

Trajectory of Democracy, Rule of Law and National Development in Nigeria; an Overview of the Muhammadu Buhari Administration 2015 to 2019

Eneasato Benjamin Onyekachi and Okibe Banko Hyginus

Department of Political Science Enugu State University of Science and Technology Nigeria.

Email: Benjamin.eneasato@esut.edu.ng, Hyginus.banko@esut.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The study explored the trajectory of democracy, rule of law and national development in Nigeria; an overview of the Muhammadu Buhari Administration 2015 to 2019. The study addressed three objectives relying on extensive literature review. The methodology is both descriptive and analytical. The study argued that sustained poor political leadership has dealt serious blow on the survival of democracy as well as stifled national development in Nigeria especially under the present dispensation of President Muhammadu Buhari administration. The absence of good governance explained in terms of defective constitutional arrangement, resulting in persistent government disregards for rule of law, disrespect for orders of court, human right abuses via executive lawlessness, corruption, economic mismanagement, fraudulent electoral system, muzzling and emasculation of the opposition using government agencies like the EFCC, DSS and the police and lack of accountability and transparency are the major impediments to democratic consolidation in Nigeria today. The study suggests that there is urgent need for conscious efforts to improve the rule of law by strengthening the capacity and transparency of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to function without undue executive interference and to uphold rule of law at all times. It is timely and needful that exceptional and concerted efforts be made to develop an inclusive, transparent and effective institutions of democratic governance that guarantee the election of responsible leaderships through free and fair elections. Government efforts in Nigeria today aimed at consolidation of democracy should go beyond tracking down the opposition and witch-hunting. There must be concerted efforts at sustainable prudent management of Nigeria's national resources to ensure democracy dividends for all and national development.

Keywords: Democracy, Rule of Law, National Development, Nigeria and Muhammadu Buhari

INTRODUCTION

It is suffice to say that in contemporary political systems democracy enjoys global acceptance, making it the world's current new bride. The rationale for the above assertion is built against the backdrop of the fact that almost everyone - Politicians, Journalists, statesmen and even the ordinary man and women on the streets - call themselves democrats while those who wish to defend a regime no matter its nature call it democracy [1]. In the light of the above, it will not be out of place to conclude that the world is in the age of democracy. Consequently, [2] averred that the global acceptance of

liberal democracy "as a major vehicle in attaining peaceful co-existence in a multi-faceted society, promotion of economic development, individual liberty, human rights restoration, rule of law and freedom of healthy competition in global socio-political activities, necessitated the quest for democratic consolidation especially in society like ours that have experienced dictatorship over the years" There is need to note that democracy is not a finished product but a dynamic process. As further argued by [3], democratization process has three phases: the fall of the authoritarian

regime (that is the dismantling of an existing military junta as was the case in Nigeria), consolidation, and enduring democracy. The process in Nigeria has only so far witnessed the collapse of authoritarian military regimes while consolidating on that has become a serious challenge. More so, the quest for enduring democracy still remains a mirage.

With the first phase of democracy already in place in Nigeria, achieving democratic consolidation requires institutionalizing good governance principles by existing democratic governments. These good governance principles should be in tandem with the demands of upholding democratic values of popular participation, respect for the rule of law, free and fair elections and the independence of the judiciary. Good governance, transparency and accountability by public officials in the conduct of public affairs reduces corruption to the barest minimum while at the same time engendering economic growth and national development.

The emergence of Muhammadu Buhari as president was due to a number of factors. The change mantra brought about by the success of the broom revolution was made possible by several factors ranging from hitherto widespread disloyalty to the PDP by a section of its card carrying members and stakeholders arising from imposition of candidates, poor leadership performance of government in the country and systemic corruption. This created high sense and levels of disappointments, disillusionment and frustration for party members and the electorates thereby paving the way for the APC, a house that was built against the PDP dominance to thrive. Massively rooted against the ills perpetrated by the PDP, the APC leveraged upon the dissatisfaction of the politicians and citizens on the performance of the PDP and its change campaign as well as prowess of several disgruntled PDP big wigs and stalwarts to secure victory at the polls.

This study therefore examines democracy, rule of law and national development as values and principles of great relevance within the political spectrum. Pursuant to the above, there are certain correlates of democracy some of which still pose daunting challenges to democratic governance in Nigeria and yet to be resolved particularly under the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari from 2015 to 2019. To this end, a number of concerns are raised in the form of questions requiring answers. What militated against the consolidation of true democracy under this administration? Why was it difficult to consolidate on the gains of the democratization effort with regards to respect for rule of law as avowed by the Buhari administration? What is the intersection between democracy, rule of law and national development in Nigeria under the Buhari administration? These are some of the questions and issues of concern that this study seek to address.

Statement of the Problem

Democracy in Nigeria is still fledgling and struggling to survive. Under the present administration of the APC headed by President Muhammadu Buhari there is overwhelming public outcry regarding the administration's disrespect to the rule of law? The scenario no doubt has portrayed the country in negative light among the comity of nations; a situation that no doubt has serious implications for national development. Cognizant of the above, this study queries the trajectory of democracy, rule of law and national development in Nigeria with emphasis on the Buhari administration (2015 to 2019). The following questions therefore come to kind; what militated against the consolidation of true democracy under this administration? Why was it difficult to consolidate on the gains of the democratization effort with regards to respect for rule of law as avowed by the Buhari administration? What is the intersection between democracy, rule of law and national development in Nigeria under the Buhari administration?

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to appraise the trajectory of democracy, rule of law and national development in Nigeria with focus on the present democratic dispensation headed by President Muhammadu Buhari (2015 - 2019). To the extent of the above, the following specifics shall be addressed;

1. To determine the characteristics and principles of democracy;
2. To examine instances and extent of disregard for rule of law under the Buhari administration;
3. To interrogate the intersection between democracy, rule of law and national development in Nigeria under the Buhari administration.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted a qualitative approach and the research design is exploratory. The goal of exploratory design is to discover ideas and insights. In addition to the exploratory design, this study employed qualitative method in its data collection and analyses. Qualitative research emphasizes meanings (words) rather than frequencies and distributions (numbers) when collecting and analyzing data. Primarily, qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret the meaning of situations or events from the perspectives of the people involved and as understood by them (in this relying absolutely on documented evidence). It is generally inductive rather than deductive in its approach, that is, it generates theory from interpretation of the evidence, albeit against a theoretical background. Thus qualitative measures

are often binary in that they are interested in the presence or absence of phenomena. This study relied ultimately on evidences drawn from secondary sources. Secondary data is made up of documented and archival materials of great relevance to the subject matter of the study drawn both from extant literature, published works, gazette reports and journals. Also textbooks by eminent scholars, newspapers, magazines and internet sources were also found useful and therefore formed part of the secondary source of data for the study. The work adopted the method of content analysis in extracting information from the above enumerated sources of data gathering techniques. Based on information gathered from the secondary literatures, thorough discussions are carried.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on the Structural-Functional approach. The approach originated in sociology and anthropology. However, political scientists such as Gabriel A. Almond, William C. Mitchell and David Apter made it prominent in Political Science. The most outstanding contribution to structural-functional approach comes from Gabriel A. Almond in 1950. Almond gives four common characteristics of all political systems on the basis of which they may be compared with one another. All political systems including the simplest ones have political structure. The same functions are performed in all political systems even though these functions may be performed with different frequencies and different kinds of structures. Comparisons may be made according to frequency of the

performance of the functions, the kinds of structures performing them and the style of their performance. All political structures, no matter how specialized, primitive or modern, are multi-functional. Political systems may be compared according to the degree of specificity of functions in the structure. Even highly specialized structure involves substantial multi-functionality.

All political systems are mixed in the cultural sense. There are no all modern cultures and structures, in the sense of rationality, and no "all- primitive" ones in the sense of traditionalist. They differ in the relative dominance of the one as against the other, and in the pattern of mixture of the two components [4]. Almond's suggestion of classification scheme of structures of the political

system is based on: the degree of differentiation; the extent to which the system is 'manifest' or 'visible'; the stability of the functions of various roles; and the distribution of power.

In applying structural-functional analysis Almond holds that political system can be compared and ranked in terms of the manner in which the functions are performed. Almond identifies two types of functions of a political system. They are: input functions; and output functions.

The 'inputs functions' are activities that are associated with the formation and transmission of demands and supports. Almond identifies the following four input functions of a political system. They are political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication. On the other hand, the output functions are the activities associated with policy-

making and implementation. Almond distinguished three types of governmental output function. They are rule-making; rule application, and rule adjudication which he says are the old functions of separation of powers.

The tools of analysis of the functionalists are conceptually and theoretically neat and good, and of immense importance in analyzing actual realities on ground and also can be applicable to the study of politically and economically poor countries with their unviable political and economic situations. Thus whereas in advanced liberal democracies structures perform functions assigned to them in nascent democracies dysfunctional structures abound. This accounts for prevalence of democratic failures as a result of lack of respect for rule of law and slow pace of national development as epitomized in Nigeria under the present administration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Democracy: Evolution and Meaning

The concept of Democracy is traceable to the ancient Greeks and specifically the city-state of Athens in the fifth century B.C. The word democracy is derived from the Greek words '*demos*', meaning people, and '*Kratos*' meaning power or rule. Literally translated, democracy therefore means 'rule by the people', although originally the Greeks used it to mean the poor or the masses. Periclean Athens, named after its most celebrated leader, has inspired generations of later political theorists, statesmen, and common people alike. Yet many aspects of Athenian democracy appear strange and unfamiliar to modern eyes. The central political institution in Athens during the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. was the Assembly, usually composed of 5,000 to 6,000 members and open to all adult citizens with the exception of women, slaves and foreigners. By simple majority vote, the Assembly could decide on virtually any domestic issue without any legal restrictions. Most remarkable, perhaps, was the fact that the leaders of the Athenian Assembly were not elected, but chosen by lot, as the Athenians believed

that any citizen was capable of holding public office [4].

The problem with democracy has been its very popularity, a popularity that has threatened the term's undoing as a meaningful political concept. In being almost universally regarded as a 'good thing', democracy has come to be used as a little more than a 'hurray! word', implying approval of a particular set of ideas or system or rule. In the words of Bernard [5], 'democracy is perhaps the most promiscuous word in the world of public affairs'. A term that can mean anything to anyone is in danger of meaning nothing at all.

Below are some of the meanings that have been associated with the concept of democracy:

- a) A system of rule by the poor and disadvantaged;
- b) A form of government in which the people rule themselves directly and continuously, without the need for professional politicians or public officials;
- c) A society based on equal opportunity and individual merit, rather than hierarchy or privilege;

- d) A system of welfare and redistribution aimed at narrowing social inequalities;
- e) A system of decision-making based on the principle of majority rule;
- f) A system of rule that protects the rights and interests of minorities by placing checks upon the power of the majority;
- g) A means of filling public offices through a competitive struggle for the popular vote;
- h) A system of government that serves the interests of the people regardless of their participation in political office [6]; [7]; [8], [9].

A working definition for democracy in this paper is 'a form of government in which power and civic responsibility are exercised by all adult citizens, directly or indirectly through their freely elected representatives'. The proposals on evolving an enduring and sustainable democracy in Nigeria are large and ever evolving [10]; [11]; [12], [13]; [14], [15]; [16]. There is no denying the fact that the Nigerian state is fragile, weak and/or soft with overdeveloped and dysfunctional structures.

Main Characteristics and Features of Democracy

Democracy is more than just a set of specific government institutions; it rests upon a well understood group of values, attitudes, and practices - all of which may take different forms and expressions among different cultures and societies around the world.

Below are some core democratic characteristics:

- a) Democracy is government in which power and civic responsibility are exercised by all adult citizens directly or indirectly through their freely elected representatives.
- b) Democracy rests upon the principle of majority rule, which means that decisions are made by majority and have to be accepted by all, but minority viewpoints are respected and protected.
- c) Democracies guard against all-powerful central governments and

- d) decentralize government to regional and local levels, understanding that all levels of government must be as accessible and responsive to the people as possible.
- d) Democracies understand that one of their prime functions is to protect such basic human rights as freedom of speech and religion; the right to equal protection under the law; and the opportunity to organize and participate fully in the political, economic, and cultural life of society.
- e) Democracies conduct regular free and fair elections open to all citizens of voting age.
- f) Citizens in a democracy have not only rights, but also the responsibility to participate in political systems that, in turn, protect their rights and freedoms.
- g) Democratic societies are committed to the values of tolerance, cooperation, and compromise.

Democracy is simply a system of government in which the principal positions of political power are filled through regular, free, and fair elections. Governance on the other hand is the exercise of power in the management of a country's resources. It is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social development [18]; [19]; [20]. Governance draws attention to the public space or realm and its management. Democracy is always more difficult to define precisely because it means different things to different people. Although the notion of democratic governance evokes a clear and unambiguous meaning, in analytic terms, governance and democracy are distinct terms. However, it is widely accepted that democratic governance which is largely characterized by high valued principles such as, Rule of Law, accountability, participation, transparency, and human and civil rights is in tandem with good governance. It is generally believed that

democratic governance is a fundamental factor to effectively advance human development. The last quarter of the twentieth century witnessed the greatest expansion of democracy in the history of the world. About three of every five independent states in the world are democracies today.

In its reach around the globe, democratization has been sweeping but far from universal. There remain significant regional disparities in the extent, depth, and stability of global democratization. The United States and Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, together with the 24 states of Western Europe (some quite small), are all stable, liberal democracies [21]. In the 48 states of Sub-Saharan Africa, democracies, or at least popular aspirations for and appreciation of the democratic form of government, are more prevalent than at any time since decolonization. However, many African regimes that are labeled as democracies are hollow and ambiguous, and many others stake a claim to democratic status that is manifestly false. Only two African states have been continuously democratic since independence, Mauritius and Botswana. Both have small populations (around two million or under), and both have achieved a pace of economic development that has eluded most other countries in the region. The most important liberal democracy in Africa is South Africa, which has so far sustained high levels of freedom despite political turbulence, economic hardship, and dominance by a single party. By contrast, Africa's other big states are all struggling politically.

Many African electorates have lost confidence in the process and have consequently become apathetic to the system, a situation that further promotes the preponderances and ambivalences of political actors [22]. This has continued to have unsalutary effects on democratic practice in Africa. Pogeson further plays down the need to over-emphasize the issue of elections in democracy over and above other conditionality while reacting to the emerging trends of democratic

governance in Africa. She argues: African technocratic elites have been evasive of a democratic substance (economic development, social security etc) in favour of a democratic form that emphasizes mainly party formation, elections and constitutional engineering [23].

The same point was earlier amplified by [24] that a government may practice the techniques of election... without being democratic and may refrain from holding frequent and systematic elections without departing from the respect which it owes its conscience and the rights of citizens. He further asserts that democracy implies the presence of ethics or a certain public spirit which in particular involves respect for human right of minorities, fair play, descent method, tolerance, observing the rules of the game, a sense of humour and unselfishness.

It presupposes individual's right to economic decision to own the means of production and participate fully in economic activities. It means the right to have access to food, shelter, education, health care etc. In essence, it seeks to ensure the welfare and wellbeing of all and sundry. [25] summarizes it thus: in its fullest sense, democracy is meaningless without economic, political and social rights. It means nothing to people who cannot eat properly, have a roof over their heads, find a job, send their children to school and have access to primary health care (PHC).

Rule of Law under Muhammadu Buhari Administration

The rule of law implies that no one is above the law and requires that all citizens observe the law and are held accountable if they break it. The due process of law requires that the law be equally, fairly and consistently enforced. The rule of law ensures law and order and the protection of citizens as they enjoy their rights. It appears evident that democratic governance under Muhammadu Buhari administration is largely affected by the personality of the ruler who reached the pinnacle of his military career as a General. The military

institution being what it is; is highly characterized by command, hierarchical structure in which rule or government is personified by the supremacy or seemingly lawlessness of the commander-in-chief and executive head. These same qualities Muhammadu Buhari has demonstrated under a civil government such that analysts and political writers euphemistically choose to refer to his administration as a regime and address him as General Muhammadu Buhari rather than President Muhammadu Buhari. This replicates the style of leadership referred to by some authors as; 'garrison democracy' [26], 'authoritarian democracy' [27] or "civilian dictatorship". Since the inception of present administration in 2015, there have been many constitutional messes and abuses that are seemingly reminiscent of the Abacha military junta. The polity has witnessed several incidences of executive recklessness and lawlessness, arbitrary use of power by the political leaders without recourse to constitutional dictate and provisions. The first in these series which further fuelled sectional agitation was the method adopted by the Buhari administration in its major political appointments, defying federal character principles. In another dimension, the judiciary under the Buhari administration has been emasculated, conquered and colonized so to say; carpeted and disregarded with impunity by the all-powerful executive who saw itself as superior to other organs of government. While the constitution is an essential impetus for democratic governance, conforming to its dictates was a major challenge in the period under review. Several judicial pronouncements were disregarded, court orders flouted with contempt while selective justice pervaded the entire polity. The following cases summed up the place of the rule of law under the Buhari civilian administration.

The Suspension and later Removal of CJN Walter Onnoghen

On Friday, January 25, 2019, our nation woke up to the shocking news of the unilateral and extra-constitutional

suspension of the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Walter Onnoghen and the immediate appointment and swearing in of Justice Ibrahim Tanko Muhammad, as the new acting Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN). This action of President Muhammadu Buhari, not only breaches the Nigerian Constitution, but has also managed to undermine Presidential democracy by assaulting one of its hallowed doctrines of separation of powers. For the records, Justice Walter Onnoghen was the head of one of the Tripartite but mutually independent organs that form the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. To attempt to muscle out the Chief Justice of Nigeria using phony charges at a time when His Lordship was primed to play a central role in the fast approaching nationwide electoral process represented the boldest steps in the march to undermine democracy and the rule of law by Muhammadu Buhari.

The Illegal Purchase of the Tucano Aircrafts

President Buhari sometime in April 2018 approved the purchase of Tucano Aircrafts for the Nigerian Military at the sum of \$496 million (Four Hundred and Ninety-Six Million United States Dollars). This, he did, without seeking prior approval of the National Assembly contrary to Section 80 (3) and (4) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) which states very clearly, how the President can spend monies belonging to the Federation. It provides:

"(3) No money shall be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund or any other public fund of the Federation, except in the manner prescribed by the National Assembly."

"(4) No monies shall be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund or any other public fund of the Federation, except in the manner prescribed by the National Assembly"

Disregard for Orders of Courts

The Muhammadu Buhari administration has serially violated court orders, going against the rule of law especially in the following known cases.

Col. Sambo Dasuki (Former National Security Adviser)

Various courts have granted Col. Dasuki bail on at least six different occasions; the Buhari led government has persistently refused to comply with the court orders.

· Federal High Court in Abuja presided by Justice Adeniyi Ademola in 2015 ordered the release of Col. Dasuki's passport and granted him permission to travel abroad for three weeks on medical grounds. Despite the order made on November 3, the Department of State Security Services, DSS refused to release Col. Dasuki.

· Again, the former NSA and four others were granted bail on December 18, 2015 on a similar condition with a N250 million bond by Justice Hussein-Baba Yusuf.

· Similarly, the former NSA; a former Minister of State for Finance, Bashir Yuguda; former Sokoto Governor, Attahiru Bafarawa; and three others were granted bail by Justice Peter Affen on December 21, 2015 by the Federal Capital Territory High Court in the sum of N250 million each and two sureties in like sum. The Federal Government cherry-picked the court order whilst disobeying the part that concerned the former NSA.

· The ECOWAS Court presided by Honorable Justice F.C. Nwoke on October 4 2016 granted the former NSA bail and ordered the Nigerian Government to pay N15 Million to the defendant as damages for his "illegal and arbitrary detention".

· On 17 January 2018, a Federal High Court sitting in Abuja reaffirmed previous court orders granting Col. Sambo Dasuki bail.

· Also on April 6, 2018 the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court affirmed, for the umpteenth time, its decision for the release of Col. Dasuki. This action of the Buhari administration has been criticized by many Nigerians and the international community as rather vindictive and amounts to gross abuse of rule of law.

Ibraheem El-Zakzaky, Leader of a Shiite Group, IMN

· Sheikh El-Zakzaky has been in detention without trial for about 4years after his followers were massacred in broad daylight; his wife and family killed and his home burnt, in a gory and shameful show of brute force by the Nigerian Army. This particular state violence is nothing short of genocide.

· On December 2, 2016 the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court Presided by Justice Kolawole ordered the release of Sheikh El-Zakzaky and berated the Nigerian government for violating his rights. The government of Muhammadu Buhari has paid deaf ears to all orders of court relating to this matter.

More so, the case of Omoleye Sowore the convener of the Revolution Now Movement still remains fresh in the minds of Nigerians. This case clearly depicted the illegality and impunity of the Buhari administration epitomized in the invasion of court by officials of the DSS. Not until the international community intervened did the President deem it fit to order the release of these illegally detained Nigerians.

The Approval of \$1 Billion for Military Expenditure before Approaching the National Assembly

The Nigerian government through the National Economic Council NEC, again in contravention of Section 80 (3) and (4) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), granted approval for the release of \$1 billion from the Excess Crude Account, ECA, for the procurement of military hardware and other equipment to fight insecurity in the country, ahead of the 2019 General Elections without recourse to the National Assembly. Mansur Dan-Ali, Nigeria's Defense Minister disclosed this at the end of security chiefs meeting with President Muhammadu Buhari at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, on Wednesday, April 4, 2018. By this act, the Federal Government acted contrary to the provisions of the Section 80 (3) and (4) of the 1999 Constitution, which states:

“(3) No monies shall be withdrawn from any public fund of the Federation, other than the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation, unless the issue of those moneys has been authorized by an Act of the National Assembly.

Executive Order No. 006 (On Preservation of Suspicious Assets and Related Schedules):

The enactment of the controversial Executive Order No. 006 as an Executive legislation which permits security agencies to freeze the assets of persons standing trial or undergoing investigation without recourse to court orders. This is a usurpation of legislative and judicial powers of the National Assembly and the judiciary as enshrined respectively under sections 4 and 6 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and reminiscent of the military era of decrees.

Appraisal of Buhari Administration with Respect to Rule of Law

Half of Nigeria’s 59-year of independence was spent under various military dictatorships, but the year 2019 marked the 20th anniversary of the return to democratic rule. While the country has seen its fair share of ups and downs during this period in the spheres of freedom of expression, judicial independence, rule of law and general civil liberties—when compared with the military regimes. Between 2015 and 2019, however, Buhari’s government serially ignored court orders, harassed and arrested journalists and activists, deployed security services to intimidate political opponents, judicial officers and unforgivably sanctioned the killings of hundreds of unarmed civilians (via python dance) on multiple occasions with the impunity of a power-drunk dictatorship. Yes, security services have been known to overreact even in advanced democracies, and civilians sometimes get hurt in the process. But what distinguishes governments committed to upholding fundamental human rights such as the right to not be killed while demonstrating peacefully are the post-incident actions they undertake to ensure such tragedies never repeat

themselves. No such luck with the Buhari government. Buhari is, by any reasonable standard, personally responsible for the killings of unarmed civilians going unpunished under his watch.

The fact that Buhari still retains significant support among Nigerians despite his anti-democratic behavior requires explanation. One major reason is that Nigeria’s top political actors are all so morally compromised that an appeal by any of them to higher principles can always be persuasively dismissed by their opponents as hypocritical nonsense. Nigerian politics and governance suffers from a moral vacancy, an acute shortage of credible political actors who could plausibly champion democratic values and set standards that others feel compelled to live up to. Ignoble actors evoking noble values they rarely uphold do not make for effective democratic role models. Hence many Buhari supporters remain unmoved by opposition claims that he is a danger to Nigeria’s democracy. To them, his rivals are hardly better democrats and are better described as wailers and haters. Moreover, many Nigerians still see Buhari as, if not incorruptible, definitely far less corrupt than his rivals.

It also needs to be said that some Nigerian voters support Buhari precisely because of his strong-arm tactics. In a society where the corrupt always seem to have the upper hand and always seem able to defy institutional attempts to bring them to book, it is understandable that the instinct for some basic societal justice can easily translate into impatience with institutions that appear stacked with people unable or unwilling to deliver basic justice. This creates the opportunity for populist authoritarianism to hold significant appeal. Buhari’s justification of his suspension of the chief judge appealed directly to this societal hunger for justice. Pointing to Onnoghen’s attempts to frustrate investigations into his false asset declaration, he argued: “If justice cannot be done and clearly seen to be done, society itself is at risk of the most

unimaginable chaos.” Nigeria’s political reality is stubbornly defiant of any simple good versus evil narrative.

Interrogating the Intersection between Democracy, Rule of Law and National Development

It amounts to overstating the obvious asking whether there is correlation between democracy, rule of law and national development. The question is to what extent has elected officials galvanized the potentialities of democracy and rule of law towards the attainment of national development. To this extent, it is germane to assert that the development crisis in Nigeria and Africa in general has been described as a crisis of governance [9]. It also follows that while the reasons for South Asia’s colossal human development are rooted in poor governance, the period of robust and rapid economic development in East Asia (Asian Tigers) is attributed to good governance. Governance has been defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social development [12]; [13]; [14].

Democratic governance is a fundamental factor to effectively advance human and national development and it is unimaginable to talk about democracy without rule of law. It is obvious that there is no clear cut direction that democracy promotes or negates growth, but this is not sacrosanct. Indeed, the body of evidence seems tilted towards a negative relationship. In view of this and the fact that most of these evidences are not based on Nigerian data, it is imperative to examine the Nigerian experience with respect to how democracy has related to economic performance over the years.

Democratic Governments should be ‘stewards’ of their national resources, maintaining and improving them for the benefit of their populations. Stewardship encompasses the task of defining the vision and direction of the citizens’ welfare, exerting influence through regulation and advocacy, and collecting and using information [21]. Thus, the

founding fathers of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, in their clairvoyance, mandated the government in Section 16 (1) to:

a. Harness the resources of the nation and promote national prosperity and an efficient, a dynamic and self-reliant economy; and

b. Control the national economy in such manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity.

However, there is a discernible wide expectation gap in the way government has managed our nation’s resources over time, the intensive, extensive and sustainable propaganda of democratic dividends notwithstanding. Nigerians want to see the dividends of democracy, for all and sundry, through improved living conditions commensurate to the volume, value and varieties of our national resources. This is the citizens’ constitutional right. Everything about Nigeria’s development has been left for too long in the ‘pipeline’. Effectual results from prudent management of the nation’s resources are expected from our governments to justify their mandates. [8] rightly believe that no one would want a person in a managerial position who appeared to do everything right as a manager (leader), but who could not turn in a good record for whatever the area of responsibility they held. This essentially relates effectiveness to results obtained or impact made to the extent the management of the nation’s resources positively affect the citizens’ lives. Rhetoric, no matter how sound and loud, would not amount to effectiveness of the nation’s resources management.

The prudent use of the enormous resources accruing to the nation can turn this country into a buoyant economic haven in the shortest possible time. However, only responsible leadership can be trusted with prudent use of resources. These are servant leaders who put the interest of the led uppermost in their order of priority and leave footprints in the sands of time, and in the hearts of

their followers through acts of self-denial. The servant leader does not consider his “personal” interest above the group interest. The servant leader always plays by the rules, when they are formulated and agreed. He does not consider himself above the law. To the servant leader, the interest of his group is paramount. The servant leader does not “force” himself on the group, or attain leadership through untoward methods and strategies [9].

Those in governance have for too long regarded and treated the nation’s resources as ‘national cake’ which is often shared among a privileged few. This goes on because the machinery to compel accountability has been weakened by the same leadership [17]. Nigerians must make exceptional concerted efforts to develop inclusive, transparent, and effective institutions of democratic governance. This entails rebuilding basic mechanisms of democratic governance to make elected officials accountable to their constituents through free and fair elections, strong government institutions, and well-organized, informed citizens who demand performance.

Conscious efforts must be made to improve the rule of law in Nigeria by strengthening the capacity and transparency of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. The civil society has to be strengthened by promoting existing

watchdog groups for more transparency, accountability, and pluralism in Nigeria’s fiscal, electoral, conflict management, political, and human rights affairs. It is pertinent, therefore, that the National Assembly allows the Freedom of Information Bill to see the light of the day in its original design. Given the demonstration of the lack of political will-power to effect a change by the ruling class, the civil society, and specifically the organised working class, must continue to press for it.

Ensuring the prudent management of the nation’s resources is a duty, the accomplishment of which is the responsibility of all Nigerians. This is, no doubt, a Herculean task which invariably entails re-ordering of priorities, rechanneling of ideals, and revitalizing the governance machinery towards breeding a sound, habitable, and tolerable society for every one to proudly live in. This is critical because Nigeria as a nation will be unable to achieve its mandate and arrive at its destiny if greed and avarice continue to deprive it of authentic vision and imagination. In the light of the “Nigerian Factor” syndrome, there is an urgent need for a Nigerian renaissance to effect robust fiscal responsibility, pragmatic public accountability, and good public governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Compelled by the issues unraveled in literature, the following recommendations are considered apt for policy;

- a) There is urgent need for conscious efforts to improve the rule of law by strengthening the capacity and transparency of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to function without undue executive interference and to uphold rule of law at all times.
- b) It is timely and needful that exceptional and concerted efforts be made to develop an inclusive, transparent and effective

institutions of democratic governance that guarantee the election of responsible leaderships through free and fair elections

- c) Government efforts in Nigeria today aimed at consolidation of democracy should go beyond tracking down the opposition and witch-hunting. These must be concerted efforts at sustainable prudent management of Nigeria’s national resources to ensure democracy dividends for all and national development.

CONCLUSION

From the issues addressed it is germane to deduce that the proposals on evolving

an enduring and sustainable democracy in Nigeria are large and ever evolving.

Whereas there is no denying the fact that the Nigerian state is fragile, weak and/or soft with overdeveloped and dysfunctional structures, yet the quest for democratic consolidation remains a currency. In a society as ethnically and religiously divided as Nigeria's, democracy is as fragile as an egg; if not handled carefully, it could drop and shatter into a thousand pieces impossible to glue back together. That's why it's critical for the country's judiciary to get reformed and strengthened by rooting out corruption within its ranks rather than suffering diminishment by Buhari. In practical terms, this would require corrupt judges to be weeded out by their peers, rather than by the politicians they are meant to hold accountable.

The next few years must be spent ensuring that cornerstone values—such as rule of law, equality before the law, accountable government, free and fair

elections, the right to nonviolent protest, and a free press become sacred non negotiable in Nigerian public life,. These are the dogmas of democracy, and only those who uphold them are truly worthy of calling themselves democrats. However, there is a discernible wide expectation gap in the way government has managed our nation's resources over time, the intensive, extensive and sustainable propaganda of democratic dividends not withstanding. Nigerians want to see the dividends of democracy, for all and sundry, through improved living conditions commensurate to the volume, value and varieties of our national resources. This is the citizens' constitutional right. Everything about Nigeria's development has been left for too long in the 'pipeline'. Effectual results from prudent management of the nation's resources are expected from our governments to justify their mandates.

REFERENCES

1. Adebani, W and Obadare, E (2011). The Abrogation of the Electorate: An Emergent African Phenomenon. *Democratization* Vol. 18, No 2
2. Adefulu, R.A (2001) Federal Structure and the Politics of Restructuring the Nigerian State in Adefulu, R.A and Olaitan, W.A (eds) *Issues in Nigerian Government and Politics*. Ijebu-Ode: Rad Consultancy.
3. Adefulu, R.A (2001) The Context of Politics and Governance in Post Colonial Nigeria in Adefulu, R.A and Olaitan, W.A (eds) *Issues in Nigerian Government and Politics*. Ijebu-Ode: RAD Consultancy.
4. Almond, G.A. (1960). "A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics" in G. Almond and J.S. Coleman (eds); *The Politics of Developing Areas*, Princeton.
5. Ashiru, Dele. (2009) The Judiciary and the Democratization process in Nigeria in Ogundiya, S.I, Olutayo, O.A. and Amzat Jimoh (eds). *A Decade of Re-Democratization in Nigeria 1999-*
6. 2009. Sokoto: Department of Political Science, Usman Danfodiyo University.
6. Bako, S. (2007). Institutional Development as a Challenge to Democratic Sustenance in Nigeria. *International Studies*. 44; 217.
7. Bernard Crick (1993). The Political Transition and the Future of Democracy in Africa. *Political Science Review* Vol.1 No.1
8. Chiamogu, A. P. and Chiamogu, U.P. (2015). Disturbance Theory and Opposition Politics in Nigeria: An Appraisal of All Progressives Congress (APC) Performance in the 2015 General Elections. Being a paper presented at the 3rd Annual Conference of the Nigerian Political Science Association South East Chapter holding 8-11 November, 2015 at the Staff Development Centre, Kpirikpiri Abakaliki, Ebonyi State.
9. Diamond, Larry (1994) Rethinking Civil Society: Towards Democratic Consolidation. *Journal of Democracy*. Vol.8

10. Dudley, Billy. J (1973) *Instability and Political Order: Politics and Crisis In Nigeria*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
11. Dudley, Billy. J (1982) *An Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
12. Gunther, R.P.N, Diamandurous, P.N. and H.J. Puhle (eds.). (1995). *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation: Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
13. Hermet Guy (1991). Introduction: The Age of Democracy. *International Social Science Journal*. No.128
14. Huntington, Samuel (1991). "The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twenties Century". Norman: University of Oklahoma Press
15. Momoh, A (2007). Provisional Notes on Authoritarian Democracy in Nigeria. Paper Presented at the International Conference titled: Nigeria's Democratic Development, 1999-2007: Trends, Problems, Challenges and Prospects. Kano: Centre for Democratic Research and Training. February 13-14.
16. Moulin Leo (1953). Local Self-Government as a Basis for Democracy. *Journal of Public Administration*. Vol.XXXIX
17. Olaitan, W.A (1997). The State as Roadblock to Democracy: "June 12" and the Democratization Experience in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Social and Management Sciences*. Vol.1, No.1.
18. Olowu, B. (2002). The Consolidation of Democracy and the Representation of Social Groups, *American Behavioural Scientist* 35 (42), 23-44.
19. Oni, Ebenezer Oluwole (2014). "Democracy and the Challenges of Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic". *Ibadan Journal of the Social Sciences*, Volume 12, Number 2.
20. Pogoson, A.I (2010). Rethinking Governance in Africa: Measuring Performance-The Ibrahim Index on African Governance. Paper Presented at a Departmental Seminar, Department Of Political Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. 10th February.
21. Richard, A. Joseph (1991). *Democracy And Prebendal Politics In Nigeria: The Rise and fall of the Second Republic*. Cambridge University press
22. Sani, S. (2008). *Civilian Dictators of Africa*. Lagos: Prestige Publishers.
23. Schedler Andreas (1998). What is Democratic Consolidation. *Journal of Democracy*. Vol.9, No.2
24. United Nations Development Programme (1997). *Reconceptualizing Governance*. Discussion Paper, Jan.2
25. World Bank (1992). *Good Governance Principles*. New York: World Bank Publication.
26. Yagboyaju, D.A. (2009). *Issues in Public Policy in Nigeria: college press and publishers limited*; Ibadan.
27. Yagboyaju, D.A. (2010). *The State and Governance Crisis in Nigeria: A Comparative Approach*. Ibadan: College Press and Publishers Limited.