THE NOTION OF PROGRESS IN KARL POPPER’S PHILOSOPHY: A VIABLE BENCHMARK FOR EVALUATING DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Progress in Karl Popper's philosophy is a problem-solving approach that dwells on criticism as a means of heralding the new based on the dissatisfaction with the old that the critical approach is capable of exposing. In his philosophical reflection, Popper presented a model of progressive political society based on the evidential progress in science by the transposition of scientific principle to political philosophy. His perceived principles of science open a closed society from its undemocratic patterns of operations that is retrogressive to an open society with a pattern of operations that are progressive. Karl Popper's notion of progress is a potent tool for evaluating progress in a democratic setting. The bulk of this essay would be devoted to analyzing the components of Popper's notion of progress and these components shall be used to evaluate certain components of democratic practices in Nigeria. If Nigeria's practice of democracy is in accordance with the ideal inherent in Popper's notion of progress, a multidimensional giant stride would have been made in Nigeria's practice of democracy. By a means of analytical research method, this essay examines the Nigerian experience of democracy but focuses on applying the components of the notion of progress in Popper's philosophy to Nigeria's practice of democracy. The thesis of this essay is that adherence to Popper's idea of progress can set the approach and practice of democracy in Nigeria on a much more progressive line. Based on the argument of this thesis, we shall recognize that Popper's view may be lacking in certain ideological balance to have equated close society with retrogression, despite its drawbacks its capacity to progress is undisputable.

Key words: Falsification, Fallibilism, Critical Rationalism, Development, Democracy, Liberal

Introduction
The notion of progress in Karl Popper's social and political philosophy is deeply rooted in his philosophy of science. The success of science in Popper's view depends on its use of the principle called critical rationalism or falsificationism that recognizes the fallibility of human reasoning; this assertion is, however, subject to critical evaluation. The important thing to note is that if the successes recorded in technological advancement by scientist in the realm of transportation, communication, and information technologies have yielded progress in the world to the point that some have described the world as a global village based on this progress, it is necessary that the principle that fostered such successes could become a sine qua non for social and political progress. The two main ideas that define Popper's view of science are the idea of science as a problem-solving enterprise and the process of this problem solving does not depend on dogmatic or authoritarian ideas that insist on absolute truth but on criticisms that regard science as conjectures and refutations. These ideas also defined his social and political view enshrined in his concept of open society.

With the idea of problem solving and criticism, progress is ensured in science and in politics, science for Popper remains a prototype of progress due to the level of success recorded in different ramifications. In Popper's view, for such success to be recorded in social and political realm problem solving and critical mentality would be required. The view of criticism as a source of progress advocated by Popper is further buttressed by Agassi who regards Popper's thought as a harmonious philosophical system based on Popper's concept of critical rationalism which he states as follows: "...refutation opens the road to innovation. Nothing is more potent heuristic than refutation. Nothing is more conducive to progress than
criticism of the current situation, nothing more likely to herald the new than discontent with the old. Criticism is liberation” (Agassi, 182). Hence, Popper's idea of politics based on his view of progress in science resulted in his view of piecemeal social engineering as a problem solving and a critical approach to social life. To this end, he advocated a form of government that does not focus so much on the question of 'who should rule?' but “how can we organize political institutions so that bad or incompetent rulers can be prevented from doing too much damage?” (Popper. Open Society and Its Enemies, 115) In recognition of criticism as the substance of progress, he criticized great philosophers that have been revered without noticing any great mistake in their philosophizing. The effort to realize ideas of philosophers such as Plato, Hegel, and Marx were termed historicism as a term that is antithetical to progressive endeavour in politics and social life. Based on Popper's view of Progress as inherent in the criticism, the practical application of this view would entail constitution amendment, a viable rule of law, fallibilistic approach to the existing policies, a free and fair election, and above a well-established democratic government. We shall use Popper's idea of progress to evaluate the practice of democracy in Nigeria.

**Popper's Concept of Progress and its Scientific Root**

The thesis central to Popper's philosophy is that intellectual and political progress are achieved not by deferring to dogmatic authority but by refuting them. He is well known for his philosophy of science which is a plea for the replacement of classic dogmatic methodology with critical debate. His social and political philosophy revolves around the tenets of his philosophy of science. Critical rationalism or falsificationism is the underlying method of his philosophy of science strives on critical approach with an unending quest towards innovations. The uncritical approach is identified with closed society and the critical approach as in science with open society, these terms; 'open society and closed society' was first introduced by Henri Bergson in his Two Sources of Morality and Religion in 1935, were made popular by Karl Popper whose entire social and political philosophy could be summarized as 'openness to criticism.' The concept of open society is based on Popper's understanding of science as an enterprise that proceeds through falsification that is antithetical to authoritarianism or totalitarianism notions of knowledge that is not open to criticism. Hence the longing of many unknown men to free themselves and their minds from the tutelage of authority and prejudice is described as an “…attempt to build up an open society which rejects the absolute authority of merely established and the merely establish traditional while trying to preserve, to develop, and to establish…standards of freedom, of humaneness, and of rational criticism” (Popper. Open Society and Its Enemies, xi). This attempt has to do with an attitude of reasonableness or rationalistic attitude which entails the following:

…reasonableness or the rationalistic attitude presupposes a certain amount of intellectual humility. Perhaps only those can take it up who are aware that they are sometimes wrong, and who do not habitually forget their mistakes. It is born of the realization that we are not omniscient, and that we owe most of our knowledge to others (Popper, The Poverty of Historicism, 497).

This rationalistic attitude is the spirit Popper considered to be the practice of science and as such the source of its method and progress. Methodology is therefore the fundamental subject in Popper's studies of science to the point that he always lays special emphasis on the analysis of the growth of scientific knowledge which does not depend on inductive method understood as the process of inferring general theories or laws from particular instances that have been observed but on hypothetico-deductive method which is acquired by means of successive conjectures and refutations. The pivotal idea is that scientific theories can never be verified but can be falsified. In the final analysis, science in Popper's view proceeds by falsifying theories: “The game of science is, in principle without end. He,
who decides one day that scientific statements do not call for any further test and that they can be regarded as finally verified, retires from the game’ (Miller, 140).

The hallmark of scientific theories is their potential falsification and it also distinguishes science from non-science. Thus, Popper held that “it is the possibility of overthrowing it, or its falsifiability, that constitutes the possibility of testing it, and therefore the scientific character of a theory; and the fact that all tests of a theory are attempted falsifications of predictions derived with its help, furnishes the clue to scientific method” (Popper, Open Society, and Its Enemies, 446). The starting point of the method of science is problem followed by an attempted solution in the form of theory (hypothesis) as tentative explanation or solution to the problem, experimentation or observation is then carried out for the purpose of refuting (falsifying) the theory. The theory could now be subjected to further falsification and then rejected or could be corroborated by further or repeated experiment that could be closer to the truth that Popper used the term verisimilitude to describe. The method of science which is responsible for its progress essentially entails the replacement of earlier theories by later theories. For instance, “Einstein's theory solves the problem of planetary motion and macro-mechanics in general, at least as well as, and perhaps better than, Newton's theory does” (Popper. All Life is Problem Solving, 11). Even though Newton's theory provides the basis for advanced science and technology for over two centuries, Einstein's theory falsified it and another theory may falsify Einstein's in the future. Popper had much confidence in the importance of falsificationism in science and held that; “Once a scientist has grasped that this is how things stand, he will himself adopt a critical attitude to his own pet theory. He will prefer to test it himself and even falsify it rather than leaving this to his critics” (Popper. All Life is Problem Solving, 11). This position of Popper is affirmed by some eminent scientist as the ideal scientific procedure.

The falsification procedure has won for Popper the title of the greatest philosopher of science in the words of a one-time Nobel Prize winner of medicine; “I think Popper is incomparably the greatest philosopher of science that has ever been” (Mulkay, 389). Hermann Bondi attributed this greatness to Popper’s method for science and opined that “there is no more to science than its method, and there is no more to its method than Popper has said” (Mulkay, 389). Another Nobel Prize winner John Eccles affirmed the importance of Popper's writings on his approach to scientific research, “my scientific life owes so much to my conversion in 1945... to Popper's teaching on the conduct of investigations.... I have endeavoured to follow in the formulation and in the investigation of fundamental problems in neurobiology.” (Mulkay, 389) He also mentions certain things he learned from Popper; “…I learned from Popper that it was not scientifically disgraceful to have one's hypothesis falsified. That was the best news I had had for a long time.” (Mulkay, 389) In compliance with the confidence developed via Popperian falsification, he proclaimed: “Now I can even rejoice in the falsification of a hypothesis I have cherished as my brainchild, for such falsification is a scientific success” (Popper. All Life is Problem Solving, 13). In line with these affirmations of the importance of falsification in science, Bryan Magee emphasizes that Popper's philosophy is a philosophy of action. “It is intended to influence people's practical acts and choices, in science as well as in politics” (Mulkay and Gilbert, 390). The manifestation of this intention is obvious in Popper's magnum opus, Open Society and Its Enemies which is more of transposition of scientist openness to criticism to the realm of politics and social affairs. Popper's account of the open society calls attention to tolerance, rationality, fallibilism and a form of egalitarianism, all of which turn out to be strongly connected. Fallibilism is a central doctrine of Popper’s science, therefore, underlies his social and political philosophy, particularly his notion of open society.

The link between open society and science is not based on the conception of science an institutional hierarchy of experts but as but as a never-ending process of problemsolving in which we offer tentative solutions to our problems and then try to eliminate the errors in our
proposals. Rationality in this line of thought must not be conceived in terms of justification, but in terms of criticism. And criticism must not be conceived in offensive manner, or as a show of contempt or disdain, but as one of the greatest signs of respect that one mind can show to another.

**Progress as the Essence of Open Society**

Progress as the essence of open society in Popper's view could be associated with the following simple syllogistic argument which states that progress comes by critical approach; the critical approach is essential to progress, the openness of society is tantamount to critical approach, therefore progress is the essence of open society. The view of progress enshrined in Popper's view is pro-liberalist and anti-historicist. Progress as the essence of open society has two different dimensions; pro-liberalist and anti-historicist. The pro-liberalist dimension of open society regard liberalism as the mark of identity of Popper's open society; it is on this basic characteristic of an open society that he categorized himself as a liberal. Hence Popper's liberalism is embedded in his steadfastness to protect the open society and the freedom of men on the basis of a set of epistemological assumptions he called critical rationalism. He labeled himself a rationalist on this basis stating his attitude as follows; “I am not interested in tradition. I want to judge everything on its own merits: I want to find out its merit and demerits, and I want to do this quite independently of any tradition. I want to judge it with my own brain, and not with the brain of other people who lived long ago” (Popper. *The Poverty of Historicism*, 162). Liberalism in this sense has to do with the conviction that we can learn through criticism of our mistakes and errors either by others or through self-criticism.

Popper identified Socrates as a model of liberalism whose liberalism is embedded in his critical approach that consists in “asking questions designed to destroy prejudices; false beliefs which are often traditional or fashionable beliefs; false answers given in the spirit of ignorant cocksureness” (Popper. *The Poverty of Historicism*, 16). Not that Socrates saw himself as an embodiment of wisdom; on the contrary, he claimed he knows not because his aim is not to teach any belief but to create a liberal impression of openness to the knowledge that would eliminate heinous dogmatic beliefs. Socrates concept of liberalism as a champion of open society lies in his absolute recognition of human fallibility. It was his idea that the search for truth through critical discussion was the best way to knowledge of the ideals. For Popper, Socrates’ critical approach based on human fallibility is scientific; “the spirit of science is the spirit of Socrates” (Popper, *Open Society and Its Enemies*, 448). In this line of thought, science is conceived as not a compendium of error-free theories regarding theories and practices that hinged on conjectures and refutations.

Since Popper equated open society with civilization, the strain of civilizations insistence on a renewal of a former method, law or pattern as the standard of doing things is connected to historicism since it regards those laws or patterns as the ideal that contradicts open society. “The tendency of historicism (and of related views) to support the revolt against civilization may be due to the fact that historicism itself is, largely, a reaction against the strain of civilization...” (Popper, 2013: xlv). As a reaction against civilization, historicism is “a poor method, unable to yield the results it promises” (Popper, 1964:58) In order to identify the right method, the aims and competence of social sciences need to be clarified. Their aims “is not, as the historian believes, the prophecy of the future course of history. It is, rather, the discovery and explanation of the less obvious dependences within the social sphere” (Popper, *Open Society and Its Enemies*, 306) Hence the impossibility of an exact social prediction falls within the realm of what he called the Oedipus effect, which is his view that prediction can influence the predicted or even thwart the prognosis. For instance, the prediction of a fall in stock exchange values over a specific number of days would most likely lead to hurried selling and thus invalidates the prediction by precipitate a crash.
Progress as the essence of open society is deeply buttressed in Popper's criticism of idea he termed historicism which he considered to be the enemy of open society; among the major enemies of the open society are the champions of historicism espoused in the totalitarian philosophy of Plato, dogmatic philosophy of Hegel and false prophetic philosophy of Marx. Popper was resolute about the annihilation of the doctrine of historicism because he was convinced that it has given rise to some of the most evil and detrimental dogmas. As a result of his position about historicism, Popper felt historicism is not necessarily intellectual error of professional philosophers but a prime source of moral and political devastation. The historicism of Plato entails an inevitable movement from perfection to decay which has to rely on Philosopher-king with the knowledge of perfection to rule the society; in Hegel, historicism entails ineluctable movement towards the ideal; Karl Marx identified this ideal as communism. Popper's open society is antithetical to these ideas because of their lack of fallibilism.

**Popper's Fundamental Criteria for an Open Society**
To understand deeply the idea of progress in Popper's philosophy, a deeper knowledge of the ideas that are fundamental to the open society is needed because progress is the essence of open society. We have identified the following criteria as fundamental to the realization of an open society:

**Limits and Control of State Power**
In view of the importance of fallibilism and the possibility of such critical approach to the policies and laws of a state, Popper opined that the state power should be limited and even regarded the existence of a state as a necessary evil because if its power is not limited the possibility of fallibilism would highly be limited and once the state power with its components becomes infallible the progress he associated with civilization that led to open society would not be existence; freedom is embedded in the notion of progress inherent in open society ideology. Thus “any kind of freedom is clearly impossible unless it is guaranteed by the state” (Popper, *Open Society and Its Enemies*, 1966). The state exercise of power is not denied but the protection of each individual member of the state from aggression and the freedom to uphold their view even when it is contrary to that of the state is what Popper accepts as one of the fundamental for the establishment of open society whose essence is progress.

The limitation of state power is encapsulated in the idea of the paradox of freedom; the idea that unlimited freedom of the strong would lead to the annihilation of the weak and absolute absence of freedom for the weak. “This is why we demand that the state should limit freedom to a certain extent so that everyone's freedom is protected by law. Nobody should be at the mercy of others, but all should have a right to be protected by the state” (Popper, *Open Society, and Its Enemies*, 333). Hence, there is a threshold beyond which the state is permitted to exercise its power in limiting the freedom of her citizens. The member of the open society demands that the state must limit the freedom of its citizens as equally as possible, not beyond what is necessary for achieving an equal limitation of freedom. State intervention is necessary, but it tends to increase the power of the state, it is important to recognize the danger of the over-emphasis on the state intervention in all ramifications, therefore constant vigilance over state limitations of freedom is necessary, for “only a state which is controlled by free citizens can offer them any reasonable security at all” (Popper, *Open Society, and Its Enemies*, 106). Amid the limitation placed on the state power, the question of the function of the state is paramount; this prime aspect of the state is expressed as follows;

For if the state is to fulfill its function, it must have more power at any rate than any single private citizen or public corporation; and although we might design institutions to minimize the danger that these powers will be misused, we can
never eliminate the danger completely. On the contrary, it seems that most
men will always have to pay for the protection of the state, not only in the form
of taxes but even in the form of humiliation suffered, for example, at the hands
of bullying officials. The thing is not to pay too heavily for it (Popper,
Conjectures and Refutation, 350).

Popper demands the establishment of institutions to address the necessity to control the
power of the state based on his view that all political problems are institutional problems,
problems of the legal framework rather than of persons and all democratic long-term policy
must be conceived in terms of impersonal institutions. He further held that criticism is one of
the many checks on the rulers under democratic political conditions and institutions that
enhance criticism must be put in place to avoid the strain of civilizations with its historicist
view of laws.

Negative Utilitarianism
In accordance with the view of science as an undertaking that depends on the method that
yields result through identification and correction of errors, sacrosanct to Popper's open
society as a progressive idea is his view of negative utilitarianism with its simple maxim 'avoid
suffering and violence.' He conceived ethics that focus on the identification and elimination of
human suffering and pain. To this end, he argues:
I believe that there is, from the ethical point of view, no symmetry between suffering
and happiness, or between pain and pleasure. Both the greatest happiness
principle of the utilitarians and Kant's principle, "Promote other people's
happiness...", seem to me (at least in their formulations) fundamentally wrong
in this point, which is, however, not one for rational argument....In my
opinion...human suffering makes a direct moral appeal for help, while there is
no similar call to increase the happiness of a man who is doing well anyway
(Popper, Open Society and Its Enemies, 602).

The above notion of ethics is called negative utilitarianism; it is antithetical to the classical
utilitarianism that seeks to maximize pleasure and happiness for the greatest number of
people. Negative utilitarianism, therefore, summarizes Popper's most deeprooted belief in
political ethics. A classical utilitarian philosopher such as Henry Sidgwick had unequivocally
argued that there is a moral symmetry between happiness and suffering. They supposed that
increase in happiness is directly proportional to the reduction in suffering and are basically of
equal value and magnitude. Popper is not in agreement with the view of classical utilitarian
philosophers; their idea is regarded as utopian, Anthony O' Hear further depicts Popper
disagreement with the classical utilitarianism termed utopian by insisting that open society's
"underlying philosophy is negative utilitarianism, rather than some positive vision of heaven
on earth" (O'Hear, 208). In Popper's view, the promise of paradise on earth as associated
with the utopianism (positive utilitarianism also) would produce nothing but hell. Hence the
piecemeal engineering method of searching for, and fighting against, the greatest and most
urgent evils of society, rather than searching for, and fighting for, its greatest ultimate good is
of more moral value to humanity. Hence, it is evident that "the main point of negative utility is
that humanitarianism, one of Popper's frequently used terms in Open Society and Its Enemies,
and not hedonism is the fundamental moral imperative" (Hayes, 115). Popper's
views about how ideas shape the development of human societies contribute to the political
effectiveness of negative utilitarianism.
Piecemeal Social Engineering

Another fundamental idea of progress that defines the open society is piecemeal social engineering; it covers a wide range of social, private and public activities. It follows the pattern of physical engineering in regarding its ends as something that transcends the realm of technology because all that the technology put forward about its ends is whether they are compatible with each other or realizable. It differs from historicism (that is in accordance with utopian social engineering) which holds on to the view that the ends of human activities are dependent on historical forces and remains within this realm. Utopian social engineering is according to Popper dangerous because it relies on the historicist view that the course of history cannot be altered. It has a certain aim of rational action which determines its means according to its aim, in the political realm, for example, it insists on the view that we must determine our ultimate political aim or the ideal before any practical action. Only when this is done can the blueprint for society be established. “Utopianism is characterized both by its radicalism (its declared intention of going to the roots of evil and tearing them up once and for all) and by its aestheticism (its goal of building a new world free of any imperfection)” (Corvi, 60). The task of piecemeal social engineer corresponds to that of a physical engineer whose task is to design machines, and to remodel and service them; that of piecemeal social engineering is to “design social institutions, and to reconstruct and run those already in existence” (Popper, 2001:65). The designing of social institutions in this regard is in recognition that the clear majority of social institutions are not consciously designed but grew out of human actions. As an engineer, he views them from a functional or instrumental perspective with the potential of converting them to the services of certain ends as machines and not organism.

The piecemeal social engineering task is for Popper an approach that is methodological sound because blueprint ideology is not a necessary factor in this method due to an ongoing reform via critical approach to existing political institutions not based on any promise of perfect state or perfect earth. He, therefore, concentrates on searching for, fighting against human suffering by focusing on the greatest and most urgent evils of society rather than searching for or fighting for the ultimate good. The piecemeal engineering would necessarily lead us to get over the great difficulties of all reasonable political reform using reason as against the use of passion and violence in executing political reform programmes, in this path improvement are achieved through democratic method. On the contrary, utopian social engineering may lead to intolerance in human suffering and even yield violence and eventual abandonment, fascism, and Nazism are good examples. Piecemeal social engineering relies on the understanding of technology as a systematic of organizing knowledge to solve practical problems. To this aim, problems are attacked with an open mind and as such cherish some ideals with regards to society but does not believe in the method of redesigning it as a whole. In all, he knows like Socrates how little he knows. Hence, constitutional reform falls within the realm of piecemeal social engineering. Utopian social engineering, on the other hand, depend on the certain idea of a heroic figure termed ‘great’ but for Popper, great men may also make great mistakes, hence his criticism of the three great philosophers; Plato, Hegel and Marx show the loopholes inherent in the tenets of utopian social engineering. It entails a dogmatic attachment to the blueprint.

Democracy

Democracy is a necessary condition for open society because democratic social institutions provide how rulers may be dismissed by the ruled; viewed as the right of the people to judge and dismiss their government; it is the only known device says Popper by which people can try to protect themselves against misuse of political power. Democracy is one of the major values of open society, according to Geoffrey Stokes. “Popper was first a proponent of liberal
democracy” (Stokes, 48). He further explained the importance of democracy to the concept of open society in Popper's view of progress as follows; "democracy is vital because it encourages a free exchange of ideas, which leads to scientific progress and thereby to the growth of human knowledge. But democracy is equally important solely in political and moral terms because it is the most effective way of ensuring effective protection against violence and economic exploitation of individuals” (Stokes, 57). For democracy to work effectively in achieving progress, Popper argued that the main parties involve must adhere to a view of its functions which he outlined in form of rules as follows:

a. The rulers must be limited; they must be dismissible without bloodshed, and the institutions to safeguard this must be secured.
b. Governments with institutions are democracies; those without are tyrannies, and this is the distinction between them.
c. The only change to the legal system which may be prohibited in a democratic constitution is one which would endanger the democratic character of the system.
d. Full protection of minorities should not extend to those who violate the law especially not to those who incite the violent overthrow of the democracy.
e. Any institutions to safeguard democracy should be framed on the assumption that anti-democratic tendencies may exist amongst the ruled as well as the rulers.
f. If democracy is destroyed, all rights are destroyed.
g. The preservation of democracy must be the first consideration in the evaluation and implementation of any proposed reform (Popper, Open Society and Its Enemies, 368369).

Popper's notion of democracy as a prerequisite for an open society is also embedded in his radical critique of Plato and Marx. He focused on Plato's critique of democracy in The Republic by his argument that the average people cannot lead well, that the rulers of society should philosopher-kings since they can ascertain the truth. However, the epistemological problem for Plato and those of his ilk have always been and will continue to be that of ascertaining who the so-called philosopher-kings might be. Popper sees The Republic as an expression of Plato's ambition that the Athenians would ask him to take political control and save Athens from its fate, in this line of thought the philosopher king is, therefore, Plato and The Republic is his manifesto. Platonic political programme in this regard is for complete reconstruction of Athenian society in order to attain the ideal state. Popper called this ideal state utopian social engineering and his warning is that it is a treacherous approach to politics that demands authoritarianism and possibly dictatorship to the detriment of the functional working society. The reconstruction of this idea in Popper's own thought is to focus on not who should lead but how to organize the human society in order to prevent bad leaders from ruling and democratic system based on the above condition for its effectiveness answers the how the organization ought to be. Democracy entails the control of the ruler by the ruled.

Popper laid the edifice of two types of government; that which can be get rid of without bloodshed with established institutions that provide this means and that which cannot be get rid of except by revolution instead of evolution as in the first case. The first type of government, Popper identified as a democracy while the second type is tyranny or dictatorship. In compliance with the above types of government, describe the principle democratic policy as “the proposal to create, develop, and protect, political institutions for the avoidance of tyranny” (Popper. Open Society and Its Enemies,118). This principle is devoid of the claims of faultless institutions or wisest man or benevolent tyrant. The adoption of democratic principle is based on the fact that the acceptance of bad policy in a democracy as long as the mechanism for peaceful change remains, is preferable to submission to tyranny no matter how wise or good he may be. In view of this understanding, democracy is not
indistinguishable from majority rule rather the various components of democracy such as general elections and representative government, an institution that safeguards against tyranny, openness to improvement and even providing such methods.

**Respect For Individual And Diversity**

One of the fundamentals ideas that define different ideology inherent in an open society is individualism; it is the individual initiative, individual doubts, and questions that open up the closed societies of the primitive tribe or the totalitarian collective. Courageous individuals make stand against the collective, risking repercussions ranging from ostracism to execution. Individualism in its sense of opposition to collectivism is a primary characteristic of the open society. However, individualism goes further than this, Popper talks of the “emancipation of the individual”(Popper. Open Society and Its Enemies, 97). The emancipated individual is freed in mind, in the body, and in spirit. He or she is free to think independently and act independently, to choose to go his own way devoid of legally restraint but would be restrained only by the legislation necessary to protect other members of society on the basis of the law of equal liberty which states that everyone has to right or liberty to act as he or she wants provided there is no infringement on the rights or liberties of others.

The individual in the open society is not simply free to think independently, she or he is required to do so. It is impossible to shift accountability to any other entity, in the way a member of a closed society can. Everyone in open society bears full responsibility for his or her own decisions, and paramount amongst those decisions, for Popper, are moral decisions. We are responsible for the norms we are prepared to tolerate, also we are responsible for helping to advance knowledge; we bear a responsibility to participate in arguments and “we have a duty to respond, to answer, where our actions affect others.” (Popper. Open Society and its Enemies, 443). To this end, individualism in Popper is an independent-minded, vociferous critic of social policies as it is exemplified in science. This view of individualism is based on Popper’s view that everyone has rationality required for such progressive driven criticism. Frederick Schauer opined that “the most prominent weakness of Popper's The Open Society and Its Enemies is the assumption that the populace has the rationality Popper sees in scientific enquiry” (Shauer, 26). Popper would no doubt claim that Schauer underestimates the rationality of human beings. He holds that it is the faculty of reason that makes human beings more than just corporal bodies; “it is your reason that makes you human...that makes you a selfsufficient individual and entitles you to claim that you are end in yourself” (Popper, Open Society, and Its Enemies, 180). Conversely, the open society must actively encourage a diversity of views and opinions, for there would be no fruitful arguments otherwise because a wide range of views is necessary for productive debate, and individualism and diversity must be respected and promoted for the open society to retain its worth. In this way, everyone would be involved in an exhilarating enterprise – the enterprise of identifying problems and progressively doing away with them.

**Evaluation**

The legacy of Popper's outstanding idea of progress based on his view of replicating the progressive nature of science in other sphere can be traced to his upbringing. For example, in his youthful age, “Popper was surrounded by progressive intellectuals. They rebelled against the social conservativism of mainstream liberalism and sought an opening to the workers. They opted for a bourgeois -proletarian alliance, under the auspices of an enlightened bureaucracy that would promote social legislation, economic modernization, and scientific education” (Hacohen, 33). His earliest influence is therefore responsible for the much time he spent in his life modifying progressive philosophy and politics based on his commitment to historical progress, nonetheless, he discarded progressive utopianism and constructed a new liberal framework for reform and social planning. Hence, his passionate
defense of Open society and Enlightenment are a metamorphosis of progressive Vienna influence. This influence led him to seek a philosophy that would promise progress and still retain its modesty and vulnerability by its openness to correction and change.

Popper's view of science as the hallmark of progress was the basis of his application of the perceived idea of progress in science to politics and other areas. However, the claims for science and the conditions for being scientific are questionable and could be unfounded also. These claims are based on a prejudiced conception of science that regards science as a certain kind of knowledge of universal and necessary characteristics, and scientists are those who possess this kind of knowledge. With Plato and Descartes, only ideas that are universal and necessary can be scientific. Descartes had much confidence in such knowledge as being mathematical and, therefore identified science with mathematics, and scientific methods are none other than the mathematical methods of deduction or analysis and geometrical intuition. With John Locke, by following Francis Bacon, would favour induction as the best method for all the sciences. Such a claim is rarely challenged. It is taken for granted by most scientists and even philosophers up to our day. Popper objects to such a claim. In his view, science is defined by the criterion of truth which he termed verisimilitude. It was based on this notion that he refashioned progressive Viennese and Central European legacies, by offering some revolutionary solutions to the major problems of the philosophy of science and novel visions of liberal science and politics, imagining utopian scientific and political communities that were engaged in the pursuit of truth and reform. He made critical debate the litmus test of political and scientific rationality. Establishing a free public sphere as the sine qua non of the Open Society.

For Popper, science and politics are interlocking with each other. Not in a domineering sense in which are we usually thinking about the relationship between science and politics, just the fear of abuse by the state. In democratic, open society science and politics fit with each other. Popper understood that science is our best kind of knowledge in the same way and for the same reasons that he believed that democracy is our best form of government. Both science and democracy try to impact opinions through rational discussion and without violence. Both science and democracy try to learn from their competitors instead of silencing them. Neither science nor democracy has always succeeded in achieving these goals. But, by historical facts, science and democracy have each succeeded with greater frequency than other forms of knowledge and government. It is very easy to misunderstand it and to think

that there is something in the nature of democracy and science that guarantee that they will always be better than their competitors. However, in the sense of Popper's critical thought, this is only an empirical fact that may change with the changing conditions in the world. To this end, Popper is adamant that philosophy can learn from science. It is not just that many of the essential problems of philosophy have their sources in science. Moreover, even though philosophical principles, unlike scientific theories, are overwhelming, philosophy can still learn from science how to go about tackling its problems so that progress is made in a way somewhat analogous to progress achieved in science. Philosophical principles, even though overwhelming, can be critically assessed from the standpoint of their capacity to solve the problems they were put forward to solve. A generalization of the falsificationist, progress-achieving methods of science – namely critical rationalism – can rightly be put into practice in philosophy so that progress can be made in solving philosophical problems too. In this way, Popper introduced the novelty of political philosophy that hinges on his scientific idea of progress.

Popper's notion of open society as the summit of progress is summed up in his concept of fallibility and falsification. The concept establishes the link between his philosophy of science, epistemology, moral philosophy and social-political philosophy. The basic tenets of fallibilism are that by an effort we can get closer to the truth once we acknowledge our ability to err. Hence, the astonishing progressive success of science in improving our
knowledge and understanding which Popper admire so much owes much to the exploitation of positive feedback based on the acknowledgment of ability to err. Actually, the falsificationist cum fallibility approach is attractive and worth investing in intellectually, politically and other realms. Whether accepted or not, we all stand in need of constructive criticism as a means of progress. However, we ought to distinguish between fallibility from timidity or lack of competence or culpability because Popper’s optimism about fallibilism failed to identify this salient issue. Fallibilism, as presented by Popper, remains a necessary condition for the maintenance of open, progressive, liberal and ideal democratic society.

Criticisation retained a novelty in Popperian fallibilism, no longer as a tool for the destruction of a theory but an improvement driven endeavour that eliminates errors. Popper’s critical approach, therefore, is a takeover from what remains after error elimination for the aim of development and improvement. In this way, nothing is wrong with being wrong but there is something wrong with refusal to admit when we are wrong or a total denial of our ability to err, even great men of history have made great mistakes as shown by Popper in his criticism of Plato, Hegel, and Marx on the basis of their fallibility. Perfection is, therefore, an ever-evolving entity of human society. Popper’s idea of openness to criticism is one of the greatest practical importance of his political philosophy. Most of our political institutions are often under-equipped to perform such functions because most of the governmental activities through the various institutions of government are not genuinely subject to criticism to a large extent. Nevertheless, the primary function of institutions of government may not always be subject to criticism as subjection to criticism demands the admittance of fallibility, some of such institutions may not always be based on the fallibility of our knowledge. Conversely the whole issue of the reconstruction of a public sphere, in the sense of a debate within which such activities are opened to examination, seems to be a pressing need. Hence, Popper’s political philosophy, above all else, represents a vindication of liberalism, democracy, and reason over tribalism, authoritarianism, and tyranny; it represents a strident defense of the right of each and every individual in the world not to live in fear of those who govern them, to be involved in decisions about the future direction of their political community, and to live a life that they feel to be worthwhile, freely and without unjust constraint (Parvin and Meadowcroft, 133).

Karl Popper’s concerns about the politics; dictatorship and democracy as well as his parallel approach to the scientific methodology seem to be quite relevant to the discussions on democracy in Nigeria. In all, an evaluation of the system of governance in Nigeria aimed at achieving progress can be evaluated using the fundamental criterion for an open society. With regards to the limits and control of state power, it high time freedom of the individual in the state should be permitted to the point of suing the federal government with fruitful results not the manipulation of justice via the judicial system which cannot be termed the last hope of a common man in Nigeria. For the state power to be limited, the independence of the judicial system is a sine qua non. Empowerment of activist in Nigeria to the point of being able to stand against government odious decision is another condition needed for the limitation of the power of government to oppress the common man. The idea of negative utilitarianism is highly recommended for leaders of Nigeria in all ramifications, so many are suffering and yet the country is getting millions of dollars daily from her mineral resources. If the focus is to avoid suffering and an imperative for all leaders in Nigeria, we would have a better country. The reverse is the case, there is little or no attention to avoiding suffering, instead, the people that are in positions of leadership prefer to inflict the masses with more suffering. In accordance with negative utilitarianism recommendation, it required that institutions should be designed to avoid suffering and ensure the welfare of the people, the formation of such institution ought to be devoid of sentiments for it to be effective.

Popper’s view of democracy can be regarded as a standard for democracy to a large extent, our acceptance of the basic tenets of democracy has made it necessary to evaluate
the democracy in Nigeria through the lens of Popper's condition for an effective democracy. The first condition focuses on the dismissal of leaders without bloodshed. In Nigeria, this is relevant to the legislative and judicial systems, also the masses. The legislature Nigeria have not been able to remove any president or governor because of inability to avoid suffering and pain to the masses. The common election is like a civil war, the ability of the people through peaceful protest in removing a leader is yet to be a reality in Nigeria. In compliance with this condition, Nigeria cannot be called a democratic country because elections are conducted with the consciousness of bloodshed and violence in all ramifications. Considering the second condition which regards democracy as a government with institutions, the existence of an institution is not what makes it democratic but the effectiveness of the institution. When most so-called institutions of democracy are not worth its salt, calling Nigeria a democratic state would be tantamount to redefining democracy. The third condition for democracy to work demands the prohibition of any change in constitution that could endanger the democratic system; on this condition, the introduction of Sharia law in the Nigerian legal system is antithetical to democracy because the constitution regards Nigeria as a secular state and as such the operation of a religious law does not work in accordance with conditions for democracy.

Furthermore, the fourth condition for the effective working of democracy gives preference to the protection of minorities. The minorities Nigeria are not regarded, in terms of leadership, the focus is always on the most populous tribes not even on the ability of those coming from these populous tribes for the position but on the condition that does not regard those ready, willing and able from the minority tribes. The fifth condition recognized the possibility of anti-democratic tendencies; however, such tendencies does not override the other requirements. The sixth condition states the importance of democracy and its relationship to other rights. It regards democracy as the upholder of other rights in society. One can conveniently conclude that the source of abuse of human rights in different ramifications in Nigeria is because of ineffective democracy we are practicing. The seventh condition is based on the preservation of democracy as the first consideration in the evaluation and implementation of the proposed reform. If preference were given to the effect of the democratic system of government and its positive impact, the primary position would be the consciousness of preserving the democratic practice in an effective manner.

Conclusion
Karl Popper's idea of progress really entails a workable idea of how to make progress in a society that has been bedeviled by retrogression. However, the confidence he placed on science as a model of progress is questionable because science is not as perfect as he presented it to be, many scientists are not conscious of his theory of progress which is a sign that scientists do not need to study falsificationism to be professional in their field of study. Also, his view that established common ground between science and democracy is fallacious because scientific theories are accepted in accordance with their pragmatic impacts, not on the consensus of a scientist. The association of open society with democracy creates a perfect picture of democracy that can hardly be realized, hence democracy should not be recognized as the best form of governance by the association of open society to it. The most important thing is an openness that entails the principles of fallibilism outlined, it can be practiced under any system of government accepted by the people. The focus should have been openness, not a democracy because the definition of democracy as the system of government whereby leaders can be removed without bloodshed can also imply the natural death of a leader. Also, his total rejected of any iota of violence in his view of openness and democracy ought to be re-examined because it fails to answer a fundamental question; if a leader cannot be removed without bloodshed and the acts of the leader is leading the death of many citizens, how should such leader be removed while claiming to be democratic?
Gambia, Zimbabwe, and Uganda are practical examples of leaders who claimed to be leading under a democratic dispensation but operating with the principle that is antithetical to democracy.

Regarding the conditions for democracy to work effectively, Popper's presentation may be regarded as the cardinal points in democracy and any state that wish to be democratic in a more effective way ought to consider putting such principles into practice. These conditions are therefore necessary for evaluating the effectiveness of any claim to democracy. In all the view of progress expressed by Popper it worth studying by leaders and government agencies to reduce the pain and suffering of the masses. Popper's political ideas are therefore recommended as a tool for progress in a regressive society. Even though Popper's view lack certain ideological balance because of equating close society to lack of progress and open society to progress, its use as the benchmark for evaluating democracy is in accordance with the strength of his conception of progress. In regarding this conception as the ideal in a democratic setting, the components of the conception are in accordance with the general criteria of an ideal democracy, therefore, the use of Popper's notion of progress as a viable benchmark for evaluating democracy in Nigeria is justified. Since our focus is on the strength of Popper's view of progress, the use of his view as the benchmark is therefore valid.

Works Cited
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