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COVID-19 MEASURES AND DEMOCRACY IN WEST AFRICA

A case study of Nigeria and Ghana

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Abstract

In trying to respond to the covid19 pandemic, the government in nascent democracies like Nigeria and Ghana initiated measures and policies to mitigate the adverse effect of the pandemic. Measures such as lockdowns, public health measures and social distancing measures, were enacted although these measures were needed but the implementation of these measures affected democratic principles especially the egalitarian principle of democracy. The work studied the impact of these measures on egalitarian democracy. Using the egalitarian democratic theory to illuminate this study, this study with the use of secondary data adopts mixed method approach of quantitative and qualitative case study, with content analysis, comparing Nigeria and Ghana, looking at how the measures taken by the Government heightened or decreased the inequality that already existed in the society. The study concludes that Nigeria and Ghana took almost similar measures in combating the adverse effect of the pandemic. The implementation of these measures heightened inequality as the poor became more vulnerable to contacting the virus and also are on the receiving end of the inequalities, when compared to the rich. However, in comparison Ghana did better in upholding the egalitarian principle of democracy when compared to Nigeria as socioeconomic relief measures were properly implemented in Ghana. This stress the need that both Nigeria and Ghana Government need to ensure equal distribution of material and immaterial rights, liberties and resources, most especially Nigeria.

Keywords: Covid19, Measures, Egalitarian Democracy.

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Aim of the study.....	4
Research Question.....	4
Theoretical framework and Literature Review.....	5
Covid19.....	5
Theoretical framework.....	10
Conceptual clarification.....	15
Covid 19 Pandemic and Health care system in an egalitarian democracy.....	16
COVID 19 Pandemic and the Educational System in an egalitarian democracy.....	17
Covid-19 and Nigeria Egalitarian Democracy.....	18
Covid-19 and Ghana’s Egalitarian Democracy.....	19
Summary.....	22
Methodology.....	23
Study Area/Case Selection.....	23
Research Design.....	23
Eligibility criteria.....	24
Method of Data Collection.....	24
Data Analysis.....	25
Results and Discussion	
Access to Education.....	26
Informal economy.....	27
Electoral democratic issues.....	28
Food.....	30
Human right.....	32
Health.....	33
Gender Equality.....	37

Socioeconomic Measures and Related Mitigation Strategy.....	38
Discussion.....	42
Summary.....	44
Conclusion.....	46
References.....	47
Appendix.....	57

1.0 Introduction

In recent times we have had several diseases outbreak that has affected democracy in West Africa which includes H1N1 in 2009, polio in 2014, Ebola in 2014, Zika virus in 2019, Lesser fever in 2017 (Christian, 2020). The management in terms of measures to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 pandemic has posed a wide range of democratic dilemmas to established and even nascent democracies most notably between globalism and nationalism, between public health and civil liberty (democratic freedom), increased inequalities and between political and technocratic governance (Amat, Arenas, Falcó-Gimeno, & Muñoz, 2020), making me want to examine in what way nascent democracies in West Africa are putting measures in place to deal with the virus and how citizens preferences are evolving alongside the crisis and government response especially as regards equal access to power, public goods, civil liberties, human rights and democratic freedom. Although China has been praised for curtailing the spread of the virus very well, scholars have argued that autocracies with strong/high state capacity like China can take swift/fast action that can mitigate the spread of the virus is doing this however, they can suppress information about the pandemic (which was most likely done) or resist popular demands advocating for a more democratic way to respond to the pandemic (attributes of autocracies). Also, the case of Hungary, where the parliament passed a bill granting powers to the government led by Viktor Orban to rule by decree with no constraints and no time limit is a clear example of democratic backsliding caused by covid19 (David, 2020). While democracies on the other hand, it is hard to suppress information or to look away from popular demand due to the inherent decentralization of powers in a democracy. While some studies have confirmed tentatively in the West that the covid19 crisis has been reinforcing the democratic status quo, by the government of the day initiating policies that help to solve or bring some relief to the people which confirms the retrospective evaluation of performance mechanisms (Amat, Arenas, Falcó-Gimeno, & Muñoz, 2020). Although such studies have not been conducted in West Africa, hence the purpose of this study. Thus, the ongoing Covid19 pandemic has generally led government around the world to initiate policies that is seen as an avenue for the erosion of democratic principles as public opinions generally appear to be relatively willing to accept a technocratic or authoritarian turn. It is pertinent to mention that before the advent of Covid19, democracy was experiencing a serious decline globally (V-DEM Report, 2020; IDEA, 2019), with the advent of Covid19, this worsens the situation. However, according

(Lührmann, Amanda, & Maerz, 2020) mitigating the spread of Covid19 is possible while still safeguarding democratic institutions, showing 47 countries that have introduced emergency measures that are less likely to pose a threat to democratic standard in the long run.

West Africa was the last region in the world to experience its first case of Covid19, the first case of Covid19 in Africa was on the 14th of February 2020 in Egypt, the first case in the region was recorded in Nigeria on the 27th of February 2020. Immediately the first case was confirmed in the region, the growth in the number of cases was rapid most notably in Anglophone West African countries (Burkina Faso and Senegal) (Martinez, Alexander, & Effua, 2020). As of the 4th of May 2021, the total number of confirmed cases in West Africa is 483,910 and the total number of deaths is 6,705 (OECD, 2021). Although, Africa was the last continent (while West Africa was the last region) to experience the pandemic it was projected that it will be the most vulnerable continent to be affected by the pandemic simply because the continent has some of the poorest countries in the world, with poorly resourced health systems, zero or no social security rendering the region the inability to quickly tackle a disease outbreak (Martinez, Alexander, & Effua, 2020), measures were still put in place to prevent the spread and alleviate the problems associated.

Corona pandemic has brought strain on democracies especially in sub-Saharan where there has not been perfectly developed democracy, the measures put in place by the government in West Africa although needed but it undermined in no small measure the very essence of egalitarian democracies where rights and freedom of citizens are to be protected equally across all the social groups, everyone and every group can have and enjoy equal access to power, and resources are to be distributed equally across all the social group. There were obvious limitations to some fundamental human rights of citizens and unequal access to health care including other important public goods, in Nigeria and all states in West Africa, there has been major lockdowns and bans of public gatherings whereas these measures are being violated without penalty by some politicians and economic elites with deep pocket as there was a major televised huge burial ceremony of the late National Chief of staff in Nigeria during the lockdown and ban of social gatherings (The Commonwealth, 2020).

Although, some have argued that the region was prepared for diseases outbreak especially with the outbreak of Ebola in 2014 that hits the region (Otu, Bassey, Ronald, & Yaya, 2020; Martinez, Alexander, & Effua, 2020). There are gross shortages in health facilities in rural regions of the

countries, where more than half of the population lives. The masses do not have access to health services, and thus there is doom for most communities in the countries. Politicians and the rich have better access and provisions for tests and care unlike majority of the masses (Ifijeh, 2020). Although most government in West Africa initiated socioeconomic relief measures in forms of palliatives which was provided by foreign countries and international organization, these palliatives took the form of cash and foodstuff as support to cushion the effect of lockdown and economic crises of COVID. There was neither proper distribution nor proper coordination in the distribution of the palliative among component units. Thus, the question of equity in the allocation of resources which is of immense importance in egalitarian democracy is raised (Amzat, Aminu, Kolo, & Akinyele, 2020).

In Nigeria many of these palliatives were being hoarded by leaders in the country. A monarch's palace in Lagos state, Nigeria, was looted by masses after the lockdown and palliatives that was meant for the lockdown taken away in large quantities. These actions were done across different states in the countries in different warehouses and politicians abodes. There was therefore civil resistance and problems to egalitarian democracy (Olaniyi, 2020; Amzat et. al. 2020).

There were unequal access or no access at all to education due to the lockdown and social distancing measures, unlike the Western world, West Africa have not embraced online education as much as she should have hence, many do not have the opportunities to subscribe their children to online education. The country also limited the supply of constant water to urban areas whereas the urban slums are been neglected. The poor households also do not have access to the usual amount of electricity. These measures has increased the social and democratic instability by bringing many forms of violence. There were clashes between youth and security institutions in West Africa, negative perception of state legitimacy, permanent criticism of criminal justice system of the judiciary and police during COVID 19 (Johnson-Sirleaf, Cameron & Kaberuke, 2020), such as nationwide endSARS protest in Nigeria due to extra-judiciary killings of the youths and police support of criminal activities and corruption of the government.

Covid19 pandemic has indeed compelled government around the world to initiate policies and measures to curb the spread of the virus, although some government especially in already established democracies has done well by initiating policies that does not undermine democratic principles. However, what has being observed in West Africa is that there was lack of strategic

planning in form of politicization of containment measures, neglect of rules and patronage, enforcement of accountability, international collaborations for selfish purposes, and great lack of trusts between citizens and the government.

Aim of the study

Upon the arrival of the first case of Covid19 in West Africa, measures such as travel restrictions, lockdown, curfew, and school closures were implemented very early in West Africa compared to other regions in the world. These measures taken by the government was necessary due to the pandemic no doubt. Though there are differences in the effects across different countries in West Africa, these measures in all the countries affects the egalitarian component of democracy than other aspects of democracy. Thus, this study aims to examine how these Covid-19 measures affect democratic principles of egalitarian democracy in the countries in West Africa.

Research Question

The research questions the study aim to provide answers to are:

1. What are the impacts of Covid19 measures on egalitarian democracy in Nigeria and Ghana?

2.0 Theoretical framework and Literature Review

The section explains the theoretical underpinning and relevant literature of the study. The first section discusses Covid-19, the measures taken by various government in the world to reduce the spread of Covid-19 with special attention to Nigeria and Ghana, the concepts of democracy will be broadly discussed, with a focus on egalitarian democracy while the second section discusses the relevant literatures to this study with the gap I intend to fill.

2.0.1 Covid-19

The coronavirus have its place in a family of viruses that can cause a variety of symptoms, including fever, pneumonia, breathing difficulties, and contamination of the lungs (WMHC, 2020). These viruses are prevalent in animals all over the world, but only a few cases have been identified to affect individuals. The World Health Organization (WHO) utilized the term 2019 novel Covid-19 to allude to a Corona-virus that influenced the lower respiratory part of people with pneumonia in Wuhan, China on 29 December 2019 (Li Q et al, 2020; CDC, 2019). The World Health Organization announced that the authorized name of the 2019 novel coronavirus is Covid-19 illness (COVID-19) (WHO). Also, the current reference name for the infection is extreme intense respiratory disorder Covid-19 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

In December 2019, a report was made that some patients had pneumonia and an unidentified reason was associated with a local Huanan South China Seafood Market in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China (Zhu N, 2020). Due to the epidemic, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) guided a quick reaction group to oblige health specialists of Hubei area and Wuhan city to carry out epidemiological and etiological research. The outbreak of the pandemic was linked to the Huanan South China Seafood Marketplace, according to WHO, but no direct animal association was recognized (WHO, 2020a). Immediately, researchers began to examine and study the health of the new Covid-19, and the underlying genome of coronavirus was released by the exploration group on 10th January 2020 headed by Prof. Yong-Zhen Zhang (Virological.org, 2020). This virus spread across China in a month during the Chinese New Year, a time when there is a lot of human activity among the citizens of China.

Coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) is triggered by an extremely transmittable and pathogenic viral infection and it is mostly transferred through contact with respiratory droplets instead of

through the air (Shereen& Khan, 2020). Mainly, coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) can be caught from those people who are infected. 3.000 droplets can be circulated up by a one cough. These droplets can land on other individuals, and top surfaces all over the place. Nonetheless, several smaller particles will stay in the air. The virus is also an extended faecal matter, thus any person who does not wash their hands meticulously after using the toilet and bathroom could contaminate whatever they touch like many respiratory viruses, including flu, Covid-19 can be spread by proximity with small droplets released from upper respiratory tract secretions of individuals that are affected, e.g. common cold, sneezing or coughing from the mouth and nose (Gray R, 2020). It has been made known from readings that the number of individuals infected with the virus will double every 7 days (Li et al. 2020) including individuals aged 60 and up with existing health problems are more likely to be affected by coronavirus (Wathore et al. 2020). That is the reason it is advisable and important to be more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from sick person. Contamination of the virus can be by the way of surface contamination when these droplets land on objects and surfaces round the person and other people touches these objects or surfaces and further touching their eyes, nose or mouth this leads to people catch COVID-19 (WHO, 2020). As a result, on March 11, 2020, WHO called the Covid19 outbreak a pandemic due to its global spread and extreme effects on the human populace (WHO, 2020).

2.0.2 Government Measures to curb the spread of Covid-19

Different countries adopted different measures although these measures are akin to one another. These measures include lockdown, social distancing, public health measures, social and economic measures etc. (Acaps 2020)

In total, more than a million individuals have died as a result of the 2019 outbreak, and the global economy is forecast to decline by a whopping 4.3 % in 2020. (World Bank, 2020). Different countries adopted different strategies in trying to stop the spread of the virus. Common measures included lock-down where most organization where forced to put an end to their operation indefinitely, which directly affected people's lives in many ways. The pandemic affected the entire food system laid bare its fragility. Closing of borders, trade restraints and confinement procedures have been stopping farmers from accessing markets, which also includes purchasing inputs and marketing their produce, and agricultural labor force from harvesting crops, thus disrupting local and global food supply chains and decreasing access to healthy, safe and diverse diets. The major

measures taken by countries globally are building of health delivery system capacity, physical distancing, community surveillance, supply of personal protective equipment for medical practitioners, creation of isolation wards, rapid response team against COVID-19, quarantine, and also banning of non-essential movement and international travels (Changotra, Rajput, Rajput, Gautam, & Arora, 2020).

Numerous jobs have been lost, many livelihoods are in jeopardy, and an estimated 130 million people will be living in life-threatening poverty if the crisis continues. These huge figures mirror the enormous difficulties and human suffering induced by this pandemic. COVID-19 is not expected to finish anytime soon. The number of new COVID-19 cases is increasing at an unprecedented pace in many countries, and for a lot of them, a second or third wave is already a fact that is not welcome. Much improbability remains about when and how the epidemic will run its course, but the exceptional economic shock caused by the global health emergency has already sharply uncovered the global economy's weaknesses that are existing before, severely drawing back development advancement around the world (UNCTAD, 2020).

Measures such as lockdown has made Local firms and SMEs which are the cornerstone of the global economy, accounting for more than two-thirds of global jobs and 80 to 90 percent of the workforce in low-income countries (ILO, 2020a), to experience sudden income losses and that one third was concerned that they would go out of business in one month this was according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development from a survey conducted on the impact of pandemic on SMEs (OECD,2020). In the sense of developing countries, an all-encompassing survey that covered 54 African countries and assessed the effect of the epidemic on SMEs found that four-fifths of respondents were significantly affected, and that the rate of utilizing ability for small businesses ranged from 30 to 40%, compared to 50 to 60% for large business organizations (Economic Commission for Africa and International Economics Consulting, 2020). Another survey of 490 SMEs in Ethiopia found that 37% had shut by April, with microenterprises and small businesses accounting for three-quarters of the total. Certain empirical evidence additionally elucidate the pandemic's adverse impact on microenterprises and SMEs in other regions (Chen et al., 2020). All theses adverse effect pandemic had on SMEs was largely as a result of the measures the government put in place to mitigate the spread of the virus, these measures affected SMEs and in developing economies where most SMEs have not embraced the online method of running business, the adverse effect is grossly felt.

These measures put in place by Government to mitigate the spread of the Covid19 has created a new way of life, which is centered around the use of Information Communication Technology products and services, which involves the digitalization of conventional businesses. As several activities have moved online, big corporations and microenterprises and SMEs alike are finding new channels of reaching more customers at reduced costs. Nevertheless, this digitalization is not even both across and within countries. It has happened in a significant way in advanced and relatively high-income emerging economies with well-developed ICT networks, an e-commerce ecosystem, and a distribution system already in place (World Trade Organization, 2020), in low-income economies the reverse is the case, hence the reason why most of the measures adopted by the government of low-income economies further increased the inequality that exist in such economy.

The tactical objectives of WHO to fight the global pandemic include the disruption of human-to-human transmission, avoid secondary infections and animal transmission and stop cross-boundary spread (WHO 2020c). Other fundamental objectives include reducing socio-economic impact through multi-sectoral corporation, treatment opportunities, improved diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines (WHO 2020d). From this WHO tactical objective countries instituted various measures to mitigate the spread of Covid19. Although these measures are important, the implementation of these measures affects egalitarian democracy, especially in nascent democracies.

For instance, in Albania, 20 million Euros was given to acquire medical apparatus and support medical staff. Frontline doctors, nurses and other health workers were given 1000 Euros as supplementary payment (IMF 2020). In addition, an emergency law was established to fine private hospitals that fail to provide healthcare assistance 40,000 Euros and trade agencies that breach health protection measures to contain the spread of the disease 83,000 Euros (Gjergj 2020). In Angola, unemployed and retired health-care experts and technicians were hired to strengthen and improve the health-care system's human capacity to handle impacted and quarantined cases (OECD, 2020b).

The Brazilian government set aside 0.4 percent of GDP for healthcare and abolished taxes and import duties on healthcare-related products and services (IMF, 2020). Ten million swift test kits were distributed, and 5800 jobs were provided to physicians, with a 20% bonus for resident

doctors. Intensive care units received 2000 beds and 6500 ventilators, as well as initiation of telemedicine and online consultations (UOL, 2020).

More than 42,000 medical personnel were sent to Wuhan, China, the epicenter of the outbreak (Islamuddin, 2020). Two new provisional hospitals were built, as well as hundreds of laboratories designed for rapid testing. COVID-19-related medical and pharmaceutical products and services were excluded from fees, although medical research into vaccines to combat the virus were funded (OECD, 2020b).

In the Dominican Republic, the government made COVID-19 testing free for people over the age of 59, those who have two or more health-related symptoms, and those who have weak health conditions. Two hospitals were selected to receive and treat COVID-19 cases exclusively, while isolation centers were founded in 15 health centers (Squire, 2020). Sweden has chosen a distinct approach in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in contrast to the majority of other nations.

The Swedish tactic for COVID19 is primarily focused on the Swedish government's actions and decisions to: (a) restrict how the infection spreads in the country, (b) ensure that health and medical care resources are accessible and obtainable, (c) limit the effect on critical services, (d) reduce the impact on both individuals and businesses (e) alleviate general concern (f) execute the proper measures at the proper time (Government Offices of Sweden, 2020a).Sweden's COVID-19 plan is overseen by the Public Health Agency (PHA). As stated by the national Constitution of Sweden, public organizations in Sweden are autonomous of the government and ministers cannot have influence in organizations decision-making (Edwards, 2020). Instead of imposing stringent rules and lockout laws, the Swedish government has advised its people to use common sense and obey the recommendations and guiding principles of the PHA. The PHA's COVID-19 approach is primarily based on recommendations and citizen's obligation and not on restrictions.

In terms of improving health policies, research and development for treatments and vaccines has accelerated in many countries (OECD 2020b; OECD Health Division 2020). Although telemedicine and up-to-date monitoring and tracking technologies are widely used, healthcare professional deployment and safety have improved (AHPRA 2020). The accessibility, availability, and affordability of diagnostic and care options have increased the safety of the elderly. For COVID-19 diagnosis and care, hospital spaces and beds have been of higher quality (SORA 2020). Significantly, medical supplies of private protective equipment, ventilators, diagnostic tests, and important medicines is greater than before across countries (OECD Health Division 2020)

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Democracy

The concept of democracy is unarguably one of the most contested concepts in the field of political science. Scholars like W.B Galie has as cited in Coppedge (2012) argued that democracy is one of the best examples of a fundamentally disputed definition. A philosophy that focuses on never-ending disagreements that, while not resolvable by any argument, are nonetheless supported by perfectly respectable arguments and proof. Michael Coppedge (2012) Posited that democracy as a type of regime is characterized by lots of ideals that is utopia that is, no contemporary political system has actually fulfilled democratic principles maximally. However, some scholars often refer to some political regime as democratic, despite the fact that democracy in the strict sense of the concept is almost unachievable especially in contemporary societies (nation states) unlike the ancient city states, where direct democracies was practice due to the small number of citizens. Most scholars are able to do this through the utilization of a procedural minimum definition of democracy which presumes fully contested elections with universal suffrage and the absence of massive electoral fraud, combined with effective guarantees of civil liberties including freedom of speech, assembly and association (Collier David and Steven Levitsky, 1997). The above definition is a minimum definition of democracy, that highlights what I will call the basic attributes of democracy but not apparently all the attributes of democracy.

For this research I will be focusing on the egalitarian component of democracy, the Covid19 pandemic has particularly negatively affected poor people around the world. Thus, I suspect that the egalitarian component of democracy took a bow especially in nascent democracies. Therefore, I would like to discuss one major classification of democracy that is also embedded in egalitarian democracy which is electoral democracy.

2.1.2 Electoral democracy

When the concept of democracy is mentioned, the first thoughts that comes to our mind is election. In trying to explain electoral democracy, I will adopt the concept of polyarchy as coined by (Dahl, 1971) paying attention to the eight essential attributes which involve (i) universal suffrage (ii) all adults have the right to vote (iii) all adults have the right to run for public office (iv) elected officials have the right to run for election. (v) Elections are free and fair; (vi) all people have the right to associate; (vii) all citizens have the right to express themselves (viii) alternative sources of

information about politics exist and are protected by law and government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference (Coppedge 2012). These attributes of polyarchy are what serves as the parameters for measuring electoral democracy by V-Dem data set. The concept of polyarchy or electoral democracy is limited to the most basic institutional requirements for democracy.

An "electoral democracy" is a democratic government based on a structure that allows all people to choose one candidate for political office from a slate of nominees. The procedure is referred to as an election. Each citizen will become a voter, and their choices will be recorded on a secret ballot. The election must be free and fair, without any intimidation or bribery techniques, and independent of the incumbents in order to count for democratic legitimacy (Ajayi, 2009). However, Schumpeter doesn't conclude at this; he proceeds to explain that: the sort of rivalry for initiative which is to characterize democratic system involves a free rivalry for a free vote (Schumpeter 1975). Additionally, Przeworski characterizes democratic system as a system in which legislative workplaces are filled as a result of challenged elections (Przeworski, 1996). He goes on to say that a government is democratic only if the opponent has a possibility of victory and assuming office (Przeworski, 1996). In his own contribution, Huntington declares in the Schumpeterian custom and characterizes democratic government as:

A political framework that exists to the degree that its most remarkable co-operative leaders are chosen through fair, genuine as well as intermittent elections in which up-and-comers unreservedly vie for votes, and in which essentially all the grown-up populace is qualified to cast a ballot (Huntington, 1991).

Huntington additionally includes like Schumpeter that democratic government likewise suggests the presence of those civil and political opportunities to publish, talk, amass and organize that are important to political discussion and the tenets of electoral campaigns. Democracy is founded on free and equal suffrage within the framework of civil liberties, competitive parties, the selection of alternative candidates for office, and the existence of political institutions that control and guarantee the positions of government and opposition, according to Di Palma (Di Palma, 1990).

The democratic electoral theory aims to encapsulate the core value of making rulers accountable to voters, which is accomplished by electoral competition for the approval of the electorate in situations when suffrage is widespread, political and civil society associations are allowed to function, and electoral processes are liberated from bribery or systemized abnormalities; and

elections influence the structure of the CEO of the nation. Meanwhile, there is the right to speak freely and an autonomous media fit for communicating contradicting perspectives on significant political issues. Electoral democratic system is perceived as an integral segment to each and every origination of democratic rule government, like egalitarian, liberal, participatory, deliberative, etc, in the V-Dem theoretical plan.

2.1.3 The Egalitarian theory of democracy

Democracy as a concept especially after the cold war era was associated more with capitalism, self-determination, and freedom while on the other hand communism or socialism was associated with massive government ownership, autocratic rule and planned economies which are justified by equality (Sigman & Lindberg, 2019).

Discussed above (electoral and liberal democracy) are the most widely used definitions of democracy which is the reason why most contemporary scholarship on democracy emphasis more on the liberal and electoral aspects of democracy. They are not enough, hence, the need to adopt egalitarian democracy. Material and immaterial inequalities, according to the democratic theory of democracy, obstruct the exercise of formal rights and liberties and limit the opportunity of people across all social classes to participate. In an inclusive democracy, human rights and liberties are protected equally across all socioeconomic strata, resources are distributed evenly across all groups of people, and groups and individuals have equal access to power. According to V-Dem, the standard of representative democracy is often taken into account when measuring inclusive democracy. (Vdem codebook, version 10)

The egalitarian democracy holds on material and immaterial equality as inequality inhibits the exercise of liberties and formal rights and access to public goods. Here, the rights and freedoms of all individuals have equal protection across all social groups, there is equal distribution of resources across all social groups. There is also equal access to power. The central idea of this is that all social primary goods which includes income and wealth, liberty and opportunity, and the bases of self-respect are evenly distributed. These fundamental public goods has to be distributed equally to validate the concept of egalitarian democracy. Every individual must have equal right to basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty at all is a principle that can be inferred from this theory.

Egalitarian democratic theory will be used to illuminate this study. Scholars of democracy have identified the centrality of equality in democratic theories (Dahl, 1971; Beetham, 1999; Sigman& Lindberg, 2019). Equality plays an important role in democratic theories as it appears to be prominent in helping democratic regimes to be effective, durable, and legitimate. Dahl(1971) emphasized the importance of equality for the realization of pluralistic and liberal forms of democracy.

Egalitarian theory of democracy is a type of democracy where citizens across all social groups can exercise their political rights and freedoms and are capable of influencing political and governing process (Sigman& Lindberg, 2019). There are basically three subcomponents of this model: equal protection of rights and liberty, equal dispersal of resources and equal access to power.

Thus, the theory explains the equity in rights and freedom, resources distribution, and access to power, which is what I want to examine vis-à-vis government measures to mitigate the spread of Covid19. The theory of egalitarian democracy is based on the assertion that human beings have some kind of fundamental worth and for this reason, should all be treated equally. Nevertheless, in order to drive home this point, egalitarians need to address these two contradictory facts that all humans are equal and that they are also unequal. On the one hand, the idea of human equality is gotten from natural observation which implies that all individuals share the feature of being human and for that reason, have inherent value. On the other hand, inequality can be derived from two channels; the first one comprises of natural endowments, talents, capacities, limitations and vices. The additional one is the varying and unequal social advantages and shortcomings that humans are born into as members of the human society (Afolayan, 2015).

Due to this, the reality of destitution and the financial contrasts amidst the wealthy and the less wealthy causes a main problem for egalitarians. Consequently, while it appears glaringly evident that no individual is, in moral status, subjectively not the same as other people, the unmistakable end likewise appears to be unavoidable that no individuals are equivalent. The egalitarian hypothesis is an endeavor to grapple with these two apparently oddities in an insightfully, ethically, and politically stable way that will fill in as the reason for making the idea of equity the thought for sociopolitical game plans and strategy contemplations. The possibility of egalitarian has its source in moral way of thinking, however morals has assumed its legitimate position in the multidisciplinary cross examination of the existence sciences – biology, biomedical science, ecological science, medication, neuroscience, health sciences, and many more (Afolayan, 2015).

2.1.4. Justification of Egalitarian Democracy for the study

Egalitarian democracy when compared to other forms of democracy has gained very little attention in the scholarship of democracy despite the centrality of equality in democratic theory.

The widespread and effect of coronavirus are very different across nations, brought about by contrasts in geographic conditions, systems of health, the toughness of the reactions, and the physical and monetary distance to China. The presentation of political and financial foundations may likewise add to this, which makes individuals question the capacity of majority rules systems to secure their residents (Kundnani, 2020).

Also, Acemoglu (2020) recommends that the COVID-19 pandemic may speed up the disintegration of popularity based foundations even in the United States. Essentially, Agamben (2020) contends that the pandemic offers an ideal appearance for carrying out unbalanced reactions that are antidemocratic in soul. There are now a few nations that have been utilizing the illness to expand dictator power. For instance, some tyrant nations expanded their hold on minorities, curbed political rivals, delayed elections, and limited right to speak freely, while others have been applying lockdowns that were over-tough and captured a huge number of individuals who disregarded curfew necessities (Runde et al., 2020). In the midst of these conversations, it is presently evident that the actions different government set up to alleviate the spread of coronavirus is a pressure test for majority rules systems everywhere in the world.

Egalitarian democracy projects is an ideal one and its essential goal is to make the human culture really better and fair. Furthermore, its beginning stage is the conviction that all individuals are normally equivalent. This infers basically that it is the reality of imbalance that requires defense. For egalitarians, people ought to be dealt with similarly except if there is an advocated justification treating them unequally. The assumption of equivalent thought at that point necessitates that essential goods – education, riches, medical care, influence, and so on – be disseminated equally in a way that would not jeopardize other important qualities particularly in the midst of pandemic. Deaths from pandemics is accused on inequitable administration, where inequities frustrate cultural participation needed for accomplishing cooperative goods. Normally, more egalitarian administration have more equitable systems of health, with more noteworthy capacity with regards reaching as well as treating individuals, in this manner causing the spread of the infection.

Thus, curbing the spread of the disease during the Covid-19 pandemic have brought about a lot of measures in many countries including Nigeria and Ghana. These have brought much strain on

democracy, majorly the egalitarian democracy, has material and immaterial equalities were mostly affected, and these led to political inequality.

2.2 Conceptual Clarification

2.2.1 Egalitarian Democracy

Egalitarian notion of democracy rely on the foundation that democracy, as a system of rule “by the masses,” requires that the right of taking part and getting involved in the governing procedure are given equally to citizens. Normally, all citizens should have the benefit of equal de jure and de facto capabilities to be involved in different ways. Frequently correlated with the fundamental principles of socialist or communist societies, which several were governed dictatorially by sole parties or absolutist dictators was equality.

The foundation of Egalitarian Democracy is based on the system of rules which states that the citizens of a country should be given the freedom to participate in politics. It is popularly known then, that the widely-accepted concept of democracy has been found to focus attention on freedom, participation and competition, and sometimes specially and uniquely liberal aspects (Sigman& Lindberg, 2015).

As Bernstein (1961) wrote, democracy stands for “an absence of class government, as the pointer of a social condition where the whole community have political privilege and it does not belong to a particular set of individuals”. The view of Athens that “no system of politics could be legitimate, appropriate or good if it left out the general public from participating in ruling” depicts the multifaceted nature of this relationship. (Dahl, 1989)

2.2.2 Equal Protection and distribution

An argument by Beetham (1999) says that equal protection of human rights is a part or consequence of democracy. For equal protection of rights and freedoms to be achieved, the state itself must not get involved in the ability of individuals to participate. The state government should enforce the equality of everyone’s rights and freedoms. Citizens’ rights should be protected equally. This goes beyond enforcing formal protection, but that state shouldn’t interfere in abilities of the citizen to exercise their rights (Beetham, 1999: 282).

Beyond safeguarding freedoms and rights of groups equally, the utilization of political power and the benefit derived from political rights should be kept in check by the basic necessities of life of

the citizens. In achieving political equality, equal distribution of resources should be taken as a matter of importance (Dworkin, 1987).

There are two ways in which equal distribution of resources helps egalitarian democracy. Firstly, it helps the democracy to reduce poverty rates and secondly it helps in the equal distribution of goods and services to both the masses and the elites (Beetham (1999); Saward (1998); Sen (2001)).

2.2.3 Gender Equality

Over the years, there have been lots of concerns about the reduction of participation of women in politics. We must know that the overall development of a nation is largely determined by the inclusion and exclusion of women in politics. (Agbalajobi, 2021)

Gender equality pertains to equal distribution of resources and opportunities between both genders, allowing both male and female to participate in the every affair of humanity. Gender Equality entails that the fundamental causes of discrimination are identified and eliminated so that both genders will be exposed to different opportunities. Gender quality should be considered for a society that wants to grow.

2.3 Literature Review

2.3.1 Covid 19 Pandemic and Health care system in an egalitarian democracy

Naturally, more egalitarian governance has access to greater equitable health systems, with greater capacity for reaching out to people and treating them, thus limiting the widespread of the virus (Krishna et al, 2021). A proper, well-equipped and well-functioning health-care system, where the financially handicapped have equal access to health together with the rich, is likely reach and treat people in high number and capacity, thereby sealing the spread of a virus and bringing mortality to the lowest minimum. Nonetheless, a significant number of these nations likewise embraced ‘emergency’ rules and ‘extraordinary’ measures that focused on the widespread of the epidemic. These supplementary measures are free of admittance to the medical care system or some other thought of wide-based egalitarian movements (Krishna et al, 2021).

Egalitarian democracy encompasses equitable access to health care, this becomes more important during pandemic like this. Naturally, those with access to good health system are more likely to be able to understand the way of politics better and vice versa (Verba et al., 1995). Citizens are always faced with discouragement when they come to the full knowledge that they cannot access good health facilities at times (Rachael & Staffan, 2015). The coronavirus pandemic has caused a series

of research revealing a close relationship between inconsistent admittance to medical care, welfare services and unfavorable results from the pandemic (Krishna et al, 2021).

Ellyatt (2020) contemplated that expansive cultural trust and social capital would be a significant factor in alleviating the infection without a lot of need for phenomenal measures in Sweden. Such populist esteems and framework with no uncertainty helped aggregate results in view of shared upsides of local area. Maybe than regulatory capacity only, expansive based egalitarian authority fortifies social limits, which can likewise form resistance against the said pandemic.

However in 2020, the Swedish expectation has not been met in these regards. Sweden had 10.3% infections and 0.06% deaths compared to 0.023% infections and 0.002% demises from coronavirus in Norway. Thus, Sweden indicates a death rate 30 times bigger than Norway's. Similarly, Finland, Iceland and Denmark death rates also are lower compared to Sweden in that same year 2020 (Krishna et al, 2021). The equality of admittance to medical care, nevertheless, is greatly related across the nations referred to above. There are welfare strategies and democratic methodology, which evidently lead to increased rate of social capital and political trust This model shows that medical care value is significant for battling sickness not due to the more extensive cultural impacts of cultural trust in a libertarian majority rules system, but instead due to the fact that admittance to medical services just catches organizational limits of medical care systems (Krishna et al, 2021).

2.3.2 COVID 19 Pandemic and the Educational System in an egalitarian democracy

Globally, the entire educational have been largely affected by outbreak of COVID-19. All the program of schools which includes teaching and learning programs, examination program, extra-curriculum program, and academic service program were disrupted by the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic (Ogunode et al, 2021). The effect Covid-19 on Ghana's teaching and learning processes was investigated by Owusu-Fordjour et al.(2020). The research uncovered some of the difficulties students encountered during the lock down which was prompted by the pandemic Covid-19. There was ineffectiveness of the online system of learning as many students were unable to study effectively and efficiently from their convenient zones. Also, for the masses, some parents found it difficult to assist their wards on how to access online learning platform due to the fact they were also not familiar with the new system. We can therefore conclude that the pandemic really had a negative effect on students learning as many of them were not used to individualistic learning (Ogunode et al, 2021). Ogunode (2021) also reported that the impact of COVID-19 on

Education in Nigeria includes the suspension of the teaching program, suspension of internal examination, suspension of the extra-curriculum program, disruption of the academic program, and inability to enroll new students.

2.3.3 Covid-19 and Nigeria Egalitarian Democracy

Failure in government administration may result in major resource misallocation and even counterproductive outcomes. Failures in the health-care system aggravate the problem, as do strong exogenous forces such as trade and other policy concerns. A significant recalibration of the response towards a new normal should be considered in this situation (Johnson-Sirleaf, Cameron & Kaberuke, 2020). These are many hard lessons for policy makers, government and the masses. There was lack of strategic planning in form of politicization of containment measures, neglect of rules and patronage, enforcement of accountability, international collaborations for selfish purposes, and great lack of trusts between citizens and the government.

Egalitarian governance comprises of equitable health systems, with greater capacity for reaching and treating people, thus curbing the spread of the virus (Vadlamannati et al, 2021). The main reason for the rapid spread of the virus in Nigeria and its effects on poor citizens, as Ozili (2020) intimates, is because of weak institutions that are ineffective in responding to the pandemic, and the lack of social welfare programs that would have catered for poor and vulnerable citizens who were affected by the impact of the worldwide health deterioration.

In Nigeria, the masses are mostly affected by the outbreak, which drives families more into hunger and poverty. A 5 billion Naira Coronavirus Disease Crisis Intervention Aid was supported through the National Assembly by the Federal Government as a monetary guide to the most weak neighborhood populace in Nigeria (Ezeibe 2020). Wavier of electricity bill was approved by the National Assembly as an important factor of reducing the entire nation's situation. Similar to different leaders of governments, the President endorsed eliminating help from the public authority's coffers to induce the Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in promoting business venture from weakening because of complete lockdown egregious impacts of coronavirus in Nigeria (Eranga 2020).

Palliatives were to be given in form of food distribution and 2-month advance as payment, but this was in the loose sense. No one actually received the two months advance (Abdul, 2020). The food security was also affected by handicapping policies put in place. The problem arose because the

policy structures was done in a way that it was above the expectations of the majority. Most citizens earn from hand to mouth on daily basis so the policies did not favour them but the elites in the community (Abdul, 2020; Andam et. al., 2020). Many of these measures and policies, though needed, the means and process have greatly fall below egalitarian democracy standard. There were experiences of use of brutal forces, outright disregard for human rights, corruption, inequalities. In Nigeria, there were spark of violence between citizens and political parties. There have been possibility of extrajudicial killings (Anyanwu et. al., 2020)., especially after the use of crude force and brutality that are been perpetuated by the security officials to ensure compliance of these measures, empowered by Nigerian Government, which is a clear breach of fundamental human rights of citizens (Aduku, 2020).

Covid-19 has disrupted the educational landscape in Nigeria by creating inequality in the access student have to learning facilities, while the wards of the political elites still have access to learning facilities, the wards of the masses do not have. A longer-term effect of this is heightened by educational inequality. Though some international development partners have introduced ICT-based resources so as to foster the learning process, the uptake depends on the quality of internet access, digital knowledge that are mostly available to the children of the elites (Obiakor& Adeniran, 2020).

2.3.4 Covid-19 and Ghana's Egalitarian Democracy

We noticed a reduction in violent enforcement of Covid-19 measures (Brief, 2020) in Ghana, Iran, and Kazakhstan. The disposition of the elitist and indifference to the security and social distance measures were against the set standard. They abused the restrictive directives and this was majorly seem with intra-party parliamentary primaries of the ruling party, New Patriotic party. There was almost total complete disregard for Covid-19 directives which even led to confrontation of Ghana Medical Association that have lost several key members through treatment transmission to seek the help of the police to apprehend defaulters and prosecute them (Ibrahim, 2020). During the course of the pandemic, joint military and police personnel ensured public compliance to the partial lock down in Accra and Kumasi. This was to make sure the citizens stay at home so far they are not out to get essential items. Thus, many of the citizens carry criminal records throughout their lives for not following the protocols that might not have been regarded as criminal offences. Some of the security response were heavy-handed that involved verbal and physical assaults which are

violation of rights and brought about public uproar about police brutality. Rights violation and bizarre disregard for human dignities was in major media reports (Ibrahim, 2020).

Crucially, the negative effect of employment on the pandemic was not only significantly more sizable in districts affected by the lockdown but was also concentrated among workers in informal self-employment. In addition, the earnings of self-employed and female workers remained more negatively affected on the average across Ghana. This finding reinforces the results obtained by other studies in the Sub-Saharan African context, suggesting that micro and small enterprises have experienced a drastic decline in activity due to the pandemic than medium and large enterprises (Lakuma and Sunday 2020), and informal workers have been at the highest risk, given the nature of their job and lack of financial aid to stabilize economic shocks (Balde et al. 2020; Bassier et al. 2020). There was no support to meet the basic needs of the citizens. Some citizens defiled the orders in search of food, the security forces used brutal measures to keep them in check, until the government was forced to provide relief. The street hawkers and beggars, disabled, widows, children with special needs were more badly hit and there were no provisions for them (UNICEF, 2020b).

There was reduction in fresh food retailers and markets. These led many restaurants, hotels, and local eateries to reduce bulk purchase of fresh food. Many low-income earning have been affected as well as purchasing power (Abroquah, 2020; Gyimah, 2020). The elites applauded the democratic decision of the government for the steps taken as they proclaimed the steps to yield positive results. This is mainly to their favour as they have almost nothing to lose unlike the traders and those in the informal sector, the artisans and entrepreneurs that have major concerns on economic upkeep in the difficult times (The Guardian, 2020). The government decision affected their ability to afford food for sustenance, and ability to pay staff (Akuoko, Aggrey, & Amoako-Arhen, 2021).

A major danger has been presented to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as COVID-19 pandemic drastically increased neediness in some sub-Saharan African nations. Current evaluation propose that the world's advancement in accomplishing zero neediness in this area by 2030 will fall back by 3 years attributable to coronavirus. The current evaluations from the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 7) propose that the all approaches to end destitution in Ghana is a long way from being done and in certain areas, it is getting hard to accomplish as the extent of Ghana's helpless populace remains moderately high (Edition, 2019). Destitution is getting more critical and

hard to establish half of the sixteen areas which experienced demolishing poverty prevalence rates. As indicated by the report, most Ghanaians are living in contemptible poverty as the figures of individuals living in outrageous destitution ascend from 2.2 million within 2013 to 2.4 million within 2017 dependent on the 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC) projections (Edition, 2019).

Gilbert et al., (2020) expressed that the administration and management of a nation's coronavirus importation depends on the limit of the health sector. Concerning readiness and weakness against importation of coronavirus in Africa, nations like Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Sudan, as well as Tanzania are at average importation and high weakness hazard. The weak medical services administrations and adverse results of health aberrations for people abiding in rural regions will additionally put them at the verge of the epidemic contrasted with their metropolitan zones. There were weak coordination mechanisms, irregular supplies of laboratory materials, inadequate quarantine and isolation centers, no legislation to deal with health emergencies of the public. These brought about issues on the equity in service availability because of prioritization. There were shortage of adequately trained health workers, the distribution of health materials were unequal with more favour to the urban regions, high workload in district and regional hospitals. Thus, those who are wealthy and in the upper class of the society have better access to the facilities (UNICEF, 2020). Additionally, Kashnitsk, Aburto (2020) as well as Emanuel et al, (2020) focused on the necessity to conquer the effect of coronavirus, there is the requirement for a reasonable portion of scant assets, contemplating denied territories like rustic areas. In light of these discoveries, the study tests if the distinctive impacts of coronavirus exists across the metropolitan areas in Ghana.

Ghana although constitutionally bound to conduct her election, both parliamentary and presidential elections raised concerns in the country regarding striking a balance between public health and responsibility of holding the rule of law. Despite concerns from different quarters, the election held by December 2020, maybe due to interest in gaining power (Ijon, & Bingab, 2020). Ghana's democracy has been hyped as one of the best in Africa as it has sustained political stability and has witnessed 3 transitions from one political party to another. The election was directly against public health restrictions and it had in a way affected the smooth conduct of the 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana. Since it is the single most decisive mechanism that provided

the citizens opportunity in the governance process, the election was conducted though they had no very good capability to conduct such.

While majority of the literature of Covid19 and democracy has focused more on liberal and electoral democracy, this thesis focuses on egalitarian democracy because of the centrality of equality to democracy.

2.4 Summary

Covid19 pandemic, obviously has adversely affected the way the world works in no small measures from political, economic, health, social etc. there is no sphere in the world that was not affected by the pandemic. Government around the world has adopted measures to mitigate the spread of the virus while these measures were needed to save the world the implementation of the measures affected democracies around the world especially nascent democracies especially the egalitarian aspect of democracy.

Egalitarian theory of democracy is a type of democracy where citizens across all social groups can exercise their political rights and freedoms and are capable of influencing political and governing process. Clearly the coronavirus pandemic has prompted an unexpected increment of research showing a near relationship amidst inequitable admittance to medical care, welfare administrations and the pandemic unfavorable results. In trying to address the broad impact of the pandemic, I asked if the measures taken by the government of Nigeria and Ghana to curb the spread of Covid19 has an effect on egalitarian democracy.

3.0 Methodology

This section explains the methods used to address the research questions and objectives. It will contain the research design, case selection, sources, and methods of data collection as well as the research instrument including a description, validity, and reliability of the instrument.

3.1 Study Area/Case Selection

The use of 'Most similar system design' (MSSSD) was used to select countries to be sampled. This means that, the countries that have been chosen appear as similar in many background attributes as possible. The countries have almost the same democratic ranking in the 2019 V-Dem democracy report (V-DEM Report, 2020). They are also Anglophone countries so as to reduce language barriers. Among other countries which fulfilled the above conditions, Nigeria and Ghana were studied. Nigeria and Ghana were purposively sampled because they had the highest numbers of cases in West Africa. The sample size was 400 respondents each in the two locations which was gotten from geo poll while the number of sources gotten from ACAPS is 6

3.2 Research Design

Research design is conceived by (Huberman & Miles, 2002) as the plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived to achieve answers to research questions as well as the arrangement of conditions for the gathering and interpretation of data in a way that provides relevant answers to the research question. That is, research design spells out the strategy for obtaining the right information as well as the appropriate techniques and tools for validating and generalizing the research. The research design expresses the nature and the plan, spelling out the sources and types of information required that are relevant to the research problem.

For this study, qualitative and quantitative data will be used, and also getting secondary data from literatures, electronic/print media, academic journals data from the V-Dem pandemic backsliding project, Afro-barometer, ACAPS dataset etc. Comparative case studies can be used to develop or test existing theories (Huberman & Miles, 2002). This research is out to do the latter, examining my cases from the day the region recorded its first case of Covid19 which was the 27th of February 2020 to date.

This research made use of the analysis of secondary data which will consist of both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

3.4 Eligibility criteria

3.4.1 Inclusion Criteria

Only sources that were relevant to the scope of this study were used.

3.5. Method of Data Collection

Statistics which are descriptive were determined for all factors in the forms of frequencies and extents/rates utilizing Microsoft Excel. The data utilized for this research were retrieved from online archive like Geo Poll, ACAPS and SERP. Other information were gotten from different authors.

Table 3.5.1 Archives of sources

Aspects of Egalitarian democracy affected by the Measures	Source
Access to Education	ACAPS , (UNESCO, 2020), (Obiakor & Adeniran, 2020).
Informal economy (low income earners or business owners)	ACAPS , Assessment Capacities Project, 2020. Anyanwu et al, 2020, The Guardian, 2020.
Electoral democratic issues.	ACAPS , (INEC, 2020), (Asante & Mills, 2020). (Ogbeidi, 2012) Joseph, 1997.
Food Concerns	(Maslow, A 1943), (Arndt et al. 2020),(Gakpo, 2020), Geo poll.
Human rights	Amnesty International, GHANA 2019 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT, ReliefWeb, 2020, Aborisade, 2021.
Health	ACAPS, Geo poll, SERP , Ahmed et. al., 2020
Gender Equality	(KELLY, 2013), CEDAW, ((Right to Education Project, 2012)

Socioeconomic relief measures	ACAPS, (Daily Graphic, 1982), Ministry of Information
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3.6. Data Analysis

Analysis of the result was done for the quantitative data as well as qualitative data. The qualitative were analyzed utilizing content analysis strategy. This is an apparatus utilized to decide the presence of specific words or ideas inside some given qualitative information that are in text design. While the quantitative data was examined utilizing descriptive statistics.

4.0 Result and Discussion

4.1 Access to Education

Nigeria

Nigeria was among the very first government in sub-Saharan Africa that enforced social distance, and one of the sectors greatly affected is the education sector. All the schools in the country were closed by mid-March 2020 together with the ban of public and social gatherings. The nationwide closure of schools has disrupted learning process and access to the vital school-provided services. UNESCO estimated almost 40 million learners to have been affected by closure of schools in Nigeria, with majority being primary and secondary school learners (Obiakor & Adeniran, 2020; Andam, Edeh, Oboh, Pauw, & Thurlow, 2020), students in tertiary institutions were not left out as all tertiary institutions were closed as well. The covid19 pandemic has created a new shift for education around the world from embracing online learning platform, restructuring application process and stimulating crisis management. While it was important to ensure that schools were closed to reduce the spread of the virus, the inability for the Nigerian educational system to adopt the E-Learning system of Education is a problem.

Some Nigerian schools especially private schools have adopted e-learning as a way to avoid fully disrupting their academic calendar. However, the total percentage of Nigerian students enrolled in private schools is 7.71% (NBS, 2020). the reason for this low number is not farfetched, private schools in Nigeria are quite expensive and it has better quality than public schools and only the rich can afford to send their wards to private schools.

School closure in Nigeria has created inequality in the access to education as public schools due to lack of funding, corruption etc has not being able to switch to e-learning while most private schools have embraced e-learning to ensure learning continues amidst the pandemic.

“All public and private schools are closed in Lagos...”

BBC (ACAPS)

Covid-19 has disrupted the educational landscape in Nigeria by creating inequality in the access student have to learning facilities. Though some international development partners have introduced ICT-based resources so as to foster the learning process, the uptake depends on the quality of internet access, digital knowledge that are mostly available to the children of the elites (Obiakor & Adeniran, 2020).

Ghana

From the excerpts, the findings revealed that schools including tertiary institutions were shut down to curb the disease in Ghana. However, accesses were given to some set of the general public for certain reasons. Schools were also reopened with certain guidelines given.

“All universities, senior high schools and basic schools are to be close. BECE and WASSCE applicants on the other hand, would be permitted to attend school while studying for their exams. In that regard, they will have to follow the protocols of social distancing”.

President's Twitter (ACAPS)

However, immediately the school closure was announced the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service also announced the Covid19 emergency provision for distance and remote learning system to help student learn while at home and this was followed with the rolling out of lessons program on Ghana Learning Television (GLTV) for more than one million senior high school students (UNESCO, 2020).

4.2 Informal economy (low income earners or business owners)

Nigeria

In a way to control the spread of Covid-19, the excerpts revealed that all business activities were put on hold in Nigeria, especially the small and medium scale enterprises while government officials and big companies even not very essential were allowed to open.

“On Monday, The Nigerian government declared the reopening of government offices and financial institutions”.

Federal Ministry of Health (ACAPS)

Business closure occurred massively and there were higher prices of goods and services that were not regulated by the government. There were higher numbers of unemployment and loss of income, and the informal sector was greatly affected (Assessment Capacities Project, 2020).

Most parents have informal and casual jobs and they cannot work from home. Thus, they experienced malnutrition and their children also malnourished due to the sudden loss of income and lack of access to social support that the elites who normally have enough resources enjoy. Many of the citizens were vulnerable (Anyanwu et al, 2020).

Ghana

The study revealed that social centres and other offices were closed generally for some period of time and reopened later to stem the spread of Covid-19 in Ghana, in all small, medium and big enterprises. These cut across all businesses the same/

“Reopening of the nation’s tourist sites and attractions, so they can begin to receive visitors”.

“Beaches, cinemas, pubs and clubs are to remain closed until further notice”.

Presidency of Ghana (ACAPS)

The rich and affluent applauded the technocratic decision of the democratically elected government for the steps taken as they proclaimed the steps to yield positive results. This is mainly to their favour as they have almost nothing to lose unlike the traders and those in the informal sector, the artisans and entrepreneurs who are majorly women that have major concerns on economic upkeep in the difficult times (The Guardian, 2020).

4.3 Electoral democratic issues.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, there was no general election scheduled for 2020, however, the electoral management body known as INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) has scheduled two state elections in Ondo and Edo state respectively. From the table 4.3.1, the number of electorates that registered to vote but did not eventually come out to vote is alarming and worrisome and the reason for this is largely due to the pandemic and the inability for the electoral management body to focus on election risk management, to develop better ways to cast ballot during pandemic so as to maintain clean, free and genuine elections. (INEC, 2020). There were no measures for safety of the electorates at large. Social distancing and provisions of resources for preventive measures of COVID-19 were not available. The politicians were more concerned in the election than safety of the voters. Thus, there was comparatively lower turn out of registered voters in 2020 as compared to 2016.

**Table 4.3.1 Summary table of the election carried out in Ondo and Edo state during Covid
Governorship Election in 2016 before Covid.**

	Edo State	Ondo State
Total Number of Registered Voters	1,900,223	1,647,973
Total Vote Cast	622,039	584,997
Difference	1,278,184	1,062,976

Governorship Election in 2020 during Covid

	Edo State	Ondo State
Total Number of Registered Voters	2,272,058	1,572,745
Total Vote Cast	537,407	572,745
Difference between both	1,734,651	1,000,000

Source: INEC

Ghana

Unlike Nigeria, Ghana had a general election scheduled for 2020, prior to the election, Ghana has conducted general election that has being deemed free, fair and credible by both local and international observers, making Ghana one of the most advanced electoral democracy in West Africa. However, the general election of 2020 was directly against public health restrictions and it had in a way affected the smooth conduct of the 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana. Since it is the single most decisive mechanism that provided the citizens opportunity in the governance process, the election was conducted though the electoral management body had no very good capability to conduct such (Asante & Mills, 2020). The turnover for the 2020 presidential and parliamentary election was good despite the lack of adequate resources to ensure implementation of measures to prevent COVID-19 spread. The government care more about the elections than citizens safety, and also the citizens do not care much about the awareness on adhering to the safety measures.

Table 4.3.3 **Summary table of the election carried out during Covid and before Covid.**

	Before COVID	After COVID
Total Number of Registered Voters	15,712,499	17,027,941
Total Vote Cast	10,713,650	13,119,460
Difference between both	4,998,849	3,908,481

Source: BBC

4.4 Food

Nigeria

In the hierarchy of needs classified by (Maslow, A 1943), he classified food as a psychological need that is food amongst other things, he classified are things no human can do without. Hence it is important that regardless of the situation food is supposed to be available and accessible to all. Looking at the table in the appendix A one of the measures that the Nigeria government took that affected food accessibility and availability is the lockdown measures. The lockdown measures threatened food production in Nigeria, making food scare and with scarcity comes increase in price and once the price increases, the poor and people in rural and remote areas are less likely to afford it. (Arndt et al. 2020) asserted that government measures such as lockdown have adversely impacted economic outcomes, while highlighting existing gross inequalities in the availability and access to food.

The lockdown in Nigeria obviously brought disruptions in food supply chains which caused food to be very limited and available to everyone especially the poor and those in the rural or remote areas. Prior to the pandemic, Nigeria is a country that has no nationwide welfare policies to enhance household food security, with the pandemic measures such as lockdown, many households in Nigeria experience food insecurity. The food provided in forms of palliatives to reduce the effect of COVID-19 measures were also been hoarded and not distributed to the citizens.

Ghana

Just as in Nigeria, there are no food distribution systems in Ghana for social intervention structures to mitigate the effect of Covid-19 measures (Gakpo, 2020). Citizens are not allowed to carry out major economic activities that could generate income for feeding as majority are in the informal sector where they live from hand to mouth. There was great worry on feeding as a basic need. This is illustrated by the data from Geopoll as shown below.

Table 4.4.1 Comparison of Food concerns between Nigeria and Ghana

Variables	Categories	Nigeria	Ghana
Food shopping	Less often than usual	229 (57%)	212 (53%)
	Same as usual	73 (18%)	93 (23%)
	More often than usual	98 (25%)	95 (24%)
	Total	400	400
Worried about food?	Yes	342 (85%)	284 (71%)
	No	58 (15%)	116 (29%)
	Total	400	400

A larger percentage of the respondents in Nigeria which was 14% more than Ghana worried about food. Little more than average respondents in Nigeria and Ghana shopped less often than usual while 18% and 23% shopped same as usual in Nigeria and Ghana respectively. In both nations, a third of respondents said they made a purchase more often than normal.

Table 4.4.2: Number of people that accessed essential (non-COVID-19 related) feeding services in the Four Quarters of 2020 (SERP)

Quarter	Ghana	Nigeria

Q2-2020	Nutrition programmes Children 6-59 Months	1,200,000	-
Q3-2020	Nutrition programmes Children 6-59 Months	1,300,000	120,903
Q4-2020	Nutrition programmes Children 6-59 Months	1,200,000	457,410

As illustrated in table 4.4.2, essential non-COVID-19 nutrition programmes were in a standstill in both Nigeria and Ghana for the first quarter of 2020 for under-5 children. There is purely lack of basic feeding services that doesn't relate to COVID-19. Things got better in Ghana for the second quarter as 1,200,000 children within the age of 6months and 59 months were able to enjoy nutrition programme, while all under-five nutritional programmes were still in a standstill in Nigeria. 1,300,000 cases were reported for nutrition programmes in Ghana, as compared to 120,903 in Nigeria in the third quarter.

The fourth quarter 1,200,00 nutrition programmes and 651,489 vaccination programmes were recorded in Ghana and Nigeria respectively. Nigeria is a country with the highest population in Africa. Ghana when compared with Nigeria has much lesser population. Nigeria should therefore have higher numbers of nutritional programmes than Ghana for under-five children nutrition, but the reverse is the case. There is therefore a worse nutrition situation for children in Nigeria as compared to Ghana. (SERP)

4.5 Human right

Nigeria

In Nigeria, security agencies was saddled with the responsibility of enforcing compliance to the measures the government has put in place to mitigate the spread of covid19. However, the security agencies most notably the police, in the process of carrying out their duties of enforcing these measures, reputable international human rights organizations have report excessive abuse of human rights by the use of illegitimate force (Aborisade, 2021).

Nigeria recorded its first case of covid19 on the 27th of February, 2020 and the lockdown measure was declared by the president on the 30th of march 2020, on the 4th of April, 2020 just 5 days after the president declared lockdown, the National Human Rights Commission in Nigeria (NHRC)

reported that 18 people had been extrajudicially killed by the Nigerian police while trying to ensure compliance to the lockdown and other measures (Aborisade, 2021). During this period, it will be safe to say that in Nigeria during this period (30th march- 4th of April 2020) more people have been killed (18) when trying to ensure compliance of the measures compare to the virus itself 11. The NHRC also reported that they have received over 105 complaints of human rights violations against law enforcement agencies within this period.

During these periods, because of the gross abuse of human right by law enforcement agencies, there was a massive protest led by the youths in Nigeria, tagged Endsarsz which literally means end police brutality, this protest was peaceful but did not end well as the Nigerian Army opened fire on peaceful protesters at Lekki toll gate in Lagos, Nigeria. Till date, the total number of people killed has not be ascertained (ReliefWeb, 2020).

Ghana

Just like Nigeria, in Ghana the security agencies was saddled with the responsibility of enforcing compliance to the measures the government has put in place to mitigate the spread of covid19. Although in Ghana the form of human right abuse that emanated from the enforcing of compliance of these measures was not as gross as that of Nigeria. Ayisi-Boateng et al., (2020) concluded in their studies that some civilians were abused both physically and emotionally by the Ghanaian police while trying to enforce compliance of the measures. Thus, by the end of 2020 the Police Professional Standards Bureau (PPSB) had received 77 cases of police brutality and investigated it with justice served (GHANA 2019 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT)

4.6 Health

Nigeria

The ill equipped health sector in Africa, has made some scholars posited that covid19 will cause a gross damage in the continent (Martinez, Alexander, & Effua, 2020). In Nigeria, as the table above has shown, there were several public health measures that was taken which includes isolation and quarantine polices, health screenings in airports and border crossing, strengthening the public health system, mandating everyone to wear protective gear in public, testing policy etc. By April 2020, 500 billion naira was raised as crises intervention fund for health facilities upgrade. The industrial capital, Lagos state, granted the sum of

\$28 million to support the containment efforts. Nigeria Center for Disease Control released \$22.7 million for test kits, medical personnel, and isolation centres (Ahmed et. al., 2020). While these measures is very necessary to mitigate the spread of the virus, the implementation of the policies increased the level of inequality that already existed in Nigeria. Ahmed et al., (2020) confirmed through their studies that in rural areas in Nigeria before Covid19 diagnostic and treatment services were available in these areas, with the advent of covid19, there was a massive reduction in the access to healthcare services in these areas as a result of an exponential increase in the cost of healthcare and a reduction or stagnation of household income.

The cost of getting a covid test done and other health related materials like drugs, face mask, hand sanitizers, disinfectants, gloves etc were all on the increased particularly because of the lockdown and the increase in demand for these items (Ahmed SAKS, Ajisola M, Azeem K, et al. 2020). making it possible for the rich only to be able to afford it and be protected from the virus. Essential items like these are supposed to be affordable and available to everyone especially in times like these.

Also, to strengthen the health system in Nigeria, it was revealed that surveys and partnership with international bodies were put in place to intensify the search for vaccine for Covid-19.

“Lagos has begun a house-to-house covid-19 survey in an effort to broaden our examination for likely cases of corona virus”.

BBC (ACAPS)

“The government has initiated an online course for health workers on Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC)”.

Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria (ACAPS)

“Nigeria's local vaccine production organization, Bio-vaccines Nigeria Limited (BVNL) is ready to guarantee that Nigeria is served Corona-Virus vaccines at the same time with different parts of the world when the World Health Organization (WHO) gives its approval for the utilization of any of some corona virus candidate vaccines. This will accomplish through a partnership with worldwide specializes accomplices who are presently working on WHO endorsement of corona virus vaccines. The specialized partners will bulk produce for BVNL...”

MoH (ACAPS)

The above measures though good, but in practice shows fundamental inequality in the health materials needed. Hence the health and public measures taken by the government created inequality in the accessibility to health care, thus adversely affecting egalitarian democracy.

Ghana

However, unlike Nigeria, Ghana upheld egalitarian democracies better by mobilizing retired health care professionals to serve the masses and ensure great access; there was the creation of national information contact centre, disinfection of public places, buses creation construction of more hospitals, and more incentive packages for health workers which showed better circulation of material and immaterial resources.

“To plan for a surge in diseases, the Ministry of health is mobilizing new and retired medical professionals”.

“To enable the flow of information concerning covid-19, the government has established a National Information Centre, ”.

“All markets and lorry terminals are being disinfected...”

“Ministry of transport is making buses available for free to convey health workers in affected areas for the duration of the restrictions”.

“Face masks, head covers, surgical scrubs and gowns will be produced domestically”.

“This year, the government promises to start building 88 hospitals in the districts where there are none”.

Ministry of Information (ACAPS)

“The health workers Incentive program will be extended by another three (3) months. This indicates that for the next three months, July, August and September all health employees would be exempt from paying income taxes. Also, for the months of July, August and September, all frontline health workers will earn a supplementary payment of fifty percent (50%) of their basic salary”.

“Enhancement of testing and treatment capacities...”

Presidency of Ghana (ACAPS)

In Nigeria, only about 29% (positive + negative) of the total population were tested in Nigeria and about 11% of the respondents in Ghana were tested. This shows a very low testing rate, with much

lesser in Ghana. Elites in the countries have better access to the testing kits. The two countries have good preventive measures and wash hands regularly. A high percentage of the population still don't practice social distancing methods. Majority of the respondents, 57% in Nigeria and 53% in Ghana buy food less often than usual. This can be attributed to restrictive movement and reduction in funds even for basic necessities. The use of non-essential items also reduced greatly due to the same reasons. (Geopoll dataset)

The Geo poll study showed that most of the respondents in Nigeria are mostly concerned about the economic impacts (32%) even more than them contracting the diseases. Contracting the diseases comes next (28%) followed by global infections. Whereas, for Ghana, contracting diseases comes first (27%), followed by global infection and economic impacts. Thus, it can be seen that the measures of COVID-19 affect well and equal distribution off resources a lot in Nigeria than other things, and a bit much in Ghana (Geopoll dataset).

Table 4.5.1: Number of people that accessed essential (non-COVID-19 related) health services in the Four Quarters of 2020 (SERP)

Quarter		Ghana	Nigeria
Q2-2020	Total Maternal Health	40,000	-
	Vaccination Programmes	1,371,547	-
Q3-2020	Total Maternal Health	60,000	6,363,597
	Vaccination Programmes	1,352,064	1,665,751
Q4-2020	Total Maternal Health	60,000	6,272,394
	Vaccination Programmes	651,489	4,594,509

As illustrated in table 4.5.1, essential non-COVID-19 health services were in a standstill in both Nigeria and Ghana for the first quarter of 2020. There is purely lack of basic health services that doesn't relate to COVID-19. Things got better in Ghana for the second quarter, as 40,000 were able to access maternal health, while all COVID-19 related essential health services were still in a

standstill in Nigeria. There was a 50% increase in maternal health for the third quarter in Ghana, while Nigeria had 6,363,597 maternal health cases. There were 1,352,064 and 1,665,751 vaccination programmes respectively in Ghana and Nigeria respectively which is a low proportion of the total population. Citizens have no access to the basic needs and no equal access to health facilities which is one of the cardinal points of egalitarian democracy.

The fourth quarter in Nigeria had a 91,203 decline in maternal health cases. These illustrated that the bad state of things still deteriorated drastically. Vaccination program increased by 2,928,758 in Nigeria though highly still insufficient. Ghana however had 60,000 maternal health cases and 651,489 vaccination programmes, which shows lesser than 10% of the total population received vaccination. These are combined results of corruption, mismanagement of funds, lack of provision of essential health facilities and lack of care of the masses. These raises question on the egalitarian democracy of Nigeria and Ghana. (SERP)

4.7 Gender Equality

Nigeria

According to (PWC, 2020) Microbusinesses in Nigeria are accounted for by 41% of Nigerian women. The women makes the bulk of small enterprises and informal sector and are more disfavoured with the measures as the measures in place affect this sectors more than any other. Also, women are generalized to be subject to exploit and gender-based violence (Thematic Report, 2020).

To make gender equality come to actualization in Nigeria is a huge amount of work. This however depends on a number of conditions which cannot be overemphasized such as socio-cultural re-orientation, political will and many more. Although the Nigerian government wished to be committed to gender equity, the existing policy is more theoretical than pragmatic. (Kelly, 2013)

Ghana

“There is gender gap between students of different sex in secondary and tertiary education and the high drop-out rates of girls from schools...”

CEDAW

Ghana democratic government are urged to take notable steps to overcome traditional attitudes that does not contribute to gender equity, equal rights measures are to be implemented. (Right to Education Project, 2012).

The social economic-impacts of the crises is far-reaching in Ghana as over 92% of workers are made up of women (Thematic Report, 2020). Women serve as the driving force of the sector of economy and thus, the policies in place affects the informal sector of the economy and brought much negative impacts with significant loss of women's earnings.

4.8 Socioeconomic Measures and Related Mitigation Strategy before and during COVID 19

Nigeria

In a bid to control the spread of Covid-19 in Nigeria, isolation and quarantine policies were put in place. Extracts from the qualitative study revealed that self-quarantine is mandatory for travellers returning from other countries to Nigeria. And these are based on suspicion, movement prior to restrictions and compulsory quarantine.

“All travellers returning from other nations prior to the restriction are monitored in self-isolation”.

AA (Media), ACAPS

“All arriving passengers must go through 7 day quarantine and avoid all contact with friends, family, colleagues, and other members of the public”.

MoH, ACAPS

Though these measures are essential, they negate the basic freedom ensured in egalitarian democracy. It was also revealed that the number of public gatherings in Nigeria has been reduced drastically to curb the spread of the virus.

“No religious center with more than 50 congregants can open for service in Lagos”.

AA (Media), ACAPS

“There should be restriction on public gathering to 20 people outside the workplace”.

Federal Ministry of Health, ACAPS

“...cinemas were required to allow a maximum of 33 percent of their official capacities.”

Garda World

“Cinemas will be required to allow a maximum of 33 percent of their official capacities.”

MoH, ACAPS

“The Nigerian government has announced the reopening of government offices and banks starting on Monday... Managed access to markets and locations of economic activity to limit the risk of transmission ... Full resumption of manufacturing industries and banks ... Lagos state authorities announced on Saturday, September 19, that certain recreational establishments in the city have been allowed to reopen with immediate effect ... The state Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, announced on Saturday that cinemas, gyms, spas, and other recreational centers will now be allowed to reopen ... All people are told to remain at home and all but essential businesses are closed for a period of 14 days.”

AA (Media), ACAPS

The economic measures in place do not allow small enterprises such as cinemas, informal economy markets that makes up the bulk of the masses and the lower wealth members of the nation to be opened or fully operational while big businesses such as banks and manufacturing industries are allowed to operate fully, even those are not essential.

“Nigerian government has agreed to pay an additional 50% of salary to all Health Workers in all Federal Government Teaching Hospitals and Federal Medical Centers in the Special COVID19 Hazard and Inducement Allowance ... The Nigerian government has announced a \$6bn stimulus package to support businesses hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic.”

AA (Media), ACAPS

The policy to increase the salary of health workers by 50% is commendable and also the provision of stimulus packages. These however are not the realities. There was no 50% increase in salary and the packages are only given to a selected few, and what was given most times are not what a person can live on in a day. There were protests by the medical practitioners in some regions of the countries due to lack of incentives while risking their lives.

Tall these measures, though they hold for the masses, the politicians and affluent in the society greatly ignored them as they held big burial ceremonies and have public gatherings as against the egalitarian principle (The Lancet, 2020).

Ghana

Also, in a bid to curb the spread of Covid 19, egalitarian democracy in Ghana were trampled upon with isolation and quarantine policies that were enacted. The findings revealed that self-quarantine is mandatory for travellers who are allowed to enter Ghana. This is evident from the excerpts that:

“People coming from abroad.....”

Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Italy

“Mandatory self-quarantine for people who are allowed enter the country. People who are considered unable to satisfactorily self-quarantine will be quarantined by the state”.

Ministry of Information

“Each passenger will undergo a compulsory corona virus test at the airport terminal, at a fee of the equivalent of USD150.00 to be paid by the passenger. The result of the test will be out in thirty (30) minutes. Children less than five (5) years of age won't be required to undergo the test at the airport. Passengers whose test results come out as positive for corona virus will be taken care of by the health authorities for further clinical examinations and management”.

Embassy of Ghana in Oslo

In Ghana, the findings revealed that public gatherings (religious centers, social events, sporting events) were banned and limited to a minimal percentage.

“...The restrictions enforced on public meetings, have been extended for another two (2) weeks, with effect from 13th April, 2020.”

“All funerals are asked to keep attendance to 25 people and to hold funerals as soon as possible because morgues are becoming occupied”.

Ministry of Information

“Reopening of the national tourist sites and attractions, so they can begin to receive visitors ... Beaches, pubs, cinemas and nightclubs are still to remain closed until further notice ... Restaurants and open air bars are open ... Movement of people has been restricted except to get essential items and use public bathrooms, and there shall be no inter-city movement of commercial and private vehicles/aircrafts except to deliver essential goods.”

ACAPS

There were mixed policies in Ghana. Most small enterprises were not allowed to open and also the informal economic activities were shut down, some are still allowed to be operational such as restaurants and open air bars. Big companies are however excluded from these measures.

“Different economic measures including: 2% reduction of interest rates by banks, and the granting by banks of a 6 months moratorium of principle repayments to entities in the airline

and hospitality industries ... Health workers will not pay taxes on their salaries for the next 3 months (April, May, June) and all health workers will receive an additional 50% of their basic salary per month (march, april, may, June). The march payment will be paid along with the April one ... A soft loan scheme will be rolled out for micro, small and medium businesses which will have a 1 year moratorium and a 2 year repayment period ... The government will absorb all water bills for all Ghanaians for the next 3 months, April, May, June ... The government will cover the cost of electricity bills for the poorest, i.e. lifeline consumers who consume 0 - 50 kwatt hours per month, for this period ... For all consumers commercial and residential government will pay 50% of electricity bills for this period, using March amount consumed as benchmark.”

AA (Media), ACAPS

Ghana government measures to ease economic pressures were good and some of them were effected. The medical practitioners were more favoured as they are in the frontline of combating the diseases. The provision of loans couldn't be accessed by all but just few. Soft loans are more accessible by medium businesses than micro or small businesses. The cost of electricity being taken care by the government ease the citizens.

Ghana government held the egalitarian democracy amongst the masses and politician the same. The measures were abiding on both politicians and the governed the same.

The NDC was formed to ensure that the people's rights are secured, that corrupt individuals are brought to justice, and that attempts are made to undermine the revolution's goal of establishing a collective national discipline in which everybody in the country has the equal right to participate in decision-making (Daily Graphic, 1982).

4.9 Discussion

Table 4.9.1 Summarized discussion on Egalitarian democracy in Nigeria and Ghana

Topics	Nigeria	Ghana
Access to Education	There was no equal access to education during the COVID 19	Although accesses were given to some set of the masses, which was not fair.
Informal economy	There was no equal distribution of resources during the COVID	There was equal distribution of resources during the COVID
Electoral democratic issues.	Years ago in Nigeria, elections were violence-prone and the higher-up indulges all forms of electoral malpractices and this has not reduced over the years. No provision of health materials during the election. Lower turn out of voters.	Measures are being taken to ensure that everybody in the country has the equal right to take part in decision-making. Low provisions of health materials. Good turnout of voters.
Food	Food security was poor as there are no equal distribution between the citizens and the government which do not show attributes of egalitarian democracy. Foods provided in form of palliatives are hoarded.	Feeding situation deteriorated drastically as a resultant effect of prevention of carrying out informal economic activities. There was lack of provision of food distribution network to citizens.
Human rights	The security agencies notably the police grossly abused the human rights of civilians while trying to enforce compliance. Evictions are carried out without proper consultation, adequate notice and compensation	While in Ghana, police also abused human rights of citizens but it was not as gross as that of Nigeria.

Health	The government officials and those with higher economic status have direct access to better health measures while the poor and people in rural and remote areas did not have but left with the hope of local vaccine production which in reality isn't available	Ghana upheld egalitarian democracies better by mobilizing retired health care professionals to serve the masses and ensure great access
Gender Equality	The lockdown measure which includes business closure affected people in the informal sector and this sector comprises more of women, there was no relief measures to ameliorate the suffering of these women during covid19.	Ghana did better with gender equality when compared to Nigeria as socioeconomic measures were initiated to help women during these times.
Socioeconomic Relief Measures and Related Mitigation Strategy	Though there were different measures, the measures are essential but they negate the basic freedom ensured in egalitarian democracy. Lack of equal material and immaterial distribution of resources such as regards the distribution of palliative, which was hoarded by some politicians.	Ghana government initiated some socioeconomic relief measure that was implemented more effectively when compared to the Nigeria Government. For example the exclusion of the poor from paying water and electricity bills and emergency provision of online learning for students in public schools.

4.10 Summary

Egalitarian democracy is achieved when rights and liberties of people are protected equally across all social classes; and resources are distributed equally across all social groups and when groups and individuals have equitable access to power. The discussion in this section will be based on the above 3 definitions

During the COVID 19 pandemic in Ghana, the measures put in place was to ensure fairness in the area of education. While in Nigeria, there was no equal access to education and this was based on the fact that Education systems were shut down and everyone was left at the mercy of online classes which were not accessible in public schools but were available in private schools. The disparity began when the poor and those in rural and remote areas could not continue to afford the expenses that come with e-learning and the rich including the politicians and those with high economic status could.

Despite the effort of the two nations under consideration, there is still a long way to go to ensure and achieve a kind of democracy where everyone has equal access to resources. The measures put in place in Nigeria are essential but they negate the principles of egalitarian democracy. The poor and people living in rural and remote areas were affected by the measures and policies enacted by the government more than anyone else. And some social distance measures that drew a hefty fine if broken were broken by some politicians and wealthy people (WHO, 2020). Though the policies holds for the masses, the politicians and affluent in the society greatly flaunt them as they held big burial ceremonies and have public gatherings as against the egalitarian principle. Ghana government when compared to Nigeria held the egalitarian components of democracy better.

One of the definitions of egalitarian democracy is that individuals and groups are to enjoy equal access to power. From the above analysis, it is lucid that in Nigeria and Ghana despite their efforts, the governments of Nigeria and Ghana are both far from achieving egalitarian democracy with Ghana appearing to be closer to achieving it than Nigeria. This is evident from the points discussed under Human right as there were reports from all spheres that the citizens in power kept on oppressing those with lesser power.

To make it a measure of egalitarian democracy, the index also takes the level of electoral democracy into account. This can also be established from the point discussed under electoral democracy. The electoral principle of democracy aims to encapsulate the core value of making rulers accountable to citizens, which is accomplished by electoral competition for the electorate's approval under circumstances where suffrage is extensive; political and civil society organizations are free to operate; elections are free of bribery and not marred by fraud or systematic violations; and they have an effect on the composition of the chief executive in the country. In between elections, there is freedom of speech and an independent media capable of expressing opposing views on political matters. Challenges of conducting elections during pandemic should be highlighted here to buttress the point.

Nigeria's and Ghana's laws still provide inadequate protection for the right to freedom of expression as there had been serious violation of fundamental human rights.

Before COVID 19, the excesses of the democracy of Nigeria and Ghana were still concealed a bit, but during the period of the pandemic, a great light shown and the deficiencies in the concept of their egalitarian democracy were revealed. The measures on covid-19 in the countries however infringe the rights and freedom of the people in different social groups of the country, resources/palliative/cash are hoarded and not distributed equally across the social groups, some of the elites and those in political positions have higher access to enjoy power and freedom that is not equal to all.

Beyond protecting the rights and freedoms of groups equally, the exercise of political power and the enjoyment of political rights should be kept in check by the basic necessities of life of the citizens. In achieving political equality, equal distribution of resources should be taken as a matter of importance in Nigeria and Ghana.

5.0 Conclusion

The study aimed to provide answers to impacts of Covid19 measures on egalitarian democracy in Nigeria and Ghana. With the use of mixed method, quantitative, qualitative and content analysis, there are various impacts of Covid-19 measures on egalitarian democracy. The measures have brought about unequal access to education in both Ghana and Nigeria. The distribution of resources was unequal in Nigeria and there were hoarding of palliatives that was meant for masses by selected individuals, whereas there were better distribution of resources in Ghana. There was poor food security in the two countries due to the ban of economic activities, especially the informal sectors that comprises the bulk of the citizen. Though there was no direct ban on buying of food or its circulation, there was no enough financial resources to buy them. In Nigeria, there were food packages provided, but the distribution was unequal and many of them were hoarded. Ghana, however, do not have provisions for feeding for her citizens and no distribution network for such. There were different socio-economic measures undertaken, which though are essential, they negate the freedom and equal rights that egalitarian democracy upholds. These measures are less stringent in Ghana. These led to gender inequality in the two countries. The health resources are not enough, especially in Nigeria though big funds were raised for the purpose. The government officials and the wealthy have better access to the health resources while the public have much access, even to the basic Covid-tests and vaccines. Ghana, as against Nigerian have great access to health facilities and retired citizens are being mobilized to combat Covid-19.

In Nigeria and Ghana, there were violence, evictions from houses, unlawful murder, police brutality, sexual violations, mass unrest, lack of proper consultations before passing judgments. It can be simply concluded that human rights are being violated to a great extent. Elections also held in the two countries without proper public health measures being put in place. There were no provision of health materials in the polling centres in Nigeria during the elections. Ghana had better provisions of such materials though it was still low and significantly insufficient.

It can be concluded that egalitarian democracy was adversely affected by Covid-19 measures in the two countries. As the measures placed brought about unequal material and immaterial distribution of resources. As illustrated in the graph in the appendix, it can also be said that though the egalitarian democracy was poor in the two countries during Covid-19, egalitarian democracy in Ghana is better than that of Nigeria.

Reflections on the research process

The concept of egalitarian democracy is more or less a utopia ideal in the world today, that can have different forms of measurements. Instead of the general approach used in the study, the two major components of egalitarian democracy could have been used for its measurement and analyzed separately. The two components being; representative and responsible government, equal rights, freedom and liberties across all social groups; also, the equal distribution of material and immaterial resources focusing on distribution of wealth and power as a socio-economic component. This would have given a better analysis of egalitarian democracy.

The study made use of secondary data sources and content analysis. This is advantageous in that it reduces the risks of travelling to conduct physical survey in the period of pandemic, it is more economical, saves time and helps to improve understanding in comparing different data sources, and also helps to understand the gaps available on a large scale. However, the accuracy of the data is not well known, the data may be subject to bias of the data collectors, and is not very accurate and sufficient for the study as more information are needed to address the research questions better. It also reduces the chances of measuring egalitarian democracy with the major two units of measurement as the data are not well structured to distinguish the components of egalitarian democracy.

The biased involve with the data and use of the secondary sources for analysis could have reduced the precision of the analysis. The result may not be the perfect representation of the democratic situation in the two countries. A cross-sectional mixed method approach of primary data in the two counties would have given a more accurate analysis that can be used in making better generalization. Interviews would have been conducted with specific questions to explore more the situation of specific issues such as the conduct of election during the pandemic.

The two cases used; Nigeria and Ghana, are both Anglophone countries in West Africa and help reduce the problems associated with language translations. They are also the two countries in West Africa with the highest numbers of corona virus cases. While Nigeria is the largest democracy in the region as regards the population, Ghana is one of the best democracies in the region. Using V-dem data, their state of democracy is also better than their counterparts in West Africa. The two countries have more data and information on the corona pandemic than other countries in West Africa. Of the two countries, Nigeria has the highest population in Africa, and has higher cases of

corona virus as compared to Ghana. These make the two countries more preferable for the study, however, inclusion of more countries would have given a better representation of the democratic situation in West Africa during the pandemic.

Future research can look at how Covid19 can promote retrospective evaluation of performance during elections in nascent democracies. Further study can also be done on the state of democracy after the pandemic to know the effect of the pandemic on the state of democracy. Studies can be carried out by including more countries in West Africa using primary data. Other components of democracy rather than egalitarian democracy can be further studied to understand how the pandemic affects different components of democracy.

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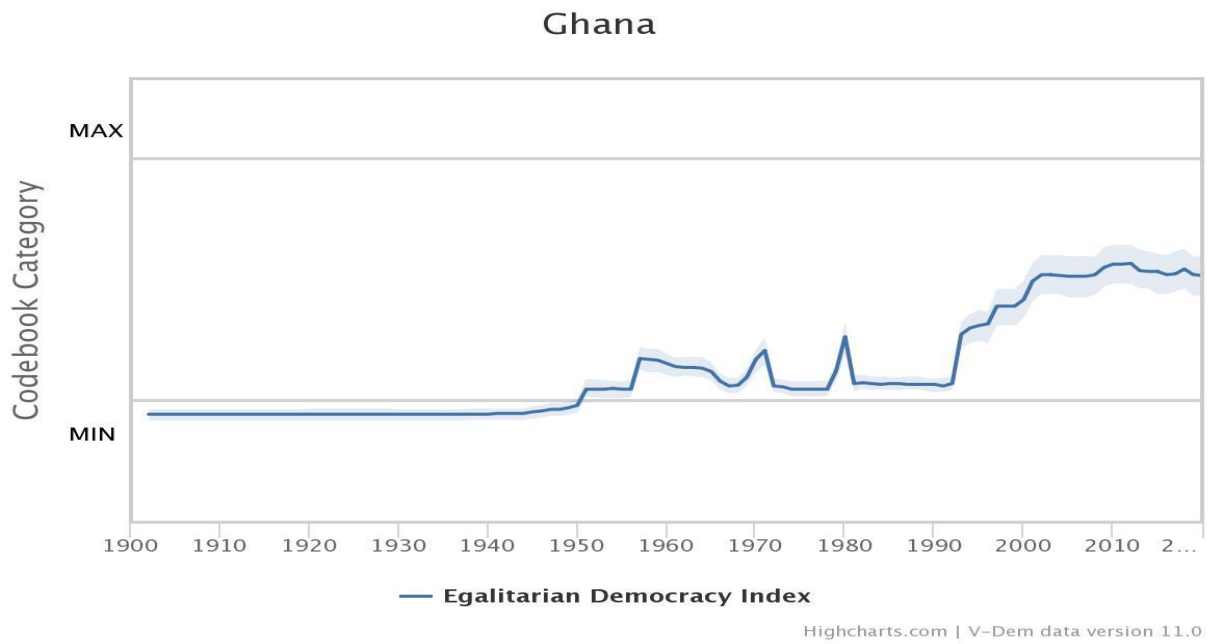
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Appendix

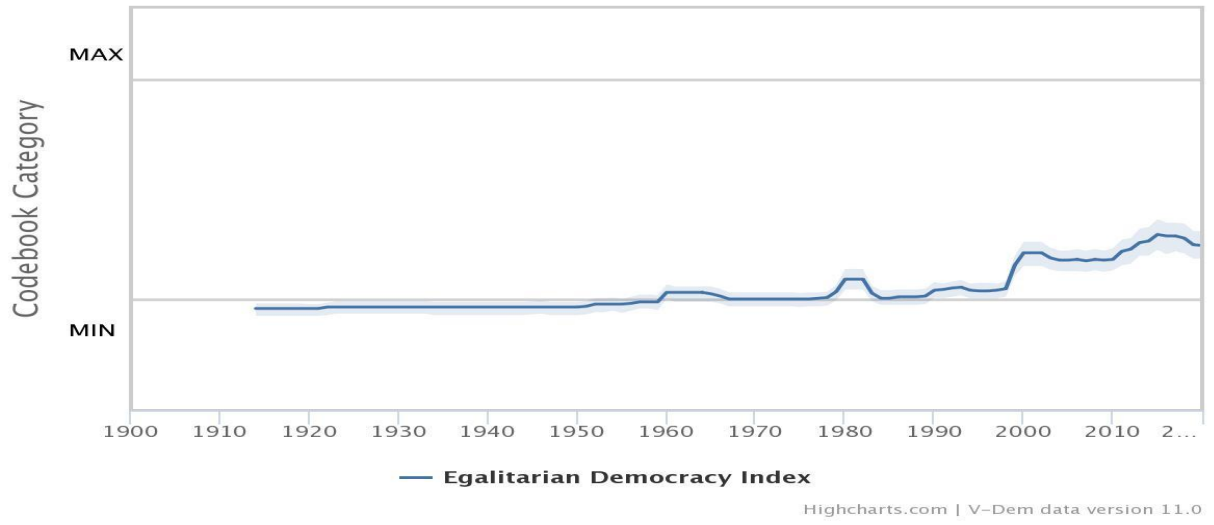
Ghana Egalitarian democracy



Source: Vdem

Nigerian Egalitarian Democracy

Nigeria



Source: V-Dem