## AN APPRAISAL OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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### **ABSTRACT**

There is an unconventional convergence in the writings on Africa that her development lags behind. This paper explores an appraisal of development and democracy in Nigeria. Arguing that the country's' development and democracy lags behind than, that of other states as a result of factors ranging front neo-colonialist activities such as unfavorable terms of trade, activities of multinational corporation and of course corruption among others. Nigeria has not score high when placed in the same matrix with countries heading towards democracy of empowerment. In attempting a discourse of this complex issue dependency approach propounded by scholars such as Samir Amir, Dos Santos, Fernando Cardoso and Celso Furltado among others has been adopted as a theoretical framework of the study which focuses on the unequal relation that exist between the centre and the periphery in the global context. The study is centered on the alternative paradigms for Nigeria development after many decades of poor performance of Breton woods prescription of liberal and Americanization style of development? This Paper further argues that the democracy and Nigeria development suffers as a result of her rentier political economy where the state officials and the agents of neo-colonialism such as MNC's conspire to extort oil revenue; and it conclude on the note that democracy and development needs to be homegrown, consolidated and centre on the material well-being of her citizenry.

Key words: dependency, development, democracy and neo-colonialism

### **INTRODUCTION**

It's unconventionally agreed among African writers that Africa's development is far behind compared to other regions and clime. Nigeria's successful incorporation into the capitalist economy and the rise of independence flag, the country has been grappling with the challenges of underdevelopment. The political leaders are clearly preoccupied with the problem of poverty, unemployment and infrastructural decay, even though they are largely responsible for all the challenges. Lesser known is the substantial variance in development fortunes within Africa. Prevailing and existing theories and their prescriptions mostly sponsored by Breton woods institution {World Bank and IMF} has also partly failed to account for the intra-African disparities in terms of her development. {Englebert, 2000}.

There are compendium of theories and research literature making attempt to explain and prescribed solutions for this weak performance, from modernization school of thought that faulted the institutional structure and traditional ties, to its counter reactionary theory of dependency which rather stressed Africa's unequal insertion in the world capitalist economy {Rodney, 1973 samir, 1974}to rational choice theory which on the other hand faulted the politicians and bureaucrats who, in light of the reorganized peasantry, chose agricultural and industrial policies which served their benefits rather than the development of the country as a whole.

The later approach which led to the flourish of Eurocentric and Breton wood's prescriptions in 1980's towards the developmental issues with the introduction of structural adjustment program {SAP} with it conditionalities has rather than bringing, justifiable "accelerated development" has otherwise brought acute indebtedness and the continual dependency in foreign trade and it unequal tendency of exploitation. Accordingly, explanation for the multiple crises of development in the sub Sahara Africa focus on the debate regarding the necessity of following the capitalist market oriented policies as prescribed by World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the capacity of Africa states to manage either development or reform and the way in which Africa institutions reproduce societies that are resistant either to state- centered development or to market forces. {Luberck, 1992}.

The Nigerian experience shows the movement towards structural reform and popular democratic movement after years of military authoritarian without corresponding response to developmental question and issues. Although writers like Momoh, {2006} contest the trend of Nigerian democratization by noting that it's a western prescription for third world countries base on the stereotypical assumptions that the third world countries are incapable of institutionalizing democracy.

More important to the current debate on the question of Nigeria democracy as a means and tools facilitating development "and specially challenging for orthodox development theory, is the staggering fact, despite nearly decade {now two} of submission to structural adjustment program {SAP] administered by World Bank and IMF neither the promised "accelerated growth" nor market equilibrium, nor new foreign investment has been forthcoming" {Iuberck, 1992}.

In this light of dimensional approaches to Nigeria development issues and her democracy, some retrospective hypothesis became necessary for further research and alternative explanation. It's an empirical fact that despite the prescription of the Breton Wood institutions, the country lags behind in terms of both structural and human centered development. What then is the alternative paradigm towards her development? How faulty is the liberal democracy as define by World Bank and IMF in relation to Nigeria development? Do we embrace the liberal or democracy of empowerment?

In an attempt to address some of these hypothetical questions, a theoretical paradigm became imperative.

# A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: DEPENDENCY APPROACH

In order to create an explicit insight and it operational values brought ford. We have to

ask; what is dependency? To borrow the logic and calculus of Sofiane, 2009 he contends that dependency is a condition in which element "A" is highly reliant on element "B". Even if both element are involved in an interdependent correlation element "B" is only weakly reliant on element "A" and is not severely constrained by this interdependency, whereas element "A" is powerless to surmount this asymmetrical situation, as it is 'more helplessly dependent. {Sofiane, 2009}.

In the same regards Dos Santos, sees dependency as "a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected. The relation of interdependence between two or more economies, and between this and world trade, assumes the form of dependence when some countries {the dominant ones} can expand and can be self-sustaining, while other countries {the dependent ones} can do this only as a reflection of that expansion, which can have either a positive or a negative effect on their immediate development" {Dos Santos, cited in Sofiane, 2009}

These though gave an insight into the meaning in terms of the conceptual clarification of the term 'dependency' however, by their attempt to conditioned this phenomenon of dependency as a "condition" project the definition with some structural weakness; for dependency in this

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regards is rather a continua process where the dependent countries suffers perpetually in the world capitalist arrangement where the capitalist economies established and create the phenomenon of indebtedness rentier economy, neo colonialism in terms of the activities of the multinational corporation and in it recent form under the guise of revolution in information technology {globalization}.

In furtherance by all attempt made by this school to interpret and translate the process of development and underdevelopment, writers argues that immediately after the collapsed of the Berlin walls which started with the independence of some colonies in the 1940's led to creation of further bloc in addition to east and western bloc. This new bloc comprises of Africa, Latin America and Asia which together they inhabited about 75 of the world population. As the question to how these new emerging states contends with the issues of developmental paradigm led to the proliferation of writers some belonging to the modernization approach which faulted the traditional ties and structural differentiation of the continent and suggest the Americanization and Europeanization of the new emerging state in terms of their policies and structures of the economy. While others belonging to the dependency school argues however that these new emerging states are pan: of history and need to be understood in it global context. The proponent of this school operated within a north-south paradigm. Marxist economist such as Theotenio Dos

Santos, Oswaldo Sunkel, Celso Furtado. Fernado Henrique Cardoso, James Petras, Andre Gunder frank, Samir Amin are considered to be among the major contributors to the dependency approach. They emphasized in terms of their area of convergence in the interpretation of the underdevelopment of third world; the gap between the "north" and the "South" is visibly widened which is the emphasis of the dependency theorist.

### DEVELOPMENT: A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

Is a complex issue with many different and sometimes contentious definitions, A basic perspective equates development with economic growth, It is imperative to conceptualize what development stands for. Development is often seen as the process of both political and socio-economic transformation of the society, In the conception of Torodo, 1970 it's a process through which there is "production of life necessities for the people in need and therefore providing them with sufficient amount of food to survive, physically, through providing shelter for people that have no other option than to live on the street and what is even more the ability and the readiness of health institutions to provide people with health care" {Torcdo, 1970}this conception is human centered perspective focus on the percentage to which poverty is reduced and accessibility to basic necessity of life became a core value of the society.

In the same vein, development is seen as the sustained increase in the economic standard of living of the country's population normally accompanied by it stock of physical and human capital and also technological improvement, While in the words and documentation of World Bank; development is the process of improving the quality of life which involves high income, better education, higher standard of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment and more equality of opportunities. {World Bank, 200J}

In almost a similar understanding, united nation development program {UNDP} view development in a perspective in which there are resources and economic structure to facilitate 'living long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to resources needed for descent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community'. Development is about empowerment, it is about local people taking control of their lives, expressing their own demands and finding solutions to their own problems, A process of economic and social transformation of the society, However, in the words of Walter Rodney in the first chapter of his insightful book on colonialism title: How Europe under developed Africa sees development as a many sided process ranging from individual level-social group-to the societal level. I will quote him in extensor:

> "Development in human society is a many sided process. All the level

of individual it implies increased in skills and capacity. greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well being .... the achievement of any of those aspect of personal development is very much tied in with the state of the society as a whole, At the level of social groups, therefore, development implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships, Development.., meant the increase in the ability to guard the independence of the social group [state sovereignty]a society develops economically as its members jointly increase their capacity for dealing with the environment; which is dependent on the application of science and development technology" {Rodney, 1973}

Rodney conception captures most of the aspect touches by writers in an attempt to conceptualize the concept of development. But more summarily is the questions raised by Dudley Seers as to what is happening to poverty, unemployment and inequality? In an attempt to answer topical questions over the developmental discourse of Nigeria state as to why amidst enormous natural and human resources the country's development lag behind, health and nutrition problems are widespread, lack of

portable drinking water, lack of access to good medical health care, absence of qualitative education and under funding of nation's institutions, infrastructural decay, absence of industrialization and widespread inequality between the class of the rich and poor, and the crisis of unemployment among others. Many studies have suggested causes for these problems. But Claude Ake {1996} believes the political conditions are the greatest obstacle to development.

### OBSTRUCTIVE FACTORS "AN OVERVIEW"

Many researchers in the field of political science have argued that the impediment to development involves factors both internal and external to Nigeria state. A neo liberal perspective tends to internalize the problem largely blaming corrupt and inefficient public policy. While the Marxist oriented scholars claim that the problem can be more accurately explain by the nature of the international economy. This scholars consider underdevelopment to have continue in the post colonial era, with the west still exploiting African economies especially economies endowed with crude oil like Nigeria and other natural resources through mechanism such as unfavorable 'terms of trade' and unequal exchange through the activities of multinational corporations MNC's.

To develop, all economies initially have to accumulate capital. This surplus capital is then invested back into the economy to produce further profits which, in turn, can themselves be re-invested. The key to development then, argued by Thompson, therefore is the accumulation of surplus capital followed by its productive investment. If this cycle of economic surplus and productive investment continues, then prosperity is generated. {Thompson, 2000}.

The Nigerian state has grapple over the years with the crisis of primitive accumulation by her political elite which has left the hypothetical question of Dudley Seers on development unanswered. This activities of the accumulation has been link to the role of the multinational corporations which is serving as the agent of neocolonialist by extracting the natural resources in conjunction with state conspiracy through the influence of public policy and governmental decision in respect to the regulation of their {MNC's} activities. Arguably, endemic immediately after the imposition of structural adjustment program {SAP} with her conditionalities of currency devaluation, staff retrenchments, market economy among others this has made it possible for multinationals and greedy political elite to extract surplus values through the neo- colonial rentier economy.

The development challenges has degenerate the state into deep crisis which allow the west to poach a good deal of economic sovereignty from Nigeria. Homayoun contends that experience of four decades of foreign aid has made it obvious that it has not resulted but in the increase of debt volume of the borrowers, their hyphened poverty and dependency. Foreign aid, under these circumstances and in its current form, is in character, a deterrent to the development of the recipient countries. {Homayoun, 1995} with the country's government forced to accept conditional lending, international monetary fund {IMF} succeeded in imposing their preferred neo liberal economic policies on the economy. Accordingly Nigeria politicians lost considerable control over setting their exchange rates establishing price controls, organizing budgets and determining what service should be offered to citizens. Decisions of public policy now had to be made in consultation with IMF officials {Thompson, 2000} which had led to policies such as national economic empowerment development strategy {NEEDS} which has the bi-product of new economic partnership for Africa development {NEPAD} and NEPAD an inactive of Britain woods institution. Homayoun {1995} further cited in regards to adverse effect of aid to development by quoting Mr. Fitzgerald who was in charge of United States foreign aid program from 1948 to 1961 stated that

"many assume that aid is provided towards the development of the recipient countries. This is certainly not the case ... the main motive for the disbursement of aid is to counteract political crisis. Economic development, should it occur, is quite incidental and only a side effete"

in this context it should be added that "aid" is applied as an extremely powerful tool for foreign policy'.

In regards to the capital inflow to Nigeria especially in the reconstruction of the financial sector; Peter argues explicitly, that the financial sector, among the few areas of recent growth, is now in the midst of a systemic crisis. The banking industry, liberalized in the late 1980s, quickly became an arena for speculation and fraud. Widespread improprieties within financial institutions and a failure of public supervision have fostered extensive collapse. At least half the country's financial institutions are currently insolvent, and regulators lack a clear strategy for restructuring the industry. {Peter, 1999}

Again peter continues that, Nigeria has experienced a marked deterioration in key public institutions, with consequences for economic performance. Disarray and corruption have weakened the judiciary, the civil service, and key regulatory agencies. Major elements of public infrastructure-notably electricity, fuel supply, telecommunications, and transportation-have also declined. Business and affluent households have turned to self-provisioning, while other Nigerians must

manage as best they can. The virtual collapse of education and health services has seriously degraded Nigeria's human capital. The exodus of professionals and the decimation of the middle class is particularly worrisome, both from the perspective of economic recovery and democratic development. {Peter, 1999}.

The structural distortions of Nigeria's oil economy have worsened in the course of the last decade. The country remains dependent on a petroleum monoculture, since the sector provides more than 80 percent of government revenues and 95 percent of hard currency. Manufacturing constitutes less than 8 percent of gross domestic product, and output has declined since 1992, Agricultural exports, which contracted sharply during the oil boom, showed some signs of revival during the late 1980s, only to drop again in recent years. It is difficult to assess the development of food production, since much of it is not marketed or measured; however, food imports more than doubled {Peter, 1999} since 1980's after the imposition of structural adjustment program. The huge revenue from the oil boom had been so badly managed that after the peak of the boom in 1980 Nigeria went into continually increasing deficit. Ake {1981}observes that oil greatly increased Nigeria's dependence, both technologically and financially, particularly the former. The oil boom itself diverted attention away from some sectors of the economy, particularly agriculture. {Ake, 198 1} Nigeria has grown

monumental incapable of feeding herself and dependent on food export from Europe and Asia over the years as a result of the abandonment of the agriculture.

The oil sector is the main sources of external earnings and revenue as such corruption in the sector rendered developmental enterprises meaningless. Momoh {2009} asserts that the activities of the oil multinational corporations especially under Mergers and Acquisition {M&S] are leading to the rapacious destruction of livelihood and livelihood opportunities.

Corruption is a relative term, and it occurs all over the continent of Africa but the syndrome of corruption is endemic in Nigeria. Officials requires bribe before they reach favorable decisions, public resources are misappropriated for private gains, individuals are employed and promoted basis of clientelism rather than merit; thereby living millions of Nigerians unemployed. In the words of Mahmud {2009}

"it is {corruption}worse in Nigeria and it has impacted ne gatively on the country's development process. In Nigeria corruption has been accepted as a way of life, and often a corrupt official or bureaucrat is hailed and respected by his community ... but the reality is that corruption is hindering the process of economic growth and development and is

also considered as an obstacle in the democratization process." {Mahmud, 2009}.

It is in this preference that Gavin (2003) argues on the bases that institutions designed to prevent corruption is used for partisan ends subject to allegation of racial, ethnic, or political bias. Formal procedures 'to investigate breeches of trust by office holders are costly and discourages public servant from making difficult decisions. The commercialization of public sphere has offered numerous opportunities to public servants to manipulate the system for private gains thereby subverting the idea of popular development through public services. Tracing it root to colonial legacies; Ake {1996} contends that "political independence brought some changes to the composition of the state managers, the character of the state remained much as it was in colonial era; it continue to be totalistic in scope, constituting a statist economy" {Ake, 1996} Mahmud continue explicitly in the context of Nigeria that

"the neo colonial rentier political economy shapes the nature and character of politics in the Country. The entire economy which depends on the rent generated from the sale of the abundant crude oil has imposed politics of graft. Corruption and accumulation, where the winner takes all and also control political space" {Mahmud, 2009}.

Again in the context of political power Ake {1996} observes that in context of development in the post-' colonial era the premium on power is exceptionally high and the institutional mechanism for moderating political competition are lacking. As a result, political competition tends to assume the character of warfare in that the quest for development is marginalized.

Finally, development is only important to man when it "addresses his material condition. Development therefore is the process through which the material wellbeing of the society assumes relevance in relation to poverty eradication, equal opportunities in regards to employment education, health facilities and fundamental human rights. In the words of Ake he asserts that if people are the end of development "then their well being is the supreme law of development. But the well-being of the people will only be the supreme law of development if they have some decision making power... but the only one way to ensure that social transformation is not disassociated from the well-being of the people is to institute democracy" {ake, 1996}.

# EXPLORING DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT NEXUS AND THEIR IMPEDIMENT IN NIGERIA

Amidst series of debate in the last decade over development in Nigeria, Scholars and politicians alike conceived returned to

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democratic governance as a mechanism towards development and advancement of the society. Resurgence of democratic movement in Nigeria rekindles the lost hope for the brighter future. However, in the words of Aluaigba that after many years of experiencing democracy, the rising hope among Nigerians is gradually giving way to apprehension and despondency..... the expected dividend as highly anticipated are not forthcoming as a result of wide range of factors. {Aluaigba, 2007}thus: a system of government that enjoys wide range reception as its anticipation to address tropical issues of development such as poverty eradication and structural efficiency; but since the last decade of it experimentation, reverse is the case in term of it benefit to the generality the populace. The Nigeria democracy is that of the bourgeoisie democratic experiment where there is dictatorship of the minority.

In the conception of Lenin "the democratic system is a feature of bourgeoisie society, the most pure and perfect bourgeoisie feature, in which the utmost freedom, scope and clarity of the class struggle are combine with the utmost cunning, with ruses and subterfuges" {Lenin, collected works vol: 20} aimed at spreading primitive accumulation at the expense of developmental enterprises through electoral fraud. It is in this parlance that Oyovbaire contends that 'democracy is yet to be experience in the country' [cited in Bake, 2001] Bako itself continue in the assertion that Nigeria has only succeeded in

conducting a transition to civil rule and not to democracy. {Bake, 2001}. Although, no universal meaning can be accrued to democracy as a result of it several transformation in different society and also as a result of it different models. However, a scholar mostly tries to construct it meaning in the parlance of liberalism and or Marxism.

In the parlance of liberalism Aniforwase, sees democracy as a system of rule embracing ejected officials who represent the interest of it citizens and rule according to rule of law. {Aniforwase, 1999} while, Wakili also contends that, it's the placement of greater emphasis on the personal liberty, popular sovereignty and representative government which entrenched check and balances to reduce or to a greater extent eliminate arbitrariness. {Wakili& Jegga, 2005}. Tll the same vain Oddih also view democracy as a system that embodies fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression, right to life, right to dignity of human person, right to personal liberty, right to fair hearing, right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, press, peaceful assembly and association, movement, and political participation. {Oddih, 2007}.

From the foregoing conceptualization, democracy has been seen as more of the freedoms of life regulation than the advancement of development that is human centered and an again favors the institutional structures that has to do with

standard for political competition and expression rather than the material aspect of her citizenry.

In the other purview, Nzongola explicitly gave an explanation to what democracy constitute in terms of it fundamental advancement of equal distribution of and access to material benefit of the society. He argues that "democracy cannot be negotiated as a new bargain to developing nations, rather, it has to be richer than the liberal model, and should be capable of leading to a development strategy that is homegrown, people-centre and oriented towards eradicating poverty" {Nzongola, 2000} thus: democracy should be people's conception not exported ideology such as liberal model of democracy but a homegrown with peoples values and costumes imbedded in it tenet. As Aristotle rightly observes that democracy is associated with equality in which "the poor shall not be in no greater subjection than the rich; nor that the supreme power shall be lodged in either of these, but that both shall share it" {cited in Aluaigba,2009}this is to say democracy is about equal distribution of wealth of the nation.

Ake, posits that one of the major problem of the feasibility of democracy in Nigeria is that the paradigm of democracy itself is not home grown and we requires somewhat more than the crude variety of liberal democracy that is being foisted on us, and even more than the impoverished liberal democracy that prevails ill the industrialized countries. {Ake, 1996} while in the other words Olukoshi argues that forces inhibiting the consolidation of democracy... include the low level of literacy, per capital income/gross domestic product; the alleged dearth of ideology; the preponderance of members of the old political and professional elite in the democratization process, the alleged absence of an independent commercial class and the persistence of neopartrimonialism/rent seeking {Olukoshi: cited in Rasheed, 2009}. Rasheed {2009} construct the factor to the nature of finance of the political activities who assumes the status of godfathers and pursued only interest that constitute values to them. Accordingly, the challenges to democracy include lack of electoral pluralism, rule of law, popular participation and control of decision making at all levels. Above all, political finance and the emergence of transactional leaders constitute debilitating factor in the new democracies. And again, in the understanding of Nicholas {2001] that modernization may necessary cause conflicts {in new democracies} as economic and social change may accelerate and intensify group competition for scarce resources.

Arguing in the same parlance with kwaja {2009}, that the challenges facing democracy and democratic consolidation in Africa are enormous. They include entrenching constitutionalism, promoting

sustainable development, nurturing effective and responsive leadership. Whereas, previously, development had been regarded as a precondition of democracy, now democracy is seen as a requisite for development.

#### **CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD**

Irrespective of the nexus to which democracy is conceived; democracy is about empowerment. Provided people are not empowered, it's then' said there is no democracy. It is in this purview that scholars like Bako {2001} argue that Nigeria has only been liberalizing not democratizing. It's the absence of democratization that is responsible for the worsening of the situation particularly in the national economy, law and order, harmonious coexistence between ethnic, communal and regional groupings, and the country's dangerous drift into subservience to American and western hegemony.

Democracy in itself is not faulty but it model and or process of it practices can be when truncated upon as the case of Nigeria; where democratic process particularly the electoral process has assume the character of warfare since the last decade and in the process marginalize the idea of development Democratic system of government as said elsewhere cannot be compromised and rejected but reappraised. Emphasis should be re-directed on a social democracy that will invest heavily in the improvement of people's health, education,

bridging the gap between the poor and the rich and addressing exclusively the unemployment crises. Democracy, with the dictatorship of the elected minority who return only to 'seek votes as the case of current dispensation should be dispelled and replace with social and popular democracy for the interest of the electorate.

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