

Democracy and the Paradox of Developmental State in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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Edited by

Janet Monisola Oluwaleye,
Olatunji Ebenezer Olugbenga
and Olamide Temitayo Ojogbede

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This book is dedicated to God Almighty, the GOVERNOR
of the whole universe, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings

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FOREWORD

The evolution of Nigeria's democracy, particularly in the context of the Fourth Republic, represents a narrative of both promise and paradox. The establishment of democratic governance brought with it a renewed sense of hope, envisioning a Nigeria that could rise beyond the challenges of military rule and political instability. Yet, as time has revealed, democracy alone does not automatically result in development or economic progress. This profound reality lies at the heart of this book, *Democracy and the Paradox of Developmental State in Nigeria's Fourth Republic*, edited by distinguished scholars, Janet M. Oluwaleye, Olatunji E. Olugbenga, and Olamide T. Ojogbode.

This comprehensive work is a significant contribution to the ongoing discourse on Nigeria's developmental journey within the framework of democracy. Through a rich assortment of perspectives, this book tackles the various paradoxes that exist within Nigeria's pursuit of development and the aspirations tied to democratic governance. Each chapter explores a vital aspect of Nigeria's socio-political and economic landscape, offering readers critical insights and policy recommendations that speak to the complexities of governance, security, economic growth, and social development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

The first chapter, "Development in the Nigerian Fourth Republic: A Paradox or Reality," sets the stage by questioning the very premise of development under Nigeria's current democratic system. The editors, Oluwaleye, Olugbenga, and Ojogbode, rigorously examine whether democracy has tangibly advanced Nigeria's developmental goals or if it remains an elusive ideal. This is followed by an exploration of the governance crisis, which highlights how structural and leadership issues continually undermine Nigeria's potential for growth and the achievement of sustainable development.

The book delves into the widening ethno-regional cleavages that have become more prominent with the rise of multiparty democracy, dissecting how these divides impact national cohesion and development efforts. Furthermore, the empirical analysis of democracy, population growth, and

economic development emphasizes how demographic pressures shape Nigeria's economic landscape, creating both challenges and opportunities for the state's developmental agenda.

Security is another fundamental theme in this compilation, explored in depth by Afolabi Muyiwa B., Olalekan Samuel Fatokun and Ilemikun Oluwaseun Abiodun. Their analyses underscore the inextricable link between security and development, emphasizing that no meaningful progress can occur in an environment plagued by instability. These chapters lay bare the hard truth: sustainable development requires a stable, secure society, and the Nigerian experience of persistent insecurity serves as a cautionary tale.

In addressing neoliberal policies, the book does not overlook the "Japa Syndrome," a term that encapsulates the exodus of skilled Nigerians seeking better opportunities abroad. This phenomenon reflects both the challenges within Nigeria and the global impact of migration on development, posing critical questions about the brain drain and its implications for the country's future.

Notably, the compilation includes an examination of faith and development, an often-overlooked dimension of Nigeria's socio-political structure. Dr. Taiwo Oladeji Adefisoye invites readers to reflect on the faith-development nexus, challenging policymakers to consider the significant role religious institutions play in shaping societal values and supporting developmental initiatives.

Equally compelling are the analyses of gender dynamics and their relation to development. The chapter on women and developmental goals, authored by Adefisoye Ibironke Damilola, highlights the necessity of empowering women as central agents of change, underscoring that the pursuit of development must be inclusive and equitable. The subsequent examination of poverty and its relationship with development by Ifeyinwa Arum further emphasizes that economic growth must address the realities of everyday Nigerians if it is to have any meaningful impact.

Moreover, this book examines electoral politics, voter education, and the impact of civil society, offering a roadmap for strengthening democratic practices and aligning them with Nigeria's developmental needs. In chapters such as "Voter Education and Electoral Politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic" and "The Centrality of Civil Society Advocacy in the Development and Security Agenda of Nigeria's Southwest Region," the authors demonstrate

how active civic engagement can serve as a vehicle for achieving meaningful, sustainable progress.

Finally, the chapter on corruption as a barrier to development unearths one of Nigeria's most persistent issues. Through a careful analysis of the mechanisms of corruption and its detrimental effects on the nation's economy, the book lays out the urgent need for reform and accountability at every level of governance.

In its entirety, *Democracy and the Paradox of Developmental State* in Nigeria's Fourth Republic offers a thorough, multi-dimensional study of the development challenges facing Nigeria. Each contributor, with their unique expertise, presents thoughtful arguments and evidence-backed insights that not only inform but also inspire readers to consider actionable pathways for Nigeria's future. The questions raised in these pages resonate beyond academia, engaging citizens, policymakers, and leaders who are committed to building a more prosperous, secure, and just Nigeria.

As a Professor of development studies, it is a honour to present this volume to readers, students, and all who seek to understand the nuances of development within the context of Nigeria's democratic landscape. This book stands as a critical resource for those eager to participate in shaping Nigeria's future and to confront the paradoxes that define our journey as a nation.

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CHAPTER ONE

DEVELOPMENT IN THE NIGERIAN FOURTH
REPUBLIC:
A PARADOX OR REALITY

JANET MONISOLA OLUWALEYE,
OLATUNJI EBENEZER OLUGBENGA
AND OLAMIDE TEMITAYO OJOGBEDE

Abstract

Development is a global priority that drives frameworks such as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Democracy is often seen as a key enabler of development, promising inclusivity, human rights, and good governance. The return of Nigeria to democracy in 1999 marked the beginning of the country's Fourth Republic. In spite of Nigeria's 25 years of uninterrupted democratic rule characterised by regular elections and peaceful transitions, the expected dividends of democracy such as economic growth, poverty reduction, and improved governance remain largely unrealised. This paper examines the paradox of democracy and development in Nigeria, interrogating the challenges such as governance deficits, security crises, ethno-regional divisions, economic instability, corruption, and civil society's role in shaping policy. This study reveals that development in Nigeria remains paradoxical, hindered by corruption, weak institutions, poor leadership, and a lack of visionary governance. To achieve meaningful development, the study recommends fostering visionary leadership through free and fair elections, strengthening independent electoral bodies, eliminating money politics, and ensuring a genuine fight against corruption. These measures, alongside institutional

reforms, are essential to unlocking Nigeria's developmental potential and achieving sustainable progress under democratic governance.

Keywords: Democracy, Development, Governance, Nigeria's Fourth Republic, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Introduction

Development is a major global concern. International efforts to ensure development of all countries have been responsible for various goals such as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The pursuit of developmental strategies has been the primary goal of every government. On the other hand, democracy has been identified as a key player in development. This is because democracy is believed to be committed to human well-being, guaranteeing human rights and dignity, hearing the voice of the public including the poor, minority and the vulnerable, which would enhance national development.

Nigeria, though it experienced long period of military intervention, has enjoyed a consistent year of uninterrupted democratic rule for 25 years since 1999 which marked the onset of its Fourth Republic. The high expectation of the citizenry has been that the dividends of democracy would bring about the much-desired better standard of living, gainful employment, and usher many out of poverty. In spite of the periodic elections, and the civilian-to-civilian transition every four years since the onset of its Fourth Republic, the expectation of the masses and the benefits expected of the democratic regime has been a mirage.

Democracy in Nigeria has been confronted with lots of challenges which made the development expected a paradox rather than a reality. This book focuses on developmental issues in the Nigeria's Fourth Republic, the main challenges with the implications on national development in the resource-rich country. Various discussions in this book are believed to provide basis for gauging democracy across the globe and to determine its impacts on development.

In the various chapters of the book, authors have critically analysed the topics of their interest in line with developmental issues in the Nigeria's democracy, especially with specific focus on the Fourth Republic. The topics of discourse in this book provide useful information and recommendations towards invigorating development under democratic regimes in governance, especially to policy makers and executors of policy.

The book considers the concepts of development, reality of development as well as the challenges of development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic such as security issues, governance crisis and development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, multi-party democracy with ethno-regional cleavages, democracy, population and economic development, neo-liberal policies and development, women and development, faith-development nexus in Nigeria, poverty and development, voters' education and electoral politics, corruption and development, cake baking to cake sharing (federal character issues), and civil society advocacy and development.

Conceptual Review of Development

The notion of development is a profoundly disputed and multifaceted concept that has undergone significant evolution over time, reflecting a variety of intellectual, ideological and practical viewpoints that have led to much conceptual confusion and misleading generalizations. In bourgeois scholarship throughout history and especially following the collapse of Soviet socialism in the 1990s, development has been conceived more in economic terms and has been intricately linked with endeavours by international organizations to tackle poverty and accomplish quantifiable socio-economic objectives, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Thomas, 2004; Sumner & Tribe, 2008). In this sense, Western scholarship posits that development can best be measured in terms of economic and social indices like Gross National Product (GNP), Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Per Capita Income (PCI) and level of industrialization, among others. This economic approach, which is close to the basic needs approach to development would mean that people are able to satisfy their material needs adequately before one can talk of development. Economic development is traditionally measured by indicators such as GDP growth, income levels, and employment rates. Recent literature continues to build on classical theories while incorporating new insights. However, this perspective does not explain everything about development as a concept which includes respect for the views of others, acceptance of a plurality of opinions as well as respect for the social norms of different societies.

Udombana (2003, cited in Olaoye, 2011:1-11) argued that development can be defined from a variety of approaches or perspectives other than an economic one. These include:

(a) as a matter of the quality of life (quality of life approach). This measures the ability of the government to provide basic needs like electricity, education, healthcare delivery pipe-borne water, good roads, security,

among others, for the citizens. This view was echoed by the Second, Third and Fourth National Development Plans, particularly the fourth which was forceful in emphasizing that “social indicators will be increasingly employed to measure development”. This view is important for third world states where access to basic infrastructural needs often define the gaps between the rich and the poor and affects the productive capacity of the economy and the building of appropriate social relations and institutions that facilitate the equitable distribution of socio-economic benefits that accrue from that process.

(b) The human approach to development argues that no organization, society, nation or country can sustain its development activities without people who are patriotic, reliable, committed, disciplined and can blend their social values with their technical skills. According to this view, development requires that people, the best resource a society can possess, must be responsible, committed, dedicated, and loyal and have integrity and a sense of unity to pursue common objectives. Thus, this view argues that development must begin from within rather than from without, although external assistance may eventually be accepted. This explains why some countries that are poorly endowed with material endowments who invest in and manage their human resources optimally develop eventually, and vice-versa.

(c) The environmental approach emphasizes the prime importance of maintaining the environment for a steady supply of resources that are required for development. This approach identifies threats to human security and invariably, development to include threats related to the economy, food, health, and the environment as well as threats to community and political security. Rapid depletion of environmental resources without replacement, to the detriment of coming generations is, thus, a major challenge to development. Therefore, efforts at sustainability (sustainable development) to extend the lifespan of resources is, according to this view, a desirable goal of development planning.

The second leg to this view, however, is the question ‘of what use is sustainable development to the poor, agrarian, primary goods producing underdeveloped economies of the South’? This is more so because countries of the South rely on their natural resources for survival in the immediate period and the short run, and think less of sustainability, which is more about the future. It is vital to answer this question because the developed, industrialized countries of the North continue to encourage rapid exploitation of the natural resources of the South for industrial use in the

Northern metropolis without much care for resource and environmental sustainability. Toyo (2000:13) answers that question, arguing that imperialist countries do not desire industrialization by countries of the South, but often dictate convenient 'industrialization' and 'development' 'strategies' that concentrate on "agriculture, agricultural and mineral raw material exports, importation of foreign capital for mining and infrastructural development, and attraction of foreign direct investment to set up import substituting assembly plants in the area of non-basic industries if some industrialization was desired". In many cases, environmental sustainability is hardly taken seriously in the extractive endeavours in countries of the South. Examples of such neglect abounds in the oil fields of Nigeria's Niger Delta, the solid minerals mining industries in Nigeria's Middle-Belt and the North, in the Congo, the Uranium fields in the Niger Republic, and in several other countries in Africa.

(d) Development as freedom directs attention to the ends that make development important rather than merely to the means that play prominent roles in bringing about development. Freedom and development are mutually reinforcing and complimentary since one advances the other. For Amartya Sen (1999:4), the main exponent of the capability approach to development, freedom is both the primary objective of development, and the principal means of development. He submits that freedom is central to the process of development for two reasons: enhancement of freedom is primarily and ultimately the first and the only acceptable evaluation of human progress. Second, Sen argues, freedom is important because development depends on the free agency of people who have economic liberties, social power, political liberties, among others, to bring about desired changes in government and in society at large.

As a constitutive input of development, the free agency of people is important because it not only multiplies itself but also strengthens economic, political, educational and social powers, translating these into concrete development through the liberty to participate freely in social choice and in the making of public decisions, thus securing their own futures.

(e) Development as a human right was reluctantly defined by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) as the right of all people all over the world and of every citizen to enjoy all human rights (Udombana, 2003:9). They are solidarity rights, reinforce and transgressing the limits of existing human rights, enhance their effectiveness and make existing rights more relevant to both government and individuals. The concept of development as human

rights belongs to the third generation or category of rights, the first generation being civil and political rights that are libertarian in character and relates to the sanctity of the individual as an actor in a specific socio-political milieu. The second category of rights consists of socio-economic and cultural rights that are not self-justiciable but requires governmental action for their implementation. These are rights to own property, to engage in lawful occupation, maintain one's culture or to practice a religion of one's choice.

Development as human rights are more sophisticated, more developed than the first and second generation of rights. As development advances, the areas of human activity increase, thus posing limitations to the socio-political, cultural and economic spaces that enhance the enjoyment of those first and second generation rights by which the ideals of the fullness of human life can be realized and promoted. Such limitations are due to the increasing activities and sophistication of mankind. Such sophistication is evident in man's foray into space by means of increasing commercial space travels, efforts to build in and make other planets habitable for humans, the increasing privatization of hitherto cheap, publicly-enjoyed services, etc. Development as human rights aim to expand the limits of humanity in the face of reducing humanness by duly constituted authorities.

The modernization theory suggests that a nation's progress through linear stages of development as driven by technological advancements, remains influential in the conceptualization of development. However, contemporary research highlights the limitations of this theory in addressing the unique challenges faced by developing nations (Inglehart & Welzel, 2010). The Dependency Theory offers a critical counterpoint, arguing that the global economic system perpetuates inequality by keeping underdeveloped countries in a state of dependency on developed nations (Prebisch, 1950; Dos Santos, 1970). United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2019) noted the impact of trade policies on inequalities.

Therefore, various scholars have advocated other approaches to the definition of development. For example, Thomas (2004) conceptualizes development to mean a process of structural societal transformation, encompassing enduring changes in economies and societies. This viewpoint highlights the significance of perceiving development as a historical progression, moulded by intricate interactions of political, economic, and social dynamics (Thomas, 2004). Conversely, Gore (2000) and some international development agencies espouse a more utilitarian approach, regarding development predominantly through short- to medium-term

performance metrics. This standpoint concentrates on quantifiable results such as poverty alleviation and income levels that are pivotal for policy formulation and assessment within global development frameworks (Gore, 2000; Sumner & Tribe, 2008).

The field of developmental psychology provides further insights into the concept of development, interpreting it as a methodical advancement involving structural progressions and functional alterations over time (Nagel, 1957; Reese & Overton, 1970). This psychological stance underscores the intricacy of human development, encompassing individual growth trajectories and broader societal modifications in behaviour and cognition (Reese & Spiker, 1966).

In addition to the economic and psychological dimensions, development encompasses broad progressions across social, cultural, and environmental spheres, as mentioned above. It encompasses endeavours to enrich the standard of living through enhancements in health, education, housing, and employment prospects (Unumen & Oghi, 2016). The concept of social justice, which advocates for the fair distribution of resources and opportunities, is central to this discussion (Sen, 2009). Empowerment, particularly of marginalized groups, is also crucial. Research by Narayan et al. (2000) emphasizes the importance of enhancing the capacity of individuals and communities to make informed choices and influence decisions that affect their lives.

Sustainable development has been defined by the Brundtland Commission (1987) as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Jarvic, 2024; UN, n.d). This concept integrates environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic viability. Current literature highlights the interconnectedness of these dimensions. In a similar dimension, research by Kate Raworth on “Doughnut Economics” saw the need for a system which consists of two concentric rings: a social foundation, to ensure that no one is left falling short on life’s essentials, and an ecological ceiling, to ensure that humanity does not collectively overshoot the planetary boundaries that protect earth’s life-supporting systems. Between these two sets of boundaries lies a doughnut-shaped space that is both ecologically safe and socially just: a space in which humanity can thrive (Doughnut Economics Action Lab, cited in Population Matters, 2024).

He proposes a framework for balancing essential human needs with the sustainability of the environment (Population Matters, 2024).

A comprehensive examination of the concept of development portrays the intricate characteristics of advancement and the significance of incorporating diverse viewpoints that straddle the economic, social, human, political, psychological, environmental, rights and equity divides. Due to its multifaceted and intricate nature, recent scholarly works emphasize the necessity of defining development using comprehensive methodologies that tackle the above-mentioned issues as they impinge on and affect human welfare in general. Thus, in defining the concept of development and addressing development related issues today, it is important to recognize these principles as essential for formulating efficient policies and strategies to foster fair, enduring and balanced development in an ever intricately linked global context or scenario.

The concept of Paradox

The term “paradox” has its origins in expressions that indicate opposition to prevailing beliefs. The Oxford English Dictionary (1989: 185), notes that a paradox can be used to describe assertions that go against widely accepted views, which may seem implausible or absurd but occasionally serve to correct misunderstandings. It can also refer to statements that, despite appearing contradictory, are accurate. Moreover, it may indicate comments that show genuine contradiction or, in logic, conclusions drawn from acceptable premises and rational reasoning that end up being self-contradictory. This diverse range of meanings associated with the term can pose challenges to effective communication as the intended message may not always be clear (Bufford, 2006).

A crucial issue to consider when conducting a literature review on the usage of ‘paradox’ is how to interpret the concept. Recent studies have outlined three main characteristics of paradox. First, paradox involves a scenario that incorporates conflicting or contradictory elements (Ford & Backoff, 1988; Poole & Van de Ven, 1989; Davis, Maranville, & Obloj, 1997; Smith & Lewis, 2011, cited in Keyser et al., 2019). Second, this conflict arises between interconnected components that are so closely linked that they can hardly be separated (Schad et al., 2016: 7, as referenced in Keyser et al., 2019). Third, these conflicts are not easily resolved and persist over time (Putnam et al., 2016, referenced in Keyser et al., 2019). These characteristics encapsulate the essence of paradox, differentiating it from related concepts such as duality, dualism, dialectics, contradiction, and tension (Putnam et al., 2016; Schad et al., 2016, as cited in Keyser et al., 2019).

In the 20th century, paradoxes began to emerge sporadically in leadership and organizational literature. For instance, a publication from 1979 demonstrated how artistic brilliance often stemmed from transcending paradoxes, such as composers like Beethoven and Mozart blending harmony and discord and utilizing silence as a form of sound (Rothenberg, 1979, referenced in Anthony, 2021). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of ‘paradox’ frequently appeared in conjunction with early notions of what would later develop into the academic field of ambidexterity, suggesting that organizations must navigate the tension between exploiting current resources and exploring future opportunities (Denison, Hooijberg, & Quinn, 1995; March 1991; Poole & Van de Ven, 1989, as cited in Anthony, 2021).

Research demonstrates that surpassing contradictions can offer significant benefits. Dealing with paradoxes can enhance creativity by improving the management of contradictions (Miron-Spektor et al., 2011, referenced in Anthony, 2021). Leaders who display narcissistic traits but are perceived as humble can foster organizational ambidexterity, leading to enhanced performance (Owens, Wallace, & Waldman, 2015, as cited in Anthony, 2021). Additionally, integrating visionary and empowering leadership styles can boost follower performance by clarifying objectives (Kearney, Shemla, Knippenberg, & Scholz, 2019, as cited in Anthony, 2021). It is believed that embracing paradoxical leadership behaviours typically strengthens organizational ambidexterity and performance (Zhang & Han, 2019; Zhang et al., 2015, as cited in Anthony, 2021).

The presence of paradoxes within an organization can disturb the desire for uniformity and simplicity, triggering defensive responses like splitting, regression, and ambivalence (Jarrett & Vince, 2017; Lewis, 2000, referenced in Anthony, 2021). In severe cases, paradoxes have the potential to instill feelings of anxiety, perplexity, and uncertainty, causing individuals to feel vulnerable and guarded (Schad et al., 2016, p. 31, cited in Anthony, 2021). Developing the capability to manage paradoxes involves confronting our defensive mechanisms, such as the tendency to oversimplify intricate organizational matters, and mastering the skill of navigating inherent contradictions (Lewis, 2000, p. 774, as cited in Anthony, 2021). Individuals who exhibit high integrative complexity, who are adept at managing paradoxes, may however, at times be perceived as challenging or contentious (Tetlock, Peterson, & Berry, 1993, as cited in Anthony, 2021).

Furthermore, the pressure exerted by leadership to transcend significant strategic inconsistencies can result in frustration or unethical conduct. An illustrative instance is the Volkswagen emissions scandal, where the

presence of contradictions in a decision-making environment driven by fear led to a facade of success (Gaim, Clegg, & Cunha, 2021: 962, cited in Anthony, 2021). Paradoxes offer distinctive and beneficial perspectives for comprehending and maneuvering through the intricacies of leadership and organizational conduct. Its capacity to illuminate and acknowledge conflicting components provides a route to heightened creativity, performance, and strategic adaptability. Nonetheless, the effective management of paradoxes necessitate the cultivation of a nuanced comprehension and ability to navigate the inherent contradictions, steering clear of pitfalls that could result in organizational dysfunction or unethical behaviours.

Given the above foundation, the notion of the paradox of democracy and development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic comes into bolder relief when one considers the belief that democracy is ordinarily expected to bring about development, which has been the mantra of development policy and planning in the Western world for a long time and overtime, also became normal expectations in the newly emerging democracies of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In addition, the question of the relationship between democracy and development has caught the attention of researchers of different persuasions. For example, in the field of comparative politics, the hypothesized strong association between democracy and economic development has ignited some research interest among scholars. Modernization theorists (who argued in favour of endogenous democratization (such as Lipset, 1959; Huntington, 1968) argued that economic development was a requirement for stable democracy and that rich countries (such as of Europe and North America) are more likely to be democracies than poor ones.

Using time series regression to test the relationship between democracy and economic development for the same period (1950-1990), Przeworski and Limongi (1997) found that findings did not support the claims of modernization theory because countries did not become more likely to democratize as they became richer, but that once established, democracy was more likely to survive in richer countries. This caused them to propose a theory of 'exogenous' democratization that democracy may result from other causes, but that wealth helps it to consolidate once it is established in another study, Przeworski et al (2000) gathered and analyzed data on the association between democracy and development from all parts of the world between 1950 and 1990. Their major finding was that although nations at different levels of development can introduce democracy, this form of government was more fragile in societies with low levels of economic development. Such societies also reported higher possibilities of relapse to dictatorship, meaning that democracy was precarious in such countries.

However, when Boix and Stokes (2003) expanded the data to cover democratic events from the 19th and 20th centuries, and included some western countries that were already democracies in 1950, their results did not support the earlier findings of Przeworski and Limongi.

Yet other scholars found that cultures may either encourage or discourage democracy and accelerate or slow down economic development, depending on the circumstances. If a society has a culture that, for example, tolerates corruption, such can be an albatross on development because corruption does not promote the ease of doing business. This assertion is supported by both old and recent social science research, especially political scientists, public administration scholars, economists, sociologists and psychologists. For example, while Banfield (1958) and Leff (1964) pinpointed the negative role of cultural traditions and norms that make corruption a way of life on development, more recent researchers like Shleifer and Vishny (1993), Rose-Ackerman (1999) and Persson, Tabellini and Trebbi, (2003) emphasized the effects on development of institutional variables like type of legal system, structure and remuneration of the civil service, the type of electoral system, among others, as important factors that determine the corruption index of countries, which can impact on its rate of development. The bottom line is that, no matter the amount of human and natural resources a society or country has, ecology has a great role to play in any discussion of its development. Thus, it can be a paradox that some naturally endowed countries are poor while others with little or no natural endowments are developing.

The essays by different scholars who are represented in this edited volume examines from different perspectives, the importance of these and related themes on the reality of development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic that began on 29th May, 1999, after the longest military rule in Nigeria's political history. This collection will explore and review the fortunes, foibles and failures of democracy vis-à-vis development in the past twenty-five years. It will then be able to pinpoint the obstacles Nigeria's development in terms of efforts to reduce poverty, tackle unemployment and reduce inequality among its population under its longest democratic rule so far. It will also offer suggestions on the way forward.

The Reality of Development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Seer's interpretation of development transcends economic growth. He posited that translating development to mean improvement without considering social development is confusing. He opined that development

should be gauged with the rate of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, thus raising the question: “What has been happening to poverty... unemployment... inequality?” (Naylin, 2009; Seers, 1969 cited in Oluseyi, 2018). He submitted that positive answers to the above questions indicate that the country has experienced development. In line with the above, the reality of development in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic is considered subsequently.

Poverty rate is one of the major ways of measuring a country's development. Human Rights Careers (2024) describes poverty as when individuals and communities lack the income and resources necessary to maintain a good living standard, including safe housing, medical care, food, clean water, and much more. The Multidimensional Poverty Index Survey (2022) revealed that 63% of Nigerians (133 million) are multi-dimensionally poor (MPPN, 2022; OPHI, 2022). The survey further revealed that more than half of Nigeria’s population cooks with wood or charcoal instead of cleaner energy. It also exposed high deprivation in healthcare delivery, housing, food insecurity, and sanitation (MPPN, 2022; OPHI, 2022). Similarly, the 2023 Global Hunger Index ranked Nigeria as 109 out of 125 with a score of 28.3, which indicates that Nigeria has a serious level of hunger (Global Hunger Index, 2023).

Poverty has been linked to lack of education, conflict and war, social injustice, and inaccessibility of healthcare, among other factors (Human Rights Careers, 2024)). The reports above show that poverty is written on the face of an average Nigerian. The implications include rising criminality and violence, increased corruption, militancy and terrorism, political thuggery, and vote selling, among others.

The country’s high unemployment rate is another pointer to the deficit of democratic dividends. For, instance, out of about 40 million population of Nigeria’s youth, only 14.7 million are employed while 11.2 million are unemployed (Oludotun, 2024). He submitted further that:

Nigerian youths are completely out of the picture. Rather than being empowered, they have been reduced to a bunch of frustrated citizens with many of them becoming political thugs and agents of destruction in the hands of the enemies of the country ...the children of these politicians’ study in prestigious institutions abroad and graduate on time, Nigerian undergraduates struggle with incessant strikes and worrisome teaching aids (Oludotun, 2024).

Scholars have linked the socio-economic challenges confronting Nigerian youths to the failure of governance. The neglect and repressive attitudes of the government coupled with unfulfilled promises, lack of transparency and accountability have brought frustration, leading to mass emigration, otherwise known as ‘Japa’ in the country (Ayanwale, 2024; Oludotun, 2024). Ego (2023), citing the KPMG Global Outlook Report HI 2023, attributed the increased rate of unemployment to low investment from the private sector, low industrialization, slow economic growth, and the challenge of absorbing the addition of four to five million entrants into the job market annually.

Unemployment, especially among youths, has been identified as the major cause of robbery (daylight or night, highway and bank robberies), pilfering, thuggery, kidnapping, and social media crimes (Oluwaleye, 2021). Alabi (2014) linked youth unemployment to anti-social behaviour which includes militancy, terrorism, stealing, pick-pocketing, cybercrime, drug addiction and political thuggery.

Another pertinent question raised by Seers on the indices of development is ‘What has been happening to inequality’. The reality of these indices in Nigeria shows extreme levels, in spite of the abundant natural and human resources in the country. Ugbede (2024) described the state of inequality in Nigeria as follows:

The combined wealth of the five richest men - \$29.9 billion – could end extreme poverty at the national level; yet 5 million people face hunger. More than 112 million people live in poverty in Nigeria, yet the country’s richest man would have to spend \$1 million a day for 42 years to exhaust his fortune. The amount of money that the richest Nigerian man earns annually from his wealth is sufficient to lift 2 million people out of poverty for a year.

The description above shows that Nigeria is not a poor country but the challenge of governance has increased the state of poverty, unemployment, wide gap of inequality which are pointers to lack of the desired development that was expected from the country’s 25 years of unbroken democratic rule. Ngara, Esebonu, Ogoh, and Orokpo (2014) attributed the high level of inequality in Nigeria to the weakness of governmental institutions which has undermined the fundamental human rights of citizens and encouraged corrupt practices.

Challenges of Development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

In the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has transitioned into a state marked by predatory and clientelist conduct instead of progress. This circumstance has enabled the ruling class to acquire extravagant homes in Europe such as London and Paris, along with luxury vehicles, earning them the moniker 'Wabenzi', or Mercedes-Benz individuals, across West Africa.

Corruption has been identified as one of the major challenges to development in Nigeria. In spite of the various government anti-corruption strategies, the evil act still permeates almost every sector of the nation's economy. Duynne and Harvey (2021) noted the paradoxes of the Nigerian economy ranking as the first continental economy with \$443 billion in 2020, with Egypt as the second with \$350 billion, and South Africa as the third with \$282 billion but Nigeria was among the lowest in the per capita income, being the third lowest in 2019. In the same vein, the World Justice Project (2023) revealed that corruption has cost the Nigerian economy more than \$550 billion since the 60 years of independence. The recovery of at least \$750 million in local and foreign currency by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in 2021 related to corruption attests to the high level of corruption in the country (World Justice System, 2023). The Transparency International (2022) ranked Nigeria as 150 among 180 countries on corruption indices based on bribery, diversion of public funds, public officials using public office for private gain without consequences, ability of government to contain corruption and enforce effective integrity mechanisms in the public sector, red tape and excessive bureaucratic burden which may increase opportunities for corruption, meritocratic versus nepotism appointments in the civil service (The Punch, 2023).

Scholars have attributed corruption in the country to a lot of factors. Among others, Ogundana (2008) identified long years of military rule, failure to apply standards and clear-cut operational procedure, weak legal and judicial process, immunity granted some public officeholders, weak law enforcement agencies, bad leadership, poor welfare and working conditions, poverty, greed and societal tolerance for corruption, excessive materialism, erosion of values and lust for power.

The implication of corruption in Nigeria range from increased crime which manifests in kidnapping, armed robbery, banditry, and terrorism which has made the country insecure for citizens and unsafe havens for investors. It has deprived the government of its capabilities to provide the much-needed social services and employment to the citizens. The attendant effects also

manifest in poor standard of living and chronic poverty ravaging the country.

Moreover, numerous development endeavours by consecutive administrations, many of which were well-intentioned, towards achieving genuine development have proven futile. This prompts crucial inquiries: Were the preceding development blueprints or methodologies flawed within their respective contexts, or were they inadequately formulated? If the strategies were sound, what accounts for the persistent challenge of realizing authentic development despite the abundance of available resources? Several factors have converged to obstruct the advancement of the nation.

Notably, there is frequently a deficiency in the executive capacity to devise and execute policies nationwide. Mimiko (1998) cited in Lawan and Oluwatoyin (2011) revealed that such positions are filled by officials who either lack genuine executive authority, the essential political will to drive policies through, or professional expertise. They noted the need for public consultation and effective planning which should include rural peasants as well as local government officials who are most familiar with the population. Besides, lack of competent governance was revealed to pose a serious barrier to national progress. Without good governance, development is an illusion. This is partly due to inadequate leadership, with the majority of leaders lacking a commitment to development (Lawan & Oluwatoyin, 2011).

Another pivotal aspect is Nigeria's excessive dependence on crude oil to the neglect of other resources. Nigeria's economy relies heavily on oil, which contributes to around 90% of its export earnings and over 60% of government revenue (World Bank, 2021). This reliance exposes the economy to fluctuations in global oil prices. Other sectors of the economy are overlooked. Agriculture, for instance, served as the cornerstone of Nigeria's economy during the 1950s and 1960s but has been disregarded after the discovery of oil in commercial quantities. How can the administration boost export when there are minimal goods to export?

Besides, greed is another challenge to development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. This also manifests in the wide gap in the income of political officeholders and government workers of high pedigree. The high take home of Nigerian legislators surpasses those of their colleagues from other countries. In line with the above is the high cost of governance due to duplication of offices, and different allowances - wardrobe, furniture, sitting, newspapers, among others. Resources used for such excesses might

be diverted to create jobs and empower the poor in the country. Furthermore, the lack of vision to bring the desired development by leaders is another hindrance to development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter examines the reality of development in the Nigeria's Fourth Republic with various developmental gauge such as level of poverty, unemployment and inequality. The study discovers that the expected development in the country in the period under study is a paradox and far from what democracy should deliver to the masses. The irony of Nigerian developmental can be attributed to corruption, greed of political officeholders, weak institutions, lack of needed visions, and deficient executive capacity, among others. The study, therefore, recommends the following for the country to attain her developmental potentials:

Visionary leaders should be given conducive environment to participate and attain leadership positions through a free and fair elections, impartial and independent electoral bodies, and violence-free electoral atmosphere. Money politics and vote buying should be kept out of democratic practice.

Government should ensure genuine fight against corruption by allowing the corrupt fighting agents like Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to discharge the duties without political interference. The agents should be allowed to bring corrupt perpetrators to book with grievous punishments, such as confiscating their properties, imprisonment, and shaming, banning them from overseas trips, among others, to serve as deterrent to others.

Integrity and track of good records of selfless services to people should be made part of the conditions for contesting for political positions. This would help to scrutinise and disqualify selfish and greedy people who are interested in political offices for personal purpose. Internal democracy at the parties' primary elections is essential to make the right choice of candidates. Genuine democracy, devoid of godfatherism and money politics should be avoid and strictly forbidden.

Sincerity of stakeholders in the practice of democracy is germane. Desire for political positions should not be made a 'do or die' matter. Voters, on the other hand should know the value of the rights and shun vote-selling.