

IMPACT OF DEMOCRACY ON NIGER STATE YOUTH: A STUDY OF ZONE C SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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Abstract

The study examine the impact of democratic governance in nurturing democratic political values on the youth of Niger state focusing on zone c senatorial zone the variables employed in the study include understanding of democratic governance, attitude toward election and political participation. The research question, objectives and hypothesis were built around these variables. Data for the study were generated from both primary and secondary sources, using the instrument of questionnaire, document and the internet. Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using both descriptive and inferential statistic. The chi-square statistical tools are utilized through the SPSS package. The study revealed that the zone c prefer democracy than any other form of government of the youth are interested in participating in the political process either as voters or contestants for public offices. The study also found that grassroots democratic participation has been either directly or indirectly hindered in zone c because leaders of youth associations and clubs are mainly nominated by elders or patrons. It recommends the entrenchment of the culture of democratic election in youth or associations exposure of the youth to practical understanding of the workings of the institutions of democracy, that political education should not be restricted to adult citizens but it should include all youth and the introduction of a curriculum in Nigeria secondary schools called democratic studies for secondary schools (DSSS).

Keywords: Democratic Governance, Democratic Political Culture and Youth

Introduction

In societies undergoing transitions to democracy, nurturing a democratic political culture is an essential requirement for bringing about consolidation and sustainability of democracy. Similarly, understanding how adolescents and youth perceive democracy is an important step towards knowing what measures needs to be taken in order to nurture democratic political culture and mindset among them, especially in Nigeria which experienced military rule over a long period and which is now striving democratic sustainability and consolidation. This long experience with militarism has implanted in her youth and students anti-social behaviors and undemocratic dispositions within the society, which convert them into perpetrators of armed banditry, criminality, anarchism unprovoked violence, as well as toughly.

Given this negative political culture associated with Nigerian youth over the years; the depiction of democratic values among Nigerian youth in general and more specifically among the youth of zone (in the states; has left much to be desired. Arising from this problem, this research was conceived to investigate the extent of democratic norms, values and practices among youth zone C Niger states of Nigeria's North – west zone with emphasis on their attitudes and perceptions of democracy. The research addressed the following questions: to what extend does the youth of zone c understand democratic governance? What is the attitude of the youth of zone c towards democratic

governance? And to what extent does the youth of zone c participate in political process?.

The central objective of the study is to assess the impact of democratic governance on nurturing democratic culture among the youth, the specific objective include: determining the extent to which the youth of zone c understand governance, finding out the attitude of the youth of zone c toward democratic governance, and to determining the extent to which youth of zone c participate in political process.

The null hypothesis formulated for the study is that there is no significant relationship between democratic governance and nurturing democratic political values among the youth of zone c.

The study is significant to policy maker's administration politician, youth organizations and the general public, the study spend between 2007 -2005. This is justified on the ground that a democratic period in Niger state.

Operationally understanding democratic governance is seeing in times of perception. Attitude is operationally defined in times of behavior in voting non-voting factors and dividend participation is operationally defined in times of political activities, problems and emergency of leaders in youth club.

This paper is divided into five sections. Section one is the introduction, section two contains literature review, section three is the methodology, section four contains discussions of results and findings while section five conclude the paper with policy recommendation.

2.0. Literature review

2.1 Concept of Democracy

Democracy as a form of political organization, like other concepts of its caliber has not been easy to define without ideological equivocation. This makes democracy by Shafritz (1988) look like beauty, which is in the eye of the beholder. The concept of democracy therefore, on its own has generated a lot of controversies, analytical disputations, ideological and philosophical camps.

This notwithstanding however, from a concrete perusal of the books that have been written on it by scholars of repute, it is clear without equivocation that the word democracy has a Greek ancestry and had its first appearance in the fifth century B.C. The Greek historian, Herodotus had coined the word. Democratic ideas in antiquity combined two Greek words, "demo", meaning people and "Kratein" meaning 'the rule of or by'.

According to Dodo (2016) democracy is a people oriented government. This is because it has been defined by Abraham Lincoln as "Government of the people" (i.e the people are involved in it), "for the people" (i.e it has the interest of the people and is run on behalf of the people) and "by the people" (i.e through the representatives of the people notably the legislatures).

Thus, the original meaning of democracy was the "rule of (by) the people" (Akindele, 1987, Enumuo, 1999, Mahajan, 2012 &Arora, 2014 in Sani 2016). At this time, Herodotus included among its specific features, "equality before the law and popular deliberations". Greek discussion of democracy was followed by Rome's contribution to democratic ideas and government in antiquity. The hallmark of this contribution was Rome's development of the "idea of constitutionalism" and her emphasis on laws as the system of norms binding on both the "rules" and "ruled" (Akindele, 1987).

Drawing inspiration from this, democracy literally means the rule by people. The idea of the people rule is thus, becoming imperative in any conceptualization of democracy (Owolabi, 1992 in Sani 2016). Although, literature established it that Greece was a stratified community whereby women, foreigners and slaves, who outnumbered the adult male citizens are disfranchised. Meanwhile, with the larger

populations of contemporary nations, it is impossible to operate the type of direct democracy that obtained in Athens. The difficulty of transforming direct democracy into the complexity of modern world has made imperative to adopt its meaning. This eventually led to the adoption of indirect (representative government).

2.2 Concept of Governance

Governance refers to the manner in which power is exercised by government in managing a country's social and economic resources. In that sense good governance is then the exercise of power by various levels of government in a manner that is effective, honest equitable, transparent and accountable. Good governance ensures the absence of abuse and corruption and the existence of the rule of law. The true test of good governance is the extent to which it delivers on the promises of human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

Also conceptualizing governance, Sharma et al (2011: 64-70) opines that it is the process of decision making by which decision are made and implemented. The authors went on to say that governance refers to the manner in which authority control or power of government is exercised in mobilizing a society's social and economic resources to address the issues of public interest. In analysing governance process, the analysis search light should focus on formal and informal decision making and implementation actors which are government and other informal actors such as the NGO's, research institution, financial institution, media, education provider, lobbyist, corporations, associations and peasants.

The Concept of good governance has no single definition. Ezeife (2002:36) sees good governance as the careful and guided application government resources to the upliftment of standard of living of the society in managing the affairs of the state; he identified the indices of good governance as adherence to the rule of law: freedom of expression and association, electoral legitimacy; accountability, transparency and development oriented leadership.

The enduring political and social elements of good governance would involve political accountability, information available, transparency being effective and efficient and co-operation between government and society (Sharma et al 2012).

2.3 Concept of Democratic Governance

Democratic government is a form of government in which all eligible citizens have an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives. It allows people to participate equally either directly or through elected representatives in the proposal, development, and creation of laws, it encompasses social, economic, and cultural conditions that enable the free and equal practice of political self-determination (fortunoto 2015).

Democratic government is a government in a constitutional democracy, where the assembly of persons is given the authority to maintain a human level of cultural order. These persons, not being superior to their community, aren't there to direct thinking or community attitudes. They are there to search for the truth of changing needs and to help maintain an informed society; to maintain the agreed constitution and to avoid conflict with universal (established principle of) law. Their duties are to reflect, and put into effect, the thinking and desires of an informed electorate; to see that the community is kept truthfully informed (Warren, 2009). Politicians are ordinary people. If well-chosen they may be expected to be better managers than the average; to maintain better moral standards and have wider or specialized experience. Nevertheless they are ordinary people no different from most and, in general, only a little more able than those they represent. To maintain order they need authority to make laws within limits denied by the constitution. Maintenance of order is assumed to require police and armed services and, in addition, order also involves care of the financial system.

Because money is the oil of industry it should be available in the needed amounts to enable human industry, free of commercial abuse, to run smoothly and in orderly manner (Gurley 2010).

2.4 Concept of Youth Participation

Gyimah – Boadi argued that youth are to be educated in such a way that they would be trained to develop the culture of critical thinking and habits of self-introspection. In this words: When devoid of authoritarianism and anti-democratic practices and in possession of credible civil education curricula, the primary and secondary schools can be key agencies for civil education for democracy” (2003:4). Such promoted in principle because it empowers the youth to actively participate in the democratic process of their society. His perspective is predicated on his argument that the more the youth participation in democratic process, the wider will be their scope of involvement in the process of decision making. Central to Alves view is the crucial role of youth as mobilizing agent. This, as he aptly opined, can be achieved through education because only an “educated man has to be able to choose democracy” (Alves, 2000:2).

It is in this context that Cincotta (2009) further provides an optimistic view of the growing number of youth in Latin America and their ability to sustain democracy since the number of young adults are on the rise in the region. Although there is no empirical research to show that the demography of youth is a source of fostering democracy, one can still concur with Cincotta (2009) that “youth bulge” which he defined as countries with a large proportion of youth adults in the working age population, is a powerful instrument in democratization only when the population of the youth are involved in what Alves(2000:4) referred to as “partaking democracy” or in Isaac’s (2002) words “education for democracy”.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the principal –agent theory. The Principal-Agent theory adopted from Batley (2004) in Kayode et al (2013) examines organizational relationship as a tension between the “Principal” who demand a service and the “Agent” who provides it. The model assumes that actors are motivated by rational self-interest. The issue is how the principal (in this case, the Nigerian Citizens) can manage the self-interest of those empowered to act on their behalf (i.e the Agents: Government officials, politicians, legislator, bureaucrats etc.) so that it will aligned with the purposes that they (the principal) wish to achieve. The problem arises not just from conflict of interest but also from the privilege access of the agents to information. The agent who has been employed to provide a service will tend to use their superior knowledge to divert benefits in their own direction.

The relevance of the Principal-Agent theory to this study can be seen in the fact that the youth of zone C Senatorial district of Niger State acting as principals demands rural transformation for the overall development of their community through service delivered by the elected Democratic acting as “Agents” to provide functional education; improved healthcare services and adequate physical infrastructures.

Nevertheless, it seen that Democraticgovernance gives little opportunity to its citizens for any significant participation in the decision-making process. Consequently, under the prevailing system electorate have so little knowledge and understanding of political problems; voters are so indifferent to voting; political Democracy are so averse to public accountability and corruption and abuse of power as so rampant in the whole administration. If people hard gotten better opportunities of political

participation, they will be inclined to discuss public issues elaborately, keep a strict watch on the activities of politicians (Agent) they shall be able to prevent the corruption and abuse of power. Hence citizen participation is not only a necessary condition of good society.

3.0. Methodology

The research design adopted for the study is the field survey research. Data were generated from both primary and secondary sources. The structured questionnaire is the instrument of primary data utilized while the secondary data utilizes documents, books; and the internet. The population of the study was target at all the youth in zone c senatorial district of Nigeria state covering Wushishi, Bangi; Kontagora, Agwara, Borgu, Mashegu and Rijau local government areas. The population is unknown, as such 50 youth were selected through purpose sampling technique and simple random sampling the sample size distribution random sampling the sample size distribution is as follows:-

Table 3.1 Sample size distribution of respondents

L.G.A. areas of zone c	
Agwara	50
Borgu	50
Kontagora	50
Mashegu	50
Mariga	50
Rigau	50
Wushishi	50
Total	350

Sources: SurveyResearch 2018.

S/no	Variable	Indices	Frequency	Percent
	AGE			
		14 – 18 years	200	66.7
		19 – 20 years	84	28.0
		Above 20 years	14	4.7
		No response	2	0.7
	Total		300	100.0
	Gender	Male	150	50.0
		Female	146	48.7
		No response	448.7	1.3
	Total		300	100.0
	Level of Education	JSS	40	13.3
		SSS	259	86.3
		No Response	1	0.3
	Total		300	100.0
	Occupation	Politician / political appointees	20	6.7
		Civil servant	129	43.0
		Former	55	18.3
		Trader/Business	66	22.0

		Man/Woman		
		Artisan	15	5.0
		Private sector employee	7	2.3
		Any other	6	2.0
		No response	2	0.7
	Total		300	100.0
	Settlement	Rural	139	46.3
		Urban	161	53.7
		Total	300	100.0

Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using both descriptive and inferable statistics. The totals employed frequency tables; sample percentages and chi-square informal.

4.0 Discussion of result and findings

4.1 Rate of Return/Response of Questionnaire

A total of 350 questionnaires administered to the respondent. 310 were returned giving 89 percent rate of returns. Out of the 310 questionnaires returned 300 were duly completed giving 86 percent rate of return therefore analysis of data base of 300 respondents.

4.2 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 Respondent's profile

Sources: Survey Research 2018.

The above table shows the age of respondents. A total of 66.7% of the respondents were within the age category of 14 to 18 years, and 28.0% were between the age range of 19 and 20 years old. The table further shows that only 4.7% of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 20 years and above. This shows that majority of the sampled respondents are within the age category of 14 to 18 years. This is to say that in an appreciable number of respondents covered in the study are within the secondary school age bracket, mostly in senior secondary school (SSS).

The table above depicts the gender distribution of the respondents. It shows that half of the respondents, constituting 50% are male, while female respondents are 48.7%. A total of four respondents did not respond to the question. This is to say that an appreciable percentage of respondents from both sexes have been covered in the study.

Respondent's level of secondary education is shown in table 3 above. The table shows that 13.3% of the respondents are in JSS classes, while those in SSS classes are 86.3%. The distribution therefore suggests that the study covered a population of pupils at the JSS level. One respondent did not respond to this question.

With regards to the type of occupation of parents of the respondents, Table 4 above shows that 6.7% of respondents' parents are politicians or public office appointees who hold political appointments in their local government, states or federal services. A total of 43.0% respondents said their parents are civil servants, 18.3% said their parents are farmers, 22.0% said their parents engage in business, 5.0% said they are artisans and 2.0% of the respondents did not respond to the question regarding the occupation of their parents. The distribution shows that majority of respondents' parents are civil servants.

From the above table, 46.3% of the respondents said they are from the rural settlement, while 53.7% came from the urban centers. Although the percentage of those living in

the urban area outweighs those of the rural settlement, the distribution shows that pupils from the two backgrounds have been covered in the study.

4.3 Measurement of understanding of democratic governance by the youth of Zone C

Table 4.2 Respondents Assessment of Understanding of Democratic Governance

S/N	VARIABLES	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
6	The youth of zone C are aware of the existence of democratic institutions	125 (41.6%)	100 (33.3%)	3 (1%)	22 (7.3%)	50 (16.6%)	300 (100%)
7	The youth of zone C have knowledge about some essential aspects of democratic governance such as rule by majority and government by elected representatives who rule according to constitution and wish of the people	150 (50%)	70 (23.3%)	10 (3%)	60 (20%)	10 (3%)	300 (100%)
8	The youth of zone C prefer democratic government as than any other form of government	190 (63.3%)	20 (6.6%)	10 (3%)	50 (20%)	30 (8%)	300 (100%)
9	The understanding of democratic government by the youth of zone C can go a long way to nature political culture in them in terms of consciousness	150 (50%)	70 (23.3%)	10 (3%)	50 (16.6%)	20 (6.6%)	300 (100%)

Source: Survey Research 2018

From the above table 225 respondents representing 74.9% claim that the youth of zone C are aware of the existence of democratic institution. Also 120 respondents representing 66% believed that the youth of zone C have knowledge about some essential aspect of democratic government. Again, 210 respondents representing 69.9% are of the opinion that the youth of zone C prefer democratic government as better than any other form of government. This view is further confirmed by excerpts from interview which shows that most of the youth enjoyed empowerment dividend from the political office holders.

The study also revealed that the youth of zone C claimed that understanding of democratic government goes a long way to inculcate political culture in them because they were concurstast.

4.4 Measurement of attitude of the youth of zone C towards democratic government

Table 4.3 Respondents Assessment of Attitude towards Democratic Government

S/N	VARIABLES	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
10	The youth of zone C have voted in election conducted since 1999	100 (33.3%)	30 (10%)	10 (3%)	110 (36.8%)	50 (16.6%)	300 (100%)
11	The non-voting attitude of the youth of the zone C is as a result of non-performance of leaders and underage status	200 (66.6%)	40 (13.3%)	10 (3%)	30 (10%)	20 (6.6%)	300 (100%)
12	Democratic governance	250	20	0	20	10	300

	has brought gains to the youth of zone C	(83.3%)	(6.6%)	(0%)	(6.6%)	(3%)	(100%)
13	The attitude of the youth towards voting impacted positively in nurturing democratic political culture	150 (50%)	40 (13.3%)	10 (3%)	80 (26.6%)	20 (6.6%)	300 (100%)

Source: Survey Research 2018

Analysis from the table above shows that 130 respondents representing 43.3% claimed that they voted in elections conducted since 1999. Those in disagreement are 160 respondents representing 53.1%. This is so because number of under agreed is also greater, also 240 respondent representing 79.9 attested that the non-voting attitude of the youth of zone C is as a result of non-performance of leaders and underage. 270 respondent representing 89.9% claimed that democratic government have brought some gained to youth of zone C. finally, 190 respondents representing 63.3% believed that the attitude of the youth of zone C towards voting impacted positively towards inculcation of democratic political culture on the youth.

4.5 Measurement of participation of the youth of zone C towards democratic government

Table 4.4 Respondents Assessment of participation towards Democratic Government

S/NO	VARIABLES	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
14	The kind of political activities in which the youth of zone C participate in comprise of coting, campaign and contesting	160 (53.3%)	40 (13.3%)	10 (3%)	60 (20%)	30 (10%)	300 (100%)
15	The most common problem affecting the participation of the youth of zone C in democratic process include lack of experience, inadequate resources and political democratic of the elders	113 (37.7%)	56 (18.7%)	10 (3%)	61 (20.3%)	60 (20%)	300 (100%)
16	The leaders in youth club and association in zone C usually emerged appointment by patron as well as nomination by members	129 (43%)	86 (28.7%)	5 (1.6%)	50 (16.6%)	30 (10%)	300 (100%)
17	Participation by the youth of zone C democratic government promote democratic political culture in the youth	190 (63.3%)	30 (10%)	10 (3%)	40 (13.3%)	30 (10%)	300 (100%)

Source: Survey Research 2018

From the table above it is clear that 200 respondents representing 66.6% claim that the kind of political activities the youth participate is include voting, campaigning and contesting. Again, 169 respondents representing 57.4% claimed that the most common problems affecting the participation of the youth of zone C in democratic process include; lack of experience, inadequate resources and political domination of the elders. Again, 215 respondents representing 71.7% leaders in youth club and

association in zone C usually emerged through appointment by patrons as well as nomination by elders.

Finally, 220 respondents representing 73.3% claimed that participation by the youth of zone C in democratic governance promote democratic political culture in the youth.

4.6 Statistical Testing of Hypothesis

Data were presented, analyzed and interpreted generally but this section tries to apply result in testing the hypothesis earlier formulated.

The operation of Chi-Square (X^2) distribution was carried out using the computer package as earlier mentioned. The presentation for the hypothesis testing was as follows:-

Ho: There is no significant relationship between democratic governance and nurturing democratic political culture on the youth of zone C.

H1: There is significant relationship between democratic governance and nurturing democratic political culture on the youth of zone C.

From hypothesis above the independent variable is democratic governance while the dependent variable is nurturing democratic political culture.

For purpose of performing Chi-Square operations on the computer for the hypothesis responses for independent variable democratic governance and responses for dependent variable (nurturing democratic political culture) were coded and the computer using SPSS package cross tabulated the responses to produce the chi-square output presented on Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 Chi-Square Output

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	218.13 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	463.974	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	210.616	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	300		

Source: Field Survey Research 2018

From the Chi-Square output on Table 4.5 above, the hypothesis testing procedures are as follows:-

Chi-square calculated value is the Pearson Chi-Square value which is = 218.13

Degree of Freedom (df) = 16

Level of significance (α) = 0.05

Critical or table value at 16 df and α value of 0.05 = 26.296

Decision Rule

Accept null hypothesis (Ho)

If X^2 calculated value is less than X^2 critical (tabulated) value.

Reject null hypothesis (Ho) if X^2 calculated value is greater than X^2 critical (tabulated) value.

Comparison

Comparing the chi-square calculated value of 218.13 with chi-square critical (tabulated) value of 26.296 it could be deduced clearly that the X^2 calculated value is greater than the X^2 tabulated value as such the null hypothesis (H_0) will be rejected.

Conclusion

Because the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected it could be concluded therefore that there is a significant relationship between democratic governance (independent variable) and nurturing democratic political culture (dependent variable), meaning that the youth of zone C can be better nurtured to have democratic political culture in democratic governance through understanding of the system, their attitude in voting as well as participation in democratic process.

4.7 Findings of the Study

1. Arising from the data presented on the youth of zone C perception of democracy in Niger State of Nigeria. It can be said that youth are conversant with what a democratic system is all about. Despite the fact that data presented have shown that the youth have various conceptions of democracy, nonetheless they still have expressed views that reflect a clear understanding of democracy and the idea behind it. The views expressed by the overwhelming majority of respondents show that democracy is rule according to people's wish, suggesting that their conception of democracy is, in contradistinction of military rule, a rule with the consent of the people. Also, this suggests that even though there is no curriculum of political education at the secondary level in the zone C that teaches students about democracy, respondents are moderately in the known of the essential features of democracy.

Similarly, despite the obvious underlying problems associated with Nigeria's nascent democracy and the poor conduct of public officers, youth zone C in the area covered in the study concur with other Nigerians, as clearly found in Afro-barometer study conducted on the country (2009:3) that democracy is preferable to any form of government. This view is supported by the opinion of the respondents that democratic governance has brought about some gains of Nigerian. Indeed, they are also optimistic that democratic system in Nigeria will survive.

2. What is perhaps more important here is that the youth of zone C expressed their interest to vote. Overwhelming number of respondents as shown in the study expressed their interest to participate in the political process either as voters or contestants for public offices at various levels of government. This means that those within the voting age are eager to exercise their civil rights while those below 18 years are eager to reach the age of voting so that they can cast their votes or be voted into public offices. The only limit to their ambition, as most respondents said, is lack of political experience and the dominance of elders in power politics.
3. Another finding of the study shows that grassroots democratic participation has been either directly or indirectly hindered in the youth because leaders of youth's associations and clubs are mainly nominated by elders or patrons rather than elected democratically by members. This findings aptly concurs with Gyimah-Boadi's (2003:4) argument that anti-democratic practices in youth such as the process of determining who should lead clubs and associations.

5.0 Conclusion

In a country like Nigeria which experienced three decades of military rule, the scar of political bastardization as a result of centralized and authoritarian system of governance will take a long time to be obliterated. One of the easiest approaches to rejuvenating society to the path of new political culture that is founded on the basis of rule of law, public accountability and constitutionalism is a process of political orientation. The study of assessment of democratic governance on nurturing political culture among the youth of zone C Niger shows that democracy requires the participation of the present and future generation of youth. Political education for this category of people has long been overdone. As the study reveals, youth are eager to participate in the political process and for them to effectively achieve this goal they require an elaborate policy in which they can be trained on the basic rudiments of democratic culture for the deepening and sustainability of the system of representative government.

Recommendations

In general, it can be said that the youth of zone C senatorial district of Niger State have an optimistic view of the development of democracy in Niger State. Despite this, they still require intensive civic education to empower them to participate in politics based on acceptable democratic practices and procedures. Therefore, the study recommended that:

1. Political education should not be restricted to adult citizens but to include all youth at the level of their development official declaration celebrate a particular event. For democracy cannot be treated as an event that can come and pass, but a process which requires orientation, understanding and acculturation.
2. The culture of democratic elections in youth clubs and association should be entrenched so as to orient the youth about they need to participate in electoral contest, accept defeat at polls, development political compromise and be educated on the objective and purpose of representative government.
3. Since education is a crucial part of the process of political socialization into democratic politics the youth of zone C should be expose to practical understanding of the workings of the institutions of democracy by visiting state house of assembly to see how motions are made and how committees present their report. Also, a curriculum should be introduce in secondary school to be known as democratic studies so that the youth can get basic knowledge of understanding democratic governance, participation in political process and right attitude towards democratic governance.

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