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Research Paper

THE NIGERIAN LEGISLATURE AND ITS CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATIONAL ROLE: FOCUS ON THE FOURTH REPUBLIC DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT **This study examined the political representational role of Nigerian lawmakers, their relationship with their constituencies and its impact on democratic consolidation under the**

on under the nation's fourth republic. It relied on secondary materials such as journal articles, books, and the theory of liberal democracy as a framework of analysis. From the analysis, results revealed a bleak representation and relationship between the lawmakers and their political constituencies. Their poor pattern of relationship was attributed to many factors which include corruption and poor political education on the responsibilities of the lawmakers. Other factors revealed include absence of transparency and accountability, limited resources, time constraints, and personal interest at the expense of public interest by the lawmakers. Their pattern of relations, without doubt, contradicts the principle of liberal democracy which is centered around fair citizen representation and political participation in the affairs of the state. It does not consolidate democracy. In a democracy, sovereignty belongs to the people and, therefore, the ultimate concern of the state should be focused on the people. Based on the results, there is need for better representation of the people by their lawmakers. The lawmakers should also educate their constituents on their major constitutional roles, promote public interest, and consolidate democracy. The constituents and the political system must also be able to hold parliamentarians accountable. When this is achieved, the people would be well-represented, and democracy consolidated. Lastly, while the research would be of benefit to the lawmakers, their constituents, the public, researchers and, by extension, the body of knowledge, future study should examine the legislature and its execution of constituency projects in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS :Constituency representation, Democracy, Fourth republic, Legislature,

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, the eminence of parliamentary, presidential, constitutional, or simply representative democratic governance, continues to dominate space and discussion amongst scholars. This is because democratic governance appears to be the regnant concern of several nations. Also, in such democratic settings, the legislature as an institution and its representational

role remains cardinal because of its key position amongst other institutions of the state and as a mouthpiece of the common people. According to Murana and Bakare (2019), the argument that the parliament occupies a key position in a democracy compares to other organs of the state, appears to persistently enjoy the support of practitioners, scholars, and observers. In fact, democracy cannot survive in any nation without a lively and a healthy parliament (Blondel, 1973). This is because of the indispensable position of the parliament in the advancement of democratic governance (Murana, 2018; Brunner, 2013; Mattes & Mozaffar, 2011). As a political instrument of a representative democracy which emerged due to complexities and new challenges in contemporary societies that hinder peoples' direct involvement in governance, it is expected to act as the mouthpiece of the people, as well as promote their interests (Awofeso & Irabor, 2020; Arter,

2011; Rehfield, 2006; Urbinati & Warren, 2008). In Nigeria, for instance, and considering the importance of representation in a democracy, the Nigerian 1999 Constitution in Section 48 and 49 ensures delineation of political constituencies where people elect representatives to stand for their interest in the parliament based on size, population and state of origin (Baba, 2019). This is done to ensure that the people make input and are included in the governance process of the state.

Based on the delineated political constituencies, Baba (2019) revealed that elected legislators are constitutionally expected and obligated to communicate and relate with their electorates to ascertain their inputs, as well, reflect their interest in the parliament. To facilitate this, the constitution also ensures the creation of constituency offices where constituent interests, requests, inputs, and complaints are collated for discussion in the parliament. However, Murana and Bakare (2019) argued that, while some of the constitutionally-created constituency offices are very active in operation and useful to their constituencies, others are mere structures with no relevance to the people. Therefore, based on the above submissions and considering the critical importance of the legislature in the promotion of democratic governance and consolidation, it becomes necessary to cast deeper research into the area. This is to ascertain the actual state of political representation as well as the pattern of relationship between the lawmakers and their constituents in Nigeria's fourth republic democracy. Though several studies have been conducted in the field by Yusuf et al. (2018), Fashagba et al. (2019), and Ruffin and Fagbadebo (2019) amongst other scholars, , none was found to have focused on the interrelationship between the lawmakers, their representational

role and relationship with their constituency. This study fills the gap and contributes to the body of knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To consolidate knowledge on the studied phenomenon, important concepts and keywords are reviewed below. These include the legislature; political representation; legislature-constituency relations; methods of relations between the lawmakers and their constituencies; and democracy and democratic consolidation.

The Legislature

The legislature as a concept enjoys various political appellations across democratic nations (Oni,

2013; Okpe & Othman, 2020; Okpe & Taya, 2018). In the US, for instance, it is known as the Congress. In Nigeria, it is the National Assembly while it is the parliament in the UK (Okpe & Taya, 2018; Lafenwa, 2009; Heywood, 2007; Oni, 2013) and Malaysia and South Africa. As an important democratic political institution (Fashagba, 2019), it stands as a vital organ in the governance of the state (Ewuim et al., 2014; Obidimma & Obidimma, 2015). It is a great pillar of democracy and positive governance (Godswealth et al., 2016; Momodu, 2012; Momodu & Matudi,

2013; Oni, 2014; Osakede et al., 2017). Aligning with the scholars above, it is also important to note that the common expectations in most modern-day nations and democracies, reside in efficient, active, and effective legislature that drive good governance.

The common expectation, as revealed by Oni et al. (2019) and Gill (2002), can only be achieved through an effective state government which does not only offer a good security to her citizens, but equally cares for their primary needs and guarantees their socioeconomic and political development. As an important organ of the state and democracy, Fashagba (2019), and Fashagba et al. (2019) found that the parliament is not only a vital democratic institution, but also a

constitutional and political unit of the state that connects the state with the common people through a legal structure of a defined authority. They concluded by denoting the legislature as the greatest organized political platform for political activities as well as a veritable route through which the consent of the citizens is mobilized and engaged for maximization of benefit. In this form, the authors observed the legislature as a link between the people and the state. Additionally, it is a

political instrument of harnessing public interest which best defines democratic governance in a state.

According to Murana and Bakare (2019), the view that the national assembly, as preferably called in Nigeria, occupies a critical state in democracy, appears undisputed and it is a mark of public representation (Fagbadebo, 2019). As well it is an organ with a defined constitutional power that, not only makes laws, but equally influences the policies of the government (Omotoso & Oladeji,

2019), to maximize the best interest for the public. However, as revealed by Fashagba (2013), the manner and the application of such constitutionally-defined powers by the institution, determine and define its relevance before the public. In this regard, Hague and Harrop (2004) observed that the parliament plays a vital function in standing for citizens by offering a formidable guard and security against executive or government tyranny.

In Nigeria's fourth republic, the legislature is established under the 1999 constitution as a legal body, not only to make laws, change, or amend them, but as well, perform constituency representational role in the parliament. It equally exercises control over government activities through its oversight function. It is a policy-making and deliberative organ established by the 1999 constitution to enhance the political system and democratic stability. Drawing from the ongoing, the parliament is seen and projected as an important political and democratic instrument of the state through which the public consent is organized and represented for the essence of better life for the people. However, as noted by Fashagba (2013), the way its powers and functions are manifested in the state would define its relevance before the people. This is because the lawmakers, as noted by Fagbadebo (2019), have the duty to represent the people, promote public good, and provide a conducive political environment to promote good governance.

Political Representation

The concept of "representation" or simply "political representation" just like law-making, is another constitutional and legal function of the national assembly (Awotokun, 1998; Okpe & Othman, 2020). In Western political thought, for instance, Fairlie (1940) found that the concept could be drawn from the history of Rome, especially when the prince appeared as their representative collectively. According to Murana and Bakare (2019), during the medieval era, the

emperor or the king, the Pope amongst other bodies like the Cardinals in the church, the Councils and the Assemblies of qualified citizens in a well-organized society, were given the character and image of representatives. In this regard, as they added, the representatives were seen in relation to a single administrator and often hereditary. The king or the emperor was the peoples' trustee and, to a great extent, free to indulge his whims in any way he deems as serving the interest of his people.

Adding to the above, Edigheji (2006) found that, in the early thought of representative government, public representatives were not necessarily elected. They were either inherited, appointed or a single actor representing the public and had nothing to do with constituencies. But in the contemporary democracies and political societies (Murana & Bakare, 2019), political representation widely remains a significant instrument of democracy. To Fairlie (1940), representative democracy informs a political system of administration where the constitutional power of public sovereignty is delegated to several elected representatives who act on them in the public interest. It is a political relationship between the legislators and their constituencies (Loewenberg & Patterson, 1979). It is a machinery of government that joins the people and the state together for the realization of better life.

Also notable is that in the present-day governance, complexities amongst other challenges make it difficult for citizens to be directly involved in the administration of their country unlike in the small Greek city-states. This, therefore, makes the electorates to participate in the administration of their state through elected political representatives (Baba, 2019; Awotokun, 1998; Okpe & Othman, 2020). In Nigeria, for instance, the representational role of the legislature is defined in the 1999 constitution (Murana & Bakare, 2019; Okpe & Othman, 2020). According to Baba (2019), they perform major functions of law-making, representation and oversight. To aid its representational role, for instance, the constitution legalized the creation of various constituencies in the country. They enable the citizens to be represented in the national assembly based on their size, population, and state of origin. The 1999 constitution in Section 48/49 further observed that the Nigerian Senate must encompass three senators from every state of the federation, as well, one senator from Abuja, which is the federal capital territory. Also, the Nigerian House of Representatives shall equally encompass 360 elected lawmakers representing different

constituencies of almost equal population. This move by the constitution is to ensure that the interests of the people are well-represented in the parliament by the elected representatives.

Legislature-Constituency Relations

Constituency-legislature relation or representation is often informed on the role of political representation of the legislature or representative democracy. The legislature, as highlighted in the preceding discussion, represents an important pillar of democracy as well as a vital instrument for good governance (Ewuim et al., 2014; Obidimma & Obidimma, 2015; Godswealth et al., 2016; Momodu, 2012; Momodu & Matudi, 2013; Oni, 2014; Osakede et al., 2017; Fashagba, 2019). While political representation is a basic function of the parliamentarians in both presidential and parliamentary democracies (Abegunde, 2016; Fashagba & Mu'awiyya, 2019), it is about transforming public aspirations into viable programs, policies, and projects (Dan-Azumi & Okereke, 2018; Omano, 2006). Based on this, it is incumbent on the lawmakers to create a stable political environment for public good. Also, a political constituency, as noted by Pitkin (1967), is a complex political concept. But as highlighted by Awofeso and Irabor (2020), it is a political electoral unit where citizens elect those who represent their interest in the parliament. It is a community of people represented in the parliament (Yusuf et al., 2018) as well as a state electoral district within a political setting (Benjamin, 2014). The above submissions show how the concept of legislature, representation and political constituency are interrelated in a democracy. They inform a political interaction and transaction between the people and their representatives in the government. This form of interaction often derives its legitimacy from the constitution which empowers the people to elect their representatives to the parliament to stand for their common interests.

In Nigeria, the 1999 constitution promotes this relationship between the entities through the creation of different political constituencies. The representatives are required by the constitution to interact and relate with their constituencies to reflect their interests in their general activities and conduct. Additionally, to facilitate interaction

and positive relationship between the lawmakers and their electorates, the constitution empowers the lawmakers to create constituency offices as centers for input collation. However, as literatures have revealed, this role is not performed by the lawmakers without enormous challenges. This is because, as Baba (2019) revealed, in Nigeria, the

lawmakers are barely held responsible for their actions and conducts especially by the state and the people. He added that, even when elections serve as a veritable instrument and avenue to sanction or reward the parliamentarians for their poor performance and conducts, the lawmakers sometimes circumvent the electoral process and rig themselves back to office. Consequently, he concluded, the quality of representation is negatively affected by the attitudes of the lawmakers. It is not an ideal teaching of a representative democracy. Such conducts by the lawmakers contradict the interest of the public and democratic consolidation. According to SAHO (2014), the national assembly is where parliamentarians should represent and look after the interest of their citizens, and the constituency must offer the common people access to their legislators (Grant, 2016, cited in Fashagba & Mu'awiyya, 2019). However, the interest of the people is compromised and, as such, the house presents a sign of unhealthy relations.

Methods of Relations between the Lawmakers and their Constituencies

In a democracy, various means of interactions between the parliamentarians and their electorates exist and cannot be overemphasized. This is because they represent the people in the parliament, and, therefore, must interact with their people. Considering the importance of communication between the entities, the National Development Institute (NDI) (2006) in their research found that effective interaction between lawmakers and their constituencies demonstrates a lawmakers' level of responsiveness and commitment to the interests of their electorate. Aligning with the above, Murana and Bakare (2019) found that lawmakers who ensure good relations, communication and easy access by their constituencies often continue to enjoy their support. As further stated by the authors, this is built on the evidence that good relations between the entities promotes good interaction, exchange of information and ideas. It allows the electorates to exercise their preferences to either oppose or support decisions affecting their lives. To this end, the lawmakers and their constituencies interact via several methods, encompassing e-mails, phone calls, text messages and constituency offices. Others include Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Radio and TV stations, as well as newspapers.

In Nigeria's fourth republic, and amongst the above-mentioned avenues of interaction and relations between the lawmakers and their constituencies, evidence shows that constituency offices are the most prominent. Regarding the constituency offices, as further explained by Murana and Bakare

(2019), several of them are engaged in serious activities and interactions between the lawmakers and the people while others are simply deserted buildings. In the constituency offices, electorates submit their request letters, petitions, protests, and complaints for dispatch to their representatives. Apart from the constituency offices, they added, Community Development Meeting (CDM) meetings equally serve as another important method of communication. Through this avenue, constituents' requests and complaints are gathered, filtered, and presented at meetings with lawmakers. The lawmaker's response to the requests is often beneficial and in favor of the electorates because it also serves as an opportunity to secure re-election support from the people. In fact, the CDM does not happen frequently except in election seasons to gain the people's support in facilitating re-election. This indicates that communication between the lawmakers and their constituents could not have been more fruitful.

Democratic Governance and Consolidation

In a parliamentary, presidential or representative system of administration, the concept of democracy, governance and consolidation cannot be overlooked. This is because they form part of the major ingredients of the political system. While the concepts appear independently unique and exceptional, they are also interconnected in a democratic system (Isma'ila & Othman, 2016), and represent a viable political instrument in building a stable system for good life. Democracy for instance, though ascribed with definitions and meanings arising from different perspectives and schools of thoughts (Yusuf, 2018), deals with a political system built on arrangement between the citizens and the state (Okpe & Taya, 2018). Notably according to Isma'ila & Othman (2016), democracy involves a type of constitutional government where the electorates elect their representatives to stand for them in the government to manage their values, resources, and welfare.

In concomitance with that, governance is an instrument for promoting democratic dividends and consolidation (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2016). It is a process by which the political system realizes the values of transparency, accountability, stable rule of law, participation as well as active provision of services and responsible bureaucratic process (Inokoba & Kumokor, 2012; UNICEF, 2002). It has also received a considerable attention in the body of literature (Ewuim et al., 2014; Akomolede,

2012; Rotberg, 2014; Nkemdili, 2013; Agunyai & Olawoyin, 2019). In addition, consolidation in a political system simply entails a responsive, efficient, and stable administration (Oni, 2014). Considering the submissions above, therefore, democratic governance, according to Isma'ila (2016), is a system in a democracy where the institutions of state like the legislature function constitutionally within the template of democratic ethics. It simply means a political system built, and operated, in consonance with democratic standards.

Building on the above, Yusuf (2018) found that democratic consolidation indicates a specific stage where democratic practice in a system is more developed, and democracy becomes more legitimate, powerful and its breakdown unlikely to manifest easily. Democracy becomes more stable (Jega, 2016, cited in Yusuf, 2018) and exists as the only system in town (Lawoti, 2014). Adding to the argument, Oni (2014) revealed that it involves a stage in which democracy is deployed to organize the people and the government, as well as the development of institutions, culture and principles that support the political system to be more stable, efficient and responsive. It simply means a system where the practice of democracy becomes more consolidated in a political system. Considering those schools of thought and revelation, however, Isma'ila (2016) argued that, in the context of Nigeria, the values are neither effective, obvious nor efficiently functional to avail positive changes needed by Nigerians. He concluded that the Nigerian political system is characterized by lack of effective practice and adherence to democratic principles by government institutions like the legislature amongst others . Challenges of insecurity, institutional corruption, religious and ethnic cleavages, electoral malpractices, weak political institutions like the executive and the national assembly continue to impact more negatively on democracy and its consolidation.

Egbefo (2015), Oni (2014), Usman and Avidime (2016), and Yusuf (2018), the reemergence of democratic form of governance in 1999, after the long experience of military administration, it came with many positive feelings and expectations. However, they added, after

several decades of practice, the positive public expectations are now shattered by extreme insecurity, poverty, political instability, corruption, poor governance, and weak political system. The above shows that both democracy, governance and consolidation have not been fruitful to Nigerians under the current fourth republic democratic governance. In terms of effective political representation and

relations between the lawmakers and their constituencies, Murana and Bakare (2019) in their survey revealed that the easiest way these relations and interactions occur is usually through a community development meeting which takes place occasionally. As they further explained, CDMs meetings often happen especially when election is imminent in the country. Therefore, the representatives use such avenue to seek support from the electorates for re-election. From the ongoing, representative democratic governance and consolidation appears to be working against the interest of the people.

RESEARCH METHOD AND MATERIALS

This study used descriptive qualitative method to examine the political representational role and the pattern of relationship between Nigerian legislators and their electoral constituencies under the fourth republic democracy. It is a useful research tool with the capacity to enhance assessment in relation to human social issues in the society (Colorafi & Evans, 2016; Creswell, 2013; Lambert

& Lambert, 2012; Wright & McKeever, 2000; Nassaji, 2015). The social issues equally encompass parliamentary representative role and their interaction with the people. The method helps researchers to employ a sound and effective description and a well-articulated deep thought on the subject of investigation (Magilvy, 2003). This is because social issues are often complex and better measured qualitatively. The tool promotes a comprehensive overview, knowledge and understanding of issues (Colorafi & Evans, 2016; Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Creswell, 2013). The above scholarly disclosures show richness and the importance of descriptive qualitative instrument in the examination of social events, and particularly in this study. Materially, the study depends on secondary literatures like journal articles and books authored by Ruffin and Fagbadebo, (2019), Fashagba and Mu'awiyya (2019), Murana and Bakare (2019) as well as Agunyai and Olawoyin (2019) for analysis. The analysis is also aided with liberal democratic theory to draw a valid and comprehensive conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the liberal democratic theory to unravel and describe the state of parliamentary- citizen representation in the contemporary representative democracy of the Nigerian fourth republic. According to Vincent and Tunde (2018), the early proponents of this theory are Rousseau JJ, Adam Smith, John Locke, John Stuart Mill and Barron De Montesquieu. The theory helps in

crafting the description of the kind of democratic practice enjoyed in several democracies around the globe. The major thrust of the theory, as explained by Mohamed (2013) and Kwasau (2013), is that it projects a political society that embraces and encourages fair citizens' representation and participation in the affairs of governance. It is a democratic theory that encourages the absolute representation of the citizens in the affair of their government. It supports political participation without inclination to ownership of property or wealth, gender, and race. It encourages a system of active political organization and citizen representation that promote good governance and the will of the citizens. It promotes a system of periodic fair, free and credible election through which the citizens elect their representatives in government (Vincent & Tunde (2018). Based on the above, the adoption of the theory in describing the state of parliamentary-citizen representation in contemporary Nigerian politics is apt, timely and scholarly significant. It would enable the researcher and readers to easily understand what representative democratic governance entails and whether the interests of Nigerian citizens have been, and are being, fully represented by the representatives as ought to be.

RESEARH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the body of reviewed works, several findings emerged. The findings are revealed and discussed under the sub-headings below.

Legislature-Constituency Representation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Under the Nigeria's fourth republic presidential and representative democracy, results emerged that the 1999 constitution created room for interaction between the electoral constituencies and their lawmakers. The lawmakers represent the interests of their constituencies in the parliament and in the government. To make the representation more legal, constitutional, and effective, result also revealed that the 1999 constitution made lawful the creation of political constituencies in the country. Through the constituencies, citizens are represented in the parliament based on their size and population or state of origin. This also aligned with the findings of Baba (2019). To further affirm the above, the 1999 constitution in Section 48 and 49 established thus:

The Nigerian Senate shall comprise three Senators from every and one must come from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. The House of Representatives shall equally comprise three hundred and sixty lawmakers representing their constituencies which must be nearly equal in terms of population and must not fall into another state (The 1999 Constitution, Section 48/49).

Based on the above provision of the 1999 constitution, findings revealed that constituents elect their political representatives to the parliament. The representatives are mandated to interact, and relate, with their constituents as well as reflect their interest in the parliament. They have the responsibility to promote and sustain public goods (Fashagba, 2019). But has the above realized since the emergence of the fourth republic? Analysis shows that the lawmakers perform their responsibilities to their constituents, but the relationship has been very poor and challenging. Affirming this, Baba (2019) explained that parliamentarians are barely challenged by their electorates and the political system to account for their actions and inactions. Even when elections are supposed to serve as a veritable opportunity to sanction and reward the parliamentarians, they manipulate the electoral process and rig themselves back to office. This attitude often impacts negatively on the quality of representation and the degree of citizen participation in governance (Baba, 2019). The conduct is totally in sharp contrast with the ethics of liberal democratic theory. The liberal democratic theory upholds that the interest of the citizens must count first because, in democracy, sovereignty belongs to the people (Ogbonnaya et al., 2017), who also represent the end of the state (Daudu & Fashagba, 2019). This cannot also consolidate democracy.

Despite the above, result also showed that some of the parliamentarians perform their constitutional role effectively. According to Fashagba and Mu'awiyya (2019), some of the parliamentarians engage their citizens through different financial supports amongst other socioeconomic initiatives to address their immediate needs. The initiatives include scholarship awards to students, distribution of agricultural implements, empowerment through computer training as well as the distribution of foodstuffs, motorcycles, commercial vehicles, and creation of employment opportunities. Others provide soft loans for small business enterprises, creation, renovation and building of primary schools, hospitals amongst other facilities in their constituencies. The essence

of this, unarguably, is to promote their constituents' social welfare which, consequently, promotes and consolidate democracy. This also aligns with the findings of

SAHO (2014), and fits into the projections of the liberal democratic theory of citizen representation.

Exposing the ill conducts of some lawmakers, Murana and Bakare (2019) affirmed that though that the 1999 constitution directed the lawmakers to build constituency offices in their various constituencies, some of such offices are functional with activities whereas others are mere buildings without life. According to Onwe et al. (2015), many of the Nigerian parliamentarians are not active. Though they are constituent political representatives, in practice, they represent their personal interest because most of them often see their election as an investment especially in Nigeria where politics is a commercial venture. Results equally surfaced that immediately some of the parliamentarians were elected to office, they quickly changed their social status instead of improving the quality of life of their constituents, and this was affirmed by Tom and Attai (2014). To Ezea (2011), the degree of budgetary indiscipline, often displayed by many of the parliamentarians over the years, remains alarming. Several constituencies in Nigeria are seen by the representatives as an avenue for financial fraud, official corruption, and lubricants for primitive accumulation of wealth. Most of the constituencies in Nigerian have never felt any positive effect from the yearly constituency project funds allocated to their representatives.

In line with the above, Fashgba et al. (2014) explained that the most disturbing part is that many of the representatives often claim that they are the serving national interest while sabotaging the interest of their constituency. This has often been the case under the fourth republic democratic governance, and in sharp contrast to the doctrine of the liberal democratic principles. The lawmakers need to prioritize the interest of the constituencies that elected them as representatives in the parliament because when their interest is considered, democracy is also consolidated.

Challenges in Legislature-Constituency Relations and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria Considering the revelations above which revealed poor level of lawmakers' representation, performance and relationship with their electoral constituencies, several factors appear to be responsible. The result revealed some of the factors as corruption, internal party crisis and absence of discipline in the Nigerian political parties. This contributes to absence of commitment of lawmakers to their constituencies. This concurred with the findings of Onwe et al. (2015). In this

case, it is noteworthy that one instrument of democratic consolidation is internal party democracy but it appears lacking in Nigerian political parties as they are often in internal crisis. According to Baba (2019), the lawmakers are barely held accountable by their constituents for their actions and inactions. These attitudes cannot say be deemed as consolidating democracy.

In addition to the above, result also emerged that, though that the representatives have their flaws, the constituents are neither flawless. According to Murana and Bakare (2019), constituents mostly do not bother to ask the lawmakers their stand on certain national issues or their voting on certain matters but are often interested in tangible and material benefits from their representatives. Consequently, the lawmakers' inability to satisfy their material requests often make them to deny easy accessibility from their constituents. The people put much material expectation on the lawmakers (Oni, 2013; Nwanolue & Ojukwu, 2012; Ojibara, 2017). This can be attributed to the poor knowledge of the people with regard to the actual role of the lawmakers. The lawmakers, amongst other Nigerian political elites, need to address this through proper political education.

Furthermore, other factors identified involve time and limited resources, personal interest and corruption and amateur representatives. On this, NILS (2015) observed that on many occasions, the Nigerian parliamentarians often complain of poor resources which, in most cases, negatively affect their performance and relations with their constituents. Communication between the lawmakers and their constituents is often poor. The reason for this may not, however, be far from some the factors mentioned above which include corruption, time, and insufficient resources.

According to Lafenwa (2009), the lawmakers often prefer to pursue their personal goals rather than the common good of their people. They do not care that the expectation of any democracy is located in effective representation of the people and good governance (Gill, 2002; Oni et al. 2019). Only through effective representation of the people can the legislature achieve the socioeconomic, political development and democratic consolidation . This is because the legislature is the only major place where the interest of the people is considered, promoted, and represented as asserted by SAHO (2014) and Grant (2016). Considering the challenges highlighted, everything points the need for better representation of the people. The representatives must strive to reduce their level of personal interest while educating their constituencies on their major constitutional roles.

Through these measures, the constituents would be well-represented, and the nation's democracy

consolidated.

CONCLUSION

Effective political representation of the citizens is a vital instrument for effective democratic governance and consolidation. It brings about better relations between the people and their representatives in the government beside the consolidation of democracy. As noted by Murana and Bakare (2019), a government that incorporates the inputs of her citizens in processes of decision- making not only promotes legitimacy and representation, but equally gives the people a sense of inclusiveness. This can be similarly termed the government of the people. However, considering the objective of this article which is centered around understanding the state of parliamentary- citizens representation and interaction in Nigeria's fourth republic democracy, relationship between the entities appears weak. Also, the study, in achieving its objective, relied on secondary resources such as journal articles and books and the liberal democratic theory to achieve a sound conclusion. Results from the analysis show that a positive political representation and sound relationship between the representatives and their constituencies has not been met. This ineffective relationship and representation were also attributed to certain factors which include corruption, personal interest, poor political education, time, and insufficient resources.

According to Fashgba et al. (2014), many of the representatives often claim that they are serving public interest but engage in sharp practices to the detriment of their constituency. Result also shows that several constituents do not understand the major constitutional roles of their

representatives and, therefore, inordinately pressure their representatives for material benefits (Oni, 2013; Nwanolue & Ojukwu, 2012; Ojibara, 2017). Drawing from the foregoing, the people have to be educated on the major roles of the lawmakers. There is also the need for transparency and accountability as evidence has emerged that the representatives are barely held accountable for their actions and inactions. With these properly addressed, constituents would be not only be well-represented, democracy would also be consolidated. Lastly, the study would benefit the lawmakers, citizens, researchers aside from body of knowledge while future study could examine the lawmakers' execution of constituency projects in their constituencies.

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