

Demographic Dynamics And The Attainment Of Democratic Development: The Case Of Nigeria

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Abstract

The discourse on demography, democracy and development issues is an inclusive one that focuses on the need to create a human environment where the quality of life of the people is greatly enhanced. Today, the measurement of progress on the development agenda, as encapsulated by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Human Development Index (HDI), goes beyond economic indicators (such as economic growth, per capita income), to include both political and social indicators. This paper argues that the real challenge of development in Africa is not the size of its population and/or resource endowments, but the poor management and politicization of its demographic dynamics captured by census data as well as adopting economic and social policies that ultimately leave the people far behind for whom development is meant. Furthermore, the paper contends that the failure of political leaders and policy makers at all levels of governance in Nigeria to pay adequate attention to the generation of quality demographic data, upon which relevant policy interventions and decisions are framed to address the problems of poverty, inequality, fertility, mortality, youth unemployment and illiteracy, negatively impact the chances for effective poverty reduction, infrastructural provision, security and reproductive health. This paper concludes that for countries in Africa, particularly Nigeria, to attain the status of a democratic developmental state and deliver on the much-anticipated 'demographic dividends', the leaders must exercise the political will to invest massively in human capital and develop a reservoir of reliable demographic data that will address the socioeconomic conditions of their citizens, including the monitoring and evaluation of development plans and programs.

Keywords: *Welfare, Development, Governance, Census, Population.*

INTRODUCTION

The current discourse linking demography, democracy and development is significant because it centers on the goal of advancing the quality of life of humanity. This is critically so as a country's most vital resource is its people, and for the potentials of these persons to be fully harnessed and productively so, there is the need for all countries to invest massively in education, healthcare, job creation and basic infrastructure that will advance the living standards of the citizenry. This has a greater likelihood of guaranteeing a reduction in poverty, communicable diseases, malnutrition, and inequality in terms of income distribution. This realism underscores the goal of development which encapsulates sustainable, equitable and democratic processes that focus on increasing living standards of people and not just on ensuring Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - which is limited to per capita income and economic growth markers. Thus, underlying the essence of development is the drive to create equity, freedom, justice and better quality of life. It also ensures that economic growth is not only sustainable, but that the fruits of that growth are widely distributed and targeted at the reduction of poverty, inequality and unemployment while promoting and providing education, health and social safety nets (Sen, 1999). Similarly, successful development will also require the existence of an enabling social and political stability where the role of government is indispensable in seeing to the attainment of the aforementioned goals, including the discouragement of conspicuous consumption, corruption and large-wage disparities.

Be that as it may, for any nation to achieve the goals of equity, freedom, justice and better quality of life for its people, it is essential that such a country needs basic information about its citizenry for the purposes of planning and development. This introduces the need for the use and application of demographic data vital for effective development planning. Good planning, therefore, is based on reliable, accurate and detailed information on the state of the society. This information makes it possible to plan better social services, improve the quality of life of people and solve existing societal problems such as unemployment, inequality, poverty, insecurity, sanitation and diseases. Thus, statistical information, particularly the one generated through the use of surveys, is an essential tool for driving the democratic and development process of any society. It also provides the avenue for citizens to examine whether the socioeconomic policies, programs and decisions of government at all levels serve the public interest that they are meant to serve in terms of delivering the dividends of development.

However, a detailed examination of data regarding the population dynamics of many African states, including Nigeria, paints a very gruesome picture of government's lack of capacity and outright failure to provide education, healthcare and food security for its people, much less having the capabilities to raise the living standards of the people. Furthermore, the question of the gap between population numbers and resource availability and utilization is all the more compelling and disturbing on the continent since most of the wealth created is not widely shared among the majority of the populace. This is manifested at both the individual and national levels by widespread poverty, unemployment, poor healthcare and nutrition, substandard housing, low per capita income, high unequal income distribution, poor electricity, and infrastructure (Handelman, 2006). This goes to buttress the fact that many of the population growth issues in the world are concentrated in mostly developing low-income countries and poor households. Yet, the population question is not so much about numbers as it is about how the resources of nations are effectively and efficiently harnessed and utilized to bring about improvements in the quality of life of the people. Besides, threat to the sustainable use of resources comes as much from inequalities in people's access to resources as well as from the ways in which they use them based on the sheer number of people involved.

Thus, the concern over 'population problem' does not call for so much control over population growth as much as the need to address the concern for human progress and equality. This is vitally so because people are the real resource of any nation and for whom development should centre on ultimately. For instance, available data from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) shows that more than 70% of persons in Nigeria live below the poverty line of 1 USD per day (specifically 112 million live in relative poverty). Infant and child mortality rate is one of the highest in world (75 and 88 per 1,000 live births), under-five mortality is 157 per 1,000 live births, maternal mortality is 545 deaths per 100,000 live births, electricity consumption is 50 percent, access to improved water is 56 percent, improved toilet facilities is 27 percent (NDHS, 2008; The Punch, 2012) and the gap between the rich and the poor, in terms of income inequality (from 0.429 in 2004 to 0.447 in 2010), continues to widen, in spite of its huge natural and material resources. It is also paradoxical to note that despite the fact that the Nigerian economy is growing at 7.7 percent, the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing every year (Imhonopi and Urim, 2012).

These dismal statistics have raised concern over the impact of governmental development policies and anti-poverty/employment generation programs such as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS), the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), other neoliberal socioeconomic policies and the commitment they promised to improve the welfare needs of the people. In the same vein, other questions have been raised such as:

- i. What are the development strategies the Nigerian government is pursuing and what is their impact on the people's socioeconomic welfare?
- ii. How are the policies designed to address the causes of population change(s) contribute to or detract from equitable development?
- iii. How democratic is the governance process in serving the interests of the greatest majority over those of the few elites?
- iv. How responsive is government toward employing demographic data in the design of development plans and policies?
- v. How significant are the citizens' involvement in decision-making process about what actually concerns them, including their active participation in choosing those who govern them?

These questions are borne out of the fact that effective governance requires institutions to provide the avenues required to promote, guarantee and secure political freedoms, economic improvement, social opportunities, transparency and protective security that encapsulate human development. This is what Sen (1993) calls an integrated process that expands the substantive freedoms enjoyed by members of the society i.e. social rights such as education and healthcare, and political and civil rights.

It is the need to address these issues that center on the standard of living of the people and the state of human development in the Nigerian state that informed this study. This is critically so as the core challenge of development in the global south has always been one of tackling the problems of poverty, inequality, and

governance. In the same vein, the study also aims to examine the role that demography plays in addressing fundamental development and governance issues in Nigeria and its utilization in deepening the promotion of sound development objectives and strategies, promote good governance and democratic dividends. Furthermore, the study seeks to reawaken the discourse about demography, development and democracy as all-inclusive phenomena that development planners, policy makers and government officials in developing countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, must take cognizance of before implementing policies that are consistent with development goals and objectives. Thus, the paper is also driven by current efforts to reawaken and revitalize the exploration of the impacts of demographic trends on the achievements of major development indicators and governance process.

DEMOGRAPHY AND ITS ROLE IN PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Census statistics represents an indispensable database required for measuring the physical and social well-being of people in a country. It also provides a channel for the estimation of most vital economic indicators necessary for evaluation of human development. Thus, for any country to attain its development objectives, it needs a sound and reliable population data support to guide its socioeconomic policies, programs, planning and implementation (NPC, 2004). Demography as a discipline helps to ensure the attainment of these laudable goals. It involves the study of population and devising means for improving the quality of people's lives and the possibility for individuals everywhere to develop their full potentials (Macionis, 2001:567; Rockefeller, 1952). It also deals with the analyses of population size, its composition, the determinants and consequences of these changes on society's socioeconomic development. While demography and demographers are not only interested in numbers and reducing population growth, they also generate evidence-based guidance for policy actions to improve human well-being through the collection, analyses and synthesization of data for a more comprehensive description of population issues which are central to human development. As such, the success of the population of a nation is vital to promoting development (economic and social) and ending poverty since a society's standard of living is closely related to its rate of population growth. In the same vein, a lack of accurate, reliable and consistent data on the well-being of the population is not only detrimental to policy making, but also to arriving at a comprehensive, holistic and better understanding and measurement of the development progress of a country.

Consequently, the provision of accurate demographic measures relating to birth rate, death rate, life expectancy level, literacy rate, healthcare, child/infant mortality, maternal mortality, calorie intake, sanitation, housing and others are important for understanding the demographic dynamics and change, and the unfolding of the demographic situation, which are absolutely essential for evaluating the progress of economic development of nations, including monitoring the MDGs, government policies and programs. Thus, demographic data help to mirror the performance of government of nations in addressing the basic socioeconomic needs of their citizens for improved living conditions. It also provides objective and reliable demographic records to identify the challenges of human development, pinpoint areas where there is progress, so that government is better informed and equipped with facts to make informed decisions and to formulate and implement the right mix of policy interventions within the framework of available resources. This is fundamentally so as having a better grasp of requisite information regarding issues of health, education, migration and state of economic growth is central to evolving effective decision-making processes that contribute to tackling issues of poverty, inadequate infrastructure, poor sanitation, unemployment and inequality in most nations of the world. Conversely, any negative change in the demographics of the people paints a struggling drop in the quality of life and increasing poverty among the people that can be attributable to poor governance and ineffective policies and programs in such societies.

Thus, today in Nigeria, issues relating to the demographics of the nation reveal a lot of areas that the government needs to focus its attention on in order to deliver on its quest to bring about the social transformation of the Nigerian state and improvement in the standard of living of its citizenry. These areas include the state of human development of the people as shown in the UNDP's global Human Development Index (HDI), which is a composite measurement of school enrolment, literacy, infant mortality, life expectancy and income (Handelman, 2006: 6). Other demographic issues deal with the age distribution of the population, migration (rural-urban),

political participation of the people in governance, gender inequality and female reproductive health matters, among others. These issues are critical in defining the state of a country's economic and social development. For instance, an expanded educational system in a country does offer the populace additional opportunities by raising their literacy rates; gives them room for earning better income and improved living conditions while also creating more egalitarian values for all. Besides, increased education and literacy expand mass political participation and increase government accountability to the governed. Similarly, an educated workforce does contribute to higher labor productivity at all levels, including enhancing the status of all. Correspondingly, changes in population composition also affect the demand and supply of labor and gender issues which are key determinants of population growth and development. It is therefore, not a surprise that a higher literacy rate has been found to be one of the most crucial prerequisites for democratic government throughout the world and a major tool for economic modernization (Axel, 1992).

Furthermore, demographic information on the age and sex distribution of the population brings to the front burner issues that concern youth and women empowerment. For instance, a country's age structure is affected by the rates of change that occur across age groups on the measure of fertility and mortality. As such, the "youth bulge" and the rapid growth of the elderly population relative to the working age population are two key structures that are shaping development concerns in this century. The effect of change in the age distribution of population on growth in developing countries is substantial. Thus, massive investments in education and health needs of persons within the 15 to 54 years bracket have important implications for the state to reap the benefits of demographic dividend. The effect of demographic dividend is realized through the proportion of the population in the labor force (quantity), the education and technical skills of the labor force (quality) and the opportunities available to workers to use their skills productively (Anrudh, 2008).

Thus, the youth bulge of any nation represents both risks and opportunities. In the same way that a baby boom stretches the resources required for antenatal care and primary education; a surge in the absolute number of youth create pressure on the services used by youth such as land, education, infrastructure, apprenticeships, and other entry-level workforce positions. In situations where large cohorts of youth can be productively absorbed into the labor force, the youth bulge can create a 'demographic window of opportunity' which may yield a high volume of economic outputs relative to the dependent costs of a large elderly population. On the other hand, circumstances exist in most developing countries such as Nigeria where the economy in spite of experiencing 'positive economic growth' is unable to absorb large number of youths due to misguided economic policies, corruption and poor leadership (see World Bank Commission on Growth and Development, 2008). In these circumstances, the youth bulge threatens to exacerbate forces contributing to political, economic, and social instability, and serves as an engine for external migration resulting in brain drain, child and women trafficking that has become a challenge in Nigeria and other developing countries as well. Besides, the ratio of youth to adult population has huge implication for resource utilization and infrastructural provisions as more schools will have to be built, health services increased, goods and services required by them are to be locally produced or imported.

Also, demographic analysis and dynamics have raised the need to address the gender question in assessing key development goals and objectives of nations. This is essentially so as women issues constitute a critical element in determining and controlling the population growth of a nation even though population increase at the national and global levels are mostly caused by a decrease in mortality and not by an increase in fertility (Anrudh, 2008). Besides, the status of women also serves as a core variable in assessing governance and development outcomes. This aligns with the Chinese saying that "women hold up half of the world". Therefore, putting women issues on the front burner of development should be a key policy decision if the drive by various countries to develop a population or people with the capacity to lead a socially and productive life is to be realized. Given the size of females in the population composition of Nigeria, women's role in driving the modernization process of the nation cannot be wished away. For instance, most of the persons who work in the agricultural and the informal sector are women; this is in spite of the fact that they are saddled with the responsibility of child bearing, nurturing, home management as well as engaging in formal employment amongst other activities. Yet, available evidence reveals that women are mostly discriminated against in all spheres of life, as many of them are concentrated in certain occupations and faces barriers to entering others such as politics and leadership where they are underrepresented, including having little influence and control over economic resources and a persistent

cultural practice of male dominance. Other forms of injustices include forced female genital circumcision, domestic violence, sexual abuse, assault, divorce laws that are biased against women, barriers to seeking credit facilities, access to land ownership and inheritance rights, and others. All these point to cases of gender victimization and exploitation which are more severe in many parts of the developing world including Nigeria.

These gender gaps impact many important facets of political and economic life just as they undermine the social and economic rights of women and young girls, including denigrating their leadership abilities and socioeconomic contributions to society. Thus, incorporating gender perspectives in policy-making and adoption of gender inclusive approaches in the framing and implementation of development-related goals is seen as the key to attaining sustainable development (OECD, 1999:15; UN 2006:15). This importance is evident in the world's governments' adoption of gender equality and women's empowerment as the third Millennium Development Goal target in 2000. Therefore, empowering women becomes an indispensable tool for advancing development and reducing poverty. Investment in women's empowerment is vital for securing sustainable economic growth and other development objectives. This is achieved by equipping them with the knowledge, skills and habits to be able to make their contributions towards the advancement of the society.

From the above discourse, it is evident that policy planners, national government officials, and international development institutions and other non-governmental organizations cannot afford to ignore the impact of demographic trends and indicators on the achievement of major development goals, including poverty reduction, health, security and provision of public services and infrastructure. Demographic factors affect poverty levels and inequality within and among countries in fundamental ways. At the micro level, fertility levels affect household economic well-being; at the macro level, the 'demographic opportunity' associated with the transition from majority youth population to a large productive-age population influences unemployment and economic growth rates; and globally, immigration results from and responds to differing levels of economic development. Thus, engaging a cohesive approach to reducing poverty and inequality requires understanding linkages to demographic change at each level.

Furthermore, demographic data bring to the fore broad areas of social concern upon which every government capacity to deliver the dividends of improved quality of life can be measured. These concerns include: material well-being, education, eradication of poverty, income distribution and expenditure, economic resource allocation, expansion of productive employment and reduction of unemployment, social integration, crime and criminal justice as well the status of women's and men's health (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1996). Thus, the degree to which these are addressed in order to advance the standards of living of the people goes a long way to show strong government commitment to social welfare programs and the share of the country's economic resources that is invested in education, healthcare, infrastructure and sanitation. In all, demography and demographic trends seek to task government to engage in policies and programs that will end poverty, ignorance, disease and provide equal opportunities to millions of people.

DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE IMPERATIVE IN PROMOTING POPULATION DEVELOPMENT

The pursuit of advancing the quality of life of people in a given society will require the existence of a responsive, transparent, representative and accountable government that can effectively tackle the challenges of poverty, inequality, unemployment; promote economic growth and human development. This is so because development entails a condition in which people can meet their basic needs for existence and live an improved quality of life. Therefore, development in any society can be as good or bad in the light of normative values such as life assurance, esteem and freedom that are operative in it. To achieve this goal, there is the need to institutionalize a social system of governance that manages and channels resources effectively toward improving the well-being of people. This is critical because the people are supposed to be the agent, means and ends of development; that is, their interest and well-being is the measure of all things; the supreme law of development. Today, in most parts of the developing world, there is an enormous focus on one vital aspect of development called governance. This is so because—underlying the 'litany of Africa's development problems is a crisis of governance'. The deteriorating quality of government, epitomized by bureaucratic obstruction, pervasive rent-seeking, weak judicial systems and arbitrary decision-making seriously hampers sociopolitical and economic

development in the continent (World Bank 1989:60-61). This condition derives from the increasing incidence of massive corruption among government officials and politicians, flagrant misuse of executive powers, lack of transparency, accountability, absence of openness in policy formulation, absence of people's participation in issues that directly impact on their well-being as well as the poor defense, protection and preservation of individual and group rights. Thus, to fully appreciate the current state of Nigeria's demographic dynamics and issues associated with it, it is essential to examine the role of democracy, governance and development in advancing population development.

In general terms, development has been viewed from political, economic and social dimensions. Sen (1999:3) provides a useful theoretical and empirical formulation of development "as an integrated process of expansion of substantive freedoms that connect with one another". He identified five distinctive types of freedom, seen in an instrumental perspective as (1) political freedoms, (2) economic facilities, (3) social opportunities, (4) transparency guarantees and (5) protective security; concluding that, freedoms are not the primary ends of development, they are also among its principal means. He further points out that focusing on human freedoms contrasts with narrower views of development, such as identifying development with the growth of Gross National Product (GNP), or with the rise in personal incomes, or with industrialization or with technological advancement, or with social modernization. While the growth of the GNP or of individual incomes can, of course, be a very important means to expand the freedoms enjoyed by members of the society, freedom depends on other determinants such as social and economic arrangements (for example facilities for education and healthcare) as well as political and civil rights (which includes the liberty to participate in public discussion and scrutiny (Sen, 1999:3). Todaro (2000) conceptualizes development as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty. Rodney (1972) sees beyond the individual or people's perception of development and conceived development, whether economic, political or social, to imply both increase in output and changes in the technical and institutional arrangement by which it is produced. In other words, development is a multi-dimensional concept and in spite of the various conceptions, it is basically about the process of changes which lies around the spheres of societal life.

Therefore, within the context of this paper, development is conceived as a conscious acceleration of economic, political, social, educational and technological growth of Nigeria through effecting consistent, progressive and enduring policies of government. This is vital as government represents the formal organization that directs the political, economic and social life of a society. As such, government's socioeconomic policy helps determine to a great extent the share of the country's resources that is invested in education, healthcare, infrastructure and sanitation. In other words, development is seen as how much economic growth translates into social development in terms of its distribution. This is significantly so as evidences from the Human Development Index (HDI) reports (the measure of a country's living standards) have revealed that poor public policy formulation and implementation has adversely affected social conditions in the Third World (Handelman, 2006). Thus, for effective and progressive development in all spheres of national life to exist in Nigeria, it must evolve from a truly democratic political system that places value on protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The association of development with democracy is borne out of the argument by scholars that democracy ensures accountability of the ruler to the ruled with the result that rulers are motivated to allocate resources effectively and productively in order to be allowed to stay in power (Grossman and Noh, 1988). Also, the fact that the practice of authoritarian rule in Africa for more than half a century has been overwhelmingly catastrophic politically and economically had activated rigorous interest and enthusiasm for democracy and the process of democratization which many such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments and international agencies like the United Nations, African Union and others believed can deal with the crisis of African underdevelopment (AU, 1990; Ojo, 2005; World Bank, 1990).

Be that as it may, democracy as a concept is inextricably linked to the demands of equality, 'one person one equal vote'. As it is well known, democracy means in Ancient Greek 'rule by the people.' Ideally, democracy means individual participation in the decisions that affects one's life. As such, popular participation has been valued as an opportunity for individual self development, and that citizen's participation in public affairs is based not upon the policy outcomes, but on the belief that such involvement is essential to the full development of human capabilities (Dye, 1975:192; Fukuyama, 1992). Democracy at the very minimum denotes

the rights of the people to choose their own government through institutionalized multiparty system and periodic secret ballots (Adedeji, 2006). Thus, underlying the value of democracy is individual dignity, equality of all people before the law and equality of opportunities in all aspects of life- social, educational, economic as well as political, and encompassing employment, housing, recreation, inter alia. Presently, it is now universally accepted that democracy requires more than elections and majority rule to be sustainable. Dreze and Sen (2002) have argued that in addition to the exercise of basic political rights such as rights to vote and the holding of free and fair elections, democracy involves respects for legal entitlements, right to freedom of expression (and an uncensored media), right to associate freely and hold public discussions, and right to organize political movements of protests. However, they contrasted the practice of democracy with the ideal. They emphasized that the latter gathers together the conditions for perfect democratic practice in the form of exercise of political, economic and civil rights, the full participation of people in matters that affect their lives, an accountable and transparent government and an equitable distribution of power (Dreze and Sen, 2002).

Therefore, a democratic system or practice is judged according to the degree of its commitment to the ingredients of democracy. Thus, democracy thrives where people freely stand for elections and vote during election, where there are periodic elections based on universal suffrage, where freedom of speech, publication and association is allowed, where government and its agents adhere to the rule of law, where majority rule is maintained, where there is acceptance of opposing views, where elections conducted are free, fair and credible, where the leadership succession process is smooth and not problematic, where the individual is allowed to freely make his or her choice and where the process of elections is competitive among political parties. In all, for democracy to be meaningful, it must be underlined by the principles of openness, representation, accountability, transparency and the defense, protection and preservation of individual and group rights (Adekola, 2010).

On the other hand, governance describes the way in which a group, organization or an institution chooses to engage in certain activities backed by goals shared by its constituents. It refers to the exercise of power through a country's economic, social and political institutions in which institutions represent the organizational rules and routines, formal laws, and informal norms that together shape the incentives of public-makers, overseers, and providers of public services (UNDP, 2007). Accordingly, governance means the degree to which institutions (such as parliament) and processes (such as elections) are transparent i.e. not susceptible to corruption in international business transactions, and accountable to the people, allowing them to participate in decisions that affect their lives. The Human Development Report (2002) defines 'effective governance' as a 'set of principles and core values that allow poor people to gain power through participation while protecting them from arbitrary, unaccountable actions in their lives by governments, multinationals and other forces. As such, governance means ensuring that institutions and power are structured and distributed in a way that gives real voice and space to poor people and creates mechanisms through which the powerful can be held accountable for their actions' (p. 6). The report highlights that democratic governance is:

- A system of representation with well-functioning political parties and interest associations;
- An electoral system that guarantees free and fair elections as well as universal suffrage;
- A system of checks and balances based on the separation of powers, with independent judicial and legislative branches;
- A vibrant civil society, able to monitor government and private business and provide alternative forms of political participation;
- A free and independent media;
- Effective civilian control over the military and other security forces.

Democratic governance, therefore, exists when the authority of the government is based on the will of the people and responsive to them. It is open when democratic institutions allow full participation in public affairs and when human rights protection guarantees the right to speak, assemble and dissent; when government

institutions are pro-poor and promote sustainable development of all citizens. While many countries are becoming democratic today, the quality of governance is attracting more and more attention within and among countries, and as such, good governance has become an important criterion for determining a country's credibility in the practice of democracy. Thus, good governance promotes equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability and the rule of law. And it is effective, efficient, and sustainable over the long run. Good governance must be rooted in these principles to move society toward greater human development through poverty eradication, environmental protection and regeneration, gender equality and sustainable livelihoods. In practice, good governance could also translate into free, fair and frequent elections, a representative legislature that makes laws and provides oversight; and an independent judiciary that interprets laws. Besides, good governance could also mean decentralization of authority and resources to local governments to give citizens a greater role in governance. Finally, good governance ensures that civil society plays an active role in setting priorities, and making the needs of the most vulnerable people in society known. In sum, governance is good if it supports a society in which people can expand their choices in the way they live; promote freedom from poverty, deprivation, fear and violence, and sustain women advancement. Yet, even as good governance takes hold in most societies, challenges to its sustainability also emerge. The greatest threats to good governance today comes from corruption, violence and poverty, all of which undermine transparency, security, participation, accountability and fundamental freedoms.

It is within this framework, therefore, that the utilization of demographic data and statistics play a critical role in helping to gauge the performance of government and its socioeconomic policy in terms of delivering sustainable development outcomes, including better service delivering across sectors such as health, education, urban planning, agriculture and effective management of natural resource revenues. Too often, the majority of those living in the developing world appear to be incidental to development rather than its focus. Ultimately, all development strategies and democratic regimes should be measured by the benefit they bring to the majority of citizens, while the value of particular development tactics should be measured by the extent to which they will contribute to that end. Thus, demographic data reveal the degree to which government focuses its priorities and distribution decisions on meeting basic human needs and placing primary emphasis on reducing poverty. Also, demographic data and statistics gathered through censuses and surveys also bring to the front burner the question of whether democracy does deliver on the provision of economic justice such as providing access to meeting basic needs like food, shelter, medical care, and housing. In the absence of equal opportunity for all citizens to these essentials for human existence, the essence of the value of equality being stressed in liberal democracy is defeated. Thus, the continued incidence of population concerns in Nigeria as revealed by census and statistical indicators in the area of population growth and distribution, education, health, labor, infrastructural facilities and gender equity needs raises serious question as to how much importance government's policymakers give to the use of these census data and statistics in formulating and evaluating economic and social policies and programs; in addressing the socioeconomic development and welfare needs of the nation.

In the same vein, question is also being raised by scholars as to the relation between democracy and economic development and whether democratization is conducive to development. However, examining the relationship between democratic legitimacy and quality of democracy is a complex one (Emmerson, 2012). The conventional wisdom holds that popular commitment to democratic regime will gain strength if the characteristics as well as the performance of the democratic regime are perceived to be superior to the old regime on some important indicators of good governance such as political liberty, equality, rule of law, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness. On the other hand, symptoms of bad governance, such as rampant corruption, electoral fraud and protracted gridlock, erode people's trust in democratic institutions. In establishing a nexus between democracy, governance and economic development, there exist two broad contradictory trends which have remained pertinent in the context of this discourse for years (Omotola, 2006). One side posits a correlation between democracy and economic growth, another sees a trade-off between democratization and economic development. As such, Feng (2001) noted that democracy and development remain some of the most important topics, in the field of international and comparative political economy for many years to come. To begin with, those who advocate that democracy leads to economic growth hold the view that the wealthiest countries in the world are democracies. One of the earliest instances of this position is Adam Smith's *Wealth of*

Nations. Smith argued that the existence of political liberalism was a necessary condition for the operation of the market, which he considered the engine of efficiency and economic growth (Ake, 2000:76). For Smith, the government that governs least, governs best; minimal government is more conducive to individual freedom, competition, efficiency and prospect for growth. Accordingly, Lipset (1959) produced the most systematic scholarly argument regarding the correlation between democracy and economic development. For him, findings from a sample of countries studied from different regions of the world reveal a correspondence between democracy and economic development. For instance, he opined that economic development is associated with more education, assertiveness and a push for participation; it tempers the tone of politics and creates cross-cutting interests and multiple affiliations which facilitate democratic consensus-building and political stability. However, Lipset thesis was to emphasize a causal relationship that flows from development to democracy rather than the other way round. In other words, countries with higher levels of development (typically measured as income) tend to also have higher levels of democracy. However, the exact specification of the relationship remains a matter of continued debate. As for Grossman and Noh (1988), democracy ensures accountability of rulers to the ruled with the result that rulers are motivated to allocate resources efficiently and productively in order to be allowed to stay in power. In a similar vein, Dahl (1971) argued that democracy ensures that rulers limit their extraction of resources to what is optimal for growth and productivity. Olson (1991) contends also that democracy commits the rulers to avoid pursuing selfish interests rather than policies which optimize growth and collective well-being. Mazrui (2002) adds that democratization and development share certain basic virtues such as popular participation, capacity expansion as well as freedom. In the same vein, Zack-Williams (2001) argued that democracy is an essential requisite for economic development, in that it empowers the general population to control decision-making. As such, the governed are presumed to have all it takes to hold governments accountable by insisting on transparency, openness, and other measures of control. Thus the absence of these virtues is considered inimical to the pursuit of economic development. However, it is important to emphasize the point that while democratization may engender development, much of it depends to some extent on the context within which the analysis is carried out (Osaghae, 1995). Moreover, the impact of democratization could be a reflection of its time-spell as well as the depth of the democratization process itself.

Thus, democracy plays a constructive role in value formation. It clarifies and constructs a society's values and priorities, such as the values of social equity, tolerance, political pluralism. For instance, some existing statistical analyses have suggested that democracies are better at providing human development and other measure of human welfare (child mortality, health, education and gender equality); distribute the benefits of development, measured through income distribution or total calorie intake, and promote human capital formation through direct public expenditure on health and education, which in turn has a positive impact on growth (Baum *et al*, 2003; Blaydes *et al*, 2011; Norris, 2012). However, in looking at the direct relationship between democracy and economic development, analyses show that democracies are no better than non-democracies, but they also show that democracies are not worse off (Przeworski *et al*, 2000). In all, for democratic practice to lead to desirable outcomes from the human development perspective, the requirement of a minimum level of equality needs to be fulfilled, for a fair distribution of power is a basic requirement of democracy.

However, Bhalla (1994) offers a different approach to the relationship between economic development and democracy. He argued that democracy is a form of government strongly associated with freedom, and proceeds to test the relationship between economic development and freedom (both political and economic) rather than the relationship between democracy and economic development. He contends that because they did not control economic freedom, past studies may not have estimated appropriately the relationship between economic development and political freedom. He hypothesizes that freedom is conducive to greater economic development, which in turn leads to greater freedom also. Bhalla further opined that 'no matter how freedom is measured, and no matter how welfare change is defined, there is a strong and positive relationship between the two' (p, 6). On the other hand, there are those who subscribe to the idea of endogenous democratization that posits that economic development causes democracy (Boix and Stokes, 2003). They argue that the changes brought about by higher levels of economic development merely enhance the probability that new democracy will survive (Przeworski *et al*, 2000). In this case, many other factors may explain the advent of democracies across countries, but once it is established, the probability of its survival increases in countries with higher levels of economic development. In either case, development is seen as a key driver for sustainable democracy.

Nevertheless, since the end of the cold war and the successive ‘waves’ of democracy were accompanied by the rising expectation about the tangible benefits of democratic rule for development, citizens and policy makers in developing countries that have democratized after 1974 (third wave democracies) and those that have done so after 1989 (fourth wave democracies) had expected that the stability and voice made possible under democratic rule would provide a better system for long-term economic development. Despite this optimism, the life experiences of the people in Nigeria and Africa in general over the past two decades reveal any little empirical support for the argument that democracy is a better political system for promoting development. The lived experiences during the ‘lost decade’ in the 1980s in Africa, Latin America and the post-Communist new democracies in Eastern Europe created worries that democracy was not able to deliver economic benefits as expected. This occurrence, therefore, has today awakened the debate to seek for an alternative comprehensive approach to development and governance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is ensconced within the Social Conflict Theory. The several social theories that emphasize social conflict have roots in the ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883), that great German theorist and political activist whose theoretical postulations provided a materialist interpretation of history, a dialectical method of analysis, a critical stance toward existing social arrangements, and advocated a political program of revolution or, at least, reform to enthrone the rights of the world’s poor (Imhonopi and Urim, 2013). Marx argues vociferously, that the materialist view of history starts from the premise that the most important determinant of social life is the work people are doing, especially work that results in provision of the basic necessities of life, food, clothing and shelter (Marx, 1971). According to Marx, the way work is socially organized and the technology used in production will have a strong impact on every other aspect of society (McClelland, 2000). He maintained that everything of value in society results from human labor; thus, Marx saw working men and women as engaged in making society and in creating the conditions for their own existence.

Marx divided history into several epochal stages, and pointed to important ones which were feudalism, capitalism, and socialism. He strived to apply materialist model of society to capitalism, the stage of economic and social development that he saw as dominant in 19th century Europe. According to Marx, the central institution of capitalist society is private property, the system by which capital (that is, money, machines, tools, factories, and other material objects used in production) is controlled by a small minority of the population. This arrangement leads to two opposed classes, the owners of capital (called the bourgeoisie) and the workers (called the proletariat), whose only property is their own labor time, which they have to sell to the capitalists (Imhonopi and Urim, 2013).

Owners are seen as making profits by paying workers less than their work is worth and, thus, exploiting them. In Marxism, material forces of production or means of production include capital, land, and labor, whereas social relations of production refer to the division of labor and implied class relationships (McClelland, 2000). Thus, Marx sees the entrenched economic exploitation leading directly to political oppression, as owners make use of their economic power to gain control of the state power levers, turning them into a servant of bourgeois economic interests. Police power, for instance, is used to enforce property rights and guarantee unfair contracts between the capitalist and the worker, while other institutions of the state represent or uphold bourgeois interests to the detriment or disadvantage of the masses. Marx also argues that oppression sometimes takes more subtle forms as religion serves capitalist interests by pacifying the population; intellectuals, paid directly or indirectly by capitalists, spend their careers justifying and rationalizing the existing social and economic schematics while workers are left in the underground of poverty and marginalization to mourn their subjugated class status (Imhonopi and Urim, 2013). In sum, the economic structure of society molds the superstructure, including ideas (e.g., democracy, liberty, capitalism, literature and others) and the social institutions that support the class structure of society (e.g., the state, the educational system, the family, and religious institutions). Because the dominant or ruling class (the bourgeoisie) controls the social relations of production, the dominant ideology in a capitalist society like Nigeria is that of the ruling class. This is because ideology and social institutions, in turn, serve to reproduce and perpetuate the economic class structure. Thus, Marx viewed the exploitative economic

arrangements of capitalism as the real foundation upon which the superstructure of social, political, and intellectual consciousness is built.

While Marx's interpretation of history might seem completely cynical or pessimistic, cast against the happenings in Nigeria, it seems his ideas not only have a strong resonance to the Nigerian situation, but they pertinently capture the type, character and complexion of democracy practised in Nigeria. Again, his social conflict theory seems to point to the ownership of the democratic ideology in Nigeria, those it benefits and those it does not benefit. Thus, democracy in Nigeria, like it is practiced in many developing nations, points to a system of governance that regenerates and perpetuates the interests of the dominant (and bourgeois) class. Consequently, to make this democracy deliver in the country, citizens and all downtrodden stakeholders in the Nigerian project must continually push for reforms, greater political and economic inclusion and a leadership that respects and responds to the people and is accountable to them.

CONCLUSION

For democratic development to thrive in Nigeria, there is the need to engage the strategy of the democratization of development and development of democracy. This involves the deepening of the democratic experience in every sphere. This process will require a human development strategy that places people at the centre of development and allows for citizen participation in issues that directly affect them. Therefore, massive investment in human resource development particularly education must be seen as the driving force for development and a necessary component of a stable and progressive society. This goal will require the institutionalization of a developmental state, one that intervenes in the economic development process in order to ensure equitable distribution of resources, and to redress inequities that tend to result from free enterprise economic systems. Such a state must be autonomous from social forces and has some anchoring which prevents it from being predatory. Without socioeconomic liberation, democracy is incomplete and development is constrained. And as the Social Conflict theory presupposes, unless and until the basic needs of the people such as food, clothing and shelter, for instance, are provided for, economic growth remains a sham.

Simply put, development strategies should be measured by the benefit they bring to the majority of citizens, while the value of particular development tactics should be measured by the extent to which they contribute to that end. Long-term success can be achieved only if the Nigerian government has the political will not just to enact sound economic policies but also to persevere in their implementation until a solid economic foundation is established. This will require the pursuit of good governance that will ensure respect for human rights and rule of law, strengthening democratization, and promoting transparency and capability in public administration. For democratic development and governance to thrive in Nigeria, the citizenry must be vigilant and demand accountability from its leaders. This will make future leaders to make ethical decisions and for the people to begin to make political officeholders increasingly accountable within and outside office. For as Mahatma Gandhi opined, "politics without ethical principles" is among the "social sins of humankind" (O'Neil, 2008).

Conclusively, the eradication of poverty requires development in which access to the benefits of economic progress is as widely available as possible to all. Thus, giving attention to social justice is vital if development and economic growth are to produce positive results and for society to develop in a balanced way. Development and spending priorities should be broad based, equitable and inclusive and should promote the interests of Nigerians even those yet unborn.

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