DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: IS THERE A LINK?

Idris Ahmed Jamo
Department of Public Administration, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria

Abstract
Nigeria is the fourth world largest democracy with a population of over 160 million and world sixth largest oil supplier and blessed with economic potentials, but majority of the Nigerian population is poor due bad governance. Everyone expected the return of Nigeria to democratic rule will bring about development. On the contrary Nigeria is still left behind in this sphere of human development. The paper is basically qualitative approach to analyze the relationship between democracy and development in the Nigerian context, concentrating on the fourth republic. Relying on poverty reduction, employment generation, effective healthcare delivery, revenue and expenditure, Gross Domestic Products (GDP), foreign exchange rate, Good governance and Human Rights Development Index (HDI). The paper argued that, though Nigeria experienced fourteen years of uninterrupted democratic rule, available evidence revealed that, there is no clear direct relationship between democracy and development in the Nigerian context, in essence the first fourteen years of democratic dispensation in the country has in no way improved remarkable development. The paper recommended strict adherence to the principles of democracy and good governance.

Introduction
The world over, democracy is fast spreading due to its ability to provides basic requirements for good governance and development (Ardo, 2000:2). Since the end of the Cold War and subsequent re-emergence of the New World Order, there was a significant resurgence interest on democracy. This development has brought an end to the struggle for supremacy as to which system of government is best due to hegemonic emergence of liberal democracy as the final human government. Nigeria is not an exception; the wave of democratic change that blew through the country was largely the product of internal and external pressures exerted on the state. (Omotola, 2007:1). Such optimism was also predicated on the realization that, democracy stimulates development (Pel, 1999; Olson, 1993; Somolakae, 2007; Jamo, 2010).

It is against this background many people celebrated the return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999 after the sixteen years of military dictatorship. The country celebrated its fourteen years of democratic rule, within the same period also the country witnessed transfer of political power from civilian to civilian government for the first time ever in the history of the Nigerian body politics since independence (Jamo, 2010:2).

Everyone expected the return of Nigeria to democratic rule will bring about development. On the contrary Nigeria is still left behind in this sphere of human development. This has made many people still hold doubts on whether development is achievable under the present democratic dispensation due to growing insecurity, poverty, corruption and unemployment to mention but a
few despite growing revenue. Nigeria is the fourth world largest democracy with a population of over 160 million and world sixth largest oil supplier and blessed with economic potentials (Abdullateef, 2010, Ibrahim, 2013) but majority of its population are poor (Ibrahim, 2013). The paper looked at the nexus between democracy and development relying on indicators including poverty, unemployment, revenue and expenditure, health, Gross Domestic Products (GDP), Good Governance and Human Rights Development Index (HDI). The paper is divided into four sections; the second contains the definitions of the key concepts in this article, followed by the literature review on the nexus between democracy and development. The third section is the research findings, followed by conclusion and recommendations.

The Concept of Democracy

The word democracy is coined from two Greek words: Demos (the people) and Kratos (rule) which simply means people’s rule. In its Greek perception means rights of the citizens of the Greek city states to participate directly in an act of governance. Ardo, (2000) added that, there is no universally acceptable definition of the word democracy. In the same vein, Chambers Encyclopedia (1970) also maintained that, there are different conceptions of democracy and no agreement as to its true nature. Dahl (1956) in the same vein maintained that, there is nothing like democracy but there are democracies. Nwokeji went further to conclude that not just is there no universal definition of democracy, but none may emerge. However, Jega (2002) observed that, if there is any consensus about what democracy means, it is perhaps in relation to the understanding that, it is not personal rule, and that, it is different from authoritarian/dictatorial rule. It can also be said that democracy is based on some forms of perception and or representation. Powell (1992) as cited in Mallam (2009) opined that, democratic governments have the following characteristics.

*The legitimacy of the government rests on a claim to represent the desires of its citizens; That is the claim of government assertion to be doing what the people want it to do; The organization arrangement that regulates this bargain of legitimacy is the competitive political election; Leaders are elected at regular intervals, and voters can choose among alternative candidates in practice, at least two political parties that have a chance of winning are needed to make such choices meaning full; Most adults can participate in the electoral process, both as voters and candidate for important political offices; Citizens and leaders enjoy basic freedom of speech, press, assembly and organization; Both established parties and new ones can work to gain members and whenever democracy exists, political disagreements subsist.*

From the above it is clear that, in a democratic state government must be legitimate, free and fair elections, existence of more than one political party and fundamental human rights. Edigheji (2005) added separation of power, political tolerance, accountability, transparency, rule of law and equality as essential features for democratic government. Samuel (1991) as cited in Edigheji (2005) conceptualized democracy as a form of political system in which the decision makers are selected through fair, honest, periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all adult population is eligible for vote. Democracy therefore involves popular participation in the process of governance, equality among citizens, sovereignty of the people, promotion and protection of human rights and essential freedoms, limited government, supremacy of the rule of law, and separation of powers between the three arms of government (Malan, 2009).
The Concept of Development
Like other concepts in social sciences, development defies single definition; however scholars have offered different conceptions of the term, for instance, Sen (2008) defined development as “collective activities by any human society directed at reducing the totality of perceived obstacles to a higher standard of living; Thus maximizing the quality of lives of its citizens”. Development can also be seen as gradual advance or growth through progressive changes. It is a gradual differentiation of an ecological community; the term is also used to describe the process of economic and social transformation within the countries. While Seers in his conception, related development to eradication of poverty, unemployment and in equality in a society among other variables when he asserted that;

The questions to ask about country’s development are therefore; what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all the three of these have declined from high levels than beyond doubt this has a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if the entire three have, it would be strange to call the result “Development” even if per capita income doubled. (Seer, 1969:3).

From the foregoing definitions development implies change or advancement. It also implies continuous process of positive change in the quality of life of an individual or a society, reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Democracy and development
Przeworski (1990); and Przeworski and Lamungi (2007) used cross national study to compare regimes (both democracies and dictators) on their effect on development; while Pel (1990) study compared Human Right Development Index (HRDI), per capita income, and gross domestic product (GDP) as an indicators for measuring development among countries. Of course the studies have exposed some issues relevant to development in countries, however there is little evidence of study with focus on poverty, unemployment, revenue and government expenditure, GDP growth and human development index, foreign exchange rate (Naira per US dollar) and health performance. This work will fill this gap.

Among the debated issues in recent years is whether link exists between democracy and development. Considerable number of scholars including, (Pel, 1999; Campos 1994; Jamo 2010) maintain the view that, there is causal link between democracy and development, while others including Sirowy and Linkels (1991); Bardhan (2002); Przeworski and Lamongi (2007) on the contrary maintained the opposite view. Two approaches according to Somolakae (2007) were observed, the first approach utilizes by the scholars is the normative approach by exploring the possible link on the basis of what they know about democracy and development, and try to establish possible linkages between them. While the other approach is the use of case studies by trying to operationalize the concept of democracy and development, and examining the rate and character of development within the area under study and try to establish conclusion whether relationship or linear association exist between the two variables. Duncan et al (2009 as cited in Olarimoye, 2010) maintained that there is a clear relationship between political and economic change. However, there is limited hard evidence on the direction of causality, and the basic mechanisms through which politics affects growth and vice versa. Chan (2009) in her study on
democracy and development in Japan and some Asian newly industrialized countries, examined whether developing countries need to adopt democracy or western model to achieve economic success. The study argues that, economic and social freedoms are necessary, but not western style institution or culture.

The study is of the view that, liberal democracy is not a prerequisite to development, what is important for development is social and economic rights rather than the western ideology. To her, development can be achieved irrespective of the type of regime, so far social and economic freedoms are available. This view is also consistent with that of Sirowy and Linkels (1991); Bardhan (2002); Przeworski and Lamorgi (2007) that there is negative relationship between democracy and development. They further opined that, regimes do not differ in their impact on the growth of per capita income.

On the contrary, Barrow as cited in Pel (1999) suggests that, the relationship between democracy and growth is likely to be slowest in the most politically repressed societies. But improvement in political rights and civil liberties in such societies tend to produce higher growth. research in addition shows that, growth tend to peak when the level of democracy is in the middle-range and gradually taper off as the level of democracy rises. The study also supported the notion that, positive linkages exist between democracy and development depending on the level of political and civil rights available, therefore the study maintained that, the higher the level of political and civil rights the higher the development, vice versa.

In similar study, Pel (1999) argued that, the question whether democracy promotes development rests on the central idea that, political institutions critical to economic development are more likely to exist and function effectively under democratic rule. These institutions include the rule of law which protects property rights, individual liberty which poster creativity and entrepreneurship, the freedom of expression which ensures the production and unimpeded flow of information, and institutional checks and balances that prevent massive theft of public wealth often observed in democracies. Supporting this assertion, statistical study of growth data for 115 countries from 1960 – 1980 were utilized. Although, the work did not provide criteria for selecting the sampled population, however, it provided a comparative analyses for several countries using institutional approach to analyze the level of development without due concern on the level of development of such institutions and that of such countries. Similar empirical study was also repeated and claims that, countries with high degrees of political openness achieve an average annual per capita growth rate of 2.53 percent, compared with 1.41 percent in more closed political systems. The study implies that more democratic countries may grow 80 percent faster than less democratic countries. Similar study also conducted examining GNP growth data from 100 countries from 1960 – 1990 but shows negative relationship. Again, Duncan et al (2009) also posited that, there is a clear correlation between political and economic change. The study further revealed that, there is limited hard evidence on the direction of causality, and the basic mechanisms through which politics affects growth and vice versa.

Scholars opposing this view contended that, strong authoritarian state which they view as essential or leading a successful process of development. They argued that, only strong authoritarian state can discipline groups bent on making too many demands and hence undermining the development agenda. Others asserted that democracy opens political contexts that may take the form of ethnic and religious mobilization and thereby undermine the emergence of a social contract or the creation of political communities. This conception made that, many parts of the world such as in Latin America ‘there is evidence of declining support for
democracy due to the perception that democracy has failed to improve people’s lives (Somolakae, 2007). Bardhan (2012) in similar view opined that, there is no significance relationship between democracy and development when he reported that:

Even in some of the richest democracies of the world while the enforcement of laws may be better and subject to less corruption and arbitrariness than in developing countries, the process of enactment of those laws is subject to an enormous amount of influence peddling for contribution to campaign finance and other perquisites for legislators. Over time this problem has got worse in most democracies, as elections have become frightfully expensive. When policies to be legislated are up for sale to the highest contributor to the campaign fund, development projects may not win out (the policy decision in the budget may go in favor of buying one more military air craft rather than 100 rural clinics), and it will not be much consolation to be told that the policies thus legislated will be implemented well by the bureaucracy and the court system under a democracy.

The above submission revealed that, there is problem of linkages between democratic regimes and provision of social welfare services to the people; in essence democracy does not always reflect the wishes of the voters, and does not always bring development.

In similar opinion, Przeworski (1990) study observed that, democratic government may be less capable of managing development. The reasoning here according to him is that, development involved changes and that change may affect some voters negatively, while at the same time benefiting others. To this extent, the study concluded that, because of this reality, governments seeking reelection could be more inclined to avoid making tough economic choices out of fear of losing support of some groups. This would either slow down development or hinder it. This dilemma may not be faced by an authoritarian regime. From this view, Przeworski is of the view that, there is little evidence of correlation between democracy and development.

Przeworski (2007) in another study refined his earlier findings and examined the mutual relationship between political regimes and economic development. His analysis of political regimes shows that while the path to democracy are varied, once established for whatever reasons, democracy survive in developed countries. Contrary to long existing arguments, political regimes do not affect the rate of investment and of the growth of total income. But since population grow faster under dictatorships, per capita incomes increase more rapidly under democracies. The study concluded that, there is correlation between democracy and development.

However, one can convincingly assert that the long existing findings that democracy is prerequisite to development is no longer relevant because of the recent findings have emerged and contradicted the position of this perception, for instance, example of countries like Japan, China and other Asian countries which have recorded some level of development, yet, they are authoritarian and less politically open states, have come to revalidate the argument that democracy is not prerequisite to development. Similarly, quantitative study by William et-el (2009) proved that correlation exists between levels of income and aspects of good governance such as market capitalism and liberal democracy. The study though significant but did not prove the direct relationship between democracy and economic development and vice-versa.

However, the above theoretical and empirical explorations have not resolved our problem of whether there is positive and significant correlation between democracy and development,
because both the two opposing sides have used both case studies and empirical studies to support their arguments. The above theoretical findings made their analyses on cross countries; however, the next section will pay more emphases on Nigeria.

**Rate of Unemployment and Development in Nigeria**

Employment and unemployment are among the indicators for measuring development of a particular country. A country is said to be developing if the rate of unemployment is declining. Again, if the rate of employment increase, the rate of purchasing power, security and saving will increase and lead to enhancement of economic activities and vice versa. Unfortunately for Nigeria, the rate of unemployment in Nigeria continues to increase since the return of the country to democratic rule, for instance, the rate of unemployment in 2002 was 3.8 and jumped to 3.3 in 2004. The figure dropped to 3.3 in 2005 and appreciated to 5.8 and 11.8 in 2008 and 2009 respectively. The figure also increased to 19.7 in 2010 and to 21.1 in 2011 and finally reached 23.3 in 2012.

**Revenue generation under Democratic rule**

The above rate of unemployment in the country is increasing with increasing revenue since the return of democratic rule, for instance, in 2004 the Federal Inland Revenue generated N1, 194.80 trillion out of the total revenue of N3.978trillion. However, the contribution of non oil revenue increased in 2005 with N1, 741.80 trillion out of total of N5, 619.30. The figure for non oil revenue appreciated to N2, 20 trillion in 2009 and N2, 84 trillion in 2010. The figure reached N4.63 trillion in 2011. Again, at the close end of 2012 the Federal Inland Revenue Services collected N5, 007trillion. In the light of the above data it is indicating that the Federal Inland Revenue alone collected N13.81trillion tax revenue in four years. (NAN,27,April 2012; www.enownow.com/news/story.php?sno=9366; Punch, 14 Feb, 2012; Business News, Oct, 29, 2012). Whereas the sovereign wealth Fund has risen to N1.2 trillion ($7.3 billion) in 2012 (Akinloye, 2013).

From 2000-2009, oil revenue generated N34.2 (82%) trillion into the federation account, while non-oil revenue generated N7.3 (17.64%) trillion. Not only that, the price of oil contributed to about 80% of the Nigeria’s GDP rose from $13 per barrel to $125(Ebinbowei, 2012). While the country’s excess crude oil account has shrunk from $ 20 billion in 2007 to $ 4.2 billion at the end of November 2012. This shows that Nigeria has generated huge revenue during the present democratic dispensation. Despite this increased revenue, the country is suffering from poor income distribution, in adequate infrastructures and relative poverty. These problems can be linked to bad governance and poor performance of national institutions (Ogbonna, and Ebinbowei, 2012).

**Nigeria’s Federal Government Budget figures for 1999 – 2013**

The revenues increase led to the increase in government budget, the budget continued to increase year after year, for instance, in 1999 the federal government budget was N 0.524 billion and appreciated to N0.705 trillion in 2000. In 2001 and 2002 the federal government budgeted N 0.894 and N1.064 trillions respectively; the figure reached N1.446 and N1.189 trillions in 2003 and 2004 respectively. The figure increased to N1.8 and N1.9 trillions in 2005 and 2006 respectively. The figure reached N 2.3 and N 2.45 in 2007 and 2008 (Nigerian Muse, 2008). While in 2013 the Nigeria budget was N4.987 trillion, with N1.62 and N2.38trl for capital and recurrent expenditure respectively. This indicates that, the bulk of the Nigeria’s budgets are spent on recurrent expenditure mostly servicing expenses of politicians.

**Performance of Nigerian Healthcare service under the democratic dispensation**
Healthcare service delivery is among the major indicators for measuring development of a country; for the reason that “healthy nation is a wealthy nation.” However, despite the importance of health to the development of a nation. National health indicators in Nigeria are possibly among the lowest in the world for almost all measurable indices (WHO, 2012; Jamo, 2013). Life expectancy in Nigeria as at 2012 was 48 years compared to 73 years in China and 83 years in Japan, while maternal mortality rate was 1,100 deaths per 100,000 in contrast to 45 and 6 deaths per 100,000 in China and Japan respectively (WHO, 2012). One third of the world maternal death occurs in India with 20% and Nigeria with 14% respectively (WHO, 2012). In Nigeria 52000 Nigerian women die every year, and daily 150 pregnancy related cases with an average of death in every 10 minutes (UNICEF, 2012). Nigeria is also among the countries in the world with the large number of infant mortality rate (70.49%, 33rd of 179), maternal mortality, malnutrition, poor drug access (0%, 141st of 163), poor birth rate, crude> 1000 people (40.51/1000, 20th per 1000), with 0.28 physician per 1000 (48 of 148), poor expenditure on health as % of GDP of 4.7% (13th of 185) and general low health performance records in the world. (WHO, 2012; NPC, 2010; Jamo, 2013). The rate of neo-natal mortality rate in the North western Nigeria (the case study) as at 2008 was 55 per 1000, while infant mortality rate was 114 per 1000, whereas under five mortality rate was 269 per 1000. (Olaniyan and Lawanson, 2010; WHO, 2012, Jamo, 2013).

Nigeria’s GDP growth and human development index
Numerous Nigerians have very high expectations that, the return of the country to democratic rule will free people from low development and the vicious circle of poverty and inter-generational transmission of poverty through the flow of dividend of democracy (Abdullateef, 2010). However, conversely the case, the country’s GDP growth performance continued to be far below the pre-democratic era, for instance, in 1985 the percentage of the country’s GDP growth was 9.5% and appreciated to 13.0% in1990, dropped to 2.2% in 1995; while the percentage increased to 5.4% and 6.1% in 2000 and 2005 respectively and dropped again to5.0% in 2010. (CBN Statistical Bulletin, 2010 as cited in Abdullateef, 2010).

Good governance under democratic dispensation
Similarly, Nigeria continued to maintain its backward position despite increased revenue under the present democratic dispensation, for instance, the report of MO Ibrahim of 2013 indicated that, the country is among the countries with poor position on the development scale in Africa. The country is ranked 13th out of 16 West African countries and 41st out of 54 continental countries on good governance with score of 41 out of 100. The report also indicated that, Nigeria is not among the best 10 African countries with suitable business environment, using economic indices such as GDP, growth GDP percapia, technology, corruption and public debt in the assessment (Ibrahim, 2013). Nigeria is the fourth world largest democracy with a population of over 130 million and world sixth largest oil supplier and blessed with economic potentials (Abdullateef, 2010; Ibrahim, 2013) but majority of its population are poor.

Transparency and the rate of corruption in Nigeria
Transparency is one of the prerequisite for development, where it is lacking development hardly achieved. Corruption is among the indices for measuring development of a particular state. Nigeria continued to maintain its leading position since the return of the country to democratic rule in 1999. The country in 2001 to 2004 ranked as the second most corrupt country in the world. In 2005, 2006 and 2007 the country was ranked 6th, 21st 32nd most corrupt country in the
world, while in 2008 and 2009 the country ranked as 59th and 50th and finally pushed to 44th position in 2010 (Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2001-2010). Though there are quite improvements over the years however the Nigeria is still among the most corrupt country in the world.

**Security and Development in Nigeria**

Security is among the indices for measuring development. Security is among the major requirements for development, investments and other productive activities. The return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999 opened up another transition to insecurity in the country, for instance Nigeria is rated 10th most in secured out of 53 countries in Africa in 2001, 2002 and 2003. The rate of insecurity increased in 2004 which pushed the country to 8th most unsecured country in Africa. In 2005 and 2006 the country was ranked 10th and 9th respectively; then pushed the country in 2007 to 9th most unsecured country in Africa. In 2008 and 2010 the country was ranked 17th respectively (Ibrahim, 2001-2010). This indicates that the rate of insecurity situation in the country is not appreciable despite the increasing budget on security in recent years.

**Foreign exchange rate (Naira per US dollar)**

The value of the Nigerian currency (Naira) continue to depreciate over the years since the return of the country to democratic rule, for instance the value of naira in 1994 as compared to one US dollar was N22.00, the value depreciated to 76.00 and 96.10 in 1998 and 1999 respectively. In 2000 and 2001 the value of naira per one US dollar was N101.70 and N111.70 respectively. Again, the value dropped to N118 and N129 in 2002 and 2003 respectively and finally to N158 in 2013 per one US dollar. This indicates that, the value of the naira in the last fourteen years suffered great depreciation.

**Poverty and Development in Nigeria**

Poverty incidence is among the indicators for measuring presence or absence of development of a particular state. If poverty is to be used as an indicator for measuring development, Nigeria is classified among the poorest countries of the world. While the incidence continued to increase since return of the country to democratic rule in 1999. Nigeria is the sixth largest exporter of oil and at the same time host the largest poor people after China and India (Igbuzor, 2008). The incidences of poverty in 1999 fall to 42.7% and increased again to 65.6% in 2000 this trend continued till 2003. In 2004 the incidence of poverty in the country decreased to 54.4% and maintained this position till 2006 and jumped to 54.5% in 2007 and increased again to 63.6% in 2008 (MDGs Mid-point report 2008). Again, the 2010 report of the Federal Bureau of Statistics revealed that, 112.5 million Nigerians out of 163 million populations live in poverty. However, the report further revealed that, apart from the relative poverty which puts the country’s poverty rate at 99.248 million or 60.9 per cent, the dollar per day measure, which put the poverty at 61.2 per cent; and subjective poverty measure which put the poverty level at 93.9 per cent (NBS, 2010); Not only that, MDG 2010 report shows that, although poverty is reduced since 2000, the reality is that, among every ten Nigerians, five still live in poverty. Growth has not been sufficiently equitable or generated employment (http://lnewsafriicanpress.com/2010/08/21/nigeria-is-unlikely--to-achieve-MDG-by-2015) Again, the United Nation Human Development report put Nigeria Human Development Index at 0.423. Nigeria therefore is among the lowest ranking Nations in the low development category, it is in the 27th position, counting from the rump (www.thenationlineng.net\2011\index.php\news\22120-nigeria-mile)
Conclusion and recommendations

Democracy is among the most popular system of government globally because of the expectation that it facilitate development due to the possession of instruments that support development. However, reality in Nigeria using different indicators revealed that, democracy in the short run did not improve development, rather contradicted our earlier notion that there is causal relationship between democracy and development. This study also coincided with other previous findings that, though democracy is important for development, but it is not a prerequisite for development. The paper recommends strict adherent to the principles of democracy and good governance.

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