

**THE EFFECT OF MILITARY INTERVENTION IN NIGERIA POLITICS**  
**A CASE STUDY OF GENERAL SANI ABECHA (1993 – 1999)**

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**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

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**BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL  
SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN  
CITY, NIGERIA,**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.SC) IN POLITICAL SCIENCE.**

**DECEMBER, 2022**

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that:

This project work is based on a study undertaken by me in the Department of Political Science, University of Benin under the supervision of **DR. OKORO**. This work has not been previously submitted for award of a degree elsewhere.

All ideas and views are product of my personal research effort and all references to works of others have been duly acknowledged.

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**KUDUS TAJUDEEN NOSAKHARE**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **CERTIFICATION**

We the undersigned, hereby certify that this work was carried out by **KUDUS TAJUDEEN NOSAKHARE** with Matriculation number: **SSC1708157** and confirmed to be adequate in scope and value for the award of a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Degree in Political Science of the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

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**DR. OKORO**

**SUPERVISOR**

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**DATE**

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**DR. JOSEPH. AIHIE.**

**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This project work is dedicated to God Almighty the master of the universe who made it possible, my sincere appreciations goes to the following, my superheroes my mother Mrs. Iyobosa Kudus who has work tirelessly to ensured that I get the best, my father Barr, Shehu Kudus for his fatherly role. To my wonderful siblings who were always there for me, Miss Fatima Otse Kudus my senior sister and Master Jaamiu Etinosa Kudus my younger brother.

Finally, to those who engage in the struggle for a true democracy of the Nigeria government

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzes military intervention in Nigeria politics, it historicizes the various military incursion in Nigeria from the post-independence era and gives an analyses of coup d'état that took place in the country using a hybrid of social economic development theory and organizational formal theory also observes the deteriorated economic conditions increase the choice of military intervention, similarly, the weak political institutions and low political culture have resulted to legitimacy crisis, it argues that the cohesive nature of the military institution and the stronger military resources, either as a percent of the state resources or relative to the national economy encourage military interregnum. Relying on the secondary source and the use of discourse analyses, also and historical overview of the military intervention in Nigeria and adduces reasons in support of the military intervention, it further argues that kleptomania of the military government has posed security threats and gave rise to economic dislocation, while the judiciary has subjugated , in conclusion the prolonged military stayed in government has adversely affected the citizens and the Nigeria economy and has eroded the professionalism of the military institution rules and the political transition to democracy in Nigeria. It enquires into how military intervenes in the Nigerian politics in the recent time. The study also examines how corruption induces military intervention in Nigerian politics due to the embezzlement of public funds by our political leaders as well as mismanagement of government properties. This study looks at the major challenges in Nigeria's transition to democratic rule so as to establish the gap

in the existing literature by examining the roles played by ethno-political organizations in the country

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

In this study, I examined the relationship between ethno political organizations and the transition from military rule to civilian rule (democracy) in Nigeria between 1993 and 1998. I also inquire into both how ethno political organizations affected the process of democratization and how the process, in turn, influenced their roles in politics generally, and in exacerbating or ameliorating political conflicts. Ethno political organizations are pan ethnic formations serving or out porting to serve the political interest of their members, their co-ethnics and ethnic homelands. They could be seen as specific movement organizations pursuing more diffuse and generalized ethnic interests. The political role of ethnic organizations has been well documented by observers of Nigerian politics. In fact, by the 1920s southern Nigeria was awash with such organizations with immediate and remote political aims, taking their names from respective communities and clans of their members. Recognizing their incipient political aspiration, a 1935 colonial report described them as young men's club of semi political nature. By the middle years of colonialism in Nigeria, these young men's club were speedily turned into pan- ethnic organizations. Ethno-political organizations such as the Igbo aged grades or unions, the Hausa Fulani Jamiuyar Mutanen (Arewa) and Yoruba Egba Omo Oduduwa, were the main ethno political organizations ravaging our country Nigeria, before the attainment of our independence on October, 1960.

These pan ethnic organizations were to become important actors in the democratic struggle of Nigerian people against colonial rule, which culminated in independence in 1960. The salutary roles they played in the first were of democratization in Nigeria, including the dynamics of their relations with the colonialist and another has been articulated by some studies. Nevertheless, the precipitate decline of Nigeria into authoritarian rule a few years after independence, characterized by nearly three decades of military rule, has also been blamed on the political intervention of these ethnic organizations. Consequently, when the military seized power and banned all political parties in 1966, at least 26 tribal and cultural associations were also banned. Still, ethno political organizations remained central in Nigerian politics generally, and in the recent process of ending authoritarian rule in particular. Some of the organization that emerged in this process include the Egbe Afenifere, literally meaning persons wishing to protect their interest in association with others and Egba Iloiwaju Yoruba (Association of Yoruba progressive) claiming to represent Yoruba interest, the Mkpoko Igbo (union of Igbo's) for the Igbo, the movement for the survival of Ogoni people (MASSOP) for the minority Ogonis and the northern Elders Forum representing or perceived to represent Hausa Fulani interests. Some of them have coalesced into larger inter ethnic and regional ensembles like the southern Mandata Group with purports to represent all ethnic interest in the south of the country.

The primary objective of this study is to explain the roles of ethno political organizations, in the transition to democracy in Nigeria which began in 1986, when the then military government of General Babangida announced its transition programme. That attempts was botched, perhaps

temporarily, with the annulment of presidential election on June 12th, 1993. Three months later, the military led by General Sani Abacha, a prominent member of the Babangida administration, seized power and promised to return the country to a democratic government which he never did until he died in 1998.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Various studies have examined transitions to democracy in Africa, often situating them within the context of the so called third wave of democracy, which refers to the recent experience of eastern European, Latin America and African countries. Although there are still many dissenting voices calling for more rigorous examination of the concept of democracy the dominant attitude is that the democracy on offer is settled, namely liberal / multi-party democracy/ this attitude, in most cases, is both reflection and a result of the renaissance and resurgence of Tocquevillean and Schumpeterian notions of democracy as institutional political arrangement and practices of west, and democratization as the spread of those institutions with them. This process is also seen as ineluctable, contrary to this position, however the originality of Africa's transitions are undeniable. Surely, extra African influences have impacted on Africa's transition, but to be spread by proselytizing others. To be sure, the reversals already being experienced in democratic transitions in some African countries and recline into authoritarian rule in others, suggest to us the need for a re-examination of the democratic content of African transitions. One factor that many will agree is central to such re-examination is ethnicity. The interface between ethnicity and democracy has been prominent theme in extant literatures. Studies have focused on the

reciprocal impact of ethnicity and multiparty democracy. While some argue a negative impact of ethnicity on democracy, others argue positive (or potentially positive) link. What is still lacking however, are in depth studies of the concrete experience of multi ethnic African societies in the light of transitions to democracy. That is the major concern of this study. In doing this, we must realize that the political interventions of ethnic groups in politics are not spontaneous. Ethnic groups act in politics through their organizations. In fact, we know that ethnic organizations sometimes help to invent identities in the first place. Such organizations as they functioned in Nigeria's effort to transition to democratic rule between 1993 and 1998 constitute the focus of our study. In a view to accomplishing this research work effectively, I therefore pose the following research questions:

1. Does corruption account for military intervention in Nigerian politics?
2. Does ethno political organizations induce military intervention?
3. What are the challenges in Nigeria's transition to democratic rule in Nigeria?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The general objectives or purpose of this study is to examine the problems and prospects encountered by military rule in Nigeria with special references to political transition in Nigeria 1993 – 1998. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine how corruption accounts for military intervention in Nigerian politics.
2. To determine the roles played by ethno-political organizations in military intervention.
3. To find out the major challenges in Nigerian's transition to democratic rule.

#### **1.4 Hypotheses**

The research formulates the following hypotheses based on the statement of the problems of thus:

1. Corruption accounts for military intervention in Nigerian politics such as the embezzlement of public funds.
2. Ethno-political organizations played some roles in military intervention of Nigerian politics through the activities of some political and religious groups in the country.
3. There are challenges in Nigeria's transition to civil rule in terms of the malpractices during elections and the failure of leadership quality by our leaders

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The most important significance of this study is that even in the context of the liberal democratic project, what remains largely lacking in existing studies is analysis of the specificity of ethnicity in on-going democratic transitions in Africa. There is need to analyses the impact of ethnicity not only the process of transition, but also its different phases. This study is therefore significance because it helps research students or scholars, as well as those who wish to specialize in this area of study, to understand and be in position to analyse the major influence or causes of military

interventions in Nigerian politics, again the main roles being played by ethno political organizations in Nigeria whether positive or negative, and finally, to understand the prospects and challenges being faced by the military and ethno political organizations in Nigeria's transition to civil rule.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.1 Literature Review**

Literature review of this work is based on different comments and findings of different scholars on their views and prospects about military in politics. Ruth First, (1970) explained military intervention in relation to theories. One of such the ones was that expounded by Finer. The Finer explains intervention primarily in terms of social environment in which the military functions. According to levels of political cultures, which were determined by the strength or weakness attached to civilian institutions. Janowitz School (1964) on the other hand, draws attention to the properties of military itself to its hierarchical organization and its distinctive patterns of recruitment and training, control and discipline. Huntington, (1964:194) sees military intervention as being apolitical in nature. To him, in societies where social institutions and social forces are highly politicized, such as political universities, political bureaucracies, and political clergy and of course political armed forces, military intervention is inevitable. According to Alex Thomson (2000:131) he sees coup d'etat as sudden illegal displacement of government in which members of the security forces play a prominent role. He says coup can be reactionary or revolutionary, bloody or bloodless. They must however be sudden, lasting a matter

of hours or days rather than weeks. For Steve Egbo, (2001:8) he sees military coup as a situation where the military may decide to overthrow the existing government and assume total control of the apparatus of the state and civil government at its highest level which is commonly known as coup d'etat, it is often achieved through excessive violence and bloodshed. In view of Emezi and Ndo, (1987:37) military rule is generally regarded as an aberration. A generally accepted political system in such a system that is governed directed and controlled by civilian political class which has been recruited by popular choice to the decision making structures of the state. Ndo further argued that military rule is not a viable substitute to a properly and popularly elected government. A. K. Ocran observed that the competence of the military in the area of political leadership is unconstitutional. He argued that the soldiers should leave politics alone when they try to run a country. This is regardless of the fact that the military when compared with their civilian counterparts have shown to be more worthy of political leadership. Isawa Elangwu, (1988:120) in his, Gowon: the Biography of a soldier\_ statement takes a look at the political biography of Gowon. He observed that while Gowon demonstrated beyond doubt that he was an effective binder, his energies were soon too taxed by a number of dilemma in Nigerian political system/. This dilemma he argues was later responsible for his dismissal in 1975. They include the inability to implement satisfactorily his nine point political programme. Announced in 1970, Black and African Festival of Arts and culture (FESTAC), Udoji salary awards and inflationary frills, labour strikes and a change for Gowon of his lieutenants who had been in office since 1967. There was also industrial unrest, abandoned property issue, "Dodam Barracks Politics,"

corruption of in high places especially among the lieutenants. The corruption of this lieutenants attracted public outcry that they should be removed. Yet Gowon remained adamant. He would see no need to primitive measures to check the excesses of his lieutenants.

- i. As regards being more of political leadership as observed by Ocran, one wonders on how an ill-trained person would effectively lead without being eluded. It was against this backdrop that Oyediran stressed that it was only in the areas which are related to the normal functioning of the military as an institution that success has been much achieved. However, Ocran advocated that before political power can be handed over to the military and democratically elected civilian government there should be a transition to civil rule programme which would be lengthy so as to make room for the drafting of a new constitution, established of political institutions and the election of civilians into representatives' political positions. He further asserts that there should be a reorientation of the masses Vis –a- Vis their social political psychological and economic consciousness. For Ocran, a complete demilitarization of the political system entails such a comprehensive programme of military transition to civil rule. He however, cautioned that any lastly transfer of political power would simply encourage the re-emergence of the military. As laudable as this preposition might seem, it had so far served to perpetuate military rule due to the extensive process of military disengagement which such political programmes requires. To this extent, many military transitions to civil rule programmes tend to prolong military rule, on this issue of political education through state agencies,

there tend to be a contradiction because of power can truly educate the masses on the principles of democracy.

A number of writers have their conceptions about the reason why corruption is prevalent in the military and other developing countries. Verda Eker, (1981:25- 70) in his article published in the journal of modern African studies sees corruption as a wide spread phenomenon in the developing worlds. The term he argued is usually reserved for the practice of using power of office for making private gain in breach of the laws and regulations normally in force or as more simply defined by M. C. Milan, a public official is corrupt if he accepts money for doing something that he is under duty to do anyway, that he is under duty to do or exercise a legitimate discretion, for improper reasons. He says that corruption flourish in Nigerian military because the necessary and sufficient conditions for its existence are prevalent in Nigeria. Among the necessary conditions are the existences of surplus national wealth, the concentration of political and economic decisions making power in official hands and the high growth rate of national wealth? The necessary conditions are what he referred to as normal code and authority structure. In other words, Verda is talking about the concentration of political and economic power and accelerated pace of economic development as fertile grounds for corruption. We shall however disagree with Verda because his assertions are highly deficient as an explanation tool for explaining corruption in Nigerian military. In the first place, his assertion that corruption is peculiar to developing countries such as Nigeria is false. Corruption also

obtains in the advanced western countries. The difference is only in terms of degree and scope. And also, the accelerated pace of economic development are not fertile grounds for corruption. Rather it is the objective basis in the process and the character for which it creates that is responsible for corruption. Another writer, Chinua Achebe, (1983:37) in his book: *The Trouble with Nigeria*, sees corruption in Nigeria as an issue which has an objective basis on the Nigeria leaders. He asserts that corruption is rampant among Nigeria leaders. He goes further to argue that Nigeria is not different from any other country in the world, and that they are corrupt because the system in which they lived is corrupt and that once the system is changed, corruption can be ameliorated. He identified seven deadly ills or maladies of Nigerian political leaders and society which includes the following: tribalism, self-conceit and flamboyance, lack of intellectual rigour, lack of patriotism, indiscipline and corruption. Achebe's work is deficient because it fails to situate corruption and other ills of society within the capitalist economic system as well as the colonial and neo-colonial character of the Nigerian society. Also, it fails to put corruption within a conceptual framework. Ankie M. M. Hoogreelt, (1992: 127-137) in his book: *The Sociology of the Developed societies* sees corruption as the evil companion vehicle for negotiation between badly integrated structures of social order. According to him, corrupt practices in contemporary developing societies are much more pervasive, much more of an everybody pattern of life, and that they disrupt economic life to a fair greater than is the case in the advanced countries. Ankie failed to realize that corrupt

practices are also pervasive in the advanced countries. Notable examples are the United State Watergate scandal and the British poulson affair. Omotunde asserts that corruption exist if there is a division of government revenue of nation income flow in order to argue the current government members private wealth, when the latter are not legally entitled to do so, we may have to note that the abuse of state power extends beyond the enrichment of the government officials themselves. It sometimes involves giving undue favours to other people with whom government officials have relationship.s Claude Ake, (1981:2) in his book political economy of Africa: sees corruption as an issue that has an obligation basis in the production process. He sees corruption as a phenomenon which created and is dependent on a particular socio- economic condition. He argued that corruption exist in capitalist and class societies which the capitalist state generates. Okwudiba Nnoli, (1983:9) in his book, Introduction to politics: sees corruption as also having objectives in the production process. He argued that crop of leaders has been producing tends to be corrupt because they play what he called mental and psychological discipline which come to an individual as he uses labour in the production of value. He went further to argue that colonialism created this class of leaders who are a position of dominance in the post-colonial capitalist state like Nigeria. That this class leaders not only become corrupt demonstration but also collude with the international bourgeoisie class in perpetuating corruption in Nigeria.

Jemibewon (1978) in his book, A combatant in government observed that under

Gowon's regime corruption had reached such a pitch that top public functionaries wallowing in it did not bother to take trouble to concerned he acts of corruption from public gaze. Onigu Otite (1982: 10) has also made some important attempt in explaining the effect of corruption on the basis of the cost benefits approach. In his constitution, he states that those who accept the positive side of corruption argue that: widespread corruption would provoke resentment and promote the cause of a revolution beneficial to society in the long run.

- ii. corruption can challenge to excel others in competitive bidding and payment of high product efficiency in commodity production.
- iii. corruption provides a chance for groups other than political parties to articulate their political process.

The various point often referred to as the benefits of corruption are merely various ways by which those who control state power accumulate wealth for them. On the other hands, scandals associated with corruption could be beneficial to society in the sense of promoting political awareness. However, this has not been the case in Nigeria. The regular experience is that any government – civilian and military alike- that is involved in corruption faces the threat of military coup. The incidence of corruption which the military had often justified for coming into government is what we have set out to re-examine.

## **2.2 GENERAL SANI ABACHA'S REGIME, 1993-1998**

Late Gen . Sani Abacha born September 20, 1943 in Kano, Nigeria died June 1998 Abuja , Nigerian military leader 1993- 1998. Abacha received his formal military training at Nigeria and British military training colleges. He rose through the rank in Nigeria military and by 1983 had achieved the rank of Brigadier , when he assisted Ibrahim Babangida in overthrowing Shehu Shagari, he has been elected to his second presidential term in 1983. General Muhammadu Buhari became Nigeria's leader but just two years later Babangida overthrew Buhari and installed himself as leader with Abacha second in command. Elections were held in 1993, and was won by Moshood Abiola, a candidate supposedly supported by Babangida, who, however annulled the elections and set up a civilian interim government which Abacha quickly overthrew, although Abacha promised a return to democracy, his actions were anything but democratic. He banned political activity of all kinds, fired a large portion of the military, controlled the press and assembled a personal security force of some 3,000 (three thousand men) while he supported the economic community of West African states (ECOWAS) and its military arm (ECOMOG), in sending troops to restore democracy in Liberia and Sierra Leone, brutally suppressed dissent at home. When Abacha took over from the Interim National Government (ING) of Ernest Shonekan in November 1993, the state was confronted with some important nation building challenges. Some of these are the challenges of democracy, federalism, corruption, governance and aggressive ethno-regionalism. In tackling these nation-building challenges, the Abacha regime made use of praetorian, institutional and constitutional mechanisms. Institutional mechanism is the creation and use of specific organizations to tackle particular nation building

challenges. For instance, Olusegun Obasanjo's administration made use of the institutional mechanism to tackle specific challenges of nation-building between 1999 and 2007. This was the rationale behind the formation of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003. It was an institutional response meant to tackle the challenge of corruption [Abdul,2004]. General Yakubu Gowon's establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in 1973 was another institutional program meant to help the nation-building process in Nigeria. Other administrations adopted the constitutional mechanism to overcome some aspects of Nigeria's nation-building challenges. Constitutional mechanism is the use of specific provisions in the Nigerian Constitution to address specific nation building challenges. When there are no such provisions that can tackle specific challenges, the mechanism allow for the use of amendments to the constitution to make it relevant to the particular challenge. This, for example, was the rationale behind the insertion of the federal character principle and principle of fiscal federalism into the 1979 Nigerian Constitution by General Olusegun Obasanjo's regime in 1979 [Ayoade,2000]. This insertion was done, it must be noted, to ensure that all the ethnic groups are represented at the centre and to also ensure the equitable distribution of federal resources.

### **2.3 THE PRAETORIAN MECHANISM USED BY THE ABACHA REGIME IN THE NATION- BUILDING PROCESS**

The state used the praetorian mechanism to tackle the challenges of federalism and aggressive ethno-regionalism. The mechanism was used to address the following issues: state creation, the transition program of the administration and the establishment of a constitutional court. In October 1996, the state used a decree in 1996 to create six additional states and one hundred and thirty eight local government areas for Nigeria [Ayoade,2000]. This now brought the total numbers of states in Nigeria to thirty-six. The reasons for this included the desire to reduce the overbearing influence of the regional governments, which would grants autonomy to the minorities; and at the same time, to ensure that governance both at the federal and sub-federal level was extended to the grassroots. Starting from 1994 through 1995, the state promulgated a series of transition to civil rule decree that would have ensured the enthronement of democracy in Nigeria. The decrees are: Constitutional Conference Election Committee Decree, 1994; Constitutional Conference Decree, 1995; and Constitutional Conference Dissolution Decree, 1995. In October 1995, the state launched its transition to civilian rule program with transition to Civilian Rule Decree 1995 [Ayoade,2000]. According to the transition program, the state envisaged that civilian rule would have been enthroned in Nigeria by 1998. The transition program was divided into nine parts. Some of its highlights include: the establishment of a new electoral commission for Nigeria; creation of new states and local governments, registration of political parties, production of authentic voters register and the setting up of state electoral tribunals. In 1996, the state established, by decree No. 34 of 1996, the Federal Character Commission. It had powers, among other things, to work out a formula for the redistribution of

jobs and to establish the principle of proportionality. The commission also had the powers to prosecute heads of ministries and parastatals for failing to carry out its instructions. It further had the mandate to address the inequalities in social services and infrastructural development. For example, based on the idea behind the establishment of the commission, Abacha's Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) members cuts across Nigeria geo-political divide.

### **Institutional Mechanism Used By The Abacha Regime In The Nation-Building Process**

To tackle the challenges of federalism, governance, democracy and distribution, the

Abacha administration used the powers of the state to establish some key institutions. Three of these are National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON), 1993, Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF), 1994 and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), 1994. NECON was established in 1993 to conduct federal, states and local government's elections into the Fourth Republic [Agbaje,1997]. It was an important transition from military to civilian rule tool of the Abacha, administration. Five political parties were registered by NECON to participate in elections that was to usher in the Fourth Republic. The Commission conducted state assembly and parliamentary elections in December 1997 and April 1998, respectively. However, before NECON could complete the electoral aspect of the transition program, which was to be the conduct of the presidential election in 1998, General Sani Abacha died. The new military ruler,

General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who took over in late 1998, proscribed NECON in 1999 and established a new electoral body, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

### **Petroleum Trust Fund, 1994**

The Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) was created by the state to “alleviate Nigerians’ poverty” [Taiwo,1970]. It was an all-encompassing project designed to make life easier for Nigerians. The activities of the PTF ranged from supplying medications to public hospitals, to building or repairing roads, building schools, renovation of some university halls across the country, to providing bore holes to communities. However, in spite of its laudable aims, the PTF failed to fulfill its important mission before it was proscribed by the Obasanjo’s administration during the Fourth Republic. Part of the reason why the PTF failed to fulfill its mandates was the high level of waste/profligacy and mismanagement carried out by those in charge of the fund. For example, Dr. Haroun Adamu’s interim report on the activities of the PTF concluded that N135 billion out of the N146 billion the fund spent between 1994 and 2000 was squandered.

### **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), 1995**

The state set up the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in 1995 [22]. The Commission’s mandate include, among other things, to monitor and investigate alleged cases of human rights violation in Nigeria; to assist victims of human rights violation and seek appropriate redress and remedies on their behalf; undertake studies pertaining to human rights;

assist the federal government in the formulation of appropriate policies; and provide reports on the state of human rights protection in Nigeria [Elumilade,2006]. However, the Commission failed to live up to its billing due to its enabling act and lack of political will on the part of the state. It has no judicial powers and it cannot force the state to act to protect the violations of an individual rights. Moreover, during the Abacha's regime, prominent civil rights activists were jailed and civil rights organizations were proscribed. The commission could not really act to protect the rights of these individuals and organizations since the state was the violator of their rights.

#### **2.4 CONSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM USED BY THE ABACHA'S REGIME IN THE NATION-BUILDING PROCESS**

The state used the constitutional mechanism to tackle the challenges of democracy, federalism, governance and aggressive ethno-regionalism. Arising from the tensions which the annulment of the June 12, 1993 federal election generated, the Abacha administration convened a National Constitutional Conference in June 1994. The conference was meant to articulate an institutional arrangement capable of laying a solid foundation for a viable, cohesive and functional Nigeria. General Abacha charged the conference delegates to fashion a "conscious culture of national consensus conceived in the broadest sense" [Falola,2008]. The administration also established a National Constitutional Commission to facilitate the affairs of the conference. Additionally, the work of the conference was to serve as a blue-print for the creation of a viable, functional

and cohesive Nigeria. And more importantly, it was meant to serve as an important plank of the transition to civil rule program of the administration. The deliberations of the conference would have provided the framework for the 1995 constitution that would have birthed the Fourth Republic [Oshodi,2008]. The death of General Sani Abacha in 1998 rendered the constitutional process invalid. The NCC made some important recommendations. Some of these are: that the presidency should be rotated between two zones of the country, north and south; that representation at the federal and sub-federal levels must be based on proportionality; and that a federal character commission was to be established. It is remarkable to note that some of these recommendations later found their way into the Fourth Republic where they became operational.

### **CSGS AND THE ABACHA REGIME, 1993-1998**

CSGs injected such conceptual tools as democracy, rule of law, human rights and sovereign national conference into the nation-building process during the General Sani Abacha's regime. The Abacha's administration was very hostile to any form of dissent and political opposition. The regime dismantled all the structures of transition to civil rule programs put in place by the preceding government. Abacha's

regime was regarded as one of the most repressive in Nigeria's history [Oshodi,2007]. Many human rights activists and the political opposition were detained, driven underground or forced into involuntary exile abroad. For example, the Nobel laureate,

Professor Wole Soyinka left Nigeria during the Abacha regime [Falola,2008]. He became the arrowhead of the opposition in the diaspora against the Abacha regime. Together with some pro-democracy activists, Soyinka formed the NALICON and later the UDFN in 1995 that subsequently became the vanguard of the opposition against the Abacha's regime in the diaspora [Soyinka,2006]. Three important issues galvanized and mobilized the CSGs against the Abacha administration. The first was the continued detention of the winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. The second was the hanging of the leader of the Movement of the Struggle for the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 [Okeke,2004]; and more importantly, the desire of General Sani Abacha to transmute into a civilian president. These three issues pitted the CSGs against the state. The CD, NADECO, NALICON and JACON were at the forefront of trying to actualize and restore the presidency to the winner of the 1993 federal election. By April, 1998, all the five political parties that were to take part in the federal election that would have ushered in the Fourth Republic adopted General Sani Abacha as their sole candidate. A development the late Bola Ige described as five fingers of a leprous hand [Okeke,2004]. This adoption further galvanized the CSGs against the administration. They reasoned that unless the military is forced from power any discussion about respect for human rights, rule of law and democracy would be an exercise in futility. However, with the death of General Abacha in June, 1998, the CSGs pressured the new military administrator,

General Abdulsalami Abubakar into carrying out a short transition to civilian rule program. Their activities and the pressures they exerted eventually culminated in the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

Theory is an explanatory thought, used in describing different political phenomenon. There are many theories that could explain political events, therefore the suitable theory for this work is that Power theory was adopted. This approach was derived from the ideas of some traditional thinkers such as: Machiavelli (1469 – 1527) Hobbes (1588-1679), and Nietzsche (1844 -1900) as well as modern writers like Max Weber, Catlin, Merriam, Lasswell, Kaplan, Watkins, Treitschke and Morgenthau. The emphasis of this approach is on the development of formidable military power and the making of wars as according to them the essence of the state power. According to Allen Ball (Modern Politics and Government, 1988), the concept of political power is a key concept in the study of politics. Because if politics is the resolution of conflict, the distribution of power within a political community determines how the conflict is to be resolved and whether the resolution is to be effectively observed by all parties.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.1 Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection adopted in carrying out this research work is the secondary data collection. The secondary data collection refers to already collected data, stored or published.

Source of secondary data include Books, Journals, Newspapers, Magazines, Gazettes in related areas .According to Akindele (1989) Finding the relevant facts on research Projects in variably entails and involves Acquiring the capacity to use the library

Proficiently and effectively. I therefore consulted the library. The library constitutes the literature review of other scholars.

### 3.2 Research Design

This study analyzes military intervention in Nigeria politics, it historicizes the various military incursion in Nigeria from the post-independence era and gives an analyses of coup d'état that took place in the country using a hybrid of social economic development theory and organizational formal theory also observes the deteriorated economic conditions increase the choice of military intervention, similarly, the weak political institutions and low political culture have resulted to legitimacy crisis, it argues that the cohesive nature of the military institution and the stronger military resources, either as a percent of the state resources or relative to the national economy encourage military interregnum. Relying on the secondary source and the use of discourse analyses, also and historical overview of the military intervention in Nigeria and adduces reasons in support of the military intervention, it further argues that kleptomania of the

military government has posed security threats and gave rise to economic dislocation, while the judiciary has subjugated , in conclusion the prolonged military stayed in government has adversely affected the citizens and the Nigeria economy and has eroded the professionalism of the military institution rules and the political transition to democracy in Nigeria. It enquires into how military intervenes in the Nigerian politics in the recent time. The study also examines how corruption induces military intervention in Nigerian politics due to the embezzlement of public funds by our political leaders as well as mismanagement of government properties. This study looks at the major challenges in Nigeria's transition to democratic rule so as to establish the gap in the existing literature by examining the roles played by ethno-political organizations in the country

### **3.3 Instrument of data collection**

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.1 THE MILITARY IN NIGERIAN POLITICS

The history of military intervention in Nigerian politics is usually traced to January, 1966 coup d'état. In fact, military invention in Nigeria can be said to be as old as the Nigerian state itself. It can be traced to 1914 when the first colonial Governor General, Colonel Lord Lugard, a British Army Officer, amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorates to become a single entity called Nigeria. The name Nigeria was coined by Flora Shaw, who later became the wife of Lord Lugard. The origin of the establishment of the Nigerian military could be traced to 1863 when a paramilitary unit was formed which was then known as the 'Glover Hausas'. It was named after Lieutenant John Glover, the then Governor of Lagos, after its annexation in 1861 by the British Government. The Glover Hausas metamorphosed into the West Africa Frontier Force (WAFF) in 1889. With the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914, it became the Nigerian Regiment of the WAFF in 1922. The Nigerian Regiment was renamed the Nigerian Military Force in 1956. The ordinance constituting the Nigerian Military Force was promulgated and changed nomenclature to Nigerian Army in 1960. The Nigerian Army became fully indigenous in 1963 in the wake of Nigeria's attainment of Republican status via the Army Act of 1963. The Nigerian Navy and Nigerian Air Force were established via an Act of Parliament in 1958 and 1964 respectively. After Nigeria attained its independence in 1960, the military continued to be loyal to the first generation of Nigerian politicians until the first military intervention in Nigerian politics via a coup on 15 January, 1966. The happenings in some post-

independence African countries was said to have also encouraged the coup d'état in Nigeria. Some of these included the 23 July, 1952 coup led by Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdal-Nasser in Egypt; General Ibrahim Abbond's coup on 17 November, 1958 in Sudan; Colonel Boumedienne's, Algerian Army Chief on 19 June, 1965; Congo-Kinshasha's military intervention on 25 November, 1965; Central African Republic's on 1 January, 1966; and Upper Volta's (Burkina Faso) on 3 January, 1966. According to Peretei (2004), 'it was like a wild fire blowing fast across the black continent'. The coup and counter coup of 1966 began a dismal tradition of military intervention in Nigerian politics. The coups ousted the Balewa's administration and marked the ascendancy of the Nigerian military to the political scene of the country and their concomitant power manipulation and control for also three decades (Zaira, 2013). The Nigerian state has witnessed eleven coup, counter and abortive coup d'états in her post-independence history.

#### **4.2 THE FIRST REPUBLIC CRISIS, MILITARY INCURSION AND TRANSITION TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

Following the fall out in the Western region based Action Group (AG) political party and the inconsistent census, the Nigeria first republic virtually collapsed. By 1964, political competition had become very severe, and two major alliance of all the political parties contested the federal elections of that year. Electoral fraud was so rampant and so prevalent that the elections were meaningless and the results of the elections ending in a stalemate (Arikpo, 1967). As Arikpo reported, the events of the 1964 federal elections serious as they were, paled beside those which

followed during the Western Region election a year later in 1965 during in which the electorate literally poured gasoline on opponents and set them on fire. The electorate literally took the laws into its hands and the Police seemed powerless. Following the events above, Nigerians believed that the military was the only institution in the country that could stop the political chaos and restore political order and stability, as well as public confidence (Ojibo, 1980). Subsequently, there was a military coup d'état on January 15 1966 where some prominent Nigeria political leaders as well as some high ranking military officers were assassinated. The military coup d'état of 1966 and eventual ascension to power by Major General Aguyi Ironsi marked the end of Nigeria's first civilian democratic government. This was a welcome development to many Nigerians as it puts to an end to the civilian rule of the country, characterized by political tensions and instability. General Ironsi's challenge was whether or not he could sustain the confidence the nation reposed in the Army take-over (Ojibo, 1980; 26). New political arrangements and programmes were announced by the new head of State, which included a new constitution and handover to the civilian government. General Ironsi promulgated Decree No 34, abolishing the federal structure of Nigeria and replacing same with the new unitary structure. Part of the promise made by his government was to hand over power to the democratically elected civilian government as the military had no desire to prolong its interim administration longer than is necessary for the orderly transition of the country to the type of government desired by the people (Banjo, 1980). Although General Ironsi had the desire to hand over to the civilians, his short stay in office hampered the fulfilment of this mandate. As sectional suspicion

mounted, by June 1966 it was already evident that another coup would take place, which later led to the killing of General Ironsi. Irrespective of the ethnic or political leaning of commentators, it was obvious that the killing of General Ironsi and the enthronement of General Gowon to political power extended the military rule in Nigeria. Unarguably, Gowon's administration came in under a retaliatory coup without strong commitment to democratize Nigeria polity. Rather, the disgruntled northern region of the country that felt it had lost power as a result of the first military coup was satisfied that they got it back. The Ironsi administration would have at least been given a chance to hand over power to a civilian government before the revenge could have been calculated to be appropriate, if he was found biased to have favoured his ethnic group. General Yakubu Gowon's government that took over power from Gen. Ironsi ruled the country amidst civil war for nine years, after which he was overthrown on July, 1975 largely for a broad cast on 1st October 1974 where he reneged on his promise to return the country to civilian rule by 1976. Ojibo, (1980) believed that Gowon achieved nothing substantial or particularly flattering in his 9-point programme<sup>3</sup>. Following the above, the government of Yakubu Gowon was over thrown by the Gen. Muritala Mohammed regime. General Mohammed set up several programmes that were to define the new and stable political order viable for a democratic transition and succession. As to be expected, the Mohammed/Obasanjo regime that succeeded Gowon's did not waste time in announcing its intention to disengage the military from politics. Thus the only way the regime could get the honour and support of the people was through setting up a realistic time table for the transfer of political power to the civilians accordingly in a four year, five stage

programme.<sup>4</sup> Arguably, the democratic succession or transition to civil rule crafted and implemented by Muhammed/Obasanjo regime has some flaws as observed by Owolabi (1992). Prominent among these flaws was the way the transition planning was conceptualized. The programme concentrated on the political aspects of the transition, without putting in place a solid economic foundation, which made fulfilment of electoral promises by succeeding civilian regime practically impossible. Besides, there was the complete lack of any plans as regard the mobilization of the citizenry, especially one that would inculcate a new democratic culture needed for the survival of the succeeding government. Five new political parties were established and registered without adequate political education to the people. Owolabi, further noted that there was the problem with the behaviour of the military during the transition programme, specifically the removal of the provision of an electoral college and substituting it with a second popular election, if the first attempt fails to produce a clear winner. This period however marked the journey to end military administration since 1966, and the beginning of the second republic.

#### **4.3 BEGINNING AND FALL OF NIGERIA SECOND REPUBLIC**

The beginning of the second republic was marked by the declaration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari of National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and his consequent installation as the Executive President of Federal Republic of Nigeria, which was not wholeheartedly welcomed by all citizens. The grudge is more pronounced among those that believed that the military was not completely neutral in the transition programme of the Obasanjo regime. This casted doubts in the minds of the people about the legitimacy of the democratically elected government of the second republic

because the transition programme designed and implemented by the previous Military administration was seen as handover conspiracy (Haruna, 1988). Many Nigerians believed that Alhaji Shagari was too slow in getting things done compared to what Prof Awojobi referred to as “the dynamism of the military”<sup>5</sup> (Afenaga, 1980). Progressively, by 1981-1983 it had become increasingly clear that there were serious lapses in the practices of liberal democracy and federalism on which the second republic had constituted under the transition programme. With hiccups in the polity, there was inevitably stalemate and paralysis of the governmental process. Politicians did not live up to the high expectation which had been generated by the coming of the second republic. Subsequently, the conduct of 1983 state and federal elections was marked by serious allegations of electoral fraud and similar malpractices, political violence, harassment and victimization of party supporters by the parties in power at the federal and state levels, which resulted in erosion of confidence in the electoral process. The post-election political climate therefore created the anticipated ground swell of popular support for a coup that forestalled the progression of the second republic, which therefore marks the ultimate end of the civilian regime in the second republic (Olagunju, et al. 1993).

#### **4. 4 THE BRUTAL JOURNEY TO THE FOURTH REPUBLIC**

Abacha’s regime however marked the end of the shortest lived “quasi civilian” government and third republic of Nigeria. The regime saw to the re-composition of a military rule, the scrapping of all democratic institutions, and the replacement of the ING by a Provisional Ruling Council, (PRC) and Federal Executive Council (FEC). Abacha’s initial declared agenda was ominously

reticent about a timetable for the military's political disengagement in politics. He set up the machinery for a promised constitutional conference, which was a gesture to capture the long standing demand of pro-democracy groups call for a National Conference. Establishment of a new transition by him was predictably disappointing to those who had expected him to install Chief MKO Abiola as the President of the country. Gen. Abacha's attempts to generate public support for his coup could hardly eclipse the pervasive feeling of despair over the collapse of a transition project that had gulped an estimated N30 billion (Suberu, 1997), and some of the enraged third Republic Senators viewed him as masking under excuses. There were uncertified allegations that the then military head of state sole financed the registered political parties (NCPN, GDM, DPN, etc.) for a self-succession bid. There were traces of "fake transition" beginning from "transition without end "(Diamond, et al 1997). In cognizance of the intentions of General Abacha, Rtd. Gen. Yar Adua and Gen. Obasanjo found themselves crisscrossing the country and mobilizing for one political project or another, either against Abacha's self-succession scheme, or continuing with their shadow-boxing in preparation for a political race about to be declared open (Adekanye, 1999; 192). After the tortious years of Abacha's transition, his death marked the end of his bold self-succession attempts at retuning Nigeria to democratically elected civilian government. Until June 1998, when General Abdulsalam Abubakar became Nigeria's new head of state following Gen. Abacha's death, the progress in the transition programme from military to civilian rule had been about one scheme in selfsuccession or the other. Unlike the previous regime, Gen. Ababakar's transition plan that

lasted shorter than two years, consolidated and sharpened up the way towards democratic transition in Nigeria. Gen. Abubakar proved to be honest and determined to relinquish power to the democratically elected civilians, which was initially doubtful to many Nigerians. Ultimately, on Feb. 27th 1999, he was proven to be truthful in keeping to his mandate, inspective of all odds by holding a presidential election without controversy. This momentous and bold step of Gen. Abubakar signaled the positive end of his military regime and the beginning of the fourth republic on 27th May 1999.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 SUMMARY**

In this study, our focus was military rule and political transition in Nigeria: an appraisal of Abacha regime (1993-1998). The study specifically was aimed at highlighting how corruption accounts for military intervention in Nigerian politics. The study also determine the roles played by ethno-political organizations in military intervention. Lastly, the study find out the major challenges in Nigerian"s transition to democratic rule .

#### **5.2 CONCLUSION**

Based on the finding of this study, the following conclusions were made:

This study has shown that prior to Abacha's reign, Nigeria had gone through series of challenges that threatened the very existence of the state. When Abacha took over from the puppet civilian administration established by his predecessor General Babangida in 1993, the assumption was that he had plans to tackle the country's various socio-political challenges and hand power back to the politicians after stabilizing the polity. But this was no to be. Abacha not only extend military rule in the country but also destroyed the few trappings of democracy that had been nurtured under his predecessor. Claiming to be interested in ostensibly democratic tenets in the country, Abacha set about overhauling the Nigerian socio-economic and political space. The study shows, Abacha made extensive use of the constitutional, institutional and

praetorian mechanisms. Indeed, some of the programmes the mechanisms established for the country were commendable. Such includes the creation of a national human rights agency, the establishment of a new electoral body, the creation of a national fund to intervene in social and educational issues, and the establishment of a series of constitutional conferences geared toward the creation of a workable and fair covenant for the country.

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