

The Challenges of Democratic Government in Nigeria: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

This research paper is predicated on the premise that democratic governance, strong commitment to the rule of law as well as a genuine will to control corruption are essential for development of any country. Using a comparative approach, the paper established that Nigeria had practically institutionalized corruption as the foundation of governance, with the military being the major culprits. Under military regimes, institutions of society easily decayed to unprecedented proportions, as opportunities were privatized by the few powerful individuals. This process was accompanied by the intimidation of the judiciary, subversion of due process, the manipulation of existing laws and regulations to suit parochial interests, the suffocation of civil society, and the containment of Nigerian democratic values and institutions. The paper further found that successive civilian regimes had not fared better. The Obasanjo civilian administration had the most profound impact on the polity but its economic reforms and relative macro-economic stability had not resulted into improved welfare of Nigerians. Thus, both the military and civilian rules in Nigeria had not impacted positively on the citizenry. This research is aimed at analyzing the impact of both the military and the civilian regimes in the Nigerian political space, and their roles in impacting on the development indices. The study is significant in providing a comparative analytical insight into the role of the democratic regimes in Nigeria which will serve as lessons and also provide a compass for sustainable political and economic policies. The conclusions therein are also significant in provoking a purposeful political leadership.

Keywords: militarization; dictatorship; corruption; democratization; extremism; federalism; nationalism;

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a particularly challenging opportunity for democratic governance. A federated policy and a multi-ethnic society, Nigeria is extremely complex and diverse, with a very large, fast growing, young population. It has a variety of often-competing major ethnic groups (Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo) generally geographically and geo-politically concentrated; extremes of wealth and poverty. It is an economy with a growth rate inadequate to the demands of the expanding population. Regrettably, the current democratization is taking place in the context of massive economic decline and the erosion of living standards of most Nigerians by the negative impact of adjustment policies and economic reforms of successive Nigerian governments.

The paper examines the historical perspectives of military and civilian regimes in Nigeria as well as the theories of democratic governance and military rule. The performance of democracy in comparison to the military rule is also examined in this paper.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigeria is not only the most populous nation in the world but the most economically endowed country in Africa and even in so many other countries of the world. Unfortunately, governance has been characterized by a series of predatory military

regimes, each of which has simultaneously mismanaged the economy and attempted to alter the formal structures of the policy to suit its particular ends. Between 1960 and May 29, 2010, civilian regimes have effectively been in place for 20 years. Military regimes were in charge of the rest of the period: January 1966 – July 1966 (General Aguiyi Ironsi); July 1966 – 1975 (General Yakubu Gowon); 1975 – 1979 (General Murtala and Obasanjo); 1984 – 1985 (General Buhari); 1985 – 1993 (General Babangida); 1993 – 1998 (General Abacha); 1998 – May 1999 (General Abubakar).

Under the military, the rule of law was jettisoned as dictatorial discretion reigned supreme (Oluba, 2008:2). Of course, this nurtured massive corruption and led to irrelevant policies and constant policy reversals which consequently marred the effectiveness of good policies.

Even though civilian regimes had been in place for some years now, the three arms of government does not in the strict sense, have practical true separation of powers. Abuse of office by various arms at various tiers of government has made the separation of powers in Nigeria ineffective and consequently impossible for the achievement of desired levels of democratic governance (Oluba, et al, 2008:3).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Nigeria operates a federal system consisting of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Each state is further subdivided into Local Government Councils. This makes the country to operate a tripartite or three tiers of governments. Although we have identified as a problem that the three arms of government does not in the strict sense, have practical true separation of powers, this study is limited to governance at the national or federal level. This is with the recognition that what happens at the national level, which is usually the centre, affects the other arms of government.

Historical Perspectives of Military and Civilian Regimes In Nigeria

Nigeria has had a long tortured history of dancing around democracy and never quite getting it right. In order to understand where Nigeria is and where Nigeria is going, you have to understand where the country is coming from. The following extracts from the text from the United States' State Department sheds a little light on this:

Nigeria was granted full independence in October 1960, as a federation of three regions (Northern, Western and Eastern) under a constitution that provided for a parliamentary form of government. Under the constitution, each of the three regions retained a substantial measure of self-government. The Federal Government was given exclusive powers in defense and security, foreign relations, commercial and fiscal policies. In October 1963, Nigeria altered its relationship with the United Kingdom by proclaiming itself a federal republic and promulgating a new constitution. A fourth region (the Midwest) was established that year. From the outset, Nigeria's ethnic regional and religious tensions were magnified by the significant disparities in economic and educational development between the south and the north. On January 15, 1966, a small group of army officers, mostly southern Igbos, overthrew the government and assassinated the federal Prime Minister and the Premiers of the Northern and Western regions. The Federal Military government that assumed power was unable to quiet ethnic tensions or produce a constitution acceptable to all sections of the country. In fact, its efforts to abolish the federal structure greatly raised tensions and led to another coup in July, 1966. The coup relates massacre of thousands of Igbos in the North prompted hundreds of thousands of them to return to the Southeast, where increase strong Igbo secessionist sentiment emerged.

In a move that gave greater autonomy to minority ethnic groups, the military divided the four regions into 12 states. The Igbo rejected attempts at constitutional revisions and insisted on full autonomy for the East. Finally, in May 1967, Lt. Col. Emeka

Ojukwu, the military governor of the Eastern region who emerged as the leader of increasing Igbo secessionist sentiment, declared the independence of the eastern region as the "Republic of Biafra". The ensuing civil war bitter and bloody, ended in the defeat of Biafra in 1970.

Following the civil war, reconciliation was rapid and effective, and the country turned to the task of economic development. Foreign exchange earnings and government revenues increased spectacularly with the oil price rises of 1973-74. On July 29, 1975, General Murtala Muhammad and a group of fellow officers staged a bloodless coup, accusing the military government of General Yakubu Gowon of delaying the promised return to civilian rule and becoming corrupt and ineffective. General Muhammad replaced thousands of civil servants and announced a timetable for the resumption of civilian rule by October 1, 1979. Muhammad also announced the government's intention to create new states and to construct a new federal capital in the centre of the country.

General Muhammad was assassinated on February 13, 1976, in an abortive coup. His chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, became Head of State. Obasanjo adhered meticulously to the schedule for return to civilian rule, moving to modernize and streamline the armed forces and seeking to use oil revenues to diversify and develop the country's economy. Seven new states were created in 1976, bringing the total to 19. The process of creating additional states continued until, in 1996, there were 36.

The Second Republic

A constituent assembly was elected in 1977 to draft a new constitution, which was published on September 21, 1978, when the ban on political activity, in effect since the advent of military rule, was lifted. Political parties were formed, and candidates were nominated for president and vice-president and the two houses of assembly. In 1979, five political parties competed in a series of elections in which a northerner, Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), was elected President. All five parties won representation in the National Assembly.

In August 1983, Shagari and NPN were returned to power in a landslide victory, with a majority of seats in the National Assembly and control of 12 state governments. But the elections were marred by violence and allegations of widespread rigging. Electoral malfeasance led to legal battles over the results.

On December 31, 1983, the military overthrew the Second Republic. Major General Muhammad Buhari emerged as the leader of the Supreme Military

Council (SMC), the country's new ruling body. He charged the civilian government with economic mismanagement, widespread corruption, election fraud, and a general lack of concern for the problems of Nigerians. He also pledged to restore prosperity to Nigeria and to return the government to civilian rule but proved unable to deal with Nigeria's severe economic problems. The Buhari government was peacefully overthrown by the SMC's third-ranking member and Chief of Staff, Major General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida in August 1985.

Babangida cited the misuse of power, violations of human rights by key officers of the SMC, and the government's failure to deal with the country's deepening economic crisis as justifications for the takeover. During the first few days in office, President Babangida moved to restore freedom of press and to release political detainees being held without charge. As part of a 15-month economic emergency, he announced stringent pay cuts for the military, police, and civil servants and proceeded to enact similar cuts for the private sector. Imports of rice, maize, and later wheat were banned. President Babangida demonstrated his intent to encourage public participation in government decision-making by opening a national debate on proposed economic reform and recovery measures. The public's response convinced Babangida of intense opposition to an economic recovery package dependent on International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan.

The Abortive Third Republic

President Babangida promised to return the country to civilian rule by 1990; this date was later extended until January 1993. In early 1989, a constituent assembly completed work on a constitution for the Third Republic. In the spring of 1989, political activity was again permitted. In October 1989 the government established two 'grassroots' parties, the National Republican Convention (NRC), which was to be a "little to the right" and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), "a little to the left", other parties were not allowed to register by the Babangida government.

In December 1990 the first stage of partisan elections were held at the local government level. While turnout was low, there was no violence, and both parties demonstrated strength in all regions of the country, with the SDP winning control of a majority of local government councils.

In December 1991 gubernatorial and state legislative elections were held throughout the country. In historic June 12, 1993 presidential elections, which most observers deemed to be Nigeria's fairest, early returns indicated that wealthy Yoruba businessman M.K.O. Abiola had won a decisive victory. However, on June 23, 1993, Babangida, using several pending lawsuits as pretense, annulled the election, throwing

Nigeria into turmoil. Babangida was forced to hand over to Ernest Shonekan, a prominent non-partisan businessman. Shonekan was overthrown by General Sani Abacha on November 17, 1993.

Abubakar's Transition to Civilian Rule

Following the death of Gen. Abacha on June 8, 1998, Gen. Abubakar took over as the Head of State.

The Military Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) promulgated a new constitution based largely on the suspended 1979 constitution, before the May 29, 1999 inauguration of the new civilian president. The constitution includes provisions for a bicameral legislature, the National Assembly, consisting of a 360-member House of Representatives and a 109-member Senate. The executive branch and the office of president will retain federal powers. The legislature and judiciary, having suffered years of neglect, were to be rebuilt as institutions.

The Fourth Republic

The emergence of a democratic Nigeria in May 1999 ended 18 years of consecutive military rule. Olusegun Obasanjo became the steward of a country suffering economic stagnation and the deterioration of most of its democratic institutions. Obasanjo, a former General, was admired for his stand against the Abacha dictatorship, his record of returning the federal government to civilian rule in 1979, and his claim to represent all Nigerians regardless of religion. The new president took over a country that faced many problems, including a dysfunctional bureaucracy, collapsed infrastructure, and a military that wanted a reward for returning quietly to the barracks. The president moved quickly and retired hundreds of military officers who had political positions, established a blue-ribbon panel to investigate human rights violations, ordered the release of scores of persons held without charge, and rescinded a number of questionable incenses and contracts let by the previous military regimes. The government also moved to recover millions of dollars in funds secreted in overseas accounts.

On May 29, 2007, Obasanjo handed over to President Musa Yar'adua who won the presidential election under the platform of the People Democratic Party (PDP). Unfortunately, President Yar'adua died as a result of a protracted illness, leading to the Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan assuming full presidential powers.

Theories of Democratic Governance And Military Rule

This section examines the concept of democratic governance with emphasis on Nigeria. The issue of governance has gained universal currency as nations and international institutions seek appropriate mechanisms to enhance the role of government by

making it more transparent, accountable, responsive and responsible to the constituencies (Natufe: 2000: 1, 2). The section also examines the theory of military rule.

Theories of Democratic Governance

Accompanying the democratic tide, which engulfed the African countries from the late 1980s into the 1990s, is the concept of democratic governance. Governance has been defined as “the conscious management of regime structures with a view to enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm” (Hyden, 1993:7).

The contribution of Goran Hyden to bring greater clarity to the concept governance needs special attention. He elevates governance to an umbrella concept to define an approach to comparative politics, an approach that fills analytical gaps left by others. Using a governance approach, he emphasizes the creative potential of politics, especially with the ability of leaders to rise above the existing structure of the ordinary, and to inspire others to partake in efforts to move society forward in new and productive directions.

His views boil down to the following:

- (i) Governance is a conceptual approach that, when fully elaborated, can frame a comparative analysis of macro-politics.
- (ii) Governance concerns “big” questions of a “constitutional” nature that establish the rules of political conduct.
- (iii) Governance involves creative intervention by political actions to change structure that inhibit the expression of human potential.
- (iv) Governance is a rational concept, emphasizing the nature of interactions between state and social actors, and among social actors themselves.
- (v) Governance refers to particular types of relationships among political actors that is, those which are socially sanctioned rather than arbitrary.

It is clear from Hyden’s submission that, the concern of governance has over the years gained momentum and a wider meaning. Apart from being an instrument of public affairs management, or a gauge of political development, governance has become a useful mechanism to enhance the legitimacy of the public realm. It has also become an analytical framework or approach to comparative politics. Minogue (1997:4) refers to good governance as “broad reform strategy and a particular set of initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil society with the objective of making government more accountable, more open and transparent and more democratic”.

There is a temptation to use governance and government interchangeably. Government is said to

derive from the Greek work *Kyberman* which means to steer. Natufe, et al (2006:3) defines a government as a collective body of elected and appointed institutions empowered to legislate and adjudicate for the good of society. He also sees governance “as conceptualized processes and systems by which a government manages the resources of a society to address socio-economic and political challenges in the polity. Natufe, thus, concludes that, “a government is elected or appointed to provide good, effective and efficient governance”.

On the other hand, democracy is always a more difficult concept to define, precisely, because it evokes different meaning for different people. That it has no universally accepted meaning is strongly suggested by the rejection of western liberal democracy as the model, with multi-party system, open and competitive (electoral contest) for power as well as civil and political liberties. It is even argued that democracy can take cognizance of existing traditions and values (customs) as implies in the discourse on African democracy. Nevertheless, the idea of democracy, irrespective of the type, has universal values and elements. It locates power in the people, who choose their representatives (leaders). Democracy implies a government which is elected, responsive and also accountable at the same time.

Having grasped the meanings of government, governance and good governance, we can now address our minds to the issue of democratic governance. It refers to the deliberate management of the public realm based on certain common goals such as the promotion of popular participation, accountability and transparency. Obviously, this is what is implied in the World Bank’s notion of “good governance”. The question of good governance has captured the attention of international institutions, including the World Bank and several inter-governmental organizations like the G-8. Both institutions have made the issue a critical prerequisite in their aid and donation policies to countries with poor records on governance. A good governance system anchored on constitutional democracy is defined by its relationship to some key prerequisites, including accountability, transparency, participatory and predictability, as pointed out above. Natufe, et al (2006:4) argues that “politics is a process of resolving societal conflicts that arise when determining who gets what, when and how”.

On the other hand, Oluba, et al (2008:3) believes “constitutional government or representative government gives majority of the citizens – in line with the levels and degree of dispersion of power a seeming equivalent or the power and authority which is enjoyed by dictators. That way everybody becomes a ruler through the constitution. A strong sense implies in the concept of democratic governance

therefore, is that, it is prerequisite for sustainable development.

Theory of Military Rule

The initial justification for military intervention in Nigeria arose from the claim that the country's civil politics were unruly and required a dose of military discipline. This naïve assumption overlooked the universal historical fact that since the invention of the nation-state some five centuries ago, its civil politics have been disorderly.

We agree that order and discipline were the military's twin mantras. But the Nigerian military's notion of discipline was completely defective. Is overthrowing a government which military officers had sworn to protect not an act of indiscipline? Obviously, discipline signifies an inner code of behaviour that honours important societal principles. Coups d'état has no redeeming values as acts of discipline, because they destroy respect for a societal institution of governance.

The interesting thing about military rule in Nigeria is that it changed the meaning of discipline into obedience. Fear-driven obedience, that destroyer of genuine discipline, has been abroad during the decades of military rule. It probably reached its ignoble height in the twosome dictatorship of Buhari and Idiagbon (1983 – 1985) when Nigerians were harassed with some creed called "War on Indiscipline".

One frightening development in Nigerian military politics was the concoction that was labeled "civilization" of military rulers. It is a corollary of the false thesis that military rule is superior to civil politics. It had been gratuitously proclaimed as a West African political tradition.

There are many prominent civilians who have encouraged military rule because they benefit from it. Some ex-military officers have openly complained that civilians instigated many of the coup d'états that have disrupted civil rule in Nigeria.

The false contrast between "good military rulers" and "bad military dictators" was pervasive in discussion of Nigerian public affairs. It is a dangerous distinction whose weaknesses deserve to be fully exposed. It excuses the basic fact that military rule of civil populations is illegitimate and will inevitably bear evil fruits.

For three decades, the Nigerian military establishments permitted its ruling elites to operate outside constitutional limits and to exercise powers that are unrestrained by institutional checks and balances. One troubling aspect of military rule is its disrespect for the constitution (Ele, 1999:9). States

whose existence resulted from the quest by the Nineteenth century leading capitalist nations to a survival imperative, meet up with the challenges of capitalism entering its monopoly phase (Lenin, 1916), have since their independence been characterized by political instability. In Nigeria, this unsavoury development has manifested in a protracted romance between the military and politics.

Proponents of military rule stress that certain characteristics of the military like their sense of nationalism, cohesion, Puritanism and austerity, professionalism, etc, impel them to move into the political arena to rescue the state from wreckage (Huntington, 1968, Janowitz, 1964).

Other scholars attribute military intervention to societal factors which are essential to the military institution. These intellectuals emphasize societal and structural weaknesses, institutional fragility and low levels of political cultures, etc, which act to propel the military to occupy the political vacuum (Luckham, 1971; Welch Jr. 1979; Huntington, 1968).

The third view questions the political nature of the military and unnaturalness of intervention in politics. These scholars stress the fact that the military is part and parcel of the process of state formation and is, therefore, a political institution. They further argue that, the idea of an apolitical professional military is alien to Africa because in traditional African states, the distinction between the spheres of economy, polity, religion and social were blurred. Thus, the concept of civilian supremacy is a borrowed term in its application in Africa. (Elaigwu, 1979; Mazrui, 1975).

In Nigeria, specifically the intrusion of the military into the political arena can be attributed to a combination of factors which are both internal and external to the military institution (Gofwen, 1997:45). He further argues, that, "the intrusion into the political scene and its consequent stay in power for the most part of the nation's history, has far-reaching implications in all ramifications. In relation to the military, it has resulted in the development of a politically and materially conscious military which cannot be satisfied relegated to the barracks for life".

Hyden (1985:5) rightly noted that, "the Nigerian military as an organization is subject to the vicissitudes of the Nigerian society just as any social institution within the Nigerian society cannot but be reflected and have repercussion in Nigerian military". Consequently, military officers as a result of their exposure to the prerequisites of political office have become very corrupt and are characterized by a conspicuous consumption and display of wealth.

The Performance of Democracy in Comparison to Military Rule in Nigeria

This section examines the performance of democracy in comparison to military rule. It compares the performances of civil rule between all the four republics as well as bringing out the challenges and prospects of democratic governance in Nigeria.

Performance of Democracy

The civil regimes since 1960 when Nigeria gained her independence are:

- (a) 1960-1965 (Balewa government)
- (b) 1979-1983 (Shagari government)
- (c) May 1999 – April 2007 (Obasanjo government)
- (d) May 2007 – to date (Yar’adua/Jonathan/ and Buhari governments)

We shall examine each of these republics one by one.

The Balewa Government

The Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa’s regime was from 1960 to 1965, which is best described as the Nigerian first republic. As the post-independence civil government, the Balewa regime was faced with a lot of challenges and prospects.

As a federation of three regions (northern, western and eastern) under constitution that provided for a parliamentary form of government, the Balewa’s government practiced true federalism. The federating regions had control over their economic resources with cocoa in the west, oil palm in the east and groundnut/cotton in the north. Later when the Midwest region was created from the western region, making Nigeria a four-region federation, the Midwest region produced rubber. Under the constitution, each of the regions retained a substantial measure of self-government. The Balewa government encouraged agricultural production, with emphasis on export crops. Substantial earnings from crop exports were used to develop the regions and the country in general. In October 1963, Nigeria attained a republican status.

The Shagari Government

The period between 1979 and 1983 witnessed the second republic in which Alhaji Shehu Shagari was the President of Nigeria. The country jettisoned the parliamentary system of government and adopted the American style of presidential system of government. The Shagari government was noted for economic mismanagement, widespread corruption, election fraud and a general lack of concern for the problems of Nigeria. Under the Shagari regime, Nigeria experienced severe economic problems. Nigerians queued for major essential commodities. Shagari himself was not corrupt but his government was too weak to check the excesses of his ministers and other appointed officials. Import license racketeering became the order of the day, with those having accessed to power becoming instant millionaires. The

period also witnessed declined oil revenue earning due to volatile crude oil prices.

The performance of the second republic was so poor that there was widespread poverty in Nigeria as graphically illustrated in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Trends in poverty level in Nigeria: 1980-1995 (%)

Year	Poverty level	Estimated total population	Population in poverty
1980	28.1%	65m	17.17m
1985	46.3%	75m	34.7m
1992	42.7%	91.5m	39.2m
1996	65.6%	102.3%	67.1m

Source: FOS Poverty Profile for Nigeria 1980-1996, April 1999.

Analyzing the table (Table 1.1), we can see that just a year after the second republic started in 1979, the poverty level in 1980 was 28.1% of the population or 17.17 million Nigerians. And in 1985, which was two years after the second republic was aborted in 1983, the poverty level jumped to 46.3% of the entire population or 34.7 million Nigerians.

Table 1.2: Trends in Relative Poverty Levels, 1980-2004

Year	Poverty level	Estimated total population	Population in poverty
1980	28.1%	65m	18.26m
1985	46.3%	75m	34.73m
1992	42.7%	91.5m	39.07m
1996	65.6%	102.3%	67.11m
2004	54.4%	266.3m	68.70m

Source: Poverty profile for Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, 2005.

In 2004, the Nigerian government decided to conduct a Living Standard Measurement Study (LSMS), a methodology developed and recommended by the World Bank. The study was intended to collect more reliable information and provide basic welfare indicators for monitoring poverty alleviation programmes. The survey found that relative poverty in Nigeria had decreased to 54.4% in 2004. However, the population in poverty had maintained a steady increase between 1980 and 2004, as illustrated in Table 1.2.

The rate of growth of the economy has not justified the supposedly huge government expenditures. Even in years when growth figures have shown marginal improvements, do they translate into per capita welfare increases or enhance the direct beneficiary index? One key issue that has hindered the performance of budgets in Nigeria is the fact that Nigeria’s economy is a very porous one: allowing the leakage of funds and resources that would have been used within the borders. Table 1.3 graphically illustrates the mismatch between huge budget deficits and the welfare of Nigerians.

Table 1.3: Growth Figures and the Incidence of Poverty in Nigeria 1998-2007

Year	Growth rate %	Budget deficit	Inflation	Incidence of poverty %
1998	2.3	4.7	10.0	68
1999	2.8	8.4	6.6	70
2000	3.8	2.9	15.1	70
2001	4.2	4.1	16.6	68
2002	3.6	4.8	12.2	65
2003	5.1	3.3	23.6	63
2004	6.6	7.7	10.0	55
2005	6.2	9.9	11.6	54.5
2006	6.1	7.0	8.5	55.1
2007	5.6	6.0	12.5	60.5

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria.

Table 2.1: Gross National Product per capita (US dollars)

Country	1975	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Nigeria	510	1,150	950	350	350	330	300	230	260
Indonesia	220	490	520	570	630	630	740	530	1,110
Malaysia	890	1,800	1,910	2,400	2,540	2,830	3,140	3,480	4,680
South Africa	2,030	1,980	2,160	2,050	2,010	1,890	1,890	3,040	3,400
Korea Republic	640	2,330	2,260	5,770	6,670	7,210	7,660	8,260	10,555

Source: World Debt Table, 1995.

Even the Gross National Product per capita (US dollars) as depicted on Table 2.1 shows a decline

from 1,150 in 1980 to 950 in 1985, which covered a substantial part of the period of the second republic.

Table 2.2: Gross Domestic Product based on Purchasing-Power-Parity (PPP) per capita GDP

Year	GDP	Percentage (%)
1980	693.803	
1981	819.682	28.52
1982	911.125	2.18
1983	875.662	-3.89
1984	866.54	-1.04
1985	940.74	8.56
1986	852.865	-9.34
1987	761.044	-10.77
1988	822.352	8.06
1989	882.672	7.34
1990	1004.552	13.81
1991	1004.849	0.03
1992	1005.456	0.06
1993	1021.045	1.55
1994	1023.86	0.28
1995	1014.059	-0.96
1996	1055907	4.13
1997	1075.066	1.81
1998	1086.818	1.09
1999	1078.353	-0.78
2000	1129.203	4.72
2001	1215.528	7.64
2002	1456.691	19.84
2003	1597.864	9.69
2004	1773.307	1098
2005	1795.5	1.25
2006	1916.382	6.73
2007	2052.248	7.09
2008	2162.054	5.35
2009	2199.076	1.71

Source: International Monetary fund – 2009 World Economic Outlook

Table 2.2 shows that there was a rapid increase of per capita GDP during most part of the Obasanjo's administration. This was partly due to the favourable global crude oil prices during most part of that period, in which oil price climaxed almost to \$150

per barrel. For instance, per capita GDP increased from 1215.528 in 2001 to 1456.691 in 2002, an increase of 19.84%. In the same period, consumer prices rose from 14.2 in 1980 to 3.41 in 1985 as depicted in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Consumer prices in selected countries (1975-1996)

Country	1975	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Nigeria	6.7	14.2	34.1	100	113.0	163.4	256.8	403.3	696.9	975.0
Ghana	0.2	2.8	25.4	100	113.0	129.9	162.3	202.7	323.2	473.7
Kenya	17.8	32.7	61.1	100	119.8	155.2	226.3	292.0	294.3	320.2
Brazil	-	8	36.2	100	97.2	93.8	100.9	108.6	110.9	111.3
Egypt	11.5	21.0	40.5	100	119.7	136.1	152.5	165.0	190.9	204.7
India	35.3	42.8	66.8	100	113.9	127.3	135.4	149.2	164.5	179.2
Indonesia	89.4	108.1	90.7	100	108.9	103.2	104.5	110.3	110.0	1094

Source: International Financial Statistics of the IMF, 1998.

Table 3.2: Inflation, Average Consumer Prices (1981-2009)

Year	Inflation	Average Consumer Change (%)
1981	20.55	106.17
1982	7.698	-62.55
1983	23.212	201.53
1984	39.582	70.52
1985	5.525	-86.04
1986	5.361	-2.97
1987	10.199	90.24
1988	34.499	238.26
1989	50.467	46.29
1990	7.364	-85.41
1991	12.695	72.39
1992	44.808	252.96
1993	57.165	27.58
1994	57.032	-0.23
1995	72.852	27.74
1996	29.262	-59.83
1997	8.536	-70.83
1998	9.986	16.99
1999	6.617	-33.74
2000	6.938	4.85
2001	18.032	159.90
2002	13.681	-24.13
2003	14.023	2.50
2004	15.02	7.11
2005	17.856	18.88
2006	8.227	-53.93
2007	5.392	-34.46
2008	11.583	114.82
2009	11.959	3.25

Source: International Monetary Fund – 2009 World Economic Outlook

While Table 3.1 was based on consumer price index with 1990 as the base year with 100 values, Table 3.2 depicts inflation, average consumer prices and percent change. Average consumer prices jumped from 6.938 in 2000 to 18.032 in 2001, an increase of 159.90% which is during the early period of the Fourth Republic. It was later reduced to 5.392 in 2007 but again, jumped by 114.82% to 11.583 in 2008.

The Abortive Third Republic

The Presidential election was held on June 12, 1993, with the inauguration of new president scheduled to take place August 27, 1993, presidential elections, which most observers deemed to be Nigeria's fairest, early returns indicated that Alhaji M.K.O. Abiola had won a decisive victory. However, on June 23, 1993, Babangida annulled the election but was forced to hand over to Chief Ernest Shonekan. He was to rule until new elections scheduled for February 1994. Although he had led Babangida's Transitional

Council since early 1993, Shonekan was unable to reserve Nigeria's ever-growing economic problems or to defuse lingering political tension. With the country sliding into chaos, Defense Minister Sani Abacha quickly assumed power and forced Shonekan's "resignation" on November 17, 1993. Not much was achieved by Chief Ernest Shonekan during the abortive third republic.

The Obasanjo Administration

Between May 1999 and May 2007, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was the civilian president of Nigeria. Obasanjo's administration marked the advent of the fourth republic. The new president took over a country that faced many problems, including a dysfunctional bureaucracy, collapsed infrastructure, and a politicized military. Obasanjo moved quickly and retired hundreds of military officers who held political positions. He also established a blue-ribbon panel to investigate human rights violations (The Justice Oputa-led Commission on Human Rights

Abuses and Violations). The president ordered the release of scores of persons held without charge, and cancelled a number of questionable licenses and contracts awarded by the previous military regimes. The government also moved to recover millions of dollars in funds stashed in secret accounts abroad.

There was a marked improvement in human rights and democratic practice under Obasanjo. The press for instance, enjoyed greater freedom than under previous governments. The challenges faced by the Obasanjo administration were the conflicts between the Executive and legislative arms of government over major appropriations and other proposed legislations. A sign of federalism had been the growing visibility of state governors and the inherent friction between Abuja and the various state capitals over resource allocation.

Problems of communal violence had confronted the Obasanjo administration throughout the 8-year's tenure. In May 1999, violence erupted in Kaduna State over the succession of an Emir resulting in more than 100 deaths. In November 1999, the army destroyed the town of Odi Bayelsa State and killed scores of civilians in retaliation to the murder of 12 policemen by a local gang. In Kaduna in February – May 2000, over 1,000 people died in rioting over the introduction of Sharia in the state. Hundreds of ethnic Hausas were killed in reprisal attacks in south-eastern Nigeria. In September 2001, over 2000 people were killed and thousands displaced in communal violence that spread across the Middle Belt states of Benue, Taraba and Nasarawa. On October 1, 2001, President Obasanjo announced the formation of the National Security Commission to address the issue of communal violence. These were some of the challenges that the Obasanjo administration faced. Nevertheless, the Obasanjo government achieved a lot in the areas of debt relief, GSM telecommunications, economic reforms, and various policy initiatives

The Paris Club debt agreement (facilitated by the savings related to the oil price-based fiscal rule, as oil price were consistently above reference prices for 2004-2008) eliminated the debt overhang. Thus, the improvement in creditworthiness showed up in the sovereign credit ratings. Nigeria subsequently

received aid which provided a sound basis for attracting both domestic and foreign investment into the country. (Okonjo-Iweala, 2009:6).

Under the Obasanjo's administration, the banking consolidation saw the number of Nigerian banks reduced from 86 in 2005 to 25 in 2008, with greatly strengthened capital positions. Financial soundness was bolstered by the reforms, as shown in Table 4, which compares Nigeria to other emerging market countries.

Nigeria's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) was second only to Indonesia's although its share of non-performing loans (NPLs) was on the high side with relatively low provisions.

Table 4: Financial Soundness Indicators 2007

Country	CAR (%)	NPL/Total Loans (%)	Provisions/NPL (%)	ROA (%)	ROE (%)
Brazil	18.4	3.1	182.4	2.7	27.8
Ghana	15.8	7.9	n.a	4.3	24.2
Indonesia	21.3	10.9	103.8	2.8	18.2
Malaysia	13.5	6.6	62.6	1.4	n.a
Nigeria	18.6	7.7	59.5	1.8	13.8
South Africa	12.2	1.2	n.a	1.4	18.4

Source: IMF GFSR. Data refers to 2007 in Okonjo-Iweala (2009: pp. 12-13)

Note: CAR: Capital adequacy ratio, NPL: non-performing loans; ROA: return on assets; ROE: return on equity.

A period of explosive growth in the Nigerian banking industry followed the 2005 consolidation. Between June 2006 and June 2008, the number of branches grew by 54 percent, the number of deposit accounts by 39 percent and total loans and advances by 197 percent (Okonjo-Iweala, et al, 2009:14)

Fiscal policy reform and relative macro-economic stability under the Obasanjo administration improved the investment climate, with the reduction in volatility helping the non-oil sector. Thus, non-oil GDP, agriculture in particular, has been growing progressively since 2004 in sharp contrast to its dismal performance over the 1980s and 1990s, and was an important driver of growth over 2004-2007 as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Contribution to Non-Oil Growth, 2004-2007

Year	Agric	SM	Man	Tel	F&I	W&RT	B&C	Others	Non-oil GDP (%)
2004	46.7	0.5	5.3	5.0	2.0	21.3	2.5	15.7	13.2
2005	45.3	0.4	5.5	5.5	1.8	27.4	2.7	11.3	8.6
2006	42.8	0.4	5.0	6.9	2.8	29.4	2.8	10.0	9.4
2007	40.6	0.4	4.5	8.9	3.1	29.4	3.0	10.1	9.5

Source: Employment and Growth in Nigeria, World Bank Staff Draft Note, 2009.

Notes: Agric: Agriculture; SM: Solid Mineral; Man: Manufacturing; Tel: Telecommunications and Post; F&I: Finance and Insurance; W&RT: Wholesale and Retail Trade; B&C: Building and Construction.

After agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, telecom and manufacturing have been next in line. Unfortunately, the impressive economic growth recorded under the Obasanjo's administration had not translated into any significant improvement in the general welfare of Nigerians.

The Yar'Adua/Jonathan Administration

On May 29, 2007, President Umaru Yar'Adua was sworn in as the civilian president of Nigeria. Due to protracted ill-health, Yar'Adua could not muster enough strength to deliver the dividends of democracy to Nigerians. He eventually died and his deputy, Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan was sworn in as a substantive president. Yar'Adua must be credited with enforcing the rule of law, transparency and accountability in governance. He initiated 7-point agenda to transform the economy.

President Goodluck Jonathan embarked upon major reforms such as electoral laws, constitution amendment, and the power sector reforms otherwise called the Roadmap to Power Reform. He also approved about 53 percent wage increase for the federal workers as well as addressing the various socio-economic and political problems in the country.

President Jonathan successfully replaced all the service chiefs, including the Inspector-General of Police. He assented to the new electoral law. However, his government faced a lot of challenges such as insecurity of lives and property, e.g. Boko Haram in the Northern States of Nigeria, kidnapping in the Southern Nigeria, communal crisis in Central Nigeria as well as reduced oil earnings arising from declining crude oil prices.

His announcement that he would contest the 2011 presidential elections under the platform of the ruling party (PDP) against the alleged zoning arrangement was seen by so many to have heat up the polity. He contested and won the election. Nevertheless, President Jonathan's administration could be credited for fostering a lot of prospects for the democratic governance. He contested the 2015 Presidential elections but lost. President Jonathan said "I conceded defeat to prevent crisis" (Super News, 21/05/15). This action paved way for political stability in Nigeria.

Performance of the Military Rule in Nigeria as Compared to the Civilian Rule

The military's three decades of dictatorship and its pervasive corruption of civil ethnics in our public affairs have left behind its infamy a curse that Nigeria will wrestle with for years, possibly decades to come. The military had installed structures and processes that are inimical to civil and democratic politics. In the three decades in which military rule had been dominant in Nigerian public affairs, many structures

of governance that threaten individuals' freedoms had been installed.

All military regimes in Nigeria had suspended sections of the constitution that may restrain their powers, while retaining those portions of the constitution that they found helpful. In the place of the constitution, the military have ruled by decrees which are usually so broad in scope that override the authorities of the law courts. In addition, they have in several instances disregarded unfavourable court rulings that apply the logic of the military's own decrees. In effect, Nigerian military has operated outside the law.

Under the military, the rule of law was jettisoned as dictatorial discretion reigned supreme. This eventually nurtured massive corruption, led to inappropriate policies and constant policy reversals which consequently marred the effectiveness of good policies. The military in Nigeria for long thrived within a corrupt dependent capitalist society where the control of state machinery has become primarily for easy accumulation of wealth. Of course, this has a negative implication for the democratic prospect of the nation.

Gofwen, et al (1997) believes that "the control of state power by the military over the years, has equipped them more than any other social category in society, to an infinitum dictate the nature and direction of affairs in this country. They have for long held on to the most important positions in the country. This has exposed them to the best opportunities and avenues to establish themselves economically and have a firmer grip on the nation's body polity". He went on to observe that, the military has in recent times produced more millionaires than the civil society. Gufwen cited an example in which between 1985 and 1993, the Babangida administration used about one hundred and forty-three officers as state governors. Also, Abacha's regime used almost sixty-five officers in that capacity. These are all apart from ministerial and other sensitive political appointments. He stated that "taken together, we are talking of nothing less than two hundred officers who have at different points in time, occupied the most economically and politically strategic positions in the country. They vacate these positions as millionaires as evident from their lifestyles, chains of businesses, land and other possessions".

The general consensus on military rule is that every successive military regime in Nigeria, reduced to a child's play, the corruption and plunder of public funds perpetuated by a preceding regime. Gowon, for instance, was accused of corruption but Babangida administration institutionalized corruption. Then came Abacha's free-for-all looting of the treasury,

with several dollars and pounds stashed in secret accounts in overseas countries.

The military officers, be the serving or retired, have become top contenders with competition rife among traditional, professional and academic institutions and bodies for the conferment of chieftaincy titles and degrees. The Nigerian military officers especially the retired ones, have become economically dominant and by implications socially influential to dictate the turn of events in political arena. They have also become deeply entrenched in the nation's body polity.

On the other hand, the advent of democratic governance, especially during the present fourth republic has not brought the expected Eldorado. Corruption is very much with us. Abuse of office by various arms of government at various tiers of government (federal, state and local) has made the separation of powers in Nigeria ineffective and consequently impossible for the achievement of desired levels of constitutional government. Oluba, et al (2008:3) argues that, "because the military has held power for several years in executive capacities, acted on behalf of the legislature and consequently controlled the judiciary, it appeared that the tradition got so entrenched that even under democracy, the executive arm dominates and often wants to control the legislature and has largely succeeded in many instances at buying up the judiciary and when it is impossible to do so, it totally disregarded its legal interpretations and verdicts. The legislative arm on its own has tried very much successfully at different times to encroach into the exclusive terrains of the executive such as the budget making as well as in trying to interpret the laws".

Like the military, the performance of the civilian regimes has not yielded the expected dividends of democracy to the citizenry. For instance, there was much retrenchment under the Obasanjo's eight years rule. The problem of epileptic power supply is still very much with us, coupled with dilapidated infrastructure, a collapsing educational system, an inefficient health care delivery system, weak consumer demand and pervasive poverty. Above all, the advent of democratic governance has not stemmed insecurity of lives and property, kidnapping and other anti-social behaviours. Thus, the current democratization is taking place in the context of massive economic decline and the erosion of living standards of most Nigerians by the negative impact of previous economic reforms.

Nevertheless, Nigeria can surmount the political will to curtail these challenges. The prospects are enormous.

CONCLUSION

It has been the contention here that both the civilian regimes and the military regimes in Nigeria are not immune to corruption. Sadly, none of them had delivered good governance to Nigerians. The emergence of the military as a political force at the helm of affairs in Nigeria had destroyed the cohesiveness of the military and its apolitical nature.

There must be zero tolerance for corruption in Nigeria, if the country is to attain development. The long period of military rule has entrenched corruption in our public realms. They ruled without regards for democratic principles that could provide checks and balances. The application of discretion and arbitrariness in the manner decisions were taken without accountability provided avenue for corruption.

Good governance, transparency, accountability and the rule of law are the keys to sustained democratic governance in Nigeria. Also, Nigeria cannot be seen as secure and free until the people's human rights are respected and protected by the government. Nigeria cannot be considered secured if millions of people go hungry, do not have roof over their heads, are jobless and sick indefinitely, with the most basic human right, the right to life disregarded

Above all, the result of continued deprivation of the lower ranks of our society has led to violence, armed robbery, thuggery, hostage-taking and murder against the society by the scum of our society. The result is that, today, the poor cannot sleep because they are hungry and distraught; the rich cannot sleep because the poor are awake.

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