

Title of Article: Democracy, Pluralism and Nation Building: The Case of Nigeria

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Abstract: This chapter examines democracy in a multi-ethnic society, where affinity and loyalty to the micro group is very strong. But given the nature of democracy as a system of rule by laws that protect the right of citizens and limits the power of the government, creating a strong nation-state in a heterogeneous society may prove difficult as is the case of Nigeria. Nations confronted with the problem of diversity often devises mechanism that tend to accommodate the varying interests of the various ethnic groups with the aim to foster unity and sustain continued existence of the country. But the question that begs for answers in this section is to determine the extent or degree provisions and practices meant to accommodate diversity in a heterogeneous polity conform to the principles of democracy. These issues were effectively discussed as it relates to the Nigeria by taking an excursion into the history of the country and its many experimentation with democracy. To start with, we have to note that one important ingredient of democracy presupposes that the 'demo' must be a part of every aspect of the governance process of which the end product affects their life. From the history of Nigeria's experimentation with democracy, this important element has been missing. Even though the country at one time or the other have practiced a system of democracy where the most powerful officials of government are purported to be selected by the will of the majority of Nigerians, a critical

examination have shown that the various stops at democracy have yet to produce a system purely driven by the people at the grassroots controlling the governance process.