

Electoral Democracy and Democratic Development: Relevance of the Post 2019 General Election for National Development in Nigeria

Mahmudat Olawunmi Muhibbu-Din

Department of Political Science, University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria
Telephone: 08054317471, E-mail: ajoocurrent@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT Multiparty elections and periodic voting are not in themselves the ultimate end of democracy. As important elements of liberal democracy, they are inadequate in generating democratic development or fostering a developmental state in Nigeria. Hence, this paper examines the relevance of multiparty elections and voting for engendering democratic development; the implications of liberal democracy for policy ownership and developmental state that prioritise people's empowerment. The method of data collection is secondary and the analytical technique is comparative. The findings show that structural reforms that do not respond to the logic of international financial agencies and the vested local elites interests; and that fully democratise power for national transformation are genuine requirements for democratic development that people long for as dividends of democracy and essential for democratic consolidation. Thus, the paper recommends human empowerment, liberation from injustice, inequality, and marginalisation will be the dividends of democratic development to the masses and peasants.

INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, Nigeria has experienced a smooth transfer of power from one democratic government to another. In essence, Nigeria has operated under uninterrupted democratic governance since the transfer of power from the military to the civilian regimes in 1999. Nonetheless, the 2015 general election was a watershed in the political history of the country as the country not only witnessed a smooth transfer of power from one democratic government to another but from the dominant ruling party to the main opposition party. Though, the country score on democracy index has been low from various international institutions, liberal (electoral) democracy experiments have not translated into national or democratic development that guaranteed improved socio-economic wellbeing and welfare for the citizenry. A narrow and limited conception of democratic practices of a nation based on international organisations ratings, centred mainly on political and civil liberty as criteria have been inconsequential for true empowerment of the masses and peasant in society (EIU 2017; Freedom House 2017). Despite a more rigorous rating, more countries dropped in their rating as electoral democracies from 2016 under 2017 criteria (Abramowitz and Repucci 2018: 129). Nonetheless, rating as

electoral democracy is insufficient in consolidating democracy as the probability of democratic breakdown or erosion are palpable. Also, the chances of enhancing the gains from liberal and electoral democracy towards democratic completion and deepening democracy are fraught with lapses (Aremu and Omotola 2007; Omotola 2009; Agbaje and Adejumo 2006; Agbaje 2018). More importantly, the inadequacies of liberal democracy in translating into popular empowerment and social transformation are substantial. The nature and character of the Nigerian state is a major impediment to the relevance of democracy to common people and national development.

Transition to democracy and the institution of formal democratisation have failed to guarantee popular participation, nor improve socio-economic wellbeing because third world democracies are more responsive to external constituencies of IMF, donors than the local people who voted them in power. Social reforms are jettisoned for the externally imposed austerity measures with severe impact on the populace (Gills and Rocamora 1992: 501). Thus political reform without social reforms undermines democracy. As mere electoral democratisation or formal democracy exacerbate economic inequality and that aggravates unequal distribution of power (Gills and Rocamora 1992: 502). In addition, democratisation offers

justificatory ideology for fervent marketization, anti-statism and rationalisation of social inequalities (Amin 1993: 83; Gill and Rocamora 1992: 503).

Consequently, the bourgeoisie class/ political elites have benefitted immensely from the current power configuration of the postcolonial Nigerian state over the masses. Thus, the struggle for democratic governance that transforms the state and impact positively on the quality of lives and livelihood is a struggle between the dominant bourgeoisie class/ political elites and the masses/peasant that are victims of the deprivation, oppression, inequality, injustice, discrimination and marginalisation.

The paper examines the relevance of multi-party elections and voting for engendering democratic development; the role of liberal democracy producing an optimal result for policy ownership and developmental state that prioritise people's empowerment; what is the place of the people in shaping the goals, means and end of development and the implications for the feasibility of democratic developmental state.

Subsequent sections of the paper examine electoral democracy or liberal democracy; democratic good governance, and the Nigerian experience; the next investigate democratic development and a final section offers a conclusion.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Existing studies show that developmental state are the product of conscious efforts of national politico-bureaucratic elites to ensure national economic and social prosperity. This is undergirded by a strong state, a political will and 'competitive bureaucracy' for development. The Nigerian state has strongly followed the neoliberal dosage in economic policies. The country has made an uninterrupted transition to democracy in the last two decades. However, its performance record shows abysmal governance. In order to continue to scurry the favour of international financial institutions, the country's political reforms utterly neglected social reform. The *raison d'être* of political reforms for the masses. Thus, democracy has limited positive impact on the people beyond voting at elections. The electoral process is massively fraught with fraud that it has been described as 'voting without choice' (Agbaje and Adejumbi 2006).

Rising insecurity, lack or low pace of development effort and repeated election violence in every election period have been the hallmark of the elections and democratic experiment in Nigeria. Numerous studies have raised the issue of democratic inclusion and material wellbeing of the populace to make elections relevant to people's needs, aspiration and development. This study points out that electoral democracy or liberal democracy will not yield nor guarantee economic development. A conscious and deliberate effort of the state must be directed to prioritized national social and economic goals, over the private economic interests (local or foreign), and the market. All other interests must be subsumed or subordinated to the national interests engineered by development-oriented elites alongside competent bureaucratic officials that are relatively incorrupt to foster democratic developmental state. Such strong state coupled with strong political will and effective bureaucracy served by powerful bureaucratic elites has led developmental state elsewhere.

Electoral Democracy or Liberal Democracy

Electoralism implies elections are held under restricted/ tight political atmosphere that limits the participation of opponents, constrain effective citizens' inclusion and the dominant few make policies between elections intervals (Schmitter and Karl 1991: 78). Schmitter and Karl consider this a fallacy and not a democracy. 'Low-intensity democracy' may have fair, competitive, open elections, genuine power for elected officials, but lacks accountability, responsiveness, and institutional balance and effectiveness between elections (Diamond et al. 1995). In electoral democracy, the criteria for identifying democracies are largely confined to civil, political rights, in addition to fair, competitive elections. According to Dahl, these are 'polyarchies' popularly defined as liberal democracies (Schedler 1998: 92). Electoral democracies that allow fair competitive elections without corresponding political and civil liberties essential for liberal democracy are minimalist in the democratic form (Schedler 1998: 93).

On the spectrum of democratisation, a nation's level of democracy is measured in term of its progress or recession from democratic consolidation. Countries that decline from electoral de-

mocracy to authoritarianism fear democratic erosion or authoritarian regression. Countries that aspire from electoral democracy to liberal democracy are on the path of democratic completion in consolidating democracy. Countries' deepening democracy is moving from electoral democracy or liberal democracy to advanced democracy. But a country that reversed from liberal democracy to electoral democracy grapple with democratic erosion on its path to democratic consolidation (Schedler 1998: 94). As nations progress on the path of democratic consolidation, from authoritarianism to advance democracy, or regress from liberal democracy to electoral democracy, far less attention has been paid to the relevance of democracy to the socio-economic concerns of the masses and the peasant in society. The democratic tenets, its deepening or completeness exclude basic social and economic rights justiciable in a law court that make democracy relevant to human welfare and wellbeing. "The political context and rights which democracy provides are ends in themselves, which make for human happiness in society. The rights to free speech, association etc., are quite crucial to man and may not necessarily lead to material betterment" (Adejumobi 2000: 5). Thus, multiparty competition or electoral democracy protect the nation from a despotic rule and provides a peaceful transfer of power. But offer no guarantee for social justice (Abrahamsen 2000: xiii). Democracy must transcend civil and political rights but must entrench economic and social rights. The separation of economic and social rights from the meaning of democracy legitimizes the prevailing power relations of elite supremacy and the perpetuation of suffering and deprivation of the masses (Abrahamsen 2000: xiii). This results from the promotion of democracy and economic liberalism simultaneously that permits a very limited opportunity for transforming the dominant social order to a just and equitable society (Abrahamsen 2000: xiv). In a developing democracy like Nigeria, the centrality of the state, its institution, the power of incumbency in dominating the electoral process are such that elections offer a choiceless occasion and exclude all chances of effective political participation (Obi 2008: 10). Abrahamsen (2000: 68) claims that "electoral democracy, while valuable, contains substantial limitations in terms of its ability to address issues of social justice in

highly unequal societies..." Democracy must transcend the political rights to embody socio-economic rights. This is not the primary concern of donors who continued to harp on economic liberalisation. The good governance framework and democratisation literature support liberal democracy over alternative conceptions that are pro-poor. This authorized the prevailing social order that disregards the widespread suffering and impoverishment of the masses (Abrahamsen 2000: 68).

The dominant Weber and Schumpeter conception of democracy as multiparty competition and election produces democratic elitism. This renders election as the basis of selecting legitimate political leaders but underplays the influence of people in decisions that affects them. Democratic participation is relegated in the contemporary democratic experience (Abrahamsen 2000: 72). Thus, democracy offers a condition for equality at voting but not in all spheres of life. It has the potential of guaranteeing political equality at voting. This is not beyond the selection of political leaders. Thus addressing equality holistically is dependent on the determination of political leaders to eliminate or reduce it (Bermoe 2009: 23). It is a two-way mechanism. As political leaders are held accountable by citizens, the political leaders and citizens collective actions are required (ibid). Economic inequality has grave consequences for democracy, results in loss of confidence and increased preference for an authoritarian rule (Bermoe 2009: 25). Economic inequality is not a sufficient condition for democratic breakdown and the association or link between the two is not linear (Bermoe 2009: 29). Evidence suggests a strong link between economic development and democratic consolidation. Similarly, poverty reduction is another area where democratic states have imparted positively (Bermoe 2009: 30).

Nonetheless, poverty reduction and increase in human development indicators may be unrelated to democracy. Democracy has been threatened more by deprivation of basic needs. Economic inequality poses a less existential threat to democratic survival than the interaction between rising poverty and growth (Bermoe 2009: 31).

Joseph (2003: 160) argues, "electoralism has come to consume democratic efforts to the detriment of broader and more systematic transformation". Thus the 'scramble for state power and

resources' that passes for elections undermines the state viability and relevance. Electoral democracy that ends at voting at elections or pluralism merely certify political liberalism, but undercuts true democracy. This negates conception of democracy as a "mode of decision-making about collectively binding rules and policies over which people exercise control and most democratic arrangement to be that where all members of the collectivity enjoy effective equal rights to take part in such decision-making directly". The underlying logic is "popular control and equality in its exercise" (Beetham 1993: 55). Nonetheless, the idea of popular participation, or voting that underpins electoral democracy, though necessary for creating a legitimate government, has been found to be less important in generating political legitimacy (Rothstein 2009). The government earns legitimacy not because it emerges through electoral democracy but from the quality of government, and operates on the principle of neutrality (Rothstein 2009: 313). Despite its acceptability as the basis for political authority, electoral democracy has increasingly generated less confidence or trust in advancing popular will even in developed democracies (Rothstein 2009: 317).

Democratic Good Governance

The 1989 World Bank report on Africa popularised the concept of good governance. The report claims that the crisis of governance underpins the problems in Africa. On the one hand, good governance means efficient administrative and managerial techniques. On the other hand, it emphasises competitive democracy and efficiency (Leftwich 1993: 606, 1994). To the World Bank, good governance means

efficient public service; an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts; the accountable administration of public funds; Independence public auditor, responsible to a representative legislature; respect for the law and human rights at all levels of government; pluralistic institutional structure, and a free press (Leftwich 1993: 610).

The Bank emphasis legalistic, formal, technical concept of governance in addition to economic liberalization. Good governance framework highlights the elimination of *corruption* through deepening *accountability*, public debate, free

press grassroots organisations and non-governmental organisations (World Bank 1989 cited in Agabje 2018: 21).

The Bank 1992 report clarified governance as "the way power exercise in the management of economic and social resources of a country for development". Good governance becomes synonymous with development management built on four pillars: public sector management, accountability, and legal framework for development, information and transparency (Agabje 2018: 21). The Bank advances a narrow administrative perspective. Good governance is efficient public service, bureaucratic competence that designs and implements appropriate policies, manages the public sector. Independent judiciary, in order to ensure the rule of law and settles disputes resulting from a free-market economy (Leftwich 1993: 611).

The World Bank 1994 report, reiterates good governance as a condition for sustainable economic development. The Bank good governance framework connects only to economic development. World Bank conception of good governance is economic, formal and technical. It loses sight of a holistic consideration of governance in society (Agabje 2018: 22).

The good governance agenda was a power relation strategy that undergirds northern hegemony over the south in the aftermath of the cold war. Development crisis was explained in terms of the absence of good governance in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the Bank recommended political reforms in the 1990s. Good governance is a strategy of endorsing a particular type of democratic forms and jettisoning alternatives (Abrahamsen 2001). Critical to the analysis of governance and development crisis is the profound influence of the neoliberal structural adjustment policies introduced in African countries and have devastating consequences on the lives and living conditions of the people.

The World Bank criticises state-led development as misconceived yet legitimises the state-led implementation of the structural adjustment programmes. Contraction of the state/destatisation was presented as necessary for democratisation and a parameter for good governance (Abrahamsen 2000: 50-51). The link between democratisation and economic liberalism is that one is impossible without the other and centres

on the idea that “economic liberalisation is expected to decentralise decision making away from the state and multiply the centres of power” (Abrahamsen 2000: 51). Democracy protects rights and is conducive to economic growth. This is an essential condition for sustainable development and growth. Benefits of economic reform materialise where there is political reform (World Bank 1989: 60, 192 in Abrahamsen 2000: 51).

Thus, good governance equals democracy and economic liberalism; bad governance means state intervention (Abrahamsen 2000: 51). “Governance means competent and accountable government ‘dedicated to liberal economic policies’” (Landdell-Mills and Serageldin 1991: 307 in Abrahamsen 2000: 51-52). Governance implies both economic liberalism and democracy. Inherent tension is inevitable in the fusion of these concepts. Economic liberalism generates economic inequalities with a devastating effect on political inequality and democratic politics (Abrahamsen 2000: 52). “This is, of course, an inherently undemocratic stipulation, in that it attempts to restrict the scope of political choice. It entails, in short, an *a priori* determination of economic model and a relegation of constituents’ preferences to second-order importance” (Abrahamsen 2000: 52). Good governance agenda is projected as a discourse that prioritises the interest of ‘ordinary people’ and claims to ‘empower’ them to resist the imposed and oppressive state (World Bank 1989: 54 in Abrahamsen 2000: 52). However, it is a euphemism for the dictatorship of development institutions that disregard the electorate choice of economic models as well as their wellbeing in favour of capitalist economic liberalisation that destroys the essence of political equality (Abrahamsen 2000: 51-52).

Abrahamsen (2000: 112) argues that adjustment policies abrogate the essence of democratisation. It procures international support for political actors but erodes their domestic legitimacy. Adjustment policies straiten socio-economic conditions that resort to social unrest, chaos and disorder. To curtail widespread social disorder, countries reverted to dictatorship or one-party rule to clamp down on opposition. Thus, formal institutions of democracy exists but the civil and political rights were grossly eroded (Abrahamsen 2000: 112-113). Democracy becomes a process of legitimising the imposition of economic adjust-

ment policies that increase hardships on the populace and abnegate economic sovereignty through the pervasive dominance of transnational capital (Gills and Rocamora 1992: 505-506; Chossudovsky 2003: 19). The adverse effects of the IMF policies were social and economic lives ruined, widening inequality and social instability and massive transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich within and between the south and the rich in the north (Gills and Rocamora 1992: 506). In effect, the IMF and the Bank structural adjustment policies have inflicted suffering and economic deprivation and social instability endangering pluralism (Abrahamsen 2000: 113; Gills and Rocamora 1992: 507). The SAP requires internal security and coercive force for political repression in alliance with developing countries elites to foist economic repression (Chossudovsky 2003: 19).

Democracy is confined to the political domain of voting and the economic sphere is relinquished to private sector ownership and competition. The adverse effect of neoliberal capitalism is pervasive inequalities and economic alienation (Amin 1993: 87). This eliminates the possibility of social reforms for more equitable distribution of wealth. Good governance agenda subordinate the interests of the masses to that of capital. Governance transcends the loci of authority and decision making; to entail “a looser and wider distribution of both internal and external political and economic power” the crux of which is political and economic relationship governing the production and distribution in a system (Leftwich 1993: 611). This emphasises the relevance of politics for guiding economic relationships. Leftwich notes good governance equates a system of ‘democratic capitalist regime’, where the state plays the role of a watchdog, this part of the governance under the New World Order.

Democracy: The Nigerian Experience

The historical struggle for democracy in Nigeria was led by all social classes against oppression, injustice, domination, marginalisation and loss of fundamental rights and freedom under colonial rule. The prevailing democratic practice perpetuates the colonial state formation and has little or no benefit beyond political and civil rights

in the contemporary democratic lexicon. This stymied the struggle of the peasants and masses against oppression and domination. The political elite or bourgeoisie that took the mantle of power sustain the colonial imperial structure and further perpetuate the structural constraints of the colonial economy in serving the interests of metropolitan capital as well as the few elites that dominate the state. The state remains 'unliberated' even though it gained political independence from colonialism but remained the very object of domination and oppression of the citizens that it claims to rule over.

This resonates Ake's (1993: 240) perspectives that African leaders conceive democratisation as "a strategy for power, not a vehicle for popular empowerment". The democratic practice undermines political equality whereby the political elites upturned the sovereign will of the people or merely granted political equality, or allow a limited conception of democracy as elections, or multiparty pluralism. This conflicts with the ideals of social democracy that guarantees equality of economic opportunity, access and genuine development. This is a fundamental objective of the democratisation project in Africa (Ake 1993: 240). While African countries have made progress on formal democracy, little or limited gains have been made on substantive democracy (Osaghe 1999: 10).

In Nnoli's view (2011: 14), the fact that democracy places people at the centre of its conceptualisation/theory does not mean people are equal, homogenised collectives /entity that can exercise power or influence politics on an equal basis. This explains the disequilibrium in the distribution of power between the elites and the masses. The political power equation becomes so imbalanced and dominated by the power elites/petty bourgeoisie that is used to oppress the masses in society (Ake 1994: 13). Ake (1994: 13) argues "it is this power structure which makes political competition in Africa notoriously intense as political competition adjusts to a situation in which there is no rule of law, no security and no defence against those who exercise state power." The character of African states is ill-equipped for the democratic form of governance.

The colonial state considered the indigenous people as subjects with no right to citizenship. The postcolonial state besides granting few political and civil rights in entrenching democratic

form of governance, the interests, yearnings and aspirations of the citizenry and their legitimate claims over the operation of the state diminish. This results from the nature and character of the dominant bourgeoisie class dependence on the capitalist relations of production, as well as the state for accumulation (Ake 1976: 3; Joseph 1978; Sklar 1979: 6-7; Ihonvbere 2001: 4). The political elites captured state power as a means of access to and control over state resources to improve their weak material base. The people were never the focal point of governance.

The narrow interests of the dominant elites override the interests of the masses and the vulnerable in society. At independence, the increasing oil wealth was neither used for long term investment nor was the diversification of the economy a national priority. Huge oil wealth diverted attention away from agriculture, the mainstay of the Nigerian economy before the discovery of oil in commercial quantities. This amounted to chronic neglect of agriculture and its strategic importance in national development. Vagaries of the international market and dwindling oil revenue in the face of declining oil income and unsustainable wasteful spending of the elites, the country was in recession as early as the late 1970s. The option of economic adjustment was inevitable and the imperative to reduce the consumption spree and diversify the sources of national wealth (William 1980; Osaghe 2015). The insignificant success recorded in economic diversification, the lack of political will, high level of consumption and rising import had a toll on foreign exchange and the depreciation of the naira. Loss of economic productivity, rising unemployment and dependence on imports aggravates the distortions and disarticulation of the Nigerian economy (Ake 1981).

Under the military regime of Ibrahim Babangida, the country adopted the Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) in 1986. The accompanying economic hardship, unemployment and socio-economic dislocation inflicted unprecedented sufferings on the Nigerian people. Similar experience under adjustment policies intensifies the clamour for democratisation in the continent. Ake (1993: 241) argues that the quest for democracy in Africa emanates from widespread unfavourable economic realities. Thus, African democracy must move beyond political rights to emphasise

economic rights. Political empowerment is inextricably linked to economic empowerment that metamorphoses to equitable development for all (Ake 1993: 241).

The people are the drivers of growth and sustainable development. This reinforces the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation.

Since, the country return to democratic rule in 1999, confronted with inherited decadence over the years, little gains at transforming the state structure for autonomy and its relevance to the masses/ peasant for democratic development have been achieved. Political elite obsesses with power and primitive accumulation, tinker with development. Enmeshed in prebendal politics, and using state resources for personal gains (Joseph 2003), which manifests in excessive politicisation of national transformation agenda. The dominant class perpetuate illegitimacy, repression and oppression through the following: The overdeveloped character of the African state and the fragile moral and popular support base of the political elites exacerbate violent zero-sum political competition for state power (Ake 1976; Jinadu 2008: 10-11).

The form democracy assumes is largely dependent on socioeconomic development, state structures and policy practices. However, accountability of rulers to the rule on whose behalf ruler exercise authority and power have taken a central place in definition (Schmitter and Karl 1991: 76). Politics of accommodation of different factions of the elites prevails, and where the less dominant faction of the elite are excluded from power, there is agitation, cries of marginalisation and legitimisation. Because of the high premium on power, violence and volatility are the means of politics. Consequently, no institutionalised political order, the political class lacks hegemony, unable to crystalize into a class independent of primitive accumulation (Ake 2000: 115-116).

In reality, democracy is a form of political schema that tolerate choosing representatives in government which facilitates different factions of elite class accommodation (Nnoli 2011: ix). Where the interest of the dominant factions of the ruling class is unmet for access to power, vested interests within the party can result in a gale of defection. Such parochial individual vested interests are above party interests. As much as the party

cannot be warped to serve personal interest of a segment of its members, what results is party switching, shifting coalitions and realignments. In 2018, Nigeria witnessed such gale of defection in the National Assembly when the majority All Progressive Congress (APC) legislators defected to their former Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Such defection is neither issued-based nor beneficial to masses.

Democracy is a struggle or contest between the pro and anti-democratic forces. Consequently, it is not a given but a product of power struggle between two opposing forces. The outcome varies in content and form depending on the side of the pendulum. This shapes the nature and character of democracy that prevails. Thus, there is a struggle between bourgeoisie (elite) type of democracy, which emphasises equality in political terms, and social (peoples) type of democracy, that underscores not just political equality, but also economic and social rights and redistributes wealth to all citizenry (Nnoli 2011: 4-6). The two kinds of democracy are irreconcilable.

.... Any attempt to confine the process of democratic aspirations of the masses who want material betterment, equal opportunity and cultural upliftment, and concrete rights. At the same time, any attempt to move beyond multiparty elections to social democracy will be resisted by the bourgeoisie who see multi-party electoral democracy as merely a strategy of power (Ake 2000: 136-137).

The conflict between the masses and peasant brand of democracy and elites/ bourgeoisie strand of democracy will shape the feasibility of democracy in Africa, and Nigeria in particular.

Though scholars argue that neither liberal democracy nor social democracy is inherently more democratic than the other, both have the danger of risking democracy if carried to the extreme. Liberal democracy will undermine the collective needs and legitimacy; social democracy will destroy individual choices, inclinations, and is controlling (Schmitter and Karl 1991: 77). However, the historical context of democracy in Nigeria requires a social democracy that emphasises liberty in social, political and economic rights and guarantees democratic development in the interest of all.

Nigerian democratic trajectory is wavering from electoral democracy towards liberal democra-

cy. However, anti-democratic forces that challenge not just the legitimacy of the state from the margins, as well as bourgeoisie or elite politics capable of undermining the rule of law are symptoms of democratic erosion. Democratic erosion implies a decline or fall on the spectrum of democratization, and the unlikelihood or feasibility of democratic consolidation. Democratic erosions manifest in “attack on institutional pillars of democracy. ...state violence and state weakness may subvert the rule of law; the rise of hegemonic parties that suffocate electoral competition; decay of electoral institutions may affect the honesty of vote counting” (Schedler 1998: 96-98). Developing countries democracy show, “democracy have been created in the context of state whose presence is partial and precarious (in both territorial and social terms) and with judicial systems in place that often cannot do much more than administer the rule of lawlessness” (Schedler 1998: 99).

The vote and the voting process are key in institutionalising a democratic government. However, elections have proved insufficient in enthroning the sovereign will of the people. The powerful elites can manipulate the electoral process and the institutions to favour a candidate of the incumbent (Osaghe 1999; Agbaje and Adejumo 2006; Obi 2008). Two limited conceptions of democratisation express the idea that one, “democratisation begins with the exit of an authoritarian regime and ends after competitive elections have given rise to two successive peaceful transfers of government between contending parties”. The other view posits that “democratisation is complete when all significant political actors accept that the electoral process has become “the only game in town for allocating public office” (Whitehead 2002: 26-27). Neither is the peaceful transfer of power from one democratic regime to another nor conduct of elections sufficient for democratisation. It simply meets the criteria of liberal democracy for multipartyism.

Liberal democracy movement favours the few local and international community interest supportive of pluralism but erodes the interests of the masses and peasants. It gives the impression of empowering people without economic power transferred to the ordinary people but serves transnational capital interest (Muhibbu-Din 2018: 124). It facilitates political liberalisation that creates an environment conducive for foreign investment

(Thomas 2001: 44). Thus, “Liberal democracy constitute the political and institutional infrastructure for a free market society” (Adejumobi 2011: 2). Genuine democratisation emphasises opening the political space for democratic inclusion but also demands a rights-based approach to democracy, empowerment and upliftment in social conditions.

Democratization requires a social transformation of the character of the postcolonial state. The character of the state as it presently constituted coexists with political repression that reinforces it (Ake 2000: 160). The limited conception of democracy as a multi-party election cannot produce democracy, “because elections will be choice between oppressors” (Ake 2000: 160). The present state nature and character is autocratic and cannot be democratic without its social transformation regardless of who is running the state. Political class, those in power and out of power and demanding democratisation are not interested in transforming the autocratic postcolonial state. “Those in power are quite happy to leave the state as it is because they exercise its powers; those in opposition worry about being victims of this power, but this is mediated by their hope of capturing it” (Ake 2000: 160). By extension, electorates are powerless in shaping the policy options of the party voted into power. International agencies determine policy directions. This essentially subverts popular will for externally foisted economic dictates (Obi 2008: 10). Democracy merely offers the prospect of capturing state power for the self-aggrandisement of the elites. The campaign rhetoric of restructuring is readily saleable campaign issue capitalising on the groundswell of popular demand for it.

The prevailing poverty level in Africa shows that democratic institutions are less germane to the poor engrossed in the daily struggle for survival. The language of politics and institutions are both alien and ensures de-participation. The institutions of democracy like the judicial system are costly that exclude the poor from accessing it. These are obstacles to democratisation and not tabled as a priority for good governance. These limitations to democratisation “are constantly reproduced and with their reproduction disempowerment is perpetuated” (Ake 1994: 14).

The place of citizens in a democratic government is what determines the level of democracy.

Democratisation involves and engages the people as the focus of democracy where the development process is people-centred, the people are the means and end of development. The institutions serve ordinary people and are easily accessible and affordable to them. The language of politics and the institutions of democracy are not the type that alienates but integrate and facilitate popular participation beyond voting at election.

Ake (1993: 239-244) advocates Africa democracy congenial with African socio-cultural realities, communal and primordial association, that prioritize collective interests over western-style individualism and rights; build on African popular participation through both economic and political empowerment as well as indigenous people participation in development that responds to African needs and aspirations.

Democratic Development: The Meaning and Implications

Electoral democracy stipulates political pluralism and free and fair elections as indicators of good governance and important elements of democracy. No important attention has been paid to the quantitative and qualitative dimension of human wellbeing and general welfare of the people (Thomas 1999; 2001). A minimalist conception of democracy as multiparty elections, pluralism expand the political space to legitimise political authority, while economic sovereignty is controlled by external development institutions. In such a context, the essence of democratic development, empowerment and liberation and emancipation of the downtrodden and the lower classes in society evaporate. Democracy is reduced to sanctify and guarantee access to power by the elites, and never centred on the *demos* (the people) nor served the interest of the demo. The central place of the demos in the exercise of *kratia*-sovereignty underpins Abraham Lincoln's definition of the government of the people, by the people and for the people (Euben 1993: 478).

Democratic development centres on building capable state provide socio-economic development and expand democratic governance simultaneously (Joseph 2003: 165). The author expresses the essence of democratic governance thus:

Democratic development in Africa requires much more than the capacity to use state re-

sources to generate greater electoral pluralities. To regain its pertinence and vitality, democratic practice in Africa must retrieve the capacity to serve the peoples in whose name it is pursued: specifically the poor, women, HIV sufferers, the jobless, youth—all les damnés de la terre who constitute an ever-widening pool of recruits for drug smugglers, diamond traders, gun runners, suppliers of prostitutes for overseas markets, quick-rich artists, fundamentalist preachers, and terrorist networks. These social groups must acquire stakes in the new democratic systems. For democracy is not, after all, just about periodic voting—or even participation, minimally conceived—but ultimately about the “kratia (power, rule, mastery) by the demos (Joseph 2003: 165-166).

The enthronement of liberal values of rule of law, civil liberties, individualism and elections as necessary political conditions for fetching/attracting international aids, trade concession, from international financial institutions (IFIs) obliterate the ideals of the democratic form of governance and the people as the ends of development. Democratic development is not dependent on exogenous policy prescriptions. Democratic development is not teleological, but promote local values and progress that is not injurious to people's worldview or culture (Ake 2000: 87-88). The people are the agents, the means and ends of development. People as agents of development means people decide development ideology, values and control public policy, participatory and the basis for social transformation (Ake 2000: 87). People as a mean of development direct their energy and resourcefulness to propel development and emphasises self-reliance. People as the end of development prioritise their interests and wellbeing- the underlying goal of development (Ake 2000: 87). Undemocratic development alienates the people, consider people's culture as retrogressive, pauperised the people and insensitive to the social condition of the people. It excludes the people as agents, means and ends of development (Ake 2000: 87). "...when the people rather than the process of development are problematized, development is derailed and becomes an exercise in alienation" (Ake 2000: 87).

Democratic development has local ownership, response to needs of people, endogenous and self-reliant. The process can be expanded through

foreign loans, foreign technology, foreign investment and foreign trade. Democratic development depends on the domestic market, integrates agriculture into industry, urban and rural, and promotes internal balance and auto-centrism (Ake 2000: 90-91). Democratic development does not link weak capitalist accumulation, lack of industrialisation to cultural or primordial attachments (Bayart 1993; Hyden 1983: 21). It not the teleological or stereotypic view of development. It centres on discipline, political attitude and willingness of the elites to propel/energise sustainable national development.

The IFIs solution to African crisis prescribed policies that 'maladjusted' African economies and amounted to the loss of 'policy ownership'. Democratic development locates the local capacity for constructing a strong state through the conscientious efforts of the elites, improving local capacity, directing local resources and energies in creating and inventing a desirable outcome for socio-economic development (Mkandawire 2001).

This entails the political leaders' democratisation in thought and actions to effectively run democratic institutions in the interest of the masses. The undemocratic nature and character of the political elites underpin the perennial failure of democratic institutions - legislature, political parties, executives, the judiciary *must* be effectively democratised (Omoweh 2008: 14). These institutions are flawed for effective democratisation but stifled to advance the interest of the few power holders.

Since the return to democratic governance in Nigeria, the democratic gains are limited essentially to voting, voting process, usually marred with widespread electoral flaws admitted by the political class. The cost of getting involved as a candidate is so high and only affordable for old brigade politicians, businessmen, moguls or their associates. The Not too Young to run bill is impaired by the excessive cost of procuring nomination forms, excruciating demands of creating effective political party structures in at least two-thirds of the states of the federation, and competing with dominant factions of the ruling class and their well-established political party structures that enjoy greater access to state power, institutions and resources.

Although the country sustained democratic experiment in the last two decades, the dividends

of democratic development are severely limited, constrained and neither emancipatory nor transformative. Freedom of information bill merely passed with no apparent impact in the practice of politics, no transparency or accountability is guaranteed. Its essence may be jeopardized to render it meaningless to democratic reforms. The judicial system is so expensive and inaccessible and *never* the hope of the masses/poor man but the very means of protecting 'the few' who can afford the exorbitant cost, and guarantee the rule of lawlessness. Nigeria Corruption Perception Index (CPI) growth was 15.7 percent above West Africa sub-regional average of 12.6 percent (UNCTAD 2017: 89). The fight on corruption sustained though still fraught with lapses is yet to build the confidence of the populace in the system. Poor governance in Nigerian politics results in loss of confidence in the political system altogether.

The health sector remains below international standard. In a recent study on global Healthcare Access and Quality Index conducted among 195 countries, Nigeria ranked 140th position far below many African countries (The Guardian 2019). The political class do not have enough confidence in the health system even though the fact that the country is endowed with some of the best medical experts in the world. What results is brain-drain of the medical personnel on the part of doctors and other health personnel, and medical tourism by the political class and few privileged class and the impoverished masses have to face what *they* must. Ake (1966: 6) claims

This type of democracy is not in the least emancipatory especially in African condition because it offers the people rights they cannot exercise, voting that never amounts to choosing, patently spurious, and political equality which distinguishes highly unequal power relations.

The ongoing state intervention in agriculture by providing loans to farmers to boost agricultural production under the Central Bank Anchors Borrowers programme requires effective state management to yield desired diversification of the economy. It is equally important that the privileged elites do not hijack the project or end up appropriating peasant surplus. If properly managed, it has the potential to expand agricultural productivity and stimulate rural development. Effective government strategy can expand the

anchor borrowers' initiative in rice production to other agricultural produce. Agricultural development can go concurrently with rural industrialisation engendering rural development. A strong and effective state that target democratic development can successfully manage the process.

The strong authoritarian state was behind the sterling economic growth of China, the Four Asian Tigers (Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea). In the Newly Industrialising Countries of India, Malaysia, Thailand, the state continued to play a strong role in development and growth (Leftwich 1993; 1994; 1995). Regardless of the political regime, more important to economic development is the nature of the state. Important is a developmental state that is 'developmental democracy' or democratic development that prioritises human empowerment and welfare (Adejumobi 2000: 6). The provision and enforcement of social and economic rights have the potential of reducing social inequalities, address most roots of political tension and conflicts and create a conducive climate for democratic consolidation. It is the path of democratic development.

For the state to be relevant for national development, it requires reforms that are contrary to 'maladjusted' state under IFIs guidance to a developmental state that is nationalist, prioritise development, encourage capital accumulation and industrialisation and holds citizens social welfare essential. Economic policies are directed at solving domestic economic problems and numerous challenges of economic insecurity. The state is relatively autonomous and enjoy legitimacy and can foster democratic development. Structural reforms must centre on economic growth, human development and income redistribution, and stimulate local initiative, ownership and management (Adejumobi 2000: 10-12). External support can be in the area of capacity building, effective utilisation of existing capacity in addition to administrative, technical, political and institutional capacity building (Adejumobi 2000: 12; Mkandawire 2001: 290).

CONCLUSION

As important as multiparty elections and voting are to democracy and democratic consolidation, the essence of democracy as a system of governance goes beyond voting in a competitive

election. A strong state capable of redistribution of wealth, reducing social inequalities, ensuring empowerment and wellbeing of its citizens must be the outcome of good governance and democratic development. Electoral democracy is not an automatic ticket to economic progress or material sufficiency of the populace. The democratic practice that centralises the role of the people as drivers of development and the end of development will influence democratic development and important for democratic consolidation. Democratic development will guarantee fairness and equity in resource and power distribution, inclusive and facilitate empowerment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The essence of a strong state and development-oriented elites that are nationalistic and patriotic cannot be underestimated in driving national development. The role of the unelected and imposed international financial institutions and their policy prescriptions must not be allowed to subvert the economic sovereignty of the people in the name of policy guidance. Suicidal policy suggestions from IFIs do not underpin development in developmental states where states have recorded sterling growth and unprecedented height in economic prosperity. National elites that are committed and sincere have played important roles in shaping and driving development. The important element of discipline cannot be taken for granted for genuine transformation. This translates into effective and efficient management of national resources, both human and material as well as the attraction of available talent in the diaspora for national transformation.

Fight against corruption must be intensified and culprits brought to book for effective management of national resources and wealth for growth. Peasants and masses interests, aspirations needs must be prioritised for inclusive as well as democratic development. Agricultural development that stimulates rural industrialisation can kick-start national development. Discovery and harnessing local capacities and potentials for development is crucial. This can be expanded and enhanced through foreign investors, foreign aids and foreign assistance. Political elites must build on the local capacity for productivity and growth. China started with the agricultural revo-

lution and embarked on capitalist reform in the late 1970s. Nigeria must have its blueprint for national development driven by national resources and capacity for self-reliance and people-driven development. This will make electoral democracy or liberal democracy relevant to African social realities and her need for social transformation in the age of the fourth industrial revolution.

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