

## **DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

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**Abstract:** *As a theory that sets some basic principles according to which a good government, whatever its form, must be run, democracy offers good prospect for achieving national development of especially heterogeneous societies. The common feature of democratic governance is its emphasis on improving the socio-economic welfare of the people and this is synonymous with the idea of national development. All over the world, democracy is prioritized because it is assumed to have the magic wand to effectively deal with inter and intra group conflicts arising from the democratic method. But the Nigerian experience with democracy is not very pleasant. The people's votes in most cases have refused to count. While ethno-religious violence is rife in the polity, the economy remain on its knees with abject poverty as a recurring decimal among the people. The popular expectations, that democracy will resolve all these challenges have largely been unattained. Therefore, it is against this backdrop, that this study explored the effect of democracy on national development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. A descriptive method was adopted and cross-sectional data were collected across the twenty five Local Government Areas in Delta State with the aid of a structured questionnaire. Non-probabilistic sampling techniques comprising of purposeful and convenience techniques were used to elicit information via questionnaire from 400 respondents. Data were analysed using Pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis. The result of the study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between democracy and national development in Nigeria's fourth republic. Thus, the study recommends among others that the political leaders should adhere to the basic tenets of democracy and constitutionalism to promote good governance and foster national development.*

**Keywords:** *Democracy, National Development, Good Governance, Nigeria*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The issue of democracy and national development in Nigeria's fourth republic will continue to dominate political discourse by both academics and non-academics because democracy is at the crossroads in Nigeria and national development also has altogether, only materialized in the inscrutable imaginations of Nigeria's national development planners (Okeke, 2014). Since independence, the country has been in search of democracy that works. What this entail should be the concern of all peace loving Nigerians. Democracy is a contested concept, it is not a given. Countries should find ways of making it meaningful to their peculiar circumstances. The way forward is to find

out ways of adapting democracy to the country's pluralism. This may require the pursuit of some kind of consociational arrangement that will allow for the sharing of power among competing groups and political interests in the country. According to Achebe (1984), political leadership has been one of the main obstacles to democracy and development in Africa. Post-independence political leadership has been everything but productive. They have been distributive rather than productive in orientation, wasteful, and corrupt in political and economic management. This argument is still forceful today. Given the character of the country's leaders, it is not surprising that there are threats to human security. This is not unrelated to the schism in the ranks of the political elite who lack the hegemony and discipline to engender socio-economic and political stability (Igbodalo, 2012).

Despite all social and economic policies that have been implemented by successive administrations, Nigeria has remained a laggard in social, economic and political developments. Subsequently, political instability, abject poverty, acute youth unemployment, heightened crime rate, poor health prospects, widespread malnourishment have been the main features of Nigeria's political economy. One of the major explanations for the failure of all development programmes in Nigeria has been the absence of democracy and the intermittent military intervention in politics (Ogundiya, 2010). Faulty development policies pursued since independence have left the people pauperized and decimated. Also, failure to play by the rules of the game of party politics brings the country close to the state of nature. This are manifested in increasing poverty, diseases, youth unemployment, poor medical care, poor housing facilities, lack of portable water, epileptic power supply, lack of access to power and resources by minority groups and their exclusion from policy making (Egharevba & Chiazor, 2013). Meanwhile, it is not an overstatement to contend that the return of the country to electoral democracy in 1999 has not made significant impact on the economic and social well-being of the people.

However, as a theory that sets some basic principles according to which a good government, whatever its form, must be run, democracy offers good prospect for achieving national development of especially heterogeneous societies. The relationship between democracy and national development is widely appreciated. This is because democracy plays a very important and crucial role in promoting good governance and fostering national development. The common feature of democratic governance is its emphasis on improving the socio-economic welfare of the people and this is synonymous with the idea of national development. Thus, the individual and his quality of life must be the centre of conception of national development (Amucheazi, 1980; Gibert & Ubani, 2015). All over the world, democracy is prioritized because it is assumed to have the magic wand to effectively deal with inter and intra group conflicts arising from the democratic method. But the Nigerian experience with democracy is not very pleasant. The people's votes in most cases have refused to count. While ethno- religious violence is rife in the polity, the economy remain on its knees with abject poverty as a recurring decimal among the people. The popular expectations, that democracy will resolve all these challenges have largely been unattained. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that

this study explored the effect of democracy on national development in Nigeria's fourth republic.

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In Nigeria, years of economic exploitation, mal-development and bad governance have continued to fan the ember of conflict and crises in the country. Since gaining political independence, Nigeria has continued to meander the path befitting failed, weak and juvenile states. A state that had very great prospects at independence and was touted to lead Africa out of the backwoods of underdevelopment and economic dependency, Nigeria is still stuck in the league of very poor, corrupt, under developed, infrastructural decaying, crises-ridden, morally bankrupt and leadership-deficient countries of the south. Rather than become an exemplar for transformational leadership, modern bureaucracy, national development, national integration and innovation, Nigeria seems to be infamous for whatever is mediocre, corrupt, insanely violent and morally untoward (Imhonopi & Ugochukwu, 2013). This supports the assertion of Okeke (2014) who posits that democracy is at the crossroads in Nigeria and that national development also has altogether, only materialized in the inscrutable imaginations of Nigeria's national development planners. Gilbert and Ubani (2015) allude to electoral malpractices and corruption as the greatest challenges of democracy and national development in Nigeria. One of the major explanations for the failure of all development programmes in Nigeria's fourth republic has been the absence of democracy and democratic principles which include the rule of law, transparency, accountability, participation and responsiveness to the needs of the poor, marginalized and underrepresented group.

Indeed, a plethora of studies exist on the nexus of democracy and national development in Nigeria (Achebe, 1983; Joseph, 1987; Oyovbaire, 1987; Osaghae, 1998; Iboror, 2004; Joseph & Gilies, 2010; Ogundiya, 2010; Akwen & geve, 2012; Lawal & Olukayode, 2012; Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013; Omodia, 2013; Okeke, 2014; Gilbert & Ubani, 2015; Ijere, 2015; Okeke, 2017). There is therefore, ostensibly in existence, a humongous volume of panacea on the possibilities of establishing an empirical nexus between democracy and national development in Nigeria's fourth republic. Against the aforementioned backdrops, this study seeks to achieve the following objectives: (1) to examine the effect of democracy on national development in Nigeria's fourth republic, (2) to verify the extent to which there is democracy without national development in Nigeria's fourth republic, (3) to examine the relationship between democracy and national development in Nigeria's fourth republic, and (4) to recommend ways of making Nigeria's democracy to engender good governance and foster national development.

## **3. CONCEPTUAL EXPLICATION**

### **3.1. DEMOCRACY**

Democracy, adequately understood, is a theory that sets some basic principles according to which a good governance, whatever its form, must be run (Oluwole, 2003). Such principles include justice, equity, freedom, liberty, accountability, openness and

transparency in government (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2015a). The Athenians of the ancient Greece defined democracy as the government of the people by the people for the people. This simply means the government people freely put up to serve them without any discrimination on the basis of social status. Euripides, a Greek philosopher long before Plato, share the above view when he described a democratic state as one governed by people's representatives and for the many who have neither property nor birth (Sabine & Thorson, 1993) cited in (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2015a). Plato, another Greek philosopher, had a similar view of democracy when he defined a democratic state in his book, the Republic, as a state governed by the philosopher kings, who neither marry nor have personal property, but live together in the barracks (that is, equivalent to government house today) and enunciate policies for the general welfare of the people. However, Plato, in his second and third books, the statesman and the laws, respectively modified his definition when he defined democracy as the government of the people in which law is supreme, rulers and subjects' alike being subject to it. Essentially, a basis assumption of democracy is that it should guarantee the welfare of the citizens. In Nigeria however, Ojajorotu and Allen (2009); Okeke (2014); Gilbert and Ubani (2015); Ijere (2015) have noted that democracy neglects the welfare of the citizens.

In recent times, democracy is increasingly becoming a disoriented political philosophy. Hence, in global perspectives, democracy is currently in decline. Strong men in emerging democracies, populists and demagogues (in the other cases) have succeeded in unleashing such governance attacks on this system of government, so much that its natural movement has become the reverse gear (Willige, 2017). Consequently, it is becoming increasingly difficult to define democracy. However, Giddens (1996) defined democracy as a political system that allows the citizens to participate in political decision-making or to elect representatives to government bodies. This supports the assertion of Gilbert and Ubani (2015) who posits that democracy is a form of government which lays emphasis on active participation by the citizenry and on popular sovereignty.

In the view of Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi (2000), democracy is a system where political office is filled through regular, free and fair election between competing parties with the possibility of a winner freely assuming office. According to Huntington (1991), the modern usage of the term democracy as a form of government is defined in terms of sources of authority of government, purpose served by government and procedures for constituting government. The central procedure of democracy as noted by Huntington is selection of leaders through competitive elections by the people they govern. Okeke (2017) sees democracy as a people-centered system of government. This centrality is however often misconceived by misguided politicians (mainly in emerging democracies) as being election-supremacy. Once the elections are over, the strong-men politicians would begin to greedily personify democracy and chose to dictate what happens in the polity and in their shenanigans, succeed in dominating the political space in the name of democracy. However, a democratic system of government according to Egharevba and Chiazor (2013:18), ideally ensures that "the government in power is accountable to the people and that such a regime and its personnel obey the laws of the land".

In contrast, Ober (2008) asserts that the original meaning of democracy is the capacity to do things, not majority rule. This is instructive within our context of democracy and national development in Nigeria. This is because; any system of government that fails to guarantee the welfare of the citizenry will be difficult to market as democracy. It may be more germane to call such a system ceremonial democracy (Okeke, 2014). The current democratic governance in Nigeria has continued to witness repeated abuses of state power that has manifested in different forms and guises. No doubt, the political elites still see policies or state power as an avenue for primitive accumulation of wealth. This conclusion which has been reached by scholars like Ake (1989); Ikpe (2000); Ogundiya (2010); Adagbabiri and Okolie (2015b), etc., is still the order of the day today.

Democracy has thus been recognized as the only moral and legitimate way through which a society can be administered. However, there has been no universally agreed definition of the concept. Despite the seemingly divergent views, democracy with social, economic and political development will engender good governance and foster national development. Therefore, democracy is regarded as the best form of government that can be adopted in a country because democracy offers good prospect for achieving national development of especially heterogeneous societies.

### **3.2. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Development is the act or process of growth, progress and improvement within a physical setting. According to Martinussen (1997), the various conceptions of development include economic growth, increased welfare and human development, modernization, elimination of dependency, dialectical transformation and capacity building. To the United National (1986), development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting there from. In its strong sense, development means using the productive resources of society to improve the living conditions of the poorest people (Peet & Hartwick, 1999). In essence, development involves improvement in the totality of the individual in his/her economic, political, psychological, social and cultural relations, among others. The ultimate purpose of development therefore, is sustainable positive change in the quality of life of citizens who inhabit a certain social space, usually a nation state (Ajaebili, 2013).

The focus of this study is national development. According to Balogun (1972), national development entails producing more and better food to eat, healthier and happier individuals, better living accommodation, improved transportation and communications system, sound education and enlightenment among the populace and generally more money floating around. Adagbabiri and Okolie (2016) assert that national development involves sustainable improvement in both material and spiritual life of a nation, and which must be realizable in ways consistent with the protection of human dignity. National development must involve the aggregation of national resources of the country for the general well-being of the citizenry in terms of their economic, social, political and

technological advancement. Reasoning along similar line, Idike (2014) holds that national development is a nationwide development in a nation-state. It implies the well-being of a covert majority of the citizens in material terms and decrease in inequality levels. Above all, national development implies the guarantee of security of live and property in the nation state. In addition, Okeke and Idike (2016) posits that national development implies the elimination of inter-ethnic bitterness and antagonisms in the inter-group and interpersonal relationships in a nation-state. National development in the context of this study therefore refers to the progressive changes and transformation in the economic, social, political, demographic, scientific, ecological as well as technological life of a nation today, without jeopardizing the development of tomorrow.

#### **4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

While there are several theories which might prove appropriate for a discourse of this nature, the political economy approach and the structure-agency theory present us with a heuristic tool for interrogating the central issues of this study. The political economy approach is derived from Karl Marx's theory of social production. In essence, the political economy approach studies the society in it's entirely but through the existing relations within it, and especially within the umbrella of social production. Production becomes very important both in understanding of the development of the society and the analysis of dynamics within it. Here, our concern is basically on how the mode of production determines the behaviour and character of man and his society. Given Marx's dialectical materialism, this emphasizes on the primary of 'mater', especially economic conditions to social existence. In order words, its emphasis is on the primary of material condition of life. This is known as economic determinism, the emphasis of political economy approach is tripartite in nature. That is, the primacy of material conditions, the dynamic character of reality and the relatedness of different elements of society (Ake, 1981; Gilbert & Ubani, 2015). The relevance of the political economy approach is based on its ability to justify how democracy as a system of government can engender and facilitate national development by improving the living standard of the citizens. Also, the structure-agency theory contends that agents such as politicians and state managers engage in politicking to get their interests promoted. But they have to operate within structure(s) that constraint or support their actions. For example, actions of ministers and governments officers produce the structure that constrain junior civil servants and state functionaries, the effect of whose actions similarly constrain the rest of us (Hay, 1988). This theory does indicate a unilinear determinism as the argument seems to suggest. While structure determines the actions of agents, agents also condition the structure in the process of carrying out their roles or simply to realize their parochial interest. Following the structure- agency theorist line of thought, Osaghae (1999) argued that African States operated a misguided development paradigm which emphasized esoteric and aesthetic needs. This created stagnation, or stunted growth and brought poverty to many Africa countries. Following the failure of the pursuit of modernization as development, a new paradigm of development that prioritizes the people as its centre piece is being propagated, especially in the global south. This model aims at promoting the welfare and

well-being of the citizenry. In this perspective to development, public policies are directed at solving challenges of hunger; disease, education, unemployment, environmental safety, medical care, etc. yet, more than three decades of experimenting with democracy in Nigeria, the expected gains of multiparty elections have failed to be registered in the lives of average Nigerians. Instead, crises of underdevelopment still persists nay in greater dimensions. Multiparty elections which are supposed to be the cure for national development and insecurity in the country have actually exacerbated them. Leftwich (1996) affirms that what matters for development is not the system of government or regime type but the type of state and the politics of the state managers. Crucially for him, it is not the technical and administrative arrangements which determine the character and competence of the state but the politics which both generates and sustains the state, irrespective of whether the state is democratic or not. This argument is still forceful today in Nigeria's polity.

## **5. DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: NIGERIA'S DILEMMA**

Despite all social and economic policies that have been implemented by successive administrations, Nigeria has remained a laggard in social, economic and political developments. Subsequently, political instability, abject poverty, acute youth unemployment, heightened crime rate, poor health prospects, widespread malnourishment have been the main features of Nigeria's political economy. One of the major explanations of the failure of all development programmes in Nigeria has been the absence of democracy and the intermittent military intervention in politics (Ogundiya, 2010). Similarly, Okeke (2017) holds that despite all the development plans by the Nigerian government, a lot of setbacks have been encountered in the developmental process. Faulty development policies pursued since independence have left the people pauperized and decimated. Also, failure to play by the rules of the game of party politics brings the country close to the state of nature. These are manifested in increasing poverty, diseases, unemployment, poor medical care, poor housing facilities, lack of portable water, epileptic power supply, lack of access to power and resources by minority groups and their exclusion from policy making (Ake, 2000; Ighodalo, 2012; Okeke, 2014; Gilbert & Ubani, 2015).

It is accepted that democracy has some universal values such as freedom, liberty, civil and political rights, free press, respect for the rule of law and constitutionalism (Osaghae, 1999). Yet, processually, the social conditions in Nigeria demands that, socio-economic, environmental and cultural rights should be given the attention they deserve at this stage of the nation's development. Democracy may mean little to a people that are hungry, poverty stricken, unemployed and illiterate. Votes can only be meaningful in the hands of those who know their meanings and relevance. Also, environmental and other abuses are going on in the midst of poverty, thereby depriving the people of access to life sustaining resources (Ighodalo, 2012). He further argued that political leadership has been one of the main obstacles to democracy and development in Africa. According to Sklar, Onwudike and Kew (2006), the leadership pattern in Nigeria lacks the necessary

focus capable of instilling national stability. Rather, Nigerian leaders are preoccupied with their desires for the appropriation and privatization of the Nigerian state. Because of political instability, the focus of the leadership became parochial with the overriding consideration for personal survival rather than national development. Given the character of the country's leaders, it is not surprising that there are threats to human security. This is not unrelated to the schism in the ranks of the political leaders who lack the hegemony and discipline to engender socio-economic and political stability (Ighodalo, 2012; Ijere, 2015).

Others like Ejubekpokpo (2012); Enwegbara (2013); Onyisi and Eme (2013) also observe that excessive cost of governance in Nigeria militates against national development. Nigeria is perceived to be running the costliest democracy in the world. According to Enwegbara (2013), government after government in Nigeria, since the return to democracy in 1999, has talked about reducing the country's high cost of governance. The irony is that rather than reducing, every new government seems to be increasing it further than it inherited from its predecessor. The Nigeria's dilemma of democracy and national development is the dilemma of democratic capitalism. If 'we, the people', jettison their market justice theory at these points, under the ambition of reinstating democracy, the people will be accused of torpedoing the process of development. Alternatively, the long-suffering citizens will continue to bear the weight of the contradictions of capitalist democracy. Parenthetically, if the victims of market justice ('we, the people') fail to act, they do grave injustice to democracy, as their social and political rights are trampled upon (Okeke, 2014).

Commenting on the factors militates against democracy and national development in Nigeria's fourth republic, Gilbert and Ubani (2015) alludes to electoral malpractices and corruption. In Nigeria, elections have always been hotly contested under party politics that is intemperate and violence rite-large. Electoral malpractices in Nigeria's fourth republic ranges from snatching of ballot boxes, falsification of election results, imposition of candidates by political parties, victimization and inducement of electorates, arson, kidnapping and assassination of political opponents, unlawful disqualification of aspirants and candidates by both political parties and electoral commission, long litigation in court, mobilization of religious sentiments, use of militant groups, political propaganda, among others. In more extreme cases, violent politics ensues such as youth restiveness and bombing. All of these constitutes serious challenges to a healthy democratic practice, hence good governance will be lacking at the expense of national development. It would seem the behavioural pattern among the political and economic elites is not in consonance with the core democratic values which conduce for stability and national development in the polity. Politics of give and take and respect for the unwritten rules of the game of politics are what makes for sustainable democracy that could offer good prospect for achieving national development. In so far as these ingredients of the democratic method are lacking, in so much the country would continue to have the orgy of violence and crises in the polity. Tied to these issues is the distributive framework in the political structure of the country. Therefore, there must be attitudinal transformation on the part of the political elite, the absence of which good governance and national development will continue to be a mirage.

As Ighodalo (2012:168) has rightly noted, the state managers continues to dish handout in form of funds to groups and nationalities making it too attractive for there to be consensual politics. In this context politics invariably becomes a zero-sum game or winner takes all. Politicians are apt to ignore constitutive rules in the political processes because emphasis is on the sharing of the national cake rather than how it is baked. Devolution of resources to state and local governments would appear to be a more productive way of bringing about national development and efficient use of resources. But unless other forms of constitutional sanctions are evolved against abuse of power and resources of the state, the same behavioural pattern that has rendered national politics corrupt and unproductive will find expression at other levels". Also, it would seem, the state is involved in too many things with little of them being done effectively. Over the years statist approach to development has led to the state chewing more than it can swallow, thus leading to inefficiency and mal-development. The orthodox Nigerian imagination of the connection between democracy and national development, intriguingly borders on what Achebe (1983:10) describes as "a tendency among the Nigerian ruling elite to live in a world of make-believe and unrealistic expectations". According to Achebe, this is the cargo cult mentality that anthropologists sometimes speak about- a belief by backward people that someday without any exertion whatsoever on their own part, a fairy ship will dock in their harbor, laden with every good they have always dreamed of possessing. This argument is still forceful today in the Nigerian state. The capacity of democracy to lead to national development has become bedeviled by the cargo cult orthodoxy.

## **6. THE NEXUS OF DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Credible elections are necessary to stem the tide of political decay and renewal in the country. This is because in the view of apologists of liberal democracy, once elections are gotten right, democracy is on its way to being consolidated and in consequence enduring peace and security will be instituted in the country. In essence, credible elections produce security, political stability and national development. Election is part of the democratic framework in the society that if properly put to use, will produce socio-economic and political development. Credible elections put the right people in government, manage conflict effectively and allocate resources efficiently. But the nature and type of democracy necessary for national development has been an issue in Africa. The mal-integration of African States into the international capitalist order has seen African States playing subservient roles to the advanced capitalist countries. Within this contraption, African States have lost any autochthonous means of addressing challenges of development that was forced down the throat of Africans in form of modernization and in contemporary times, globalization. The aesthetic values in western development paradigm see development as mere transition from 'traditional' African ways of interaction to 'modernity' conceived of as westernization. These development models are mainly concerned with stimulating economic growth in form of increase per capital income, import substitution, industrialization, etc. while human or social security is given scout attention by African leaders (Ighodalo, 2012).

Democracy and national development are implicitly related and mutually complementary compatible. Indeed it would be difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of national development under a non-democratic system. As democracy foster national development, so also does national development facilitate the practice of democracy (Siegle, Weinstein & Halperin, 2005). Chatker (1991); Sen (1999); Ijere (2015) claim that democratic good governance is not an outcome or consequence of development but a necessary condition of national development and improved income. Proponents of democracy and development are of the view that democracy have the institutional advantage to perform more than non-democracies and democratizing countries have outperformed their authoritarian counterparts on a full range of indicators like life expectancy, literacy, access to clean drinking water, agricultural productivity and infant mortality (Siegle *et al.*, 2004). In addition, Sen (1999) succinctly sees development as freedom-an integrated process of expansion of substantive freedoms. Economic growth, technological advancement and political change therefore are all to be judged in the light of their contributions to the expansion of human freedom. Among the most important of these freedoms, he argue, are freedom from famine and malnutrition, freedom from poverty, access to health care and freedom from premature mortality. In the Nigerian context however, these freedoms must specifically include freedom from hunger and starvation, freedom from malnutrition, freedom from curable diseases, and high rate of infant mortality, material mortality and freedom from political gangsterism masquerading as democracy. It must include freedom to fully participate in the process of democracy in the country (Okeke, 2017). But how would these lofty conditions materialize for national development to become feasible in the country, in the face of dwindling internally generated revenues and undulating corruption?

Democracy is a sham if meaningful decisions, leading to significant public outcomes are not made by free citizens, secure in their dignity, acting as political equals (Ober, 2013) Raaflaub and Wallace (2007) argued that democracy is constituted through institutions, practices, mentalities and eventually, ideologies. Farrar (2007) holds that revolutionary democratizing change can occur only once the citizenry as a whole become aware of its own potential power and collective identity. In positioning Nigeria's democracy for national development, it is noteworthy that the rule of the game must be anchored on justice, fairness and equity. To achieve these virtues, the rule of law becomes highly imperative; the promotion and enjoyment of fundamental freedom becomes indispensable; and accountability, transparency and due process must be the guiding principles in the conduct of public affairs (Gilber & Uban, 2015). They further affirm that no other form of government is capable of guaranteeing these virtues other than a democratic government because of its lofty prospects in the achievement of national development. In addition, Sen (1999) adds that national development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as a systematic social deprivation, neglect of social facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states. Sen's thoughts are in line with the Human Development Index (HDI) which bring to fore an increased awareness that the commonly used economic measures of development are too limited. The emphasis for the Human Development Index (HDI) is that people and their capabilities should be the

ultimate criteria for judging or assessing the development of a country and not economic growth levels alone.

In line with the literature review, the following objectives and hypotheses were formulated for the study:

*To evaluate whether democracy guarantee national development in Nigeria's fourth republic.*

*To examine whether democracy in Nigeria's fourth republic neglects the welfare of the citizens.*

*To examine the relationship between democracy and national development in Nigeria's fourth republic.*

*To assess the effect of democracy on national development in Nigeria's fourth republic.*

## 7. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between democracy and national development in Nigeria.*

*H<sub>2</sub>: Democracy does not have a significant effect on national development in Nigeria.*

This study adopted the cross-sectional research design, hence the choice of data collection across the twenty five (25) Local Government Areas in the State. Non-probabilistic sampling techniques comprising the purposeful and convenience techniques were used in reaching respondents. The target populations were the electorates in the state. According to independence National Electoral Commission (INEC), the total number of voting population in Delta State was 2470264 in the third quarter of 2018 (INEC, 2018). The selection of the sample numbering 400 was determined from the population of 2470264 using the Taro Yamane's formula as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where N = The population size,

n = Sample size,

e = Sampling error

$$n = \frac{2470264}{1 + 2470264 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 399.93$$

$$n = 400 \text{ Appr.}$$

Consequently, a sample size of four hundred (400) was used. Electorates in each of the Local Government Areas were randomly selected to ensure fair representative from each local Government Area that make up the sample size.

The research instrument for the study was the structured questionnaire. This was a modified form of the instrument used by Siegle, Weinstein and Halperin (2004 & 2005). This was necessary to better address the new respondents in a different environment. Data analysis was performed using Pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis.

## 8. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This study examined the relationship between democracy and national development in Nigeria's fourth republic. To achieve this, four hundred (400) questionnaire were distributed across the twenty five (25) Local Government Areas in Delta State. Out of the 400 copies of the questionnaire administered, 313 were retrieved, giving us a response rate of 78.25% as shown in the table below.

**Table 1 Distribution of Questionnaire and Response Rate**

S/N	Local Government Areas	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage (%)
1	Aniocha North	16	11	2.75
2	Aniocha South	16	13	3.25
3	Bomadi	16	14	3.50
4	Burutu	16	11	2.75
5	Ethiope East	16	13	3.25
6	Ethiope West	16	14	3.50
7	Ika North East	16	12	3.00
8	Ika South	16	14	3.50
9	Isoko North	16	13	3.25
10	Isoko South	16	14	3.50
11	Ndokwa East	16	12	3.00
12	Ndokwa West	16	10	2.50
13	Okpe	16	13	3.25
14	Oshimili North	16	10	2.50
15	Oshimili South	16	14	3.50
16	Patani	16	10	2.50
17	Sapele	16	11	2.75
18	Udu	16	13	3.25
19	Ughelli North	16	12	3.00
20	Ughelli South	16	14	3.50
21	Ukwuani	16	14	3.50
22	Uvwie	16	13	3.25
23	Warri North	16	12	3.00
24	Warri South	16	14	3.50
25	Warri South-West	16	12	3.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>78.25</b>

Source: Researchers' fieldwork, 2018

**Table 2 Electorates' Responses on Whether Democracy Guarantee National Development in Nigeria**

Category	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agreed	67.5
Agreed	21.8
Neither Agreed nor Disagreed	10.7

Source: From the Questionnaires Administered

Table 2 shows that democracy guarantee national development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Out of the total respondents, it was observed that 67.5% strongly agreed and 21.8% agreed while only 10.7% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Without doubt, democracy has a magic wand in promoting good governance and fostering national development in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic if our political leaders adhere to the basic tenants of democracy and constitutionalism.

**Table 3** Electorates’ Responses on Whether Democratic Practice in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic Neglects the Welfare of the Citizens

Category	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagreed	5.7
Disagreed	13.2
Neither Agreed nor Disagreed	-
Agreed	19.5
Strongly Agreed	61.6

Source: From the Questionnaires Administered

Table 3 revealed that democratic practice in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic neglects the welfare of the citizens. Out of the total respondents, it was observed that 61.6% strongly agreed and 19.5% agreed while only 18.9% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. This finding supports the assertion of Adagbabiri and Okolie (2015a) who posit that it is worrisome however, that almost two decades after the “third wave” of democracy has blown across the continent of Africa, democratization has not produced the expected result. Rather than engender development and good governance, it has led to anarchy, civil wars, genocide and general political instabilities as have been seen in Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria. In Nigeria’s Fourth Republic for example, political assassinations, abject poverty, acute youth unemployment, arson, mobilization of religious sentiments, ethno-religious conflicts, bombing and general economic and political decay have been the major dividends of democracy since 1999 when the country returned to democracy.

**Table 4** Correlation Matrix

Variables		Democracy	National Development
Democracy	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.874**
	N	313	313
National Development	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.874**	1
	N	313	313

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 4 shows the correlation between democracy and national development in Nigeria. There exists a significant positive high correlation between democracy and national development ( $r = .874$ ,  $n = 313$ , &  $P < 0.01$ ). This implies that democracy has a strong and positive relationship with national development in Nigeria. This finding supports the assertion of Diamond (1992) who posits that democracy is not an outcome or consequence of development but a necessary condition of national development and improved income and also economic, social and political development leads to-and are

necessary pre-condition for democracy. He argue further that when development is inclusive in so far that it reshapes class structure, political culture, state-society relations and civil society, it facilitates and deepen democracy.

**Table 5 Regression Analysis**

Moderated Regression Analysis showing the Effects of Independent Variable on the Dependent Variable							
Dependent variable	Independent variable	F	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj-R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	T-value
National Development	Democracy	43.211	.386	.148	.135	.399	5.780

Source: Field Survey, 2018

In relation to the second hypothesis which states that democracy does not have a significant effect on national development in Nigeria, the results show that the correlation coefficient (0.386) indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between the predictor (democracy) and the response variable (national development). The R-squared statistic as explained by the fitted model implies that about 14.8% of the total variation in national development is explained by variations in democracy. The ANOVA results for democracy as predictor of national development in Nigeria is statistically significant with F-value of 43.211 and p-value of 0.000. The regression coefficient, t-statistic and p-value for the model implies that democracy ( $\beta = 0.399$ ,  $t = 5.780$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ) exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on national development in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can thus be concluded that there is a significant effect of democracy on national development in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic.

## 9. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results amongst others showed that there is positive and significant relationship between democracy and national development in Nigeria. The findings is in agreement with Evan and Ferguson’s (2013) view that elections alone has no evidence or significant impact on development, but deeper measures of political inclusion-including political competition, issues-based political parties and competitive recruitment to these parties are significant. The findings of this study also agree with Diamond (1992) study that revealed the relationship between democracy and national development. The result also showed that democracy does have a significant effect on national development in Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with Gilbert and Ubani’s (2015) views that democracy plays a very important and crucial role in promoting good governance and fostering national development. The findings of this study also agree with Siegle *et al.* (2004 & 2005) studies that democracy has a strong influence on national development. They argued further that putting checks on the power of the executive, separating the party from state decision-making, establishing a merit based civil service, fostering an independent and embedded private sector, facilitating the free flow of ideas and creating expectations of adherence to the rule of law are complementary factors for socio-economic development in democratic societies. To improve and drive national

development, strong democratic political institutions, the rule of law and inclusive economic institutions must accompany democracy.

## **10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The return of multiparty democracy raised hope as to the arrival of the solution of Nigeria's crises of governance- good governance, the rule of law, freedom as well as institutional, infrastructural and national development. However, political assassinations, abject poverty, acute youth unemployment, arson, mobilization of religious sentiments, ethno-religious conflicts, bombing and general economic, and political decay have been the major dividends of democracy since 1999 when the country returned to democracy. The studies have revealed through its perceived findings that democratic practice in Nigeria's fourth republic neglects the welfare of the citizens. Summarily, Ijere (2015) argues that democratic political institutions may be better than authoritarian regimes but how democracy improves development and the quality of life of the populace requires more than just democratic structures of governance, periodic elections, freedom-free press and free speech. It is obvious from the foregoing that governance issues are the bane of national development and political instability in Nigeria. Faulty development policies pursued since independence have left the people pauperized and decimated. Based on the empirical and theoretical findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Winner- takes all politics that defines the liberal democratic model is not ideal in our democratic project because it is willfull, elite based, unethical, discriminatory, violent breeding and parochial. All these have huge implication for political social and economic development.
- To improve and drive national development in Nigeria, strong democratic political institutions, adherence to the rule of law and inclusive economic institutions must accompany democracy.
- The political leaders should adhere to the basic tenets of democracy and constitutionalism to promote good governance and foster national development.
- The judiciary is a critical organ in the sustenance of democracy and maintenance of law and order in the society. The judiciary should be consistent and transparent in the discharge of its constitutional roles. It should be shielded from the rampaging scourge of corruption eating deep into the entire polity. In this regard, government must continue to emphasize merit in the appointment of judges.
- The political space should continually be expanded to give the people more opportunities to participate in the democratization processes going on the country as this has made it difficult for some socio-economic policies and programmes of government to achieve their goal and target.
- The Nigeria government should be more proactive in ensuring that the anti-corruption agencies are more effective and efficient and not mere appendage of the presidency for witch-hunting perceived political opponents.

INEC should rise up to their constitutional responsibility of monitoring activities of political parties so as to enthrone internal democracy in the political parties with strict

adherence to their respective constitutions. An organization like the electoral commission cannot be tied to the apronstring of the executive arm of government. It must be liberated from its strangle-hold through better funding and institutional autonomy to enable it run its affairs effectively and efficiently. The civil society groups should be more vigilant and more proactive in challenging the obnoxious policies of government.

A new political culture of tolerance and accommodation, bargaining and compromise, conflict and consensus should be embraced by stakeholders in the political system. The much needed peace for national development will evolve as investor (both indigenous and foreign) will begin to develop faith and confidence in the system.

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