

**DEMOCRATIZATION, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN  
AFRICA: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE**

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**Abstract**

This article is a contribution to the debate on democratization, good governance and development in Africa. It examines the nexus among the 'embattled trinity,' using a contextual analysis of the Nigerian experience under the fourth republic; but within a broader framework of African democratization hurdles. It argues that whereas democratization, defined as the process of transition to a stable/consolidated democracy, could be a harbinger of development, with good governance as the link in the chain; much of it would however depend on its time-spell, depth and the context within which it is pursued. It is argued that the present state of democratization in Africa gives cause for concern, as it tends towards the direction of disempowerment. Issues such as democracy dividends; the travails of presidentialism; ethno-religious conflicts were critically examined, leading us to the basic question of whether Africa (Nigeria) has really democratized. While democratization has been on course, it has not taken a firm root, because it has so far been pursued and predicated on alien institutions. Given this scenario, the paper argues for an urgent need for a reversal of the trend, if democratization must be genuinely nurtured and sustained in Africa. In the circumstance, we consider social mobilization in all its ramifications as a highly useful and pivotal option.

**Introduction**

The end of the Cold War and the subsequent emergence of a New World Order no doubt produced significant impacts on the world system. One outstanding area of its impacts is the global resurgence of democratization; or to borrow the term crafted by Huntington (1991), it has brought about the 'third wave' of democratization. This development, in the view of some scholars, has brought an end to the struggle for supremacy as to which system of government is best due to the hegemonic emergence of liberal democracy as the final form

of human government (Fukuyama, 1989). Put differently, democracy has become "the only game in town" (Linz and Stepan, 1996:15).

Evidently, African states are no exception. The wave of democratization that swept through Africa was largely a product of pressures exerted on the state by both internal and external forces (Lawson, 1991:1-25; Agbu, 1996:1-16; Osaghae, 1999:3-25; Zack-Williams, 2001:215-218; Omotola, 2002:1). In its wake, it elicited high hopes and expectations across the continent. The reasoning, perhaps, is that democracy offers better opportunities for self-actualization and development. Such optimism is not misplaced giving the fact that democracy represents a fulcrum in the values, which the 'global wind of change' has imposed on the global system. This was apart from the series of frustrating and debilitating experiences, which Africans had had to contend with under successive authoritarian regimes. It then follows that any country desirous of relevance within the world system must be seen as 'democratically complaint'. In this sense, democratization assumes a standardized yardstick for full participation in world affairs and the enjoyment of the associated benefits.

Beside the high hopes that the new democratization would engender a democratic future in Africa (Osaghae, 1999:3), the optimism was also predicated on the rationalization that democracy stimulates development. Such arguments constitute the central thesis of liberal democratic scholars (See Olson 1993:567-576; Simbine, 2000:13-16). For these scholars, "good governance" is the key link in the chain. This has been viewed as synonymous with "sound development management" (World Bank, 1992). The reasoning here seems to suggest that without good governance being institutionalized through accountability and transparency, neither democracy nor development could be expected to take firm roots and last long.

Stemming from the foregoing, the principal objective of this paper is to assess the state of democratization vis-à-vis development in Africa, periscoping its high and low points.

My argument is illustrated with the recent experience of Nigeria (1999-2003). I argue that while it would appear, though superficially, that democratization has impacted positively on development in Nigeria, the evidence on ground seems to point to the contrary. The question therefore arises as to whether democratization is really a necessary and sufficient condition for development. If only in the interim we hold this to be correct, then a more fundamental question would be whether Africa (Nigeria) has really democratized. These and other related questions constitute the major thrust of this article.

The paper is organized into five parts. This introduction is followed by a review of literature on the key concepts: Democratization, Good Governance and Development; as well as the nexus among them. Part three attempts to explicate the hurdles against democratization for development in Africa with specific illustrations from the Nigerian experience. The concluding part prognosticates into the possibility of adapting democratization for development in Africa.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

Though the triple concepts of democratization, good governance and development have generated mounting international discourse; and a sizeable amount of literature developed therefrom, there still exists widespread confusion about their meanings and relationships. The conceptual ambivalence, as well as confusions, that hover around them could be attributed to the fact that, all seems to be, though in varying degrees, multidimensional and value loaded. Hence, they can be appropriately grouped in the category of words like power, justice, peace, equality and freedom, which Gallie (1962:121-146) referred to as "essentially contested concepts" (cf Ojo, 1999). For us, they remain "an embattled trinity", yearning for more amplification and illumination so as to unravel the ambivalence surrounding their relationships.

#### *On Democratization*

Scholars have variously explained democratization. However, its basic tenets are everywhere the same and well known. Basically, it connotes a process of movement from authoritarianism to a stable democracy. Osaghae (1995:5), who equates democratization with transition to democracy, explains it as "a political process because it basically has to do with the transformation of the state and the political society". This conception, obviously, extricates the economic dimension of democratization. This position derives from the belief that though the economic dimension provides an enabling environment for democratization, they do not form part of its definition. In the extreme, it is feared that it may impede political freedom, and enhances one type of democracy, which is the liberal type (Osaghae 1999:5, citing Diamond 1997; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997; Schmitter and Karl, 1996). On the surface, this argument looks plausible. However, it may well be argued that any attempt to divorce economic considerations from democratization may be self-defeatist. Reasons being that the political and economic society operates on a continuum and spiral of interdependent linkages. Besides, the triumph of the west in the Cold War has elevated liberal democracy to a status of best form of human governance, with no other competing values (Fukuyama 1989, Linz and Stepan, 1996:15).

Osaghae (1999:5) however, defines democratization as "the process of establishing, strengthening, or extending the principles, mechanism, and institutions that define a democratic regime". In his elaboration on this definition, Osaghae opines that two points could be inferred. One, that democratization is relative, incremental and phased. Two, that democratization is variegated in nature, calling for caution not to analyze it as a blanket process. The validity of this exposition, particularly in the African context can hardly be contested. It attests to the fact that democratization is a term used retroactively, after certain thresholds have been crossed (Schatzber, 1997:215-221).

Similarly, democratization has been defined as:

*a political movement from less accountable to more accountable government, from less competitive (or non-existent) elections to fuller and fairer predicted civil and political rights, from weak (or non-existent) autonomous associations to more numerous associations in civil society (Potter, 2000:368).*

This definition also neglects the economic dimensions. Nevertheless, it emphasizes the relevance of good governance in the democratization process as well as other certain forces (political rights, autonomous civil society) that could strengthen the process.

If democratization, as suggested by the above definitions, implies the process of getting to a stable or consolidated democracy, the transitional process is no doubt daunting and challenging. Indeed, the process could trigger higher undesirable side effects particularly in collapsed states (Ottaway 1995:235, Huntington, 1996, Ihonvbere, 1997). Perhaps, it is for this reason that the conditions that could guarantee a process of smooth transition has pre-occupied scholars over the years. Among others, socio-economic development, the nature of the society and social divisions; historical legacies; state power and political institutions, political culture and ideas; independent judiciary etc. have been considered as pivotal (Baker, 2000:9-34; Potter, 2000:370-374; Ojo, 1999:256-265; Suberu, 2001, Beetham, 1994:156-166). It should be noted that these explanatory variables are closely knitted in a network of interconnectivity (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997:45).

It is instructive to note that a democratic regime, being the ultimate goal of democratization, operates on certain fundamental principles. It is reasoned that the extent to which democratization establishes these elements may provide the basis for evaluating its success or otherwise. These principles include:

- (i) Pluralism and multipartyism, including free and fair competitive politics... and relatively autonomous civil society.
- (ii) Popular participation in the political process... provided those elected remain accountable and can be voted out if they no longer enjoy the people's support.
- (iii) Rule of law, respect for human rights and equality of access to all citizens and groups to the state power and resources (which does not, however exclude policies designed to enhance the access of members of disadvantaged and marginalized groups); and
- (iv) Constitutionalism or respect for the "rules of the game", which includes civil control of the military and the efficacy of representative, judicial and oversight institutions (Osaghae, 1999:7).

Be that as it may, it should be noted that democratization has generally been seen as the solution to Africa's multifaceted problems. This is what Ottaway (1995:235) called the 'democratic solution', which he considers as "certainly the most desirable and probably the only viable one in the long run". The validity of this claim only remains to be supported by empirical realities across the continent. May be a little more time is needed before a comprehensive assessment could be undertaken. Yet, a preliminary evaluation is desirable.

#### *On Good Governance*

Good governance, as a concept is a problematic one. For one, it is value loaded and therefore subjective. The meaning attached to it may largely be a function of the intents and purposes of the analyst. Nevertheless, it remains a useful concept for obvious reasons. As Doornbos (1995 cf. Doornbos, 2001:94) rightly posited, the concept of good governance "could be used to invite judgment about how the country... concerned was being governed: it enabled the raising of evaluative question about proper procedures, transparency, the quality and process of decision making, and other such matters". In fact, "it helps to differentiate the

professed or actual self-understanding of the ruling groups from their real causal contribution to the prosperity or misery of their subjects (Chabal, cf Simbine, 2000).

For Eyinla (2000:22), good governance means accountability, security of human rights and civil liberties, devolution of powers and respect for local autonomy, which all constitute a challenge to democratic regimes. Moreover, good governance has been closely linked to 'the extent which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, committed to improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of its citizens, competent to assure law and order and deliver public services, able to create an enabling policy environment for productive activities; and equitable in its conduct' (Landell-Mill and Seragelden, cf Simbine, 2000:17).

The World Bank has offered a more comprehensive explanation of good governance. It defines 'governance' as "the means by which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" and 'good governance' as synonymous with "sound development management" (cf Potter, 2000: 379). It encompasses a broad sphere of public sector management; accountability; legal framework for development (reforms); information and technology; the legitimacy of government; the competence of governments to formulate appropriate policies, make timely decisions; implement them effectively and deliver services (cf Potter 2000:379).

The point has well been made that good governance is pivotal to a successful democratization and by extension, development. The presumption is that for an enduring democratization, the basic tenets of good governance as enunciated above must be well institutionalized and internalized. With such sound management of resources, the goal of development is considered assured.

*On Development*

Like most other social science concepts, the problematic of the term development is evidently manifest in the literature. This is exemplified by the current pluralism in the development literature, as being dominated by different schools of thought (See, So, 1990). The fact that development is a multidimensional as well as a value loaded concept (Lane and Ersson, 1997:15-16) has been a complicating factor. In General terms, however, development has been viewed from political, economic and social dimensions. These various aspects of development are well reflected in the extant literature on the subject.

Todaro (1985) for example; conceptualizes development as: "a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty" (cf Lane and Ersson, 1997:19). In another work, the same scholar identified three core values of development (Todaro, 1989:89-90). These include the ability to provide as many people as possible with their basic needs or the ability to acquire adequate food, shelter, health care and protection. It also entail the perception of individuals or groups of self-worth and esteem as a respected member of the society; and freedom in the sense that individuals and society at large have an expanded range of choice, not only with respect to the material necessities for self reproduction but also in their ability to have a say in, if not to determine, the method and process by which values are allocated in the society (cf Ogwu, 2002:12-13).

The widely cited political economist, Armati K. Sen, has offered more illuminating thoughts on the concept of development. For him, development connotes 'capacity expansion' (Sen, 1990), and synonymous with freedom (Sen, 1999). As capacity expansion, development requires adequate empowerment of the state and the society such that they can adequately distil their complimentary responsibilities. It requires an enhanced state capacity as well as institutional and governmental stability. It is only within such framework that individual



members of the society can find fulfillment in terms of the basic necessities of life. As freedom, development demands great latitude of autonomy for the political community and its constituent parts; as well as for the individual members of such communities. In that case, the level of popular participation, measured in terms of the quality and quantity of participation is highly decisive.

### *Understanding the Nexus*

The attempts to understand the nexus between democracy, good governance and development have produced divergent views. For scholars of liberal dispositions, democracy and development are inextricably linked, with emphasis on good governance as the link between them (See World Bank, 1992). The centrality of good governance to the whole process has been well recognized. Kofi Annan (1998 cf Potter, 2002:386), avers that the UN has increasingly begun to focus on good governance because "no amount of funding, no amount of charity will set the developing world on the part of prosperity. Member states have increasingly recognized that good governance is indispensable for building peaceful, prosperous and democratic societies". According to Bhalla (1997 cf Potter, 2000:375), democracy is strongly associated with greater freedom; whereby greater freedom leads to improved economic growth and development.

Counterpoised to the above is the argument that democracy impedes development, particularly in the underdeveloped societies. In that circumstance, authoritarian regimes are considered as better placed to enhance development. Yet some have contended that no direct or systematic causal connection between democratization and development. The various propositions have been buttressed in varying degrees with empirical evidences (See Lane and Ersson, 1997; Potter 2000:374-379).

The line of argument pursued in this paper is that there exists a correlation between democratization, good governance and development. This rationalization is informed by the

fact that conceptually, these concepts are closely interconnected and interwoven. If democratization is about establishing consolidated democracy; the conditions for such attainment are implicitly embedded in good governance. Besides, both democratization and development share certain basic virtues such as popular participation, capacity expansion as well as freedom (Nwabueze, 1993:94; Adedeji, 1997:7; Mazrui, 2002:23-46). Evidently too, these constitute part of the intrinsic values of good governance.

It is however important to emphasize the point that while democratization may engender development, much of it depends to some extent on the context within which the analysis is carried out. Moreover, the impact of democratization on development could be a reflection of its time-spell as well as the depth of the democratization process itself. It could also be aspectual, especially in the short run, giving the fact that development is a multidimensional concept. Development in a given aspect, say for example at the political level, may in the long run induce development in other aspects. That being the case, caution must be exercised in making generalized statements about their relationship. This explains why a contextual analysis would be of high utility having been reputed for its ability to account for differences in the same phenomenon in different systems (Osaghae, 1994:137).

### **The Nigerian Experience, 1999-2003**

Nigeria's march to constitutional civilian rule has so far been a tortuous adventure, characterized by moments of hope raised and hope dashed. The democratization processes that ushered in the fledging fourth republic were particularly daunting. It could be said to have effectively begun with the setting up of the Political Bureau in 1986 by the General Babangida regime. Reputed as the most ambitious, imaginative, complex and expensive transition in the world (Diamond, Kurk-Green and Oyediran, 1997:1); it however ended in fiasco with the tragic and arrogant annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. This was not minding the fact that the election was rated as the freest and fairest in the annals of

electoral history in Nigeria (Izah 2003:3). The attendant impasse that followed the annulment however proved a hard nut for the regime to crack. Hence, the institution of an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan (See Ojo, 1998).

Expectedly, the birth of the ING was greeted with mass protest, giving the impression *abinitio* that it would not be able to put the situation under control. True to expectation, the military capitalized on the contradictions surrounding the ING to seize power through General Sanni Abacha in November, 1993. In the transition process that followed, Abacha was so much pre-occupied with a self-succession agenda. As such, he kept manipulating the process to suit his selfish intents. This was not without some resistance and resentments from pro-democracy and human rights groups such as Campaign for Democracy (CD); National Democratic Coalition (NADECO); as well as labour movements such as Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC); Nigerian Union of Petroleum and Gas Workers (NUPENG) etc. However, the regime remained undeterred and relied on excessive harassment, arrest, detention and extermination of opponents.

The sudden death of General Abacha on June 8, 1998 however paved the way for the emergence of General Abdulsalami Abubakar as the Head of State. The basic concern of the regime would appear to be a successful transition to a democratically elected government within the shortest possible time. In seven months, the regime has successfully completed a transition to civilian administration, which climaxed with the handing over of power to a democratically elected government, headed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo on May 29, 1999. This development certainly poses some challenges for the new democratic government (Agbu, 2000:59-69; Eyinla, 2000:21-27). These include how to nurture the nascent democracy to maturity such that it can no longer be reversed or eroded (Omotola, 2002:1); good governance, human rights and civil liberties; participation and empowerment; power sharing, executive-legislative relations etc (Agbu, 2000:59-69; Eyinla, 2000:21-27).

To what extent have these challenges been met? This question is pertinent since all the issues raised could take a toll on development; and could also tell the extent to which the Nigerian polity has democratized. The searchlight will now be shifted to these challenges.

*Whither the Dividends of Democracy?*

Surely, the premium placed on democratization derives largely from its perceived role as a harbinger of development. Most African leaders, presumably because of the high expectations placed on them, for to whom much is given, much is expected, are quick to sloganize development with the phrase 'dividends of democracy'. The question may very well be asked as to whether the 'over dramatized' so-called dividends of democracy translate to development.

First, what do the dividends connote? By dividends of democracy we mean the benefits and positive gestures which the new environment of democracy has brought to bear on the state and society. Ideally, it would include rising legitimacy of the state; improved standard of living for the majority of the populace; improved climate of human rights in all its ramifications; all culminating in popular empowerment, participation and enhanced atmosphere of peace and stability as a prerequisite for development.

To what extent have these materialized? One perspective, and perhaps the more dominant one, is that if anything, the fledging democracy, rather than produce positive results, has been the bane of Nigeria (Ozov, 2002:48-49). Relying on the 2002 and 2003 reports of the Economic Intelligence Unit, "Nigeria has nothing close to genuine democracy". Rather, there is "a woeful failure to improve the living standards". In another perceptive essay, Onyegbula (2000:24-25) has pointed out that "the standard of living continues to worsen by the day while the social infrastructure and educational systems are still comatose". This may be due to the fact that the Nigerian economy has not showed enough signs of recovery, a phenomenon that has been complicated by the haphazard implementation of the

privatization exercise, without due recourse to its social, economic and political costs. Moreso, there have been an upsurge in the threats to security of lives and property in terms of nature, scope and depth, (See Ojo, 2002). This is in sharp contradistinction to the established fact that no meaningful development could take place in an atmosphere of instability.

The trend is worsened by the wide gap between government official pronouncements and actions. This suggests that the whole essence of good governance, as the viable link between democratization and development, has not yet been well internalized by the ruling elites. This is mostly reflected in the government anti-corruption crusade. Elaigwu (2002) aptly captures the scenario thus;

*There is a big gap between the rhetorics of transparency and accountability on the one hand, and demonstrable commitment to values in the actions of the political actors, on the other.*

Granted that Nigeria, as Carrington (2000:15) and Omotola and Saliu (2003) have contended, has made a promising start with the enactment of the Corrupt Practices and Other Offences Act of 2000, its impacts are yet to be felt in practical realities. Under the nascent democracy, corruption would seem to have been let loose on the system with a renewed vigor. It is so much entrenched that no organ of government is exonerable, as glaringly revealed by the Auditor-General's audit report of January 10, 2003 (See Thisday, Jan. 19, 2003; 29-34). The revelation has since lain to rest the skepticism about the 2002 report of Transparency International, which rated Nigeria as the second most corrupt country in the world.

Be that as it may, it should be noted that some forces which I will call 'government apologists,' have consistently drawn attention to the increase in salary, giving rise to more cars and houses for the working class; increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP); the privatization environment and the 'feelings' of freedom among Nigerians as evidences of

development. One often forgotten point is that the unintended outcomes of some of these issues have served to neutralize their intended benefits. For example, the country has continued to witness an unprecedented rate of inflation and downward trend in the exchange rate of the naira. These are ominous developments. More fundamentally, development is not restricted to a statistical concept of inputs and outputs. It means much more than that. Its overall connotation is shrouded in the concepts of capacity expansion and freedom, which can only be enhanced if the people could meet their aspirations, including their fundamental survivalist existential. Situated within this framework, it is subject to debate whether the enabling environment for development has been created, let alone it being instituted. Accounting for this paradox therefore becomes inevitable.

#### *On Democratic Space and Popular Participation*

The idea of popular participation is crucial to both democratization and development. In its comprehensive usage, popular participation is the empowerment of the people to involve themselves in the regulating structures and in designing policies and programmes that serve the interest of all, and contribute optimally to the development process (Adedeji, 1997:7). Nwabueze (1993:94) notes that popular participation embraces development, in which case there exists a society where the members are independent of each other, none being subservient to another.

The actualization of the foregoing demands that democratic space be opened up and expanded to its elastic limits. The Obasanjo's administration would appear to have grappled with this reality when it came to power. This is exemplified by some of the policy measures which the government has put in place to facilitate democratic openings. For example, the establishment of what is now popularly referred to as 'Oputa Panel' to investigate human rights abuses by previous military regimes, Poverty Eradication programme, registration of new political parties, among others, have the potential of expanding the democratic space,

thereby enhancing popular participation, if properly managed. Today, human rights and pro-democracy groups, indeed the entire spectre of the civil society now appear to have the space for effective operation.

In realistic terms however, the democratic expansion or the opening up of the democratic space, which these measures presuppose is everything but real. Indeed, they all represent a 'pretentious' opening of the democratic space. The report of the Oputa Panel, for example, is still being kept away from the public, a development that has elicited doubts about the sincerity of the government in that regard. The registration of more political parties offers a more graphic illustration. Ordinarily, more parties is supposed to imply more participation and higher freedom of choice. However, the reverse has been the case. In almost all the parties, old and new ones alike, the process of selecting party flag bearers was neither open nor competitive in the real sense of the exercise. For instance, the National Conventions of most of these parties, where presidential candidates were elected, were mere 'charade' meant to create the impression that the process was open and competitive. The All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) convention witnessed a situation whereby the four presidential aspirants from the South walked out of the convention ground, protesting that General Buhari and Dr. Chuba Okadigbo have already been endorsed before the convention. With respect to the Peoples Democratic Party's, which appear a little more open and competitive, subsequent revelations have shown that it was not as opened as one would have imagined. (See Tell, Jn.13, 2003:16-22). Every other party merely handpicked their presidential candidates. Even at the state level, there was no meaningful difference. This is true to the extent that all the incumbent governors were returned as their flag bearers, without really passing through any open and competitive process, save for their programatized conventions. The only exemptions were in Borno and Anambra states, where the incumbents could not clinch their party tickets. They however contested under the umbrella of the Alliance for Democracy.

Moreover, the process of voter's registration also served to contract and choke up the democratic space. For reasons such as time constraint; shortage of registration slips; and other administrative bottlenecks, the exercise was fraught with many inadequacies. Chiefly, many eligible voters could not secure registration and were ultimately precluded from the whole electoral process.

At the crossroad of the critical test of second election as a crucial stage in the democratization process, there have been mixed-feelings concerning the process and outcomes of the elections. In varying degrees the electoral process has been generally rated as relatively poor (TMG, 2003; EU, 2003). The reasons adduced include irregularities; electoral frauds; as well as partisanship on the part of some electoral commissioners. As such, the results of the elections, particularly the presidential election, have been vigorously rejected by a coalition of other political parties (The Punch, 8th May, 2003). This is a worrisome dimension because if free and fair election could be regarded as just the beginning (Carter, 2001:17-20); the implications of an election of a reversed order are easily discernible. The legitimacy crisis such may create for the emergent government would certainly task the energies and ingenuity of the government to manage. In the event that the opposition parties prove recalcitrant, the government may resort to draconian measures to contain them. This will further contract the political space with greater consequences on popular participation and development.

If popular participation is defined both in terms of quality and quantity of participating; whereby quality is measured in terms of level of freedom of choice and autonomy of individuals to make contributions to the political process without intimidation, fear or favor, and quantity is determined by the ratio of actual voters to registered voters vis-à-vis the eligible voters, (if restricted to the electoral process), one inevitable conclusion is that the Nigerian experience has woefully betrayed this standard (Omotola, 2003a).



### *The Travails of Presidentialism*

Presidentialism is built around the doctrine of separation of powers, with emphasis on checks and balances as a means of checking abuse of power. It refers to a system whereby no one branch had enough power to dominate the other (Ate 2000:70). Principally, it requires that the three organs of government – legislature, executive and judiciary- should operate as independent of one another, yet they are united by a common purpose, which is good governance. This forms the basis for them to also function in unity (Oyovbaire, 2002:75-197).

The executive and the legislative organs are closely linked in almost all their activities. This is because the legislature is constitutionally empowered to exercise oversight functions over the activities of the executive with respect to budgeting, appointment, and the impeachment process. It is however important to note that the whole process has been problematic in Nigeria due to the "formalistic or purely statutory interpretation of the principle of separation of powers as contained in (Section 4-6) by the legislative arm" (Ate 2000:70).

With respect to the budgetary process, there have been frictions between the executive and the legislature. Most often, the conflict results from legislative upward review of the proposed budget especially the aspects that directly affect the legislators. This often tends to be done in a most outrageous manner (Aiyede and Isumonah, 2002:15-18). There had also been controversy over the non-implementation of the budget in line with the approved appropriation. For example, it was alleged that the executive does not have regard for the legislature's capital project priorities, which would help to boost their democratic base and shore up their popularity (Aiyede and Isumonah, 2002:7). The conflict was so much that at times, there have been cases of total deadlock in the budgetary process.

The most disturbing dimension was played out with the legislature's constant resort to the use of impeachment threats against the executive (Omotola, 2003b). At least, threats of impeachment against the president have become consistent pattern of executive – legislative relations. It only climaxed with the August 13, 2002 episode. Evidently, the attendant crisis had negative impacts on the entire system. In all, the much needed institutional cohesion and governmental stability became debased, having serious repercussions on the nascent democracy, national cohesion and development (Omotola, 2003b).

### *Ethno-Religious Conflicts*

Contrary to expectations though, the birth of the fourth republic, has thrown up numerous cases of ethno-religious conflicts. In most cases, such conflicts are being championed by viable forces of identity, through the deadly manipulation of identity. Such forces of identity include O'Odua Peoples Congress (OPC); Arewa Peoples Congress (APC); Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) etc (Quaker-Dokubo, 2000:85-98).

Among other high-ranking conflicts, the one that accompanied the introduction of Sharia law in some northern states of Nigeria, particularly in Kaduna, was most outrageous. It claimed several lives and property worth several millions of naira. The severity of the violence also triggered off a chain of counter violence in other parts of the country such as Kachia; Aba, Oweri, Sokoto, Damboa etc (See Ojo, 2001; Quaker-Dokubo, 2000:93-94). These were apart from communal clashes such as the Ife-Modakeke crisis as well as the seemingly insurmountable conflict that has enveloped the Niger-Delta region over the years.

These conflicts have combined effectively well with the cries of marginalization across the country to weaken governmental stability. It has equally raised the question as to the efficacy of the management of the national question in Nigeria, being a fundamental factor in the conflicts.

By and large, the impacts of conflicts on development are everywhere negative. Apart from loss of lives and property, investible resources are often diverted to security issues and conflict management. Yet, its psychological impact through depression, is agonizingly too traumatizing. The most worrisome element is the gradual re-militarization of the state and society, as against the desired goal of demilitarization. Operation fire for fire, a government response to the intransigence of some ethnic militia groups particularly the OPC, is in itself a form of militarization of the state and society. No genuine democratization can take firm root under such situations, let alone development. A holistic view of these issues leads us to the basic question as to whether Africa (Nigeria) has really democratized.

#### *Has Africa (Nigeria) Really Democratized?*

To conclude this section, it is pertinent that we critically examine the state of democratization in Africa. This expedition becomes inevitable against the background of the fact that the Nigerian situation, as shown above, seems a deviation from the expected outcomes. It is even more pressing because a cautious note has been well sounded about the need for circumspection in projecting the prospect of democratization in Africa (cf Osaghae, 1999:3).

Generally, doubts have been expressed about the ongoing democratization wave in Africa. For Agbu (1996:1); the latest democratization in Africa could best be regarded as 'palliative'. In his own thought, Baker (2000:9); avers that; no sooner had they been established than many of them have already begun to show "sign of ill health and some have been wounded". Yet, many other scholars have queried whether the democratization experiment could be nurtured to maturity and sustained (Lawson1999:1-26; Ake, 1996; Suberu 2001; Baker, 2000). The consensus seems to be that: some progress has been made at the political and formalistic level of multipartyism, periodic elections, and civil society in several countries. However, the emergent democracies have continued to lack depth, and its

growth has been stunted by the several thorns which have historically suffocated it" (Osaghae, 1999:4).

With respect to Nigeria, the democratization process is on course. Though fraught with many inadequacies, which have hamstrung it from adequately coping with the hopes and challenges placed on it *abinitio*, it is nevertheless the preferred option; first in line with global dictates and second, for the eruption of civil society and their persistent struggle to energize the process. While it certainly lacks depth in concrete terms, it has been able to elevate Nigeria and Nigerians from the abysmal valley of despair to the exalted mountain of hopes, to borrow the language of Professor Jerry Gana, the information minister. As the situation is now, it leaves much to be desired. What then is the way forward?

### **Towards Democratizing Africa for Development**

Without any doubt, the faltering of democratization in Africa may be attributed to the fact that it is not enmeshed so much in the society as it failed in its entirety to pay attention to African realities and peculiarities. This point has been well stressed in the literature. "The development of democratic institutions", it has been argued, "can only be accomplished by African themselves, and only when the social foundations are at least somewhat conducive" (Lawson 2000:23). Indeed, "before democratic reform can actually begin, the (continent's) people must first develop a coherent political form that has some relevance to their own historical and cultural realities" (cf Lawson, 2000:23). However, the reverse has so far been the case in Africa. As Ake (1999:15) perceptively puts it "culture, has been largely ignored as if it too had no serious implication for the success of development strategies. African culture has fiercely resisted and threatened every project that fails to come to term with it, even as it is acted upon and changed".

The whole scenario has been complicated by the enduring legacies of colonialism. For one, the democratic institutions inherited at independence by the political elites were

basically western (Elaigwu, 2002:17). Besides, the colonial political culture to which the nationalist leaders were socialized was one characterized by lack of public-spirited restraint in the quest for, and exercise of power (Ake, 1973:358; Ayoade, 1986:27; Ekeh, 1975, 1983). With this form of socialization largely unaltered, its implication has been that the actions and activities of the operators of the democratization process has most often created 'democratic deficit', to put it in Elaigwu's terminology.

Caught up in this precarious and pathetic situation, there is an urgent need to redress the situation, if democratization must live up to its billings in Africa. It is necessary to reconcile the disjuncture between African peculiarities and the inherited institutional as well as socialization structures upon which African democratization experiment are anchored. As long as these structures remain the platform upon which African democratization drives and strategies are anchored, all developmental drives may appear like putting the cart before the horse and to that extent, turn out be an exercise in futility. There is therefore the need for adaptability to make the democratization process amenable to African realities. As Elaigwu (2002:13) has pointed out, what is needed is "institutional, processual and attitudinal changes in order to meet the challenges of Democracy, Transparency and Accountability". It is only by so doing that democratization can take a firm root in the society and from there derives the nourishing ingredients for growth, maturity and consolidation.

The accomplishment of the above requires a broader process of social engineering and mobilization. This refers to "a process of creating a new consciousness, a new way of doing things and learning new values and attitudes necessary for the attainment of certain defined goals" (Osaghae, 1989:28). But if it must be fruitful, it needs to be all embracing, encompassing both the state and society. This explains why Osaghae (1989:31) argues forcefully that social mobilization as a process of socio-political engineering, which aims at achieving defined goals, must be able to herald fundamental changes in societal structures,

institutions and process, as well as the existing normative order. From this point of view, the failure of African States is monumental.

Yet, mobilization is central to the resolution of the problem. The starting point would be the empowerment of the masses in terms of qualitative basic needs (food, shelter and clothing), education and secured access to health care. Its central focus must be to decolonize the mind of Africans, both the power elite and the ruled alike, while stressing the fact that development is more feasible when situated within the framework of the cultural milieu. The mass media, civil society organizations, and indeed all and sundry have a responsibility in this challenge.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In this paper, I have attempted to explore the concepts of democratization, good governance and development with a view to unraveling the ambivalence surrounding them, particularly as regards their relationship. In doing so, I have attempted to contextualize the discussion, using the Nigerian experience under the fourth republic; within the broader context of African democratization hurdles.

Within the context of the Nigerian experience (1999-2003), I have argued that democratization may very well be a real harbinger of development. This would however depend on its time-spell as well as the depth of the democratization itself. It has also been stressed that democratization could also engender development aspectorally giving the fact that development is multidimensional. In the long run however, the developed aspect could induce development in other aspects.

Be that as it may, the study found out that the current state of democratization in Africa gives cause for concern. Issues such as democracy dividends, democratic space and popular participation; the travails of presidentialism; ethno-religious conflicts were critically examined leading us to the basic question of whether Africa has really democratized. The

answer is that though fraught with many inadequacies democratization has been on course in Africa. The poor performance, or better still, the faltering of the process, was among other things, found to be due to the fact that it has so far been pursued outside the cultural milieu. In terms of structures and socialization of the actors it has been largely alienated from African peculiarities.

Given the above scenario, there is an urgent need for a reversal of the trend, if democratization must be genuinely nurtured and sustained in Africa. To this end, we consider social mobilization in all its ramifications as a highly useful and pivotal option.

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