

# Democracy and Development Nexus and the Intermediation Role of Development Communication in Africa

Kelly Bryan Ovie Ejumudo

Department of Political Science Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria

Email: drkellypaulovieejumudo@yahoo.com

## Abstract

Democracy that potentially has the capacity for enhancing the responsiveness, accountability and transparency of the state seems to be at the heart of development. Arguably, democracy and development have an association, because the former facilitates the latter. In the face of efforts at democratic enterprise, consolidation and representative governance in Africa, democracy appears to be a mirage to the extent that it is largely flawed, fragile and fledgling. This study that relied on valuable secondary sources of data contended that while democracy and development have a cause and effect relationship, the relationship is not unilaterally a one-way directional one and therefore there is no straight-line correlation between them. The study equally canvassed for the intermediation role of development communication because democracy is a necessary and not a sufficient condition for development in Africa. The study concluded that development communication is a desideratum because it is a catalyst and an impetus for the actualization of the democracy potency in the African development agenda.

**Keywords:** Democracy, development, intermediation, communication, Africa.

## 1. Introduction

Democracy as an institutional arrangement for political decision-making that seeks to ensure that society arrives at an orderly, stable and legitimate government that would guarantee the preservation of individual rights is not only predicated on the principles of liberty, equality, justice, representation, consensus and peace building, it equally provides a fertile ground that is germane for the initiation and consolidation of development efforts and aspirations. There appears therefore, a seeming potential relationship between democracy and development. This is largely because a democratic climate ensures the enhancement of the responsiveness, transparency and accountability of the state and the empowerment of the people is a necessary condition, or put more emphatically, it is a condition precedent to the actualization of development in any society. It is, in this connection, that it has been argued that democracy engenders a re focusing of the state to serve the macro interests of its citizenry, rather than the micro interest of the privileged few. In the same vein, the supposed inseparability of and, by implication, the association between democracy and development, culminated in the viewpoint that there can be no development in the absence of democracy. In the face of the facilitating role that democracy arguably plays in the development process, the intermediation role of development communication between democracy and development cannot be over-emphasized. Development communication is thus a catalyst in the facilitating role of democracy in the development agenda. Democracy is therefore a necessary and not a sufficient condition for development, especially as the sufficiency of democracy depends on the existence of and the activation as well as application of intermediation factors like effective communication.

The above reality brings into focus the necessity, desirability, inevitability, relevance and utility of development communication in the insufficiency of the democracy and development nexus. In the African continent, democratic experimentation has largely been an on-going concern and process. The institution of democratic practice in Africa somewhat engendered efforts at economic restructuring supposedly geared towards socio-economic development. Paradoxically, however, African countries are largely faced with unending development dilemma that has made it absolutely necessary to appraise the democracy and development nexus question and reality. As a matter-of-factly, there is evident persisting social and economic crisis that has both constrained development efforts and accentuated the poverty problem in Africa. In sum, there have been frustrations and misused opportunities such that the democratization process has not been beneficial or, put more categorically; it has failed to satisfy the democratic yearnings and aspirations of the large majority of Africans. The temptation is there to say that the democratic process is at crossroads because despite the opportunity that abound for the continent to search for, experiment with and consolidate democracy through constitutional reforms, political engineering and transitional programmes, the

democratic dream or actual democracy has proved elusive and by implication has become an illusion. In the midst of the so-called variant of democracy in Africa, efforts at building a society that guarantees justice, human dignity and civil liberties which democracy represents have been constrained and the continent faces political, social and economic uncertainties, a situation that is compounded by government's insensitivity to the fundamental problems of resource distribution, poverty alleviation, infrastructure development, environmental degradation, socio economic dislocation and insecurity and the poor capacity to deliver democratic dividend. Africa is therefore in a straight betwixt democratic centralism and democratic consolidation with serious implications for development in all its ramifications. At the heart of the democracy and development nexus in Africa, as a consequence, 'is development communication that is a veritable instrument for citizenship participation, governmental transparency, responsiveness and accountability as well as mobilization for social change. This paper therefore examines the desirability and inevitability of development communication as a catalyst or impetus to the facilitating role that democracy is expected to play in actualizing the potentials of development in Africa.

## **2. Democracy: A Conceptual Understanding**

According to George Orwell (cited in Mahajan 2011: 793), democracy does not have an agreed definition and the attempt to provide one is resisted from all sides. Democracy could be defined as a high-flown name for something that does not exist. In a similar vein, Lucas (1976:29) opined that democracy is a noun but should be an adjective. It therefore implies that democracy is nothing but different doctrines in different people's minds or perhaps the most promiscuous word in the world of public affairs and it could be everybody's mistress. Burns (1935: 32) equally asserted that democracy is a word with many meanings and some emotional colour, for it is not an algebraical symbol, but a flag or the call of a trumpet for some; and for others an obsolete mythology which has undesirable connections with capitalism and imperialism, and to Finer (1949:15) democracy has come to mean different things, some very hostile to each other, that it needs careful analysis if misunderstanding and idle controversies are to be avoided. Attempting a comprehensive definition of democracy appears elusive and a mirage. This is because it is confounded by a wooliness of thought and usage that is characteristic of the social sciences. And as Eliot (1914:17) rightly posited, when a word acquires a universally sacred character as the word democracy has, one wonders whether it still means anything at all. Expanding the frontier of the argument, De Jourenel (1949: 276) noted that all discussions about democracy, all arguments whether for it or against it, are stricken with intellectual futility because the thing at issue is indefinite. Therefore efforts by scholars and political theorists across age, discipline and society to define democracy have always founded on the rock of ambiguity and antinomy (Williams 1999:65). The complexity in defining democracy may be due to the fact that political systems are in a continual state of evolution and ideas regarding what ought to be the scope of governmental intervention in the lives of individuals have also changed and are continually changing. No wonder, the complexity in providing a concise and precise definition of democracy is compounded by the fact that historically the concept itself has been a locus or terrain of prolonged intellectual and ideological contestations. Essentially, after centuries of intellectual speculations as to the origin and nature of democracy, the sad conclusion is that it is an ideal towards which many nations strive. By implication, the democratic ideal remains an ideal, a possible explanation for the necessity to see democracy as a continuum where democracies can be placed and gauged in accordance with the extent of their democratization or conformity with acceptable democratic norms and values. One may simply argue that any given nation, or a method or institution is democratic which means that it is in the process of achieving the ideal or that it adopts some principles or processes which may be called democratic (Ijomah 1988:65).

As far back as 1849, Guizot (1949:11) observed that such is the power of the word "Democracy" that no government or party dares to raise its head or believes its own existence possible, if it does not bear that word inscribed on the burner. The difficulties of capturing the essence of democracy and of high listing its often contradictory activities made scholars researchers to resort to various devices and stratagems for coming to terms with the above reality (William 1999: 65-66). One of the most celebrated and influential attempts in this direction are the concept of polyarchy formulated by Dahl (1971:39). He classified political regimes according to two criteria: the degree of contestation of political power and the extent of popular participation in such contestation. The two-dimensional framework proposed by Dahl has become widely adopted by political scientists to measure the extent to which various states approximate the democratic ideal (Tremblay et al 2012). All the same, democracy that was derived from the Greek word 'Demos' meaning people and 'Kratos' implying rule or power refers to government or rule by

the people or masses (Mbachu 1990: 13). It therefore follows that in a democracy, government should not only be responsible to the demos (people), political power should also emanate from the popular will of the people and the state should be guided by and bound by the same will. Diamond (1999:19) approached democracy as a developing process and added that consolidation is a critical step in building democracies. He further argued that the consolidation process involves three components namely: decentralization that enhances the efficiency, quality and legitimacy of democracy, political culture which is a precondition for democracy to take root, especially as democratic values, beliefs, attitudes, norms and means must be embodied in a democracy and the creation of a civil society that facilitates and enhances public participation in the democratic process and prevents abusive power from becoming concentrated at the centre of society. Democracy is a way of life that permits freedom to make choices pertaining to every area of human endeavour and safeguards the liberty of individuals and protects them against unnecessary constraints on their actions because it is a governance system based on popular will. At a more theoretical level, democracy is a political system in which the eligible people in any country participate actively not only in determining the kind of people that govern them, but also actually participate actively in shaping the policy output of the government (Mbachu 1990:197).

Democracy has been used ever since the time of Herodotus to denote that form of government in which the ruling power of a state is legally vested not in any particular class or classes, but in the members of the community as a whole. Mahajan (2011: 794) stressed that democracy is not a particular kind of civilization; it is rather a civilized way of taking political action. A parsimonious definition of democracy that captured the important notion of the uncertainty of political competition is that of Przeworski (cited in Tremblay et al 2012: 335) who contended that democracy is quintessentially characterized by the fact that the winners of political competition do not have a guaranteed control over the power that they have won. Therefore, if the losers of political game know that they have a reasonable chance to win in the future then they have an incentive to stay within the rules of the game and accept their long status. When losers think this way then democracy becomes equilibrium because neither the winning nor the losing side of the competition has an incentive to depart from it unilaterally. In line with this perspective, democracy is an organized uncertainty. Democracy is a political contrivance that is aimed at reconciling freedom with the need for law and its enforcement and it is a political method by which every citizen has the opportunity of participating through discussion in an attempt to reach voluntary agreement as to what shall be done for the good of the community as a whole. Mill (cited in Mahajan 2011: 794) also viewed democracy as that form of government in which the whole people or a numerous portion of them exercise the governing power through deputies periodically elected by themselves, while Seeley opined that democracy is a government in which everybody has a share. According to Hall (cited in Mahajan 2011: 794), democracy is that form of political organization in which public opinion has control. In fact, democracy is one in which public policies are made on a majority basis by representatives subject to effective popular control at periodic elections which are conducted on the principle of political equality and under conditions of political freedom. Kpanneh (cited in Mbah 2003: 151) equally argued that democracy is a complex process of institution building, development of a liberal political culture and traditions, an uninhibited growth of free speech, an unfettered development of the press and respect for not only the rule, but the due process of the law. It can be safely stated therefore that democracy cannot exist in the absence of fundamental human rights, whether individually or collectively, which is in consonance with Nnoli's (2003: 143) notion that democracy is a system of government usually involving freedom of the individual in many respects of political life, equality among citizens, justice in the relationship between the people and the government and the participation of the people in choosing those in government. In fact, democracy is one which makes government responsive and accountable and a form of government where the mass of the people possess the right to share in the exercise of sovereign power, maintain ultimate control over affairs and determine what kind of government machinery shall be set up. Rather than a mode of governance, it represents a bold and rigorous attempt to conceptualize the democratic process as a function of several features that include freedom of speech, and association, the supremacy of the will of the electorate, regular elections and accountability. These features constitute the clustering of practice and countries can be placed on the democracy continuum in line with the presence or absence of all or some of the features.

### **3. Development: A Conceptual Clarification**

Development, like democracy, is a very vague term and it is very difficult to precisely define it. It is a step towards

achieving some goal and in nature it is ever changing. It is not an absolute but a relative term because it is difficult to measure development, especially as a particular activity may be considered development or a step forward in a particular society, but it may not be so considered in another society. Development is very much related with aspirations and expectations of the people. It is interaction of the people with the natural resources available to them. Quite often, development in administration is viewed as some dynamic change of society from one stage to another without assuming that it is final stage. Scholars have defined development severally. For instance, Marsh (1996:35) conceives the concept as huge changes in the lives of people and societies and a progression from one condition to another that is, from underdevelopment to development. The modern concept of development can be traced to 1987 when the report of the Brundtland Commission defined development to include economic, environmental, social, culture and health as well as political needs. In defining development therefore, one cannot avoid concerns with social and political issues while focusing on goals, ideals and economic matters. Some scholars have, however, emphasized the need for human-centred development; that is, the focus of development needs not been machines or institutions but on people. In the same vein, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) maintained that the people must be at the centre of all development (UNDP 2012: 17). The World Bank (2012:54) also asserted that investing in people, if done rightly, would provide the finest foundation for lasting development. It noted that all people have the same basic needs in form of clean water, fresh air, comfortable housing, etc., which must be met if development is to happen; Development is also seen as an aspect of desirable and planned change influenced by governmental action. Thus development is a value-based and a broad concept. In a broader sense, it is the process of increasing autonomy and discretion of social systems (Riggs 1961: 32). According to him, diffraction is necessary for development by which he meant degree of differentiation in a social system and it connotes increased abilities of human societies to shape their own cultural environments.

Development is a multi-dimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social systems (Todaro 1985: 87). It transcends beyond the improvement in income and output to the radical transformation in institutional, social and administrative structures. Although development is commonly seen in a national context, its holistic realization may necessitate fundamental modifications of the international economic and social system. Development is therefore a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it also connotes increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well being (Rodney 1972:1). Commonly, the term “development” is used in a restricted parlance primarily because the type of economy in any society is an index of the other social features. Thus, the traditional conception of development as the capacity of a national economy whose initial economic conditions has been more or less static for a long time to generate and sustain an annual increase in its GNP at rates of between 5.7% or more has been expanded. Implicit in the orthodox view of development is the assumption that growth in income will translate automatically to improvements in the welfare of the citizens of any given country (Iyoha et al 2003:334). Due to the experience of many less developed countries in the 1950s and 1960s, which reveals the simultaneous existence of rapid growth and the general deterioration in the condition of human life; attempts have been made to humanize the concept of development. In the thinking of Seers (cited in Todaro 1985:54), for instance, evaluation of developmental levels must be concerned with what has been happening to poverty, unemployment and inequality. Besides, development is a continuous process of generating and more efficiently allocating resources for achieving greater socially satisfied ends (Aboyade 1973: 16). Development is, by implication, made up of two basic and fundamental interrelated parts: increasing the availability of resources and improving the utilization of available resources.

While the first component encompasses the natural, human and financial, the second component is a complex function of social organization, level of technology, efficiency of management and the content of public policy (Aboyade 1973:16). Thus, the resource that is primarily critical to the development process is the natural resource. This is because the natural endowment constitutes the basis for man’s primary economic activities. All the same, from the perspective of resource availability for economic development, the significant factor is not simply the size of the surface area; rather, it is the productive capacity represented by the economic quality of the physical environment. Therefore natural environments become resources when they are discovered and exploited (Fajingbesi 1999: 91). In this direction, development implies change and this is one sense in which the term “development” is used to describe the process of economic and social transformation within countries (Thirtwall 2012:8). Development is equally an innovative process leading to the structural transformation of the social system through the productive exploitation of environmental resources. This process often follows a well-ordered sequence and

exhibits common characteristics across countries. The concept of development, in fact, embraces the major economic and social objective and value that societies strive for and the three basic and distinguishing components or core values in the wider meaning of development are life-sustenance, self-esteem and freedom (Goulet 2011: 17). Life sustenance is concerned with the provision of basic needs, while self-esteem and freedom have to do with the feeling of self-respect and independence and liberty from the three evils of want, ignorance and squalor. These three core components are interrelated, for lack of self-esteem and freedom result from low levels of life sustenance and both lack of self-esteem and economic imprisonment become links in a circular, self-perpetuating chain of poverty by producing a sense of fatalism and acceptance of the established order-the accommodation to poverty (Galbraith 2012:12). Development therefore encompasses a process of improving the quality of human life which involves raising the standard of living of people (income and consumption, level of food, medical services, education and other infrastructural development); creating social, political and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity and respect and increasing freedom of choice of goods and services.

#### **4. Democracy and Development Nexus**

“Democracy and development” nexus has been and continues to be debated both in academic circles and in the international community. There is additionally a broader understanding that the linkages are multiple and very germane for both those involved in democracy building and development policies. Development is also increasingly understood as a general improvement of the quality of life for the majority of the population, while democracy is not only a value to be pursued for its own sake, but also as an integrated tool that is expected to deliver a better life that underpins the development reality. Democracy and development does not just inform and explain; it is also a forum for open and robust debate on political and economic trends in Africa that will encourage a cross-fertilization of ideas in the theoretical and practical aspects of democratization, development and peace building. It has often being argued that there is a nexus between democracy and development. For the average African, democracy is only meaningful if it delivers what can be called democracy dividends i.e. socio-economic development. It has been further argued that there is an organic link between the political freedom that democracy could engender and freedom from hunger, ignorance and disease that can result from socio-economic development. The development and democracy nexus argument is based on the conviction that it is the rule of law which democracy guarantees that spells out the frontiers of justice, equity and human freedom and only democracy can be relied upon to support and pursue the development agenda. Moreover, the nexus is critical if we are to deepen and expand the commitment to democratic governance and thus help in the sustenance and consolidation of the gains of democratic initiatives as a foundation for economic and social development. It may be difficult to deny that democracy is not only an end in itself but also an important means to other ends because democratic political systems are generally seen as best suited to protect and guarantee human rights and to deliver social and economic development. From this point of view, it is also accepted that the democratic process is vital for addressing the political aspect of poverty. Being accountable to citizens also enable democratic governments to chart a political course supported by people and to be able to change it when needed. This will however be possible only if we are able to bring together a broader understanding of democracy where there is a juxtaposition of the procedural and institutional aspects with the delivery element. This may suffice as a possible explanation for why the very question of the ability of democracy to deliver on citizens’ needs and expectations has gradually emerged as a major challenge across the globe.

The most recent, very comprehensive and ambitious analysis of the relationship between democracy, value change and development comes from Ronald Inglehart, the founder of the World Values Survey. Inglehart and Wetzel (2010: 54) summarily concluded that, “socio-economic development tends to propel societies in a common direction”-toward self-expression values and “emancipation from authority”-“regardless of their cultural heritage”. This shift toward tolerance, trust in others, suspicion of authority, and valuing of freedom has profound political consequences. And as people come to embrace self-expression values, they come to demand democracy-and not just any democracy but the institutions to protect individual freedom and choice that encompass liberal democracy. And with development, the quantity and variety of information available explodes, and more importantly, control over it is dispersed. As Ghali (1992:7) also rightly articulated, democracy is favoured around the globe not only because of the outcome of the cold war, but because only the structures of democracy can foster the open intellectual environment that the economy of this dispensation demands. At least, in today’s world, development depends to a large extent, on access to information, popular participation and freedom of expression, which are hallmarks of

democracy. According to Osaghae (2002: 12), democracy facilitates development in several ways including enhancing the responsiveness and accountability of the state and empowerment of the citizens to participate in and claim ownership of the development project that it superintends. The crux of this argument is that democracy engenders a refocusing of the state to serve the interests of its citizenry rather than that of a few privileged elites. It is this perspective of viewing democracy as empowerment that probably led Zack-Williams (2002: 213-223) to conclude that 'no democracy no development'. This conclusion was strongly supported by Boutrous Ghali when he noted that it is for this reason that we have come to associate democracy with development, speaking of the two as inseparable for success' (Ghali 1992: 20).

To the extent that democracy guarantees freedom of participation in the development process, and harnesses the human and natural resources for the benefit of all, these observations may be less contentious. There are yet other scholars who hold the view that democracy would thrive better under conditions of economic development. In his work, 'Economic Determinants of Democracy', Muller (2010:18) conducted a cross-national quantitative research on the correlation between development and democracy. In a survey that covered fifty- eight countries, he submitted that 'a country's level of economic development is associated positively and strongly with the extent to which the political system manifests properties of democracy' (Muller 2010:19). Generally speaking, therefore, it is possible to contend that there exists a two-way relationship between democracy and development. The symbiosis defines complementary network that concurs with Queen Elizabeth's (2003: 3) observation that 'neither kite could fly independently for too long'. According to Ake (2003: 126), by the assumptions of the development paradigm, African countries can develop only in the context of democratic politics and considerable confusion exists among scholars of development over the relationship between development and democracy. Some say there is no necessary relation between democracy and development. Some argue that democracy is detrimental to development and others think it is conducive to it, while some yet think the matter is one of sequencing. Ake further stressed that from all indications; this confusion arises from scholars' not taking the assumptions, the conventional wisdom, seriously. Once that is done, he highlighted,, the confusion disappears; although there may be errors but not confusion. The prevailing development paradigm sees the people as the end of development. In practice, however, they are only nominally so. That is not surprising, since people cannot be the end of development unless they are already its agents and its means, a condition that has never been true in Africa (Ake 2003: 126). If the people are the agents of development-that is, those with the responsibility to decide what development is, what values it is to maximize, and the methods for realizing it-they must also have the prerogative of making public policy at all levels. They must not merely participate in the conventional sense of the word; they must be the ones who decide on how to proceed with social transformation. Finally, if people are the end of development, then their well- being is the supreme law of development. But the well being of the people will only be the supreme law of development if they have some decision making power. It is possible of course that someone can exercise public decision-making power to the benefit of others (Ake 2003:127). But the only one way to ensure that social transformation is not dissociated from the well being of the people is to institute democracy. All the same, the democracy and development nexus reality is potentially feasible, practicable and evident with the intermediation of catalysts, stimulants, activators and impetus like development communication. Some scholars have however denounced the possibility of democracy in Africa, given her state of economic underdevelopment.

As Oyugi (2011:109) pointed out, the whole idea of democracy does not make sense in a situation where a people's major preoccupation is survival. It is virtually impossible to establish democratic practices in a polity that is technologically underdeveloped. Industrialization and the attendant diversification of the economy that accompanies it is, therefore, a basic prerequisite for the establishment of democratic practices in the contemporary world. The' above represents the reasoning of some political theorists; who would want development first before democracy. Others scholars doubt if democracy can facilitate development in Africa. Mkandawire (1996:11), for instance, argued that correlation does not suggest causation and that it is doubtful if such correlation exists. Although, the linkage between development and democracy is, in the estimation of Olushola (1994: 106), unclear, yet it remains one that has generated controversies in political discourse. The clarity concern expressed by Olushola may not be unconnected with the insufficiency of democracy for development. All the same, if democracy cannot provide the basis for the development of the practicing enclave, then it is not a worthwhile system of government for a well-organized polity. If anything, democracy by virtue of the fact that it provides core institutions that support personal freedom is a sure antidote for economic development (Olushola 1994:106). However, the viewpoint that

democracy can only thrive in a developed economy is a narrow argument, which sees democracy as a political device that does not have either direct or indirect impact on the economy.

Granted that there is correlation between democracy and development, though not a straight-line type; in most of Africa, the pursuit of transition to democracy in a situation of acute economic and management crisis, has obstructed and stifled bosh genuine democratization and development process with negative implications for a climate of perpetual insecurity and instability, characterized by the persistence of violent crimes and ethno-religious conflicts. Also, it is argued that deeply entrenched legacies of authoritarianism in periods of transition have undermined the management of crises and conflicts and have helped to generate unnecessary tensions and confrontations with violent outcomes (Jega 2007: 168). Some analysts have also questioned the focus on democratic reform given the parlous state of African economies. This mind-boggling concern is in tandem with the view of Nyango (1988:71), one of the earliest contributors to the democracy and development debate, that there exists a definite correlation between the lack of democracy in African politics and the deterioration in socio-economic conditions' on the continent. He explained that the absence of democracy in Africa for much of the last thirty years encouraged lack of accountability and hence low levels of accumulation and advocated democracy as a panacea arguing that democracy with its built-in accountability can lead to more responsible use of public resources and hence, high levels of development (Nyango 1988: 72). The above contention is in tandem with Ake's position (1990: 2) that Africa needs democracy not only because democracy is desirable in itself, but also because it will greatly facilitate development. According to Ake, there are four ways in which political authoritarianism undermined development in Africa. First, he said political repression has turned politics into warfare, thereby infesting leaders with a siege mentality and effectively relegating development issues to very low priorities. Second, the reliance on repression by leaders has disconnected them from their people and completely dissociated public policy from social needs. Third, constant coercion of the people has alienated them from the state that is therefore seen as a force to be feared, evaded, cheated and defeated as circumstances permit. The fourth way in which political repression contributed to Africa's underdevelopment is occasioning an enormous waste of human resources, the very engine of development.

## **5. Factors Constraining and Inhibiting Democracy Initiative and Development Agenda**

In the face of the seeming consensus on the democracy and development nexus, there are apparent factors that appear to be constraining and inhibiting the democracy initiative and the development agenda. This is not surprising because both phenomena are arguably complementary and supportive and by implication could be described as inversely having a cause and effect relationship, although the relationship is not unilaterally one-way directional and singularly correlated. Some of the constraining and inhibiting factors are colonial background that did not create the conditions that are germane for the democratic experience or the enabling environment for democracy and development to thrive, lack of genuine commitment in the neo colonial environment as evident in the fact that the political leaderships never really had development on the agenda in the first place or really ready for democracy in the first instance and, resultantly, none of them had any serious interest in transformation, and all of them were only too aware that they could not afford to broaden the social base of state power (Ake 2003: 4) , past political history and, legitimacy. Other factors include electoral fraud and corruption, for elections are meant to be free and fair so that citizens can have confidence that the process is legitimate and that it will make leaders accountable to the voters since the aim of democracy is to install a responsible and representative government (Finer 1949: 213). Although establishing free and fair elections is not as easy as it may seem (Dickerson and Flanagan 2012: 299), liberal democracies do not always fit local cultures, especially as it is a value-laden process of government and if it is to become universal, ways must be found to resolve conflicts between liberal democratic values and existing cultural values (Dickerson and Flanagan 2012: 305). This explains why Ake (2003:129) argued that Africa requires somewhat more than the crude variety of democracy that is being foisted on it and most of the continent is still far from liberal democracy and further still from the participative social democracy that our paradigm envisages.

In respect of development, because the development paradigms largely ignored the specificity and historicity of African countries, African leaders were put in a position where everything was relevant to them and nothing was uniquely significant for understanding them (Ake 2003: 13). In fact, the development paradigms constructed for other purposes and experience, meaningless for being incomplete and out of context, were applied in ways and for purposes that defy comparability. The development paradigm essentially suffered greatly from being indifferent to

the institutional framework of development and there was little consideration for how the political structures and practices, the administrative system and social institutions of a country might affect its feasibility and practicability. Additional factors are political culture that invariably constrain the democracy development nexus, if they are either absent or largely non-existent; human rights abuses that straddles both structural and behavioural dimensions of democracy (Oche 2004: 15), despite the fact that democracy places a primacy on human rights and the enforcement of these rights serve as cornerstone for successful transition to democratic consolidation (Jega 2007: 127) and the logic that it is only when people enjoy the right to exist in dignity, that is, freedom from poverty, that the enjoyment of civic and political rights can be meaningful to them (Anifowose and Enemuo 2005:100) and centrifugalism, because by the time independence was achieved in the early 1960s, the centrifugal tendencies had grown strong enough in many countries (for instance, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Uganda, Cameroon, and Zaire) to threaten not only the transition to independence but, more importantly, the political viability of the new governments (Ake 2003: 5). In trying to deal with these forces of disunity, some African countries, like Nigeria, came to independence with such complex constitutions that systemic breakdown was inevitable.

## **6. The Desirability and Inevitability of the Intermediation Role of Development Communication in the Democracy and Development Nexus**

Despite the fact that some democracies are functional and others are flawed, there appears to be a relative consensus that there exist a nexus between democracy and development, that is to say democracy necessarily engenders development and development naturally brings about transformation in individual values and social structure that press societies toward democracy. The viewpoint canvassed in this paper is that democracy with all its appeal and potency, is only a necessary and not a sufficient condition for development. The premise of this contention is the logical understanding that there is no unilateral, one-way directional correlation between both phenomena, instead other phenomena like development communication play a vital intermediation role which serves as a catalyst or an impetus for the actualization of the democracy potency as far as the development agenda is concerned. A standard vehicle for democratization has been development. Another factor that stimulates both democratization and development, namely access to information, could be consistent with the historically strong statistical correlation between democracy and development and might also help explain some of the recent unprecedented political changes. Development communication, in its broadest sense, is an instrument of social change. UNESCO (2012:140) recognizes this role in resolution on culture and communication. One critical and common factor in the conceptualization of development is that communication constitutes an important factor in the development process. The issues that have followed from this understanding are numerous, but are mostly captured in this question: How may the factor of development communication be effectively and efficiently applied in the process of moving underdeveloped societies to the realm of developed societies? The answer to this question summarizes the major thrust of this paper. Development communication (DC) is conceptualized as the systematic, effective, and efficient use of communication structures for development purposes. Jayaweera (2012:19) viewed DC as a systemic utilization of appropriate communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate, and train rural population mainly at the grassroots level.

Other scholars who have aptly captured the concept of Development Communication (DC) include Mercado (1992:13) cited in Soola (2003), who asserted that DC a top-down, development-oriented, and government-to-the-people communication has been redefined "as a subsystem of the larger system of communication with emphasis on the planned use of communication resources to gain multi sectoral support in attaining and sustaining national development goal". African countries are beset with many challenges in social, political, cultural and economic development and transformation. Bofo (2006:11) stated that regardless of the type of development challenges in African countries, their communication and information have critical roles in the efforts to address these challenges. Akinyele (2003: 65) citing Fraser and Restrepo-Estrade (1998:24) observed that a prime factor in fostering change for development is the planned and systematic use of communication to help individuals, communities, and societies to introduce and accept changes. This means that communication has a consequential role to play in fostering development. Hence, Okunna (2012: 293) stressed that development communication is "the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential." Also, emphasizing the utilitarian role of development communication, Bofo

(2012:11) described the concept as the planned and systematic application of communication resources, channels, approaches, and strategies to support the goals of socio-economic, political and cultural development. In a similar vein, Laninhun (2012: 79) posited that development communication has to do with understanding the needs of people, informing the people, and mobilizing the people for effective participation in the development process.

Even in a globalized world, development communication appropriately seeks to localize communication efforts in finding solutions to problems. This simply means that localized problems are given localized communication treatment in consideration of the peculiar local factors, regardless of the globalized communication system. Development Communication is therefore accepting the truism of the power of communication as a catalyst for social development through mass participation. It is equally the utilization of existent communication tools, applicable theories and result-driven strategies for the advancement of society. Development Communication that envisions the deliberate use of communication to the end that the development agenda will culminate in a higher quality of life is the process of eliciting positive change (social, political, economic, cultural, environmental, etc) through an effective exchange of pertinent information in order to prod people to action. Development communication thus encapsulates the useful role of information tool and dissemination in the development process that engineer positive change and provides useful inputs that produce outputs that are efficacious in addressing critical challenges facing democratic development in the African region. As democratic societies rests upon the right of individuals and groups to lead a life that they value and enable them to realize their potential as human beings, a climate that is germane and fruitful for development, the intermediation role of development communication is forcefully made bare. From time immemorial, communication has been considered a guideline for governing democracies where elected officials presumably make public policies on behalf of the citizens and democracy demands that the people should be given equal opportunity to participate in the decision making and administration of the state, that there should be a free, fair and independent judiciary, equality of all before the law and that the law be supreme such that the leaders and the led as well as the government are informed and guided by the law. The use of functioning democracies as innovations necessary in order to move societies from a closed authoritarian regime to one of openness, transparency, accountability and participation so as to stimulate and facilitate development is therefore arguably incontrovertible. This however demands building a robust and vigorous mass media, civil society and significant other people-oriented organizations that will generate social capital, foster civic norms, press public interests, raise citizen consciousness and encourage mass participation, check and scrutinize and guide government conduct, and engineer good governance reforms.

## **7. Concluding Remarks**

In most of Africa, although there have been various attempts and efforts at democratization and democratic consolidation, yet the claim to having a functional democracy that is founded on mass participation appears to be a sham and a ruse. This position derives from the fact that the developing process that critically builds up to consolidate democracies are largely constrained, stifled and stagnated to the extent that most democracies in Africa can be appropriately dubbed as shallow and flawed. Undoubtedly, entrenching democratic values and institutions in transitional democracies is not an easy task, especially as democratic consolidation demands decentralization that enhances the efficiency, quality and legitimacy of democracy, political culture that embody democratic values, beliefs, attitudes, norms and means and civil society that is the realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting and autonomous from the state and bound by a legal order or set of shared values. In the environment of failed democracy, most of Africa that is in a straight betwixt democratic centralism and consolidation, experience underdevelopment or stagnated development, a crisis situation that is compounded by a mixed and politicized mass media, a growing civil society and a faulty and relatively closed communication system deliberately concocted by the various governments to frustrate the utility and applicability of development communication that can efficaciously intermediate to stimulate the facilitating role of democracy in actualizing development. In sum, the intermediation role of development communication in the democracy and development nexus must be enduring because most of Africa still needs a democracy that has a developmental basis and underscores the empowerment of the ordinary people and the dismantling of structural and institutional barriers to mass participation in governance

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