aminu Kano revealed his views on women. Aminu outlined his views on women in this essay and provided evidence for the belief that education is the most effective means of bringing about women's independence. Mallam provided some drastic solutions to the issues after identifying the main causes of the barriers to female education in the Muslim Emirate of Kano, northern Nigeria. For instance, he suggested legislation that would require female education and forbid early marriages. He recommended that Kano grant scholarships each year to a minimum of five women and three men (Yahya, 1989). He demanded the creation of a Public Enlightenment Department, which would put pressure on the well-educated elite to teach reading and writing to their spouses, sisters, and other female relatives. This is the story of how and where Mallam Aminu Kano initiated the Northern women's independence movement. Put another way, Mallam saw the value of education early in his political career and used it to further his cause of women's political, social, and economic empowerment in the nation. As a result, Mallam Aminu combined his fight for the liberation of Nigeria, the democratization of the Native Authority system, the right to direct elections, and the emancipation of the Talakawa with the fight for women's freedom and rights. His ideas and knowledge regarding gender equality were primarily derived from Islam and the historical experiences of the Muslim world. Sule (in 2001).

Following his resignation from his teaching position in 1950, Malam Aminu Kano entered politics and initiated the women's emancipation movement, founding the NEPU women's wing in 1952 under the late Hajiya Gambo Sawaba as its head (Shawulu, 1980). The NEPU women's wing's primary goal was to push for women's suffrage in the North (Shawulu, 1980). Back then, advocating for this was like to starting a revolution. Aminu Kano and his supporters moved with extreme caution and subtlety, knowing exactly what they intended.

Initially, Aminu Kano's fight for women's voting rights began with a call for electoral reform that would grant voting rights to all adults, male or female, rather than just those who paid taxes, which excluded women because they do not pay taxes in the North (Paden, 1973).

The NPC members who oppose Aminu fiercely opposed this initiative. They obstructed the fulfillment of his goal by using every tool at their disposal, including religious sermons. Moreover, Aminu Kano and his party were depicted as opponents of the Islamic concept of purdah, or private prayer, and as such, they were working to weaken the institution of marriage by pushing for women to cast ballots in their married homes.

Malam Aminu Kano persisted in voicing his thoughts, ideas, and opinions regarding women's equality and political rights in spite of everything. He positioned people who disagreed with him on the issue and exposed the fallacy of the arguments using his extensive understanding of Islam.

Once more, Aminu Kano questioned his detractors at the time: if they were against women being able to vote due to religious beliefs, then why didn't they also oppose women being able to attend rituals, go to marketplaces, carry water and firewood, etc.?

Second, despite the fierce criticism of his views on women, Aminu Kano persisted in his fight, only stepping up his efforts to grant women's rights to the political arena in the 1950s and 1960s. His fight was now to be elected to every office in the nation, in addition to just being allowed to vote. As he continued to broaden his demands for women's independence and rights, the resistance to his principles grew (Kano, 1973).

Furthermore, Aminu Kano continued to advocate for women's equality and the need to empower them at practically every occasion he received to give public remarks, even after the First Republic fell and party politics were forbidden. He went on to counsel males to make every effort to ensure that their wives and daughters have access to education.

After women in northern Nigeria were granted the right to vote during Nigeria's return to democratic governance in the late 1970s, Aminu Kano's protracted fight for women's political rights in the North was deemed a great accomplishment. As Aminu Kano himself admitted to Alan Feinstein in a private correspondence, it was a revolution (Jega, 2002). As a result, starting with the 1979 elections, a significant number of Northern women left their houses to cast ballots. In fact, a few of them, including Hajiya Marjanatu from Katsina and Hajiya Kande Balarabe from Kano, ran for office and were elected.

### **Aminu Kano's Political Thoughts on Democratic Humanism**

Malam Aminu Kano has a straightforward and simple definition of "humanism." Its purpose is to instill a sense of social justice in political thought. It is imperative to prevent anything that diverts or distracts from the work of fully mobilizing the populace toward the predetermined goals.

Sincere human service does not tolerate prejudice based on racial or skin-color differences. In the long run, "Democratic Humanism" has the power to bring people together in the pursuit of social and economic independence, political liberation, and constructive progress.

It is "democratic" in that it promotes participation from individuals. Because it releases people from the degrading bonds of social degradation, political oppression, and economic exploitation, it is considered "humanist." However, how will these goals be achieved? In what way will it be applied in the real world in Nigerian society? In what ways may the ideal of an equal society be realized through the application of the principles of "democratic humanism"? Madame Aminu Kano offers the solution:

Socialist goals in Nigeria must be fully accepted by the populace, i.e., that there can only be one party system since any other would allow leeway for subversive forces to operate both inside and outside the

country. The recent event in Chile is a reality that needs to be considered. It is an enormous undertaking to construct a one-party state in Nigeria. But as evidenced by Third World events in comparison with the European Economic Community, no developing nation can defeat capitalism with capitalism. Socialism is the only other option. The issues exist, and it's challenging to locate solutions. However, they might be nearby (Aminu Kano, 1973, p. 74).

Examining the notion of "democratic humanism" critically will show that it is the culmination of all the goals and aspirations of progressive movements for political, social, and economic change from the beginning of time to the present. A person cannot be a good, honest, and honorable member of any society if they do not wish for others to have the same good life that they have. It is imperative that the fight to transform Nigerian society for the sake of a better future be carried out on a national level. This is only attainable by the combined will of the people, strengthened by the power of God alone.

Malam Aminu Kano's previously mentioned beliefs essentially indicate that a vanguard state must be established. But the real query is: "Is it appropriate to refer to a vanguard state as a democratic state?" A vanguard state cannot be referred to as democratic if democracy is understood in the western liberal sense as merely a system of selecting and approving governments. Even while a vanguard state may represent the will of its citizens, that does not mean that its citizens choose it or that it is their government. The main justification for vanguard leadership is the belief that most people are too dumb and illiterate to govern themselves. Consequently, they cannot be trusted with immediate power because they are too corrupted and too ingrained in the morals and values of the previous horrible society.

To refer to a vanguard state as democratic is to emphasize goals over methods. It is to elevate the accomplishment of goals (democratic dividends) that the majority of people support and prioritize over the interests of the individual to the standard of democracy. This is the traditional, non-liberal understanding of democracy, of course. Theoretical thoughts of emerging country leaders bear considerable similarities to Rousseau, the fundamental formulator of this kind of democratic theory. This coincidence might be explained by the nature of the issues facing developing nations. Similar to Rousseau, they conclude that moral decay, "dehumanization," and "loss" of freedom within the structures of political and economic inequity are the root causes of social evils. Like him, they think that only the collective will of humanity can bring back full freedom for man (Benn and Peter, 1964). Restoring equality would help restore humanity, freedom, and dignity that have been robbed from the people via deceit or force. This calls for a political, economic, moral, and affirmation of the undifferentiated people's will as the only acceptable source of political power, all at once.

It is reasonable, then, to sum up democratic thought as the belief of those who hold that since men are equal in certain areas, they ought to be equal in all areas. According to the constitution, the majority rules, and in terms of society, the underprivileged rule. However, the proponents of this ideology are ignorant of the limits faced by the impoverished, who are deemed unfit to govern due to their lack of resources and intellectual capacity. Macpherson (1966). Malam Aminu Kano, for instance, didn't hesitate to caution that the Nigerian People's Party (NEPU) would need to employ the services of the exact native rulers they decry. This is due to the fact that there are not enough Talakawa people to manage the national or local government apparatus. So what is the democratic solution to this dilemma? How can the underprivileged take an active part in democracy? Because democracy is a state of civilized society rather than a state of nature. Culture, education, and social habituation are components of civilization.

These take time to acquire. This explanation rejects the ridiculous claim that individuals shouldn't be granted access to democratic institutions until they are competent to use them. This claim is like to telling someone they can't go to the stream until they can swim. The argument for democracy is based on the idea that people can only learn how to use democratic institutions via practice, and that using them is the only way for people to acquire the virtues that democracy stands for.

### **Democracy and Development in Nigeria**

Following its independence, Nigeria embraced democracy as a form of governance, emphasizing that all people are created equal, have certain unalienable rights, and that the government's role is to protect those

rights. It also believes that the people's permission gives the government authority. The first democratic era came to an abrupt end in 1966 upon independence. Nigeria was ruled by a succession of military juntas for the majority of its history of independence, with a brief restoration occurring between 1979 to 1983. General Sani Abacha, the final military leader, passed away unexpectedly. General Abdulsalami Abubakar took over as leader and brought democracy back to the nation on May 5, 2009, when a new constitution was adopted. There was a general expectation in Nigeria that the elected civilian administration would get to work right away raising the standard of living for the populace when it became evident in 1998 that the protracted period of military dictatorship and authoritarianism was about to come to an end. The expectation among Nigerians was that the end of military control would result in a sharp decline in crime, corruption, willful human rights violations, and widespread poverty. They also anticipated that public infrastructure and institutions, which the military had abandoned in a condition of complete despair, would be restored to enable the provision of essential social services. It was anticipated that a civilian government would improve resource management for the country and result in lower rates of unemployment, insecurity, and criminal activity. Nigerians did, in fact, anticipate that the country's new civilian rulers would exercise their authority sensibly and effectively, serving the interests of the populace rather than allowing individuals in positions of political authority to amass illegal wealth (Agbese, 2005).

The literature has a lot to say on the connection between democracy and development. According to Todaro and Smith (2003), the three main goals of any society's development are to: increase the availability and distribution of necessities of life, such as food, clothing, and shelter; raise people's standard of living in addition to their income by creating more jobs and better educational opportunities; and strengthen cultural and human values, which will raise people's self-esteem both individually and as a nation. Lastly, increase the rate of economic and social choice available to individuals and nations by releasing them from poverty and dependence on one another as well as from ignorance and illnesses.

Different programs were implemented by military and civilian governments in order to achieve the aforementioned key values. The River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), Operation Feed the Nation, the Green Revolution (GR), the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), the Directorate of Foods, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRRI), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Family Support Programme (FSP), and the Family Economic and Advancement Programme (FEAP) were a few of the initiatives and programs that were started and carried out between 1960 and 1999. At the state level, various programs were also implemented to combat poverty.

The Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), created during the democratic era of Obasanjo's administration, aimed to employ 200 000 unemployed youngsters nationwide. Along with developing attitudes toward a maintenance culture in public buildings and rural and urban roads, PAP was also intended to reduce poverty. However, due to structural inefficiencies, it was phased out by 2001 and merged into the newly established National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). The Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), the Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS), the Special Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS), and the Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS) are the four programs that make up the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP).

With the establishment of the Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme, rural areas in Nigeria received special priority for the first time in the country's democratic history in an attempt to improve the dire and declining quality of life there. The Rural Energy and Power Supply (RIDS) was created to address issues with portable water, irrigation schemes to increase agricultural output in rural areas, rural transportation, and rural communication. Rural electrification, rural water development and supply, rural transportation development, and rural communication development were the primary implementation programs.

The National Poverty Eradication Programme's poor performance and accomplishments provided the federal government with the urge to develop the comprehensive and intricate National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). It was known as the Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) at the local level, and the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) at the state level. In order to address a wide range of socioeconomic and political issues in the

nation, particularly in rural areas, the program was comprehensive and detailed. It did this by implementing social charters, developing the private sector, reforming governmental institutions, and emphasizing values. A number of economic reform initiatives were presented by the late Umar Yar'Adua's administration, with very little focus on political change. "The seven point agenda" served as the framework for these reforms. This includes the production and distribution of energy, agriculture, the development of wealth, land law reforms, transportation, security, and the eradication of poverty via education. Though praiseworthy, the agenda seems to have passed away with the president.

President Goodluck Jonathan launched the Youth Enterprise with Innovation (You Win) program, the Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P) program, the most recent N-Power Program, which was started by the Buhari administration in 2016, and other old programs of its predecessor that are either dormant or obsolete.

### **Poverty and Democratic Practice in Nigeria: The Nexus**

Despite the implementation of various programs aimed at tackling the enduring issue of extreme poverty in the nation, notable progress has not been made, particularly in the local arena, where the majority of the rural populace continues to live in poverty and experience social, political, and economic marginalization. The figures that are now available indicate that the significant and successful policy execution of poverty alleviation does not support the enormous resources put in the policy.

Africa has a very real poverty rate, and the average African's quality of living has steadily declined over time. Because of how widespread it is, many now consider it to be a normal part of life. One could argue that the complicated and multifaceted challenge of poverty in Africa is equivalent to the continent's overall problems. The worst aspect of the situation is that "poverty for majority and wealth for minority"—that is, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. As previously said, there are many other factors that contribute to poverty in Africa, including mismanagement, political corruption, illiteracy, crime, a weak economy, veiled religious beliefs, unequal resource allocation, etc. Numerous studies have actually revealed the nature and scope of poverty in Africa. For instance, Edoh (2003) shows how drastically Nigerians' per capita income fell from a high of almost \$1,280 in 1980 to a low of \$1 in 1995. Anyanwu (1997) and Nyong (2004), for example, found that Nigeria's per capita income in 1990 was \$240, far less than the sub-Saharan African average of nearly \$500. Nigeria's number was significantly lower than those of Botswana (\$3210), Mauritius (\$3,710), Egypt (\$1,080), Cote d'Ivoire (\$6600), South Africa (\$3,500), and Egypt (\$1,080). Akpa (2001)

Two decades later, however, disappointments, frustrations, desperation, and hopelessness are revealed on the score card of the trend in the institutionalization of the fundamentals of democracy in Africa. In fact, there are many unsolved doubts about the promised developmental efficacy of democracy given the material realities of people in most of Africa. In Nigeria, for instance, as at 1999 (1999 data) Human Development report indicates thus:

- ❖ Adult Literacy-44%
- ❖ Percentage of people living in poverty-49% as against 43% in 1985
- ❖ Percentage of population without access to safe portable water-60%
- ❖ Percentage of population without access to basic health facilities-49% (Obasanjo, 1999, p.14-15).

A decade after, the picture has not changed any much better. If anything, the picture appears very discouraging. According to the National Assembly Statistical Information (2009):

- ❖ As at 2004, 54.4% of Nigeria's population lived in Poverty
- ❖ As at 2006, 39.18% of persons aged 25-34 were unemployed.
- ❖ As at 2007, 53.16% of Nigerian's had no access to basic health care facilities/services. Etc.

Most young people in this country do not have a job. For example, Oshiomhole (2010) contends that more than 70% of young people are unemployed and without a source of income; for these underprivileged people, thuggery politics becomes the solution. In support of this perspective, Lawal (2010) argues that politicians take advantage of this and seek out young people who are not only the backbone of society but also the most susceptible to poverty that they impose upon themselves since they are criminals and hustlers. Some of the thugs who are hired and trained for different political purposes—such as intimidation, harassment, and assassination—are paid monthly wages plus allowances. A portion of them work as personal assistants,

special advisers, or special assistants; those who don't fit into any of those roles become government contractors. Some are still paid back right away following the regular assignment (Lawal, 2010).

According to the Vision 2010 Committee Report, only approximately 40% of Nigerians have access to safe drinking water, 50% of the country's urban population lives in single-occupancy homes with more than seven people on average, only approximately 62% of Nigerians have access to primary healthcare, and the majority of Nigerians consume less than one-third of the country's recommended daily intake of protein and vitamins.

In Nigeria, a nation of nearly 160 million people, poverty is pervasive. In recent decades, the plague has also exhibited an increasing tendency, which explains the country's low development indicators and its ranking among the world's poorest nations (United Nations, 2001 and OXFAM, 2003). The majority of people in Nigeria are impoverished, earning too little to meet their basic needs for housing, food, water, healthcare, and education. The country's poverty profile paints a dismal picture of a wealthy country in decline, given its abundant natural resource endowment (OXFAM, 2003).

Research has indicated that Nigeria has a high head-count ratio of poverty, with 70 and 91 percent of the population, respectively, living on less than \$1.00 and \$2.00 per person per day. Along with short life expectancy at birth (52 years), it also displays low levels of human competence with inadequate access to portable water (62%) and sanitation (54%). Regardless of the indices used to define or quantify the phenomena, the research above makes it very evident that Nigerians are extremely impoverished. This is a paradoxical scenario in that the nation's efforts to raise the living standards of its people have not succeeded, despite having abundant natural and agricultural resources and effective programs to combat poverty like the National Poverty Eradication Program and the Family Economic Advancement Program.

Why do Nigerians remain impoverished in spite of the government's commendable efforts to reduce poverty and the resources at its disposal? To summarily give the answer, Edoh (2003: p. 71) identifies the following as some of the causes of poverty in Nigeria.

- Corruption and embezzlement
- Poor Leadership
- Lack of comprehensive National Poverty Alleviation
- Lack of sound agricultural policy and protracted neglect of the sector
- Lack of basic infrastructures
- Rapid population growth
- Excessive internal and external debt burden.

The ongoing poverty in Nigeria, compounded by widespread unemployment, is impeding the country's progress toward genuine democracy. Despite the federal government's declared battle on poverty, the number of unemployed people has not decreased. Without the necessities of life, no one can engage in democratic politics in an effective manner. As a result, lacking the fundamental freedom to participate in the life they enjoy, those living in poverty cannot be considered fully fledged members of society. Expanding the freedoms we have reason to value not only makes our lives richer and more unrestricted, but it also enables us to be fuller social persons who exercise our own volition and interact with and influence the world in which we live, as noted by Amartya Sen in *Development As Freedom*. Since economic instability has the potential to overthrow democratic institutions, it is then reasonable to claim that poverty in Nigeria is a barrier to true democracy. Nigeria has a lot of poverty and injustice issues, and the people there don't seem to realize that it's part of their culture to not be able to have a just, prosperous, dignified existence and true democracy. It is important to remember that over 70% of Nigerians are thought to be impoverished. Is it any surprise that society is in disarray?

It is indisputable that there is a proven link between democracy and poverty based on the explanation above. Particularly when it aligns with Abraham Lincoln's assertion that "Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people." It is obvious that a strong economic foundation is necessary for the successful functioning and consolidation of democracy. Quantitative cross-national research on the economic determinants of democracy and democratization, as argued by Aminu Kano, generally and consistently shows that a country's degree of economic development is positively and strongly associated

with the degree to which the political systems exhibit democratic properties. Dambatta (1993). Thus, the economy and sustainable democracy are causally related in two ways: the former determines the presence of enduring democracy, while the latter is a necessary condition for sustainable economic reform. The takeaway is that while widespread poverty and illiteracy threaten democracy, strong economic growth upholds it. The fundamental components of democracy in Nigeria, as mentioned in this study elsewhere above, have not been ingrained in a workable and sustained democratic system, and vice versa, because of a system that is driven by poverty. These elements include the people's sovereignty, the rule of law and constitutionalism, periodic and regular free, fair, and credible elections, majority rule and minority rights, equality before the law, and individual freedom.

Aminu (1982) made a sharp observation in his insightful public lecture, noting that democracy has not become entrenched in Nigeria just because the country's economic statistics did not add up. Rather, democracy—or any form of government, for that matter—must provide real economic benefits to the majority of the populace in order to be credible and enduring. In an article for a seminar titled "What Makes Democracy Endure?" According to actual data uncovered by Przeworski (1996), a nation's degree of economic development significantly influences the likelihood that democracy will last once it has established itself. If the per capita GDP of a nation is less than \$2,000, then an average democracy should last roughly 85 years; democracies should last 33 years between \$2,000 and \$4,000 and 100 years between \$4,000 and \$6,000 forever. No democracy has collapsed in a nation where the average yearly income is more than \$6,033.

But regardless of ideology or degree of democracy, most African states lack significant economic potential—many of them are essentially undeveloped—that could draw in foreign risk capital. For this reason, entrepreneurs have not historically flocked to these countries! Furthermore, depending on local money to drive growth means dooming many people to a life of marginalization (Abdulyakeen, 2021). Following in the footsteps of this line of reasoning, Aminu Kano proposed that a democracy lacking an essential efficiency condition is unlikely to succeed, and he made this claim while explaining why democracy failed in Nigeria's first republic. It can't live up to the expectations of its people; it can't provide the goods, as they say. The economic foundation is so important that many have speculated that even communist nations may increasingly resemble western democracies as they grow wealthier.

The relationship between democracy and economic robustness indicates that wealthy individuals are typically limited to voting. As a result, pursuing a political career becomes a luxury for those with the means to do so and who frequently hold public office in Nigeria. Therefore, even though the politicians are to blame, it is important to emphasize that the Fourth Republic was doomed to corruption from the start since it established western democracy on a shaky economic foundation. In Nigeria right now, the same thing is happening. As a result, the high rate of poverty in the Nigerian system led to the monetization of politics, in which politicians with avarice and desperation buy off the public.

Given the historical data cited above, it is undoubtedly difficult to maintain democracy in an economy like Nigeria, where the average annual income has consistently fallen below \$1,000. Przeworski (1996) asserts that this presents a significant risk to the consolidation of democracy. Claude Ake (1980, p. 35), taking into account the relationship between democracy and the economy in relation to the typical African's expectations, claimed that: The common people of Africa are endorsing democracy as a second independence. This time, they seek freedom from indigenous leaders rather than from their colonial overlords. They are seeking independence from rulers whose mismanagement has made their exploitation and poverty unbearable. They also believe that without gaining political influence and improving their position to align public policy with social needs, they will not be able to achieve tangible progress in the near future. However, democracy is being understood and promoted in ways that undermine these goals and show a lack of consideration for the social circumstances facing the majority of Africans. Sule (in 2001). The political elites who are in favor of democratization are typically individuals who lack access to power and who are generally indifferent to democratic ideals. In large part, they endorse democratization as a power tactic. The people's only option is to pick between oppressors, which gives the impression of choice and justifies their actual lack of empowerment.

Kano (1978/4) acknowledged, in keeping with the aforementioned hypotheses, that you are aware of the mindset of our people. Democracy will lose credibility and people may cry, "na democracy we go chop?" if it cannot provide us with clean water, good roads, industrial development, agricultural transformation, sanitization of society, or electricity.

The warning is that a return to dictatorship cannot be completely ruled out in situations where democratic processes do not result in economic turnaround. This is evidently where Kano (1978/4) began, thus If many of the recently established democracies in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa are unable to lower their frequently shocking rates of poverty, inequality, and social injustice and instead establish the framework for long-term, sustainable growth through market-oriented reforms, they will most likely collapse in the medium to long term.

In contrast, the Central Bank acknowledged in its public first-quarter report for 2008 that the Nigerian economy is in a state of chronic crisis. The poverty issue is still present as a result of the weak economy. The poverty crisis in Nigeria has taken on a terrifying magnitude. According to democratic philosophy, a highly hierarchical social structure, poverty, and widespread illiteracy are all detrimental to democracy's ability to function. It is obvious that Nigeria's economy has been in terrible shape over time, endangering the establishment of democracy. In his insightful essay, Aminu Kano stressed that a fragile economic system cannot in any way lead to a democracy that can last.

However, it is crucial to emphasize that providing everyone with a respectable level of life, decent housing, access to healthcare and education, and assistance for the elderly has been the positive impact of democracy. It is also usual to equate democracy with "equality" of opportunity, rather than equality in all facets of life, as everyone is entitled to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Therefore, in his "utilitarianism," Jeremy Bentham modestly proposed that the primary duty of the state is to maximize happiness for the largest possible number of individuals.

What goals are the Nigerian democratic leaders aiming to accomplish? They have been successful in delivering misery to the populace rather than genuine democracy. Their living standards have not increased as a result of the "civilian democratic governance," as is well known. Consequently, the "Poor Man's Burden" is getting harder to bear every day! The people's hopes and dreams have been crushed, leaving them furious, dejected, and hungry. Dike (2005) disregarded Nigeria's Democracy Day, characterizing May 29 as a day to celebrate poverty rather than democracy. Every leader worthy of the name should aim to maximize the pleasure of the people, even if it means forgoing some of the privileges that come with holding public office. Kano correctly observed that a starving man or woman prioritizes sating their hunger before everything else. He (she) is willing to give up everything in order to obtain a small amount of food. That is the current state of affairs in Nigeria. The people must first be given job, food, and the necessities of life (portable water, power, a good road network, security, decent schools, medical care, etc.) if anyone hopes to grant them a democracy and a sense of freedom. When they are well, independent, and able to support their families, they will worry about democracy. Introducing democracy to a people who don't know where their next meal is coming from could not be a successful endeavor. The politics they would have to worry about, in a sense, would be the politics of their stomach. If left unchecked, the nation's increasing levels of extreme poverty, grief, and restlessness could cause socio-political instability. Because of the way that nature made us, we are unable to recognize our own reflections in others. Nigeria is sitting on a ticking time bomb, as the world has attested, but the country's authorities have refused to acknowledge this truth or take appropriate action. It is undeniable, nevertheless, that establishing a stable and long-lasting democracy in a society as impoverished as Nigeria is still unattainable.

## **Conclusion**

This study revealed that Nigeria's budding democracy is up against formidable obstacles, thus it must be carefully tended to and controlled. Among other modern socioeconomic issues, poverty and the various deprivations it entails seem to be the biggest destroyers of the Nigerian economy. It's interesting to note that Nigeria has some of the highest rates and worst degrees of poverty in the world, with dire ramifications for the country's economy and society. Despite the limitations of time and space, it is important to note that not all of the topics covered in this paper are exhaustive. Human and group rights violations are among the many

other equally important issues that worry experts studying democracy and democratic consolidation. Democracy, on the other hand, is about liberty combined with more political space. A system that is so flawed that it clearly restricts the rights of people, religions, and groups is not conducive to a democracy that can last. A persistent crisis of legitimacy arises from the state's incapacity to organize an impartial, equitable, and trustworthy election. However, this is a result of weak political cultures and brittle democratic institutions brought on by a weak economic foundation. In the end, it is determined that establishing a viable and long-lasting democracy in a community that is racked by poverty is unreal.

### **Recommendation**

- i. The pressing need to alleviate the widespread poverty that is destroying the populace. In order to address the multifaceted character of this malignant disease known as poverty, Nigeria has to implement an efficient plan for reducing poverty. Poverty's social, cultural, political, and economic aspects must all be taken into account in this strategy. The people need to be given a means of subsistence in order to eradicate poverty and ensure the functioning of democracy. For example, giving them a job so they can take care of themselves or through.
- ii. The government of Nigeria must equip its people with a functional education that would enable them to be independent and politically aware, enabling them to engage in political processes with intelligence.
- iii. The necessity of restructuring Nigeria's economy in order to separate it from the world capitalist system. This can be accomplished by diversifying our economy to lessen our exposure to the whims of the global marketplace. Our agriculture industry needs to be redesigned. In order to attain economic growth and development, an effort must be made to guarantee sectoral linkages of the air economy.
- iv. Sound political Education. The National Orientation Agency (NOA) must immediately reorient its mission from that of a government propaganda machine to that of a genuinely national and people-oriented organization tasked with informing and enlightening the Nigerian populace about the value of good governance and democratic processes. This supposed agency ought to participate in civic and moral education as well. Along with disseminating government initiatives in an effort to get public feedback.
- v. Dealing with the corruption issue. The Nigerian institutions battling corruption ought to be given the authority they need to carry out their mission free from outside intervention. I think that if all of the previously listed points are carefully taken into account, Nigeria will be much closer to having a stable democracy.

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