

## AN EXAMINATION OF DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

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### Abstract

Nigeria is the largest democracy in Africa. In 1999, it returned to civil rule after years of military interregnum. The return was greeted with excitement, fanfare and expectations. The paper seeks, therefore, to interrogate the journey so far in Nigeria's democratic experience. The study adopts qualitative method with emphasis on secondary source of data gathering. Data was analysed using content analysis. The study finds out that democracy is not equal to development, and at the same time not a threat to it. It concludes that democracy has not brought expected development to Nigeria due to failure of both the leaders and the followers to build a system that engenders development. The paper, thus, recommends developmental democracy, democratic institutionalization, and socio-political restructuring among others for a positive democracy-development relation.

**Key words:** Democratic Governance, Diversification, Development, Toutocracy, Fourth Republic

### Introduction

Democracy as a system of government is common in almost all countries of the world – both developed and developing. Globalization on cultural hybridization among nations has accentuated democratic trends. Democratic practices are becoming universalized as both equalitarian and majoritarian rule (Eke, 2005). Many scholars have reasoned that democratic principles are sine-qua-non to national development. This is, perhaps, after putting into consideration such democratic principles as liberty, rule of law, freedom of speech, etc. but most countries, especially in the developing countries, only sing democracy without adherence to its principles (Osi, 2003). Elections have been identified as an indispensable foundation of democracy. It has also been connected to development. Both democracy and development have been two of the major preoccupations not only in scholarly circles, but also in policy, development and advocacy environs in the last couple of decades. All the three –elections, democracy and development- have been troubled, most especially in practice and delivery on their promises, in both developed and developing democracies (Omotola, 2021).

The global trend of accepting democracy as the preferred form of government prompted the African political elite to embrace the paradigm shift from authoritarian regimes to civil rules. Although, there are still cases of authoritarianism in some states within the continent, the wider acceptability of democracy cannot be undermined. The popular pressures for entrenchment of democracy in Africa necessitated Nigeria's move to embrace civilian government devoid of military autocracy. Since Nigeria's political independence in 1960, the political transition has always been truncated via military incursion in the country's politics. However, the return to democratic system in 1999 after series of military rule ushered Nigeria to the current fourth republic which has been sustained for over two decades (Udeoji, 2021). *There has been contention whether development is a precondition for entrenchment of democracy or rather democracy serves as catalyst for development, which is very much unclear. Regardless of the answer, since the prodemocracy charges hit Africa since 1990s, democracy has not made substantial strides. There have still been huge issues of underdevelopment, corruption and mal-administration. Many*

*have started scrutinizing the possibility of democracy been ideal for Africa.*

Africa's economic performance remains dismal and prospect for the new millennium is bleak. The continent, consisting of 54 countries, is the least developed continent of the Third World despite its possessing immense wealth of mineral and natural resources. Compared with the Third World, development indicators of Africa have lagged persistently behind (Siyum, 2018). It is an indisputable fact that many decades after self-rule, a number of African countries are mired in a vicious circle of development crisis, characterized by poverty, stagnation, misery, violence and disruption, and these are often blamed on lack of resources. Unfortunately, the lack-of-resources thesis fails to explain why some natural resources-rich African countries such as Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola, among others, are shining examples of dysfunctional developmental failures.

Nigeria welcomed the reign of democracy in 1999. For her, the model of democracy that has been seen to have helped in transforming lives in the Western, Northern and other parts of the First World had come to stay. Thus, 1999 was an opportunity for Nigeria to also practice that paradigm that enabled development to emerge in such entities. Although Nigeria paved the way for democratic rule roughly two decades ago, the people still struggle to locate or fathom tangible dividends of this system of governance. Rather, what is glaring is the near failing state situation as manifested in the cases of injustices, insurgency, ethnic and other forms of rivalries, to mention but a few (Obinyan & Otoide, 2021).

Scholars like Friedman (1962) and Sylvia (2002) in Udeoji (2021) posit that durable democracy is strongly correlated with economic development, implying that political freedom is a function of economic freedom. Sharing the same view are the purveyors of neoliberalism and its political correlate such as: the international financial institutions; the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F), the World Bank; the African Development Bank (AfDB); and the international organizations like the Common Wealth of Nations, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), among others. These international capitalist driven institutions are in unison that there is no substitute to a free-market economy and liberal democracy; and that both must go simultaneously.

The modern trend of scholars and practitioners' contention revolves around the usefulness of democracy to development. Basically, the paradigm is being shifted towards developmental indices as justification for the functionality of democracy as a system of government. This dimension reflects in Osagahae (2001) submission that democracy is contested across different regions within the global community. The point of Osagahae is that what is democratic in western societies might not be accepted to be democratic virtues in Asian region. To him, the Arab world understanding of democracy differs from the European analysis of the concept. Be that as it may, the best mechanism to measure democracy is development.

The synergy between democracy and good governance has been explored. Classical thinkers such as de Tocqueville (1961) viewed liberal democracies as the embodiment of reason and advancement that would greatly empower the labouring and disadvantaged sectors of society to press successfully to redress the gross socio-economic and political disparities.

It on the foregoing postulation that, this paper attempts to examine Nigerian democratic journey from 1999 to 2022.

### **Methodology**

This paper adopted qualitative method using secondary sources like articles from reputable journals-local, national and international, gazette from government agencies, data from inter-governmental and non-governmental organization to examine democracy and development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It used content analysis in analyzing the data.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This research work finds it suitable to use two theories in examining democracy vis-à-vis development of the Nigerian state in the Fourth Republic. The theories are: Motor Park Theory of Democracy and the Hanging State in Nigeria.

### **Motor Park Theory of Democracy**

A South-eastern political scientist, Prof. Jonah Onuoha is the exponent of motor park theory of democracy. The Nigerian brand of democracy has given world intellectuals and local political think-tanks a reason to think that their basic or elementary definition of democracy is, after all, questionable and inadequate. Nigerian politicians, revere culture of impunity, snatch ballot boxes, loot public treasury, kill or kidnap their political opponents, engage in vote-buying and intimidation of the electorate. What type of theory can explain this political behaviour? Despite this obvious gap in the literature, Nigerian political scientists seem not to be worried (Onuoha, 2020). This theory is a novel effort to develop a framework that explains striking abnormality in the behaviour of leaders and followers in Nigerian political space. Motor park touts are a bunch of illiterate thugs, extortionists and notorious young men who work in the motor park. The theory identifies three personality traits about them (motor park touts). They are shameless, fearless and ruthless. On a deeper reflection, the theory likened average Nigerian politician with these touts as they have commonalities and share the same traits. It also identifies three categories of tout – tout-touts, corporate-touts and chief-touts. The strongest of them is chief-touts - they are political gladiators with paraphernalia for controlling the machinery of politics.

The tout theory is an attempt to explain our collective experience as a nation. The theory establishes that Nigeria practices *toutocracy* not democracy. That is, government of the touts, by the touts and for the touts. It is a perverted version of model democratic theories and practice. The theory is a relevant lens that could be used in viewing democratic character of Nigeria and predominant culture of Nigerian political players at all levels.

### **The Hanging State in Nigeria**

Wale Are Olaitan, a Nigerian born and bred professor of Political Science evolved the hanging state theory of state/Nigeria. This theory is an attempt to give a new conception of the Nigerian state as a result of inadequacies of the existing conceptions. The theory identifies vagueness and lack of empirical roots in those conceptions. It is rooted on specific history, movement and growth of the Nigerian State, thus the theory is a concrete and historical intellectual elucidation (Olaitan, 1993).

The thrust of this theory is commercial capitalist nature of the Nigerian state; a situation where a country principally rests on commercial capitalism with a tangential relation to the process of production. It derives its revenue from imposition of import duties and other forms of tariff than taxes on the people and services. The Nigeria state survives mainly not from revenue derivable from productive sector of the economy, but on oil rent. Put differently, the theory explains a scenario of a state not surviving on the principal process of social reproduction within its territory. That is, Nigerian state and Nigerian society are not productively linked. Thus, Nigeria survives largely because of the goodwill it enjoys from international system, instead of getting its life sustenance from society. The hanging status of the Nigerian state is that, it is not productively linked to its society; it does not survive primarily on the productive contribution by its citizens but, it relates tangentially to the process of social reproduction of the vast majority of its citizens. It barely concerns itself in activities outside the oil sector where most of its citizens derive their livelihood.

The implication is, citizens regard the state with indifference and antagonism. The resources are regarded as nobody's resources within the notion of clientele politics and impunity. The state does not possess moral basis to legitimately enforce its laws; and people do not respect the laws. The theory asserts that relationship between the state and society in Nigeria has really been

characterized by disharmony, contradiction and lack of recognition of the necessity of interdependence because of nature of the state. As such, Nigerians are not interested in paying tax since the state does not affect their productive process. Citizens are not critical on how government revenues are expended; a situation that fertilizes corrupt practices; inhibits good governance and endangers democracy and development.

The hanging theory is a valid and relevant framework in discussing democracy and development in Nigeria as the citizens (both the leaders and the followers) and the state determine path to development or ruination of state.

### **Development**

Development is a multi-dimensional process involving major changes in social structures, political attitudes and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty (Ersson, 1997). It is basically about the people reaching an acceptable standard of living, a condition possible only when they have the basic things on which they need to live decently. These include housing, shelter, clothing, food-nutritionally balanced diet, portable water, clean environment, etc.

The concept of development has been variously defined by scholars as such there is no one acceptable definition of development. The earliest conception of development was based on economic development. Economic development was the main feature of development. It was believed that economic growth would not only result in an increasing personal income but also a higher quality of life. Economic growth is measured using the Gross National Product (GNP). This is an approximate measure of the total value of goods and services produced by an economy for a year. Overtime, it was discovered that the correlation between economic growth and improvement in standard of living was inconclusive. Therefore, it became unjustifiable to use economic growth as a measure of development. This fact is caused by an uneven distribution of gains from economic growth as those who were rich became richer and the poor became poorer. This led to a shift to a more holistic definition of development (Ugbem, 2019).

Development is a multifaceted concept encapsulating widespread improvements in social as well as material wellbeing of all in society. The United Nations (UN) views development as follows: A more equitable distribution of income and wealth for promoting both social justice and efficiency of production, to achieve a greater degree of security and to expand and improve facilities for education, health, nutrition, housing and social welfare, and to safeguard environment. The qualitative and structural changes in society must go hand-in-hand with rapid economic growth, and existing disparities – regional, sectoral and social – should be substantively reduced. These objectives are both determining factors and end results of development (Ugbem, 2019). This definition is inclusive as it focuses on qualitative and quantitative improvements in standard of living of individuals and a society. It furthermore underpins the elimination of conditions that inhibit social and economic wellbeing and also emphasizes the distribution of public goods in such a way that disparities are significantly reduced.

Todaro (2009), defines development as a multidimensional process involving the reorganisation and re-orientation of the entire economic and social systems. To him, development is a physical reality as well as a state of mind which society has through the combination of social, economic and political process secured the way of obtaining a better life. Rogers and Rogers (1994) conceive development as a long participatory process of social change in the society whose objective is the material and social progress for the majority of population through a better understanding of their environment. This definition furthermore emphasizes the organisation of resources in society to ensure equitable distribution of goods and services as well as the enhancement of the standard of living of the members of the society. The definition also shows that development is a process as well as a condition.

On the whole, development refers to a planned process of social change as well as a condition of qualitative and quantitative social wellbeing. Various theoretical explanations have been advanced by development scholars. The modernisation perspective which owes its origin to the western scholars emphasizes a top-bottom approach to improvement in standard of living and structural differentiation while the dependency perspective owes its origin to scholars of the developing countries. It advances external causation to third world underdevelopment and emphasizes a bottom approach to development. These two perspectives have formed the basis of many development strategies that have been adopted in many developing countries over time. Many times, these efforts have been manned by corruption, nepotism as well as lack of proper planning and implementation.

### **Democracy**

Eke (2005), perceives democracy from the prism of representation through a periodically organized free and fair election. Roskin, in Eke (2005), aptly states that democracy is a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office. Shively in Eze (2015), views democracy as a state in which all full adult citizens vote at regular intervals to choose, from among alternative candidates, the people who will be in charge of setting the state policies.

Appadorai (1968), in Ofoeze (2002), categorizes the fundamental principles of democracy to include political equality and majority rule. From these definitions of democracy, it is easy to believe the liberal scholars that democracy facilitates national development as its nature connotes. However, viewed from the Marxists prism democracy is seen as a government practice that guarantees the control of policymaking by those who control the substructure of society. To the Marxists, what the liberals see as the majority is a reflection of the few. The view of the Marxists on democracy is actually what plays out in developing nations.

According to Osi (2003), the liberal democratic formula was not the appropriate panacea for the development of Nigeria considering her endogenous factors. Perhaps, there would have been some embellishments to get it ("Africanized"). Uga (2000), argues that democracy is not a potted plant, which can be transplanted into any soil and grown without work. That implies that Nigeria democracy must be natured before it entrenches, to warrant any form of development. Ejiiofor in Eke (2005), corroborates this position, that the premise of the social condition of democracy in developing depends on the enabling capacity of these societies to harbor the tenets of democracy as a necessary first – steps to development.

For democracy to engender national development, there must be sincere effort at institutionalizing democracy which leads to turning the economy around, redressing our battered educational system; mending our traumatized psyche, replacing current disillusionment among our people with healthy skepticism; ensuring rapid expansion of our technological bases, tracking the current unacceptable and intolerable level of poverty; transforming our rural areas into centers of production; and cementing unity rather than fanning the embers of disunity in our country (Osinachi, 2009).

Democracy is a *political movement that involves incremental improving in accountability, electoral competition, activism and expansion of civil liberty* (Potter, 2000). For Whitehead (2002), in **Ogbulafor, Iwundu, Fidelis, Emmanuel, & Mojirayo (2018)**, democratisation is a complex process that involves political competition and the transition from one state to the other can be brought about rapidly, unambiguously and permanently, provided some of the prescribed institutional changes are implemented. Such changes, when effected, are expected to yield a democratic society where democratic ideals will prevail (Omotola, 2007).

What then makes one society democratic and the other not? To effectively engage such elements, it

is apposite to begin with a conceptualisation of democracy. Democracy as a system of government stresses the sovereignty of the people. Schumpeter (1967) in Omotola (2021) opines that democracy entails that 'institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions, which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals, who are to assemble in order to carry out its will'. Held (2006) shares similar views when he views democracy as a 'means to self-fulfilment', as 'a means to an end', which 'serves to protect the liberty of citizens and to maintain the minimum public goods (the rule of law, electoral politics, a safety net, security) necessary for citizens to go about their self-chosen ends and objectives.

Diamond (2008) submits that a system would be classified as democratic if it ensures the following attributes:

- Substantial individual freedom of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication, broadcast, assembly, demonstration, petition, and (why not) the internet;
- Freedom of ethnic, religious, racial, and other minority groups (as well as historically excluded majorities) to practice their religion and culture and to participate equally in political and social life;
- The right of all adult citizens to vote and to run for office (if they meet certain minimum age and competency requirements);
- Genuine openness and competition in the electoral arena, enabling any group that adheres to constitutional principles to form a party and contest for office;
- Legal equality of all citizens under a rule of law, in which the laws are “clear, publicly known, universal, stable, and non-retroactive”;
- An independent judiciary to neutrally and consistently apply the law and protect individual and group rights;
- Thus, due process of law and freedom of individuals from torture, terror, and unjustified detention, exile, or interference in their personal lives, by the state or non-state actors;
- Institutional checks on the power of elected officials, by an independent legislature, court system, and other autonomous agencies;
- Real pluralism in sources of information and forms of organizations independent of the state; and thus, a vibrant “civil society”;
- Control over the military and state security apparatus by civilians who are ultimately accountable to the people through elections.

These attributes are important in locating the level of democratic ethos imbibed a a country and her citizens for an all-inclusive development.

### **Democracy and Development in Nigeria**

The debates revolve around whether democracy promotes or retards development. There is a revolving debate whether democracy enhances or retards development. The legendary Political Scientist, Samuel P. Huntington, appropriately classified this dichotomy into the 'compatibility' and 'conflict' perspectives. Empirical illustrations are drawn from key indices of the economy to show that Nigeria's brand of democracy has not really promoted economic development. Specifically, I focus on data for the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), poverty level, inequality, life expectancy at birth, adult literacy, unemployment and debt crisis (Omotola, 2021).

#### **a) Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth Rate**

GDP growth rate is one of the major indicators of economic growth, which sets the foundation for economic development of any country. According to study conducted by Omotola (2021), fluctuation in GDP has been evident from data attributable to Nigeria since the return to

democracy in 1999 till 2020. In particular, the real GDP growth for 2020 was -1.8 %. However, it has tended to decrease through 1999 to 2020 period ending at -1.8% in 2020. Equally, the country experienced a negative value of -1.6% in 2016. It was in this year that the country experienced a negative growth for three consecutive quarters, leading the country into a devastating economic recession. Again, it was equally discovered that the growth rate of the GDP turned upward after the debt forgiveness in 2005 up till 2010 before it started declining. The reasons for the decline and fluctuations between 1999 and 2020 are many, notably the mono-economy nature of the country, weak institutions, lack of mutual interaction between democracy and development and lately, the effect of COVID 19 pandemic across the globe (Omotola, 2021).

### **b) Poverty Level**

Poverty is a major indicator of underdevelopment. Data were presented in a multiple bar chart to compare different levels of poverty in Nigeria for selected years. It shows that the percentage of the population leaving below \$1.90 per day rose under the military rule from 22.8 in 1985 to 28.6 in 1992 and 32.4 in 1996, but declined under democracy to 23.2 and 23.4 in 2003 and 2009 respectively and 12.4 in 2018. Although the percentage of the population captured in poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 appears to be higher, similar trend can be observed (Omotola, 2021).

The percentage of the population under \$5.50 poverty headcount significantly show the enduring level of inequality that will be further discussed. The high number of people living in poverty is indicative that all the anti-poverty interventions of the government have been counter-productive.

According to report by the World Poverty Clock (2018) indicates that Nigeria has not only “overtaken India as the country with the most extreme poor people in the world”, but has remained the top most country with extreme poverty in Africa. Thus, no fewer than 86.9 million Nigerians, representing nearly 50% of its estimated 180 million population now wallows in extreme poverty. The current efforts to lift more Nigerians out of extreme poverty is clearly indication that the successive Nigerian governments mismanaged the country's vast oil riches via incompetence and corruption, though the present regime is yet to actualize its mission on poverty reduction (Udeoji, 2021).

### **c) Economic Inequality**

Economic inequality is inimical to political and economic development. Economic growth becomes meaningful and translates into development when the proceeds are fairly evenly distributed among the populace. It was revealed that as at 2018, the highest 20% of Nigeria's population holds or controls 42.4% of total national income. The data also showed that the proportion of national income held by the lowest 20% class of the Nigerian population averaged 5.32% from 1985 to 2018 for about 10,393,684 of the overall population. Surprisingly, the income share of the highest 20% of the Nigeria population averaged 48.03% over the same period, representing 9,384,272 million of the total population, which is substantially less than those in the lowest income share. These data indicate that the gap between the lowest 20% and the highest 20% is very wide, amounting to 175, 592, 044 million. That is, the gap between the lowest income and the highest is 17 times.

The situation in Nigeria suggests that income inequality is widespread, with the proportion of those in the lowest rung of the ladder large enough to undermine democracy and development. The lowest 20% of the population controls only 7.1% of national income during the same period, 2018. When aggregated, while the highest 20% of the population controls 42.4% of national income in 2018, the remaining 80% put together holds 57.6%. This is the crux of the matter, underscoring widespread inequality in the distribution of economic growth (GDP). This equally contravenes the Median Voter Models as posited by Persson and Tabellini (1994) in Omotola

(2021) which suggest that democracy generates the redistribution of income in a country, if properly harnessed.

#### **d) Life Expectancy**

Life expectancy at birth is an indicator of the average number of years one is expected to live. The data for Nigeria since independence in 1960 as presented in Figure 9 have been disturbing, standing at 37.41 years in 1961, and incrementally rose to 54.6 in 2019. For the first decade of democracy under the fourth republic, it was always below 50, except in 2009 when it stood at 50.4 years.

According to the above source, for instance, in 2019, Algeria had the highest life expectancy in Africa where a new born infant was expected to live for 78 years. This was followed by Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritius, each with a life expectancy of 76 years. Of the 54 countries included in the database, 42 of them had a life expectancy of 60 years and above. Nigeria's 54.6 years during the same period ranked among the lowest, occupying the third last position, after Central African Republic and Lesotho with a life expectancy of 53 and 54 years respectively over the same period (Omotola, 2021).

#### **e) Education (Adult Literacy)**

Education is an important determinant of democracy and development. It is a pre-requisite for the survival and success of democracy. It is also seen as a fundamental factor of development because of its abilities to raise people's productivity and creativity, and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances (Brende, 2015). Level of education of any country is usually measured by a number of indices such as school enrolment and adult literacy. Using both indicators, Nigeria has not really fared well. As Figure 10 reveals, adult literacy fluctuated across the years. After an initial positive showing of 54.7% at the national level in 2003, rising to 70.1% in 2006, it plummeted to 51.6% in 2008 and rose again to 62% in 2018. The trend was the same for male and female, the only difference being that the literacy level of male was higher than female's; and higher than the national average in all cases.

The situation seems worse for school enrolment. As at 2013, data from UNICEF reveal that 'one in every five of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria'. The data further reveal that about 10.5 million children aged 5-14 are not in school in Nigeria; and that 'only 61 percent of 6-11 year-olds regularly attend primary school and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36-59 months receive early childhood education'. This is in spite of the fact that primary education is officially free and compulsory in the country (British, Council, 2014; UNICEF, 2013). The situation may have been accentuated by years of Boko Haram insurgency and rural banditry in the north east and north west/central respectively (Omotola, 2021)

#### **e) Unemployment Level**

High level of unemployment is an indicator of underdevelopment. Though always on the high side, the situation would appear to have been deteriorating under democracy, especially since 2014. The total number of labour force in Nigeria rose from 32 million in 1990 to 62.2 million in 2020. It is evident from the study that a large proportion of this population is not gainfully employed. Specifically, the total percentage of unemployment of the nation was between 3.5% and 4% of the total labour force between 1991 and 2013. The trend of the percentage of the unemployed labour force surpassed 4% in 2014 and 2015, and rose further to 7.06% in 2016. It was between 8.39% and 8.53% of the labour force between 2017 and 2019, and 9.01% in 2020. By implication, more than 5.6 million of Nigeria's labour force (working age) are unemployed in 2020. This did not account for those that are underemployed, which constitute a significant portion of the employed labour force (Omotola, 2021).

Daniel Treisman posits that economic development set the stage for democracy (Achemoglu, Naidu, Restropo & Robinson, 2019). Contrarily, Robert Barro asserts that democracy is not the key



to economic growth as more political rights do not influence growth. China is the case study available for this. China is only second to the USA in terms of GDP and it could surpass it soon if it continues with the pace it runs (Schmidt, 2019).

There is a definite correlation between the lack of democratic practices, development in African politics and the deteriorating socio-economic conditions. If governments are not accountable to the people, then they are less likely to pursue socio-economic development. The linkage that exists between democracy and economy is therefore two-dimensional. While democracy has a tendency to lead to economic development, it can also be argued that without a sound economic base democracy can hardly survive in any social formation. By and large, democracy and development in Nigeria is seen to have reflected limited progress in revitalizing economies or alleviating poverty in the country.

A political scientist, Professor Emeritus, Richard Sklar's view on 'developmental democracy', is that democracy is the best type of government with the most noteworthy ability to ensure advance and development of Africans. Developmental democracy, then again, holds that the estimation of democracy lies in its commitment to national and individual improvement. Essential qualities of democracy are freedom of speech, and commitment regarding the improvement of individual, allowing citizens to get involve in governance (Bassey & Udoudon, 2018). Linz and Stephen corroborate that democracy guarantees development in any society. They contend that the essentials of a democracy include its ability to regulate social conduct, the creation of strong political institutions, the presence of a strong civil society and pressure groups, a strong and rational bureaucracy and an economic regime with a strong private sector base, increased production and economic growth (Linz & Stephen, 1997).

Contrarily, the USAID's report (2012), posits that democracy is not strictly essential for development just as bad governance is possible under formal democratic structures. It however concedes that free, fair, and competitive elections do make it possible to remove bad or corrupt political leaders. Obinyan and Otoide (2021), aver that democracy whose templates and practice have helped in liberating, emancipating, developing other nations appears to have failed in Nigeria, reason being that democracy and its processes have been hijacked by a set of people who are not capable of anything but overseeing bad governance. Instead of practicing the ideals of democracy that have led to massive development and growth in other climes, a caricature of that democracy is what is been practiced.

Equally, Gbreybie (2009), asserts that past governments failed in the area of development and peaceful co-existence of Nigerians due to their non-adherence to democratic values and application of the principle of true fiscal federalism. Ogbonna (2012), amplifies this that even though Nigeria has recorded a long breadth of democratization, the development imperative of democracy is not only thin, but the polity suffers from the potentialities of reversal. Babalola (2018), notes that as long as Nigeria keeps having followership that demands patronage, handout and favours, search for true leadership will be long and winding. He queried, how can a society get a true leadership fix when the people celebrate failed leaders? Economically, Nigeria is dependent – it is also a mono-cultural and consumptive economy (Udoh, 2017). Political instability resulting from a dysfunctional economy and insecurity has reduced foreign investment. So also is institutional decay and complete inundation of the social, legal and general business environment. Unsteady power supply and high crime wave all hold Nigeria economy stagnant. Lack of industrialization, inability to diversify, and under-developed rural segments, have combined to undermine economic development (Bassey, 2016).

Summarily, Omotola (2021), Obinyan and Otoide (2021), and Gbreybie (2009) observed that democracy has failed to engender economic development in Nigeria. Babalola (2018) considered inanity of the follower ship is the bane to development. A situation where citizens applaud failed leaders for sentimental and selfish reasons. USAID (2012) contend that

democracy is not a guarantee for economic prosperity as less democratic regimes eg, China, favourably compete with liberal democracies. This view was also affirmed by Robert and Barro (in Bassey Y Udoudon, 2018). It can be inferred from the above that, what brings development is beyond democracy, and democracy is not a hindrance to development. High quality of followership is as important as good leadership. Development does exist in the blue; this underlies development-friendly policies and environment. Thus, democracy is not the problem of Nigeria; but Nigerians, both leaders and followers are problems to democracy and development.

### **Discussions**

Challenges to a viable democracy and development in Nigeria are similar to those of other African countries. These challenges include lack of civil society involvement, absence of political will, institutional weakness and corruption among others. From our findings in the course of this paper the factors hampering a successful democratization in Nigeria are mainly corruption, malpractices and inadequate professionalism in the Press, weakness of state institutions, electoral malpractices and political intimidations, and weakness of the civil society.

According to Greg Mills, Africa's poverty is not because of a lack of capital, access to world markets, technical experts or the unfair global economic system, it is rather because African leaders have made bad choices that keep the continent in abject poverty (Poncian & Mgya, 2015).

It is revealed from the literature that Nigerian democratic practice is problematic and faulty. It betrays the expectation of the citizens that invested much hope in it for socio-economic and political transformation. It does not work for Nigeria the same way it works for other countries especially the First World's. From which ever perspective development is viewed, economic point of view or more holistic view, the story would not have changed for Nigerians to tell. Observing from Omotola's (2021) previously discussed analysis of indicators of development, education, employment, life expectancy and GDP among others, Nigeria is scored low. This is, in addition to other indicators of underdevelopment – corruption, nepotism, inefficiency, insecurity, ethnicity... in recent times, the disturbing political development in Nigerian democratic experience is trending national insecurity that challenges survival of Nigeria as a sovereign nation.

All this rises concern on the suitability or otherwise of democracy to Nigeria. it is an irony that Nigerians believe that past military regimes were more glorious than civil rule as witnessed from 1999 to date. It is more ironical that Nigerians experience economic hardship despite several windows of empowerment by current administration.

A reflection of the tout theory advanced by Jonah Onuoha (2020), as earlier discussed helps us to see that democracy as a system is not the crux of the matter but the idiosyncratic variables of democratic players (both the leaders and the followers) in Nigeria's political space. In reality, ethos and essentials of model democracy are virtually non-existent down here. Politicians are not restrained by any known democratic principle. Rather, their philosophy on politics is Machiavellian where the ends, justifies the means.

The second theory, the hanging state in Nigeria, vividly exposes the character of the state, the leaders and the commoners. State-economy relation is antagonistic and disarticulated; a classic case of mutual hatred where both sides failed in their responsibility. Nigerian state fails to reckon with its citizens by providing enabling environment where production thrives and citizens in reacting to that care little about what the state does or not as much government revenue is derived from the crude oil royalty typical of a profiteering rental state. Thus, democratic values of accountability and transparency as well as responsiveness are endangered.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations were made to reposition Nigeria for

socio-political and economic development:

- Propping of developmental state. The developmental states are known by emphasizing on technical education and economic nationalism. Emphasis on technical education fosters youth employment. With this, China growing population is being absorbed by domestic and foreign corporation. Developmental state is characterized by development-oriented political leadership bound together by a powerful economic and political ideology focused on development.
- The culture of over-dependence on oil rent for survival is not sustainable, there is serious need for economic diversification and industrialization; this will not only make the country viable but also improve governance as citizens/tax payers will be interesting on how their contribution to national coffer is spent.
- To record meaningful development, politico-economic restructuring is a desideratum. The culture of centrally pooled revenue has made component government to be complacent and indolent by ignoring inward potential to generate revenue for development of their respective states. Fiscal federalism will strengthen democracy and foster accountability, responsibility and development.
- Democratic institutionalization should be focal point of all stakeholders in governments. The implication of this is independent judiciary and electoral body, legislative functionality, press freedom... To achieve this requires a strong, capable and committed leadership that will preside over the constitutional engineering, if need be, to this regard.

### **Conclusion**

This paper explored synergy between democracy and development in Nigeria. It is established that Nigeria is underdeveloped notwithstanding its democratic claims. All indicators of good governance are abysmally negative, which is a striking revelation that democracy is not equal to development and Nigeria's democracy is highly deficient. China, Russia and other remnants of former USSR have significant record of economic development in spite of their abuse of democratic fundamentals. Also, there is possibility of bad governance in a formal democratic structure. The paper concludes that, democratic practice has not lived up to the expectation of the masses. It has not resolved development crisis in Nigeria, nay, it is a tortuous experience with unsettling challenges. Democracy is not an end in its self, but a means to an end. Nigeria's inglorious economic status is a political problem that involved both leaders and followers for their inability to foster a system that engenders development, being it democracy or non-democratic.

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