

**COVENANT UNIVERSITY  
NIGERIA**

*TUTORIAL KIT  
OMEGA SEMESTER*

**PROGRAMME: POLITICAL  
SCIENCE**

**COURSE: POS 221**

## **DISCLAIMER**

The contents of this document are intended for practice and leaning purposes at the undergraduate level. The materials are from different sources including the internet and the contributors do not in any way claim authorship or ownership of them. The materials are also not to be used for any commercial purpose.

# POS 221: DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Lecturers: Dr. M. Duruji and Mr. Loromeke

## QUESTIONS

- 1) With clear examples, discuss the features of accountability in democracy
- 2) Describe in details, the ways of ensuring accountability in democracy and relate how these apply to contemporary democratic experience in Nigeria.
- 3) Discuss the types of democratization processes as elaborated by Huntington
- 4) Examine the concept of Democracy.
- 5) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the Proportional Representation system.
- 6) The procedural definition of democracy rests on two dimensions of Participation and Contestation; using these two principles do an assessment of Nigeria's democratic experiment since 1999.
- 7) With clear examples, examine the contentions of the elite and the pluralist theories
- 8) Identify the major electoral systems and discuss their advantages and disadvantages. Which do you think would be suitable for Nigeria and why?
- 9) Identify and discuss the role of the media in democracy
- 10) Identify the INEC voting procedure adopted for the 2011 General election and relate these to the identified rigging methods in Nigeria's elections?
- 11) Analyze the impact of public opinion in Nigeria's democratic governance.
- 12) Applying the Huntington's model, discuss the factors responsible for the waves and reverse waves we have witnessed thus far in global democratization experience.
- 13) Examine the agencies for the formation of public opinion.
- 14) Examine the impact of social capital in engendering a vibrant civil society?
- 15) Discuss the major characteristics of Representative democracy.

## ANSWERS

- 1) First the student is expected to show that the concept of accountability involves two distinct stages: answerability and enforcement. In addition, the issues of responsibility to the citizenry and separation of powers must also be identified and discussed.
- 3) Democratic *transformation*: takes place when power holders take the lead in bringing about democracy  
Democratic *replacement*: takes place when opposition groups take the lead in bringing about democracy. Old authoritarian regime is overthrown.  
Democratic *transplacement*: takes place when there is joint action by the government and opposition groups to promote democratization.
- 5) Advantages: Translating of votes to seats can avoid the 'unfair' results that can arise in FPTP systems. Avoids the 'winning bonus' as votes are directly translated into seats. It

encourages or requires parties to formulate policy lists which can be voted upon thus clarifying ideology and policy. PR does not allow votes to be wasted so is it democracy in a purer form than FPTP? Low thresholds mean that almost every vote is counted and will be represented. PR can facilitate minority parties' access to representation thus more democratic. Encourages parties to campaign beyond their districts as every vote counts. It can provide a stability to Policy and makes power sharing more visible.

Disadvantages: Gives rise to coalition governments thus fragmented executive can cloud policy making and provide obstacles. Factional splits can arise which, again, cause instability in the legislature. PR can be a platform for extremist parties and potentially anti-systemic parties. Governing coalitions will undoubtedly share too little common ground to make strong policies.

7) *Elite theory* argues that the key policy decisions are made by a tiny minority; Robert Dahl felt government too large, issues too complex, for any other option. Elite theorists feel elite rule unfair, undemocratic; that decisions benefit the powerful and wealthy.

*Pluralism* argues that political decisions are largely driven by interest groups. While there may be powerful business interests, pluralists point out the action government has taken to close down asbestos operations and curtail the use of tobacco, as a result of various other interests promoting government action. Some pluralists argue that only societies with traditions of pluralism can foster democracy; democracy has had little success taking root in Russia where Communism eliminated most competing groups

9) The role of the media includes; Communication between the Government and the Citizenry, Accountability, Constitutionalism and the Rule of the Law, Political socialization, Conduct of free and fair elections, Democratic Consolidation, Democratization.

11) The role of public opinion in a democracy is of particular significance on two grounds. In the first place, when free play of opinion is assured, the whole process acts as a check on the overgrowth of power. When law becomes a reflection of public opinion, it offers an easy solution to the problem of political obligation. Opinions may be reflected in an election, a policy decision, or formal legislative enactment. Once it is accepted that opinion determines political action, the opinion conductors may be found in formal as well as informal agencies. The formal role is played by the governmental agencies like the legislative, executive, judicial and administrative machineries, while the latter may be illustrated by the role of political parties and interest groups

13) Political Parties: The most important agency for opinion formation is the political parties. The valuable service rendered by parties is that they organize the people and amble them to choose between alternatives. Various indictments have been made against political parties. Their honesty and utility have often been questioned. Still, without them public opinion, which is the prime mover representative democracy, can never be formulated and put to its proper use Free Press.

Educational Institutions: In the creation of public opinion the educational institutions are of considerable importance. The ideas developed in the early ages condition a student's outlook. These educations are intended to stimulate and increase curiosity. But a method

of education that robs students of their open mindedness and drugs them with the number of political half-truths is certainly injurious.

Platforms: For educating people and formulating opinion platform speeches are very useful means. Hence, every democratic government guarantees the right to freedom of assembly. The speeches delivered in public gathering sometimes leave indelible impression in the minds of the listeners. These days, it's not just public speaking, there is also public thinking.

Cinemas and Radio Broadcast, Free Press.

- 15 Popular Accountability of Government, Political Competition, Alternation in Power, Uncertain Electoral Outcomes, Popular Representation, Majority Decisions, Right of Dissent and Disobedience, Popular Equality, Popular Consultation.