



LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIAN FOURTH REPUBLIC

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<p>Received: August 20th 2023 Accepted: September 20th 2023 Published: October 21st 2023</p>	<p>Accountability deficits have long plagued democratic endeavours in third-world countries, with Nigeria being no exception. This research delves into the ramifications and challenges presented by this lack of accountability within Nigeria's democratic framework. The absence of accountability not only complicates the democratization process but also poses significant barriers to national advancement. Its repercussions include deterring investments, undermining governance, skewing public policies, fostering financial misappropriations, and engendering corruption. Consequently, Nigeria frequently finds itself unfavourably positioned in corruption perception indices. This lack of accountability is also a leading factor behind rising insecurity, escalating unemployment, pervasive poverty, and disillusionment with democracy. Several challenges underpin this deficit in democratic accountability within Nigeria. The nation grapples with fragile institutions, weakened political parties susceptible to external influences, rampant godfatherism, and overarching leadership issues. For a comprehensive understanding, this study employs a historical approach, critically assessing data from secondary sources. The theoretical framework of accountability is harnessed to shed light on the intricate dynamics of Nigeria's democratization challenges. To address these concerns, the research offers several recommendations. Emphasis should be placed on data-informed decision-making. Efforts should be ramped up in political mobilization and civic education. The appointment of heads of democratic institutions should be independent, and free from presidential influence to ensure impartiality. Furthermore, a robust legal framework is essential, one that is unsparing in its treatment of corrupt public officials, ensuring that malfeasance is consistently penalized.</p>

Keywords: Accountability, Democratisation, Republic

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of civilian governance in Nigeria in 1999 has brought to light the issues of democratisation, accountability problems, and sustainable development. According to Achebe (2019), it has been observed that a significant number of Nigerians tend to participate in fraudulent activities. This behaviour is attributed to the influence of their surroundings, which fosters an atmosphere conducive to such practises. Former British Prime Minister David Cameron previously made a statement asserting that Nigeria is a country characterised by significant levels of corruption. According to Oloye (2016),

Accountability and transparency form the basic foundation in the process of democratic experimentation. Though corruption and lack of accountability is a global issue, the intensity and sophistication varies from countries to countries. Accountability in the process of democratic experimentations remains, a hallmark of modern democratic governance. (Sylvester, 2013).

Democracy will continue to remain illusion and a phantom if those in power cannot be held accountable. Accountability and transparency is pivotal in the values which globalization and wind of changes has imposed on the global system, which Nigeria is one. In spite of the fact that Nigeria globally is one of the major producers of petroleum products, the country remains underdeveloped and backward in socio-economic and political advancement. Consequently, abject poverty creepy underemployment, atrocious insecurity and other social crises is creeping the country. In government the purpose of accountability is to uphold fundamental and cardinal principles such as public interest, public trust, and rule of law.

Hence, accountability within democratic systems encompasses the public's expectations about the exercise of political power, financial integrity, prudent decision-making, and ethical conduct of government employees. The concept

of good governance acknowledges a set of widely accepted norms, including transparency and openness. This statement suggests the involvement of the general public in decision-making processes and procedures.

Accountability under democratic systems entails the establishment of measures to ensure that institutions and leaders are held responsible for their actions, while also fostering a culture of transparency and adherence to established norms and principles. Despite Nigeria's abundant natural resources and valuable mineral deposits found in all states of the federation, the absence of accountability perpetuates a condition of perpetual poverty, stagnation, and underdevelopment inside the country.

The chief executives from the President to local government chairmen considered themselves as imperial lords considering the principle of transparency as anathema and therefore unaccountable to anyone not even the citizen whom they derived their legitimacy from.

Political gladiators, even heads of institutions regard the push for accountability even by their equal and coordinate branches of government as an affront and such intentions is quickly deflected and neutralized with threats. (Akor, 2022).

Lack of accountability in our democratic experimentation with inherent draconian effects, has degenerated from being a major challenge to fundamental crises in our body politic, exerting adverse impacts on national growth and development. Resolution of this crisis will impact positively on national development. It is a complex social political and economic phenomenon and the most important obstacle to national developments. It is subversive to investment, undermining good governance and fundamentally distorting public policies, leading to misallocation of resources, which particularly hurts the poor (John, 2010 April, 10th).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the major factors responsible for the failure of most African nations to attain development has been the absence of good government and accountability in their democratization experiments (Gyong 2003).

Democracy has the capacity to open up the political space and liberalize the political atmosphere, thereby unlocked the socio economic and political development. As a result of lack of the principle of accountability in the process of her democratization, Nigeria is now confronted with pervasive and mind blowing insecurity, debt crisis, rudderless leadership, mismanagement of her diversities, bad economic policies, resulting in extreme poverty, massive unemployment and galloping inflation (Ogunnaike, 2023). By the time the current democratic administration leaves office on May 2023, public debt profile would be 77 trillion naira despite the fact that Nigeria became the first African country to settle public debt in 2006, paying Eighteen Billion dollars (\$18,000,000,000) to secure forgiveness for the balance of Thirty Billion dollars (\$30,000,000,000) debt to the London and Paris Clubs (Yusuf. 2021).

Some of the reasons for her debt profile is attributed to gross profligacy and prodigal mentality of her political leaders, derived from her elites perception of participation in governance as an individual opportunity for rapid material mobility. The views that have historically justified the use of the state as a means for primitive wealth acquisition and the promotion of self-interest. According to Ukeje (1999: p. 125), Nigeria is now grappling with an unparalleled surge of interconnected security challenges, ranging from incidents of abduction to the rise of extremist insurgencies. Virtually every region of the nation has been affected by various forms of violence and criminal activities. The magnitude of insecurity poses a significant danger to the fundamental structure of her society. The preservation of national security serves as a foundational element for achieving economic liberation, advancement, and progress. Peaceful countries have a tendency to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). Domestic investors have a high degree of economic agency, operating with few or negligible concerns. While it is seen that some states dedicate a greater portion of their funds to security organisations compared to other developmental institutions, it is unfortunate that these funds are often misappropriated during the procurement of arms and via contract inflation. Consequently, this mismanagement results in inadequate provision of modern weaponry and insufficient training for employees within various security apparatuses.

According to a recent analysis published by Trading Economics, a renowned worldwide organisation specialising in economic statistics for 196 nations, it is anticipated that Nigeria's military budget would see a rise to almost \$2 billion by the year 2023. This projection is based on comprehensive global macro models and prevailing expectations. According to the Punch Editorial (2023, January 18th), the average military spending in Nigeria from 1960 to 2021 was \$1.2 billion, with a peak of \$4.5 billion in 2021. The situation might be considered paradoxical since, despite the substantial allocation of funding, the military's efforts in combating insurgency have persistently struggled. This can be attributed, at least in part, to a deficiency in accountability and transparency about the distribution of these monies. (Ufor, 2022, August 5th).

Accountability in Crises our democratic experimentation sustained nepotism and favoritism leading to a highly biased distribution of state resources. It breeds corruption inhibits integration and reduces official preferences in allocation of states values. Beyond the moral implications, nepotism inject rot in governance, leading to illicit benefits and abuse of power for private gain. No democratic dispensation is despotic and claim to be fighting corruptions (Mercy 2015).

Accumulated consequences of failed leadership compounded by lack of leadership accountability in democratic dispensations also induced psychological reactions from the populace, resulting to democratic frustrations. Fundamentally disturbing is the *Japa Phenomenon Syndrome*, a migration mentality currently eroding the nation of young dynamic brains and intellectuals, relevant for national development, growth and rebirth. This problem present to us certain germane questions that bothers our mind, such as; What are the challenges of militating against

democratization and accountability in our body politics and what are the effect of lack of accountability in the process of our democratic experimentation. It is against this background that this study was undertaken to examine leadership accountability and democratic consolidation in Nigerian Fourth Republic

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the challenges of militating against democratization and leadership accountability in Nigeria?
2. What are the effects of lack of accountability in the process of Nigeria democratic experimentation in Nigeria?

Objective of the Study

1. To identify the challenges militating against democratization and leadership accountability in Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the effect of lack of leadership accountability in the process of democratization in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concepts of Democracy

The etymology of the term democracy may be traced back to its Greek origins, where it is formed from the combination of two words: "demos," signifying the populace or people, and "cracy," denoting governance or authority. Translated literary democracy refers to a kind of governance characterised by the rule of the people. Democracy, as a political system, places the highest level of power in the hands of the people and seeks to promote the collective welfare of society. According to Ibaba (2010, p. 66), Democracy is characterised by many fundamental attributes, like the regular occurrence of elections, transparency, inclusiveness and accessibility, adherence to the rule of law, legitimacy, the enforcement of rights, and constitutionalism.

Democracy may be defined as a form of governance in which individuals wield political authority, either directly or via regularly chosen representatives. This implies that a state may be considered democratic if it establishes structures that allow for the manifestation of the people's sovereignty in determining the fundamental social orientations and policies. According to Appardorai (2004), factors such as economic equality, brotherly emotions, and political liberty are considered to be essential basic requirements. (p.137)

The presence of opportunities for political engagement, political equality, and the potential for an alternative administration are key factors that contribute to the democratic nature of a state. Democracy encompasses the principles of majority rule and the acceptance of minority groups in relation to the choices made by the majority. Scholars and statesmen have made several efforts to provide a comprehensive definition of democracy in diverse contexts. President Lincoln's definition of democracy is that it is a form of government in which the authority and power rest with the people, who collectively exercise their governance for the benefit and welfare of the people themselves. The term "democracy" has been employed since the time of Herodotus to refer to a system of governance wherein the authority of the state is not concentrated in any specific social class or groups, but rather distributed among all members of the community. This distribution is manifested through the act of voting, whereby the community collectively exercises its power. The principle of majority rule is integral to this system, as it serves as the peaceful and lawful means by which the will of the people is determined, given that no alternative method has been discovered.

The approach might be characterised as a civilised means of engaging in political endeavours. This endeavour is an effort to balance the concept of individual freedom with the need for the establishment and enforcement of laws. The process effectively addresses conflicts and ongoing efforts to reach consensus by engaging in dialogues and reaching compromises based on the highest level of agreement possible. According to Hall (year), democracy may be defined as a political system in which popular opinion exerts power over the government. According to Professor Dicey, democracy may be defined as a system of governance whereby the ruling body represents a significant proportion of the overall population of a country. As per President Roosevelt's assertion, democracy encompasses more than just the widespread right to vote and the unhindered expression of the collective will. It must also serve as a proactive and beneficial influence in the everyday lives of individuals, addressing not just their political concerns but also their economic necessities (Mahanjan, 1988: p. 793-795).

Democratizations

The three basic component of democratization are:

- (1) Ending authoritarianism.
- (2) Installing democratic regime
- (3) Consolidating and deepening democratic regime.

Democratisation refers to the process of transitioning towards a political system that embodies more democratic principles and practises. This might potentially include a shift from an authoritarian regime to a comprehensive democratic framework, or a move from a partially authoritarian political structure to a completely democratic political system. The conclusion of the democratisation process may either result in consolidation or further deepening. In Nigeria, there is frequent mention of the consolidation or deepening of our embryonic democracy as a democratic process. The process of democratisation is subject to the impact of several variables, including economic growth, education, and the presence of a vibrant civil society. Economic growth may be seen as a significant contributing element to the process of democratisation.

According to Sen (1983), The sustainability of Economic Development is contingent upon the collaborative endeavours and initiatives undertaken by policy makers and communities. These aims may also result in the advancement of human

capital and vital infrastructures, since the process of democratising a state involves promoting openness and accountability. According to Jega and Wakili (2001, p.2),

In the African context, the democratisation process is characterised by the gradual disengagement of military and authoritarian regimes, such as those led by Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo and Jerry Rawlings of Ghana. This disengagement paves the way for the establishment of a legitimately elected civilian government through a transition programme, commonly referred to as democratic transition (Ese, 2003).

According to Mukoro and Arugu (2018), the democratisation process may be seen as a mechanism aimed at attaining the desired outcome, which is often perceived as effective governance or human well-being (p. 88). Hence, democratisation may be seen as the practical implementation of conceptual ideals.

Democratic Consolidation

Democratic consolidation is a concept that political scientists use to describe the process by which a new democracy matures in such a way that it is unlikely to revert to authoritarianism without an external shock (Linz & Stepan, 1996). In essence, a consolidated democracy is one in which democratic practices and institutions become so ingrained that they are the 'only game in town.' The process of democratic consolidation is intricate, multifaceted, and differs across nations due to historical, cultural, and economic variations.

The study of democratic consolidation emerged significantly after the third wave of democratization, which took place in the late 20th century when many countries transitioned from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones (Huntington, 1991). As nations made this transition, scholars began to analyze what it takes to ensure that these newly-formed democracies remain stable and don't relapse into their old ways. The importance of historical context cannot be understated; countries with a longer history of democratic traditions, such as the United States or the UK, differ considerably from those with shorter histories, like many post-colonial African nations (Ake, 2000).

Central to the idea of consolidation is the establishment of strong democratic institutions. This includes a judiciary that is independent, a vibrant civil society, a free press, and law enforcement agencies that respect human rights (O'Donnell, 1996). In consolidated democracies, these institutions are not just formalities but have real power and public trust. They ensure the rule of law and provide checks and balances on political power, preventing the resurgence of authoritarian tendencies.

Beyond institutions, the values and beliefs of the citizenry play a significant role in democratic consolidation. In stable democracies, the public believes in democratic principles and holds democratic norms. As Almond and Verba (1963) noted in their seminal work, "The Civic Culture," the attitudes of citizens towards their political system are vital. If the majority of citizens value democracy, believe in its principles, and participate in its processes, democracy is more likely to thrive and consolidate.

There is a considerable debate over the relationship between economic development and democratic consolidation. Some scholars argue that economic growth and equality facilitate democratic consolidation because prosperous citizens will resist authoritarian reversals (Lipset, 1959). However, others point out that many wealthy countries have remained authoritarian and some poor ones have successfully consolidated their democracies (Przeworski & Limongi, 1997). Nevertheless, economic stability and equitable distribution of resources can alleviate social tensions and reduce the allure of authoritarian solutions.

The international environment can significantly influence the process of democratic consolidation. Democracies are more likely to thrive when they have the support of international allies, access to economic aid, and are part of a neighborhood of other democratic states (Pevehouse, 2005). In our modern, interconnected world, external pressures, whether through diplomacy, sanctions, or the promise of membership in international organizations, can play a pivotal role in a country's democratic trajectory.

In conclusion, democratic consolidation is a multifaceted process that goes beyond merely holding free and fair elections. It involves a complex interplay of historical legacies, institutional development, political culture, economic conditions, and external influences. As countries continue to democratize, understanding the underpinnings of democratic consolidation remains crucial for scholars, policymakers, and citizens alike, ensuring that newly established democracies endure and flourish.

Leadership Accountability

Leadership accountability refers to the responsibility leaders have to answer for their actions and decisions, primarily to those they lead and serve (Bovens, 2007). In essence, it encapsulates the idea that leaders, whether in business, government, or other sectors, are answerable for the outcomes of their decisions. Moreover, as the world becomes increasingly complex, the significance of accountability within leadership grows concurrently, necessitating a deeper understanding and implementation of its principles.

Historically, the concept of leadership accountability can trace its roots back to the early political systems where leaders were held answerable to their subjects or communities. Ancient Athenian democracy, for example, instituted a mechanism called "ostracism" to hold its leaders accountable (Kagan, 1989). Fast forward to the modern era, with the rise of large corporations and complex government structures, the nature and scope of leadership accountability have expanded and become intricate, given the vast number of stakeholders involved and the multifaceted decisions leaders must make.

Several institutional mechanisms facilitate leadership accountability. Regulatory bodies, internal audits, checks and balances, whistleblowing systems, and performance evaluations are tools and structures set up to ensure leaders are accountable (DeCremer & van Dijk, 2009). Moreover, with the advent of technology, new tools like social media and

online platforms have provided the public with a more direct channel to hold leaders accountable by sharing their grievances or voicing their concerns.

Culture plays a pivotal role in shaping how leadership accountability is perceived and practiced. Some cultures might prioritize collective well-being over individual gains, ensuring leaders are more tuned to community needs (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002). Moreover, ethical considerations, such as fairness, honesty, and integrity, are intertwined with accountability. Leaders who prioritize ethical considerations are more likely to be transparent about their actions and decisions, fostering trust and reinforcing their accountability.

Despite its importance, leadership accountability faces challenges. In some situations, leaders may evade accountability due to a lack of transparent mechanisms or because they can manipulate the systems in place (Eisenbeis, Knittel, & Schoenherr, 2009). Bureaucratic red tape, the diffusion of responsibility in large organizations, or even the 'too big to fail' attitude can obstruct the path of genuine accountability.

When practiced efficiently, leadership accountability can lead to better decision-making, enhanced public trust, and improved overall performance of an organization or nation (Brown, Harrison, & Treviño, 2005). Conversely, a lack of accountability can lead to mistrust, inefficiencies, and sometimes even catastrophic failures, both in the corporate world and in government structures.

To sum up, leadership accountability is not merely a term but an ethos that every leader should internalize and every institution should prioritize. As the complexities of our global society continue to evolve, the need for transparent, responsible, and accountable leadership will only grow. Ensuring leaders remain accountable for their decisions and actions is fundamental for the progress and betterment of societies worldwide.

The Nexus between Democratization and Leadership Accountability.

Accountability refers to the inherent duty and obligation of an individual entrusted with a certain role to duly disclose and report all relevant actions within their purview to the entities or individuals who have bestowed that trust upon them. The individuals responsible for making decisions within the government, business sectors, communities, or organisations have the responsibility of being accountable to both the general public and the relevant authorities involved. Leadership accountability has a crucial role in enhancing public trust in government performance, so contributing to the promotion of good governance. The notion of accountability is predicated on the expectation that those in positions of authority or those entrusted with certain responsibilities should be held liable for their actions and the resulting outcomes. It is evident that the current status of public accountability in Nigeria is profoundly discouraging. The more the attention placed on it, the more concerning it gets. According to Onwuka (2022, March 15th), the ongoing decline in the degree of responsibility among public officials indicates that the nation is confronting certain challenges related to democracy. The concept of accountability encompasses various components. In the context of government, it refers to the government's obligation to provide explanations for its actions or lack thereof, as well as the ability to hold the government accountable for these actions. This serves as a means to prevent the government, its representatives, institutions, and officials from engaging in reckless and extravagant decision-making (Nwokocho, 2007: p. 73).

The concept of leadership accountability has significant importance and serves as a crucial element in the processes of democratisation and good governance. It facilitates the distribution of authority and the collective oversight of the use of communal assets. This leads to the mitigation of power abuse and corrupt practises, hence playing a crucial role in safeguarding the realisation of individuals' fundamental human rights. The presence of effective accountability mechanisms has a significant role in fostering confidence in governmental institutions.

Accountability pertains to the interconnections between state institutions and the populace. It encompasses the duty of state institutions or any other authoritative bodies entrusted with public obligations to disseminate information, elucidate, and rationalise their decisions and actions. Additionally, it encompasses the entitlement and duty of citizens to obtain information, seek clarifications, scrutinise, and evaluate the behaviour of individuals holding public responsibilities. Hence, democracy and the process of democratisation ideally provide opportunities for public engagement and deliberation.

This strategy involves the measurement of performance and entails repercussions for both successful and unsuccessful attainment of an organization's or public entity's intended objectives, aspirations, and expectations. Accountability refers to the state of being held responsible or answerable for one's actions or decisions. According to Nwachukwu (2000), providing an explanation of one's conduct in the context of stewardship encompasses both financial responsibility and representational accountability (p. 45).

The concept of accountability necessitates that elected officials in democratic systems responsibly and effectively use public resources entrusted to them for their intended purposes. This implies that the allocation of public monies must not be redirected for personal or private purposes.

Theoretical Underpinning

The theoretical framework used in this study pertains to the concept of responsibility, specifically focusing on its relationship with democratisation and the associated issues. According to Vance, Lowry, and Eggett (2015), accountability theory elucidates the manner in which individuals see the need of rationalising their actions to an external entity, leading them to contemplate and experience a sense of responsibility for the decision-making and judgement processes. Consequently, the recognition of this apparent need to justify decision-making processes and outcomes enhances the probability of engaging in thorough and methodical contemplation of one's procedures and behaviours. Supporters of this theory believe that the accurate measurement and assessment of social activities have the potential

to enhance the efficacy of human services. Good governance and development as an intertwined concepts have largely been elusive in Nigeria rather corruption, poor governance; lack of transparency and underperforming or none performing had characterized government engagement and functions even in our democratic experimentation due to lack of accountability. Therefore accountability theory can be adopted to prevent policy violations and undue diversion of commonwealth to private interest. The aforementioned idea was first formulated by Fetlock, Lerner, and their associates and has been successfully used in the field of organisational research.

Accountability is generally seen as a crucial component in several political objectives, such as combating corruption, ensuring equitable funding for election campaigns, and promoting and strengthening democracy in nations undergoing transition. Hence, the idea is promoted as a means of protecting against instances of corporate fraud, political influence, and financial catastrophes. The underlying principle of this philosophy is to enhance the quality and efficiency of public service.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this study is historical research. In this study, secondary data from various sources such as books, journals, the internet, magazines, and newspapers were examined to investigate the impact of the lack of accountability in managing state resources on the equitable distribution of common wealth or resources in Nigeria. This lack of accountability has led to a widening gap between the elite and the masses, as well as hindered the country's developmental efforts. The historical method has significant importance since it entails the investigation, recovery, analysis, and interpretation of events in order to reach reasonable answers. This study explores the challenges of democratisation and accountability in Nigeria, specifically focusing on the management of public resources in relation to the development process. The concept of accountability highlights that issues in accountability arise, among other factors, due to inadequate leadership at different tiers of government. One of the key factors contributing to the issue at hand is the absence of robust institutional frameworks and enough mentoring opportunities.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Effect of Accountability in Democratic Resources Management

The establishment of accountability is of utmost importance and serves as a foundational element for the cautious and efficient administration of contemporary economies, as well as for the promotion of social welfare. In the majority of societies, when the delegation of power to public authorities occurs, it becomes necessary to provide reassurance to those who have delegated this power. This reassurance is crucial in ensuring that the transfer of power is not only efficient but also free from any kind of misuse or exploitation. Accountability is a crucial mechanism that facilitates the availability of information, enabling the measurement of government operations and serving as a framework to safeguard against potential abuses of authority. In this scenario, it guarantees transparency in the context of democratic experimentation. The absence of accountability results in a deficiency of confidence between the governing body and those being governed. The outcome would manifest as societal instability and governmental misconduct, ultimately resulting in unparalleled levels of corruption and hindered progress.

In the case of oil producing country like Nigeria this concept of democratization and accountability is of greater importance. Oil creates major opportunities and the government plays a major role in managing the resources. Therefore, accountability in exploring these resources affects the wellbeing of Nigerians and the future generations. The process and extent of exploration of the oil resources have presented prime opportunities for outright corruption; as the exploration of these resources is tied to individual material accumulations. Accountability in oil operations should allow democratic debates on oil explorations which have induced so much corrupt practices as a result of sudden inflow of revenues, to avoid social consequences such as the consistent sliding of Nigeria in poverty rating (Carstenis, 2005).

The recent assessment of Nigeria by Transparency International (TI), a worldwide anti-corruption alliance, as a country experiencing a deterioration in the prevalence of corruption should not come as a surprise to informed observers and followers of Nigerian affairs. The evident economic and social instability prevalent within the political system serves as compelling evidence that there are significant issues at hand, with many of these challenges stemming from corrupt practices. Corruption in Nigeria erodes the efficiency of public services such as healthcare, education or social services. Corruption has been identified as the major challenge in our process of democratization as hardly a day passes without one corrupt case making wave in the media. In its 2021 According to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Nigeria was positioned as the second most corrupt country in the West African region. The nation saw a decline of five positions, resulting in a score of 24 out of 100 in the index. In the 2021 report, Nigeria had a decline in its position, falling from 194th out of 180 nations in the previous year to 154th. The score of Nigeria had a decline from 76 in 2019 to 25 in 2020, and is projected to further decrease to 24 in 2021.

Nigeria is the 150 corrupt nations out of 180, countries according to the 2022 corrupt perception index reported by transparency international. (Pouch editorial board, 2022, February 7th) Nigeria decline in ranking made corruption the greatest contributor to undevelopment, rising insecurity, unemployment and endemic poverty, while leadership failures is also found to be engendered by corrupt practices. The CPI is widely known to be impartial and significantly, recognized as the most acceptable parameter for measuring corruptions. Corruption induced by lack of accountability in our democratization process is deepening poverty. Corruption hinders the prospects of sustained economic development by impeding long-term growth and discouraging both foreign and local investment. This phenomenon fosters the occurrence of capital flight, inflation, and devaluation of the domestic currency. According to Abdulahi (2014),

The presence of convictions documented by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) serves as a significant indicator of the deeply entrenched endemic nature of corruption resulting from the absence of accountability within our democratisation procedures.

In the year 2021, the commission successfully obtained 2,220 convictions, so contributing to a cumulative total of 6,629 convictions achieved by the commission from 2010 to 2021. The conviction of 6,629 individuals throughout the specified time frame serves as evidence of the significant problem posed by corruption, which may be attributed to a lack of accountability within our democratic system.

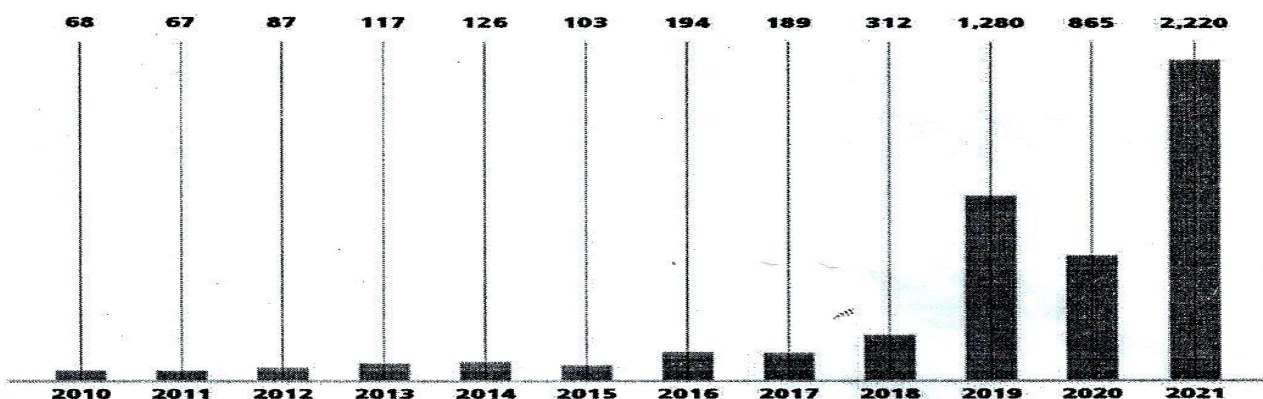
EFCC Convictions from 2010 to 2021.

According to a press release by the Economic and Financial Crimes agency (EFCC), the agency has announced that it has achieved a total of 2,220 convictions in the year 2021. This brings the cumulative number of convictions gained by the EFCC from 2010 to 2021 to 5,629.

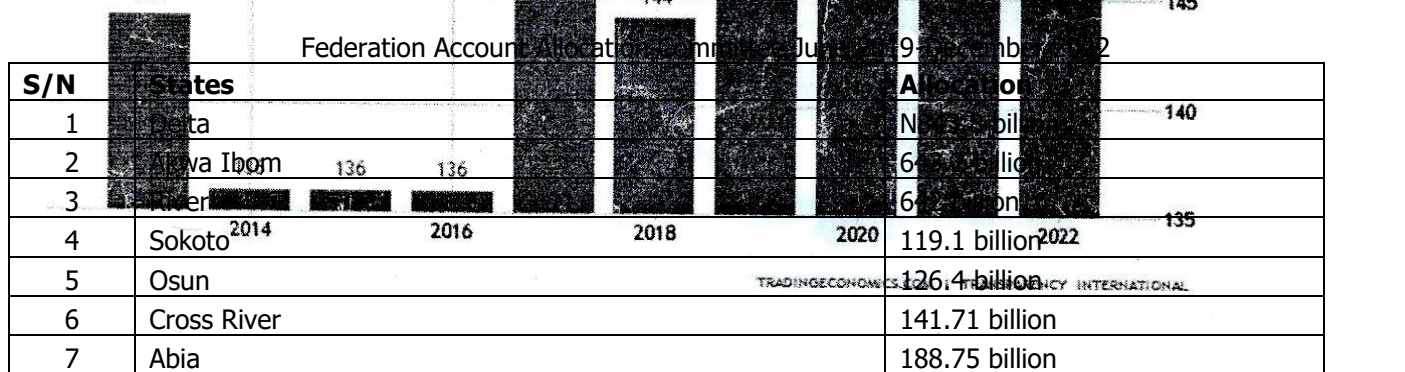
Nevertheless, the commission has failed to provide comprehensive information about the cases and individuals who have been convicted, resulting in a lack of openness in the data it has supplied.

Since 2016, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has ceased the practise of publicly disclosing a comprehensive annual report on its website, which formerly included specific information on convictions obtained and individuals found guilty of offences such as money laundering, corruption, cybercrime, and advance fee fraud, among others.

EFCC CONVICTIONS FROM 2010 TO 2021



Nigeria is the 150 most corrupt nation out of 180 countries, according to 2022 corruption perceptions index reported by Transparency International.



8	Adamawa	221.86 billion
9	Anambra	204.54 billion
10	Bauchi	200.5 billion
11	Bayelsa	543.6 billion
12	Benue	192 billion
13	Borno	233.9 billion
14	Ebonyi	171.3 Billion
15	Edo	247.5 billion
16	Ekiti	148.4 billion
17	Enugu	196.3 billion
18	Gombe	156.6 billion
19	Imo	215.96 billion
20	Jigawa	223.7 billion
21	Kaduna	242.5 billion
22	Kano	308.4 billion
23	Katsina	233.7 billion
24	Kebbi	204.3 billion
25	Kogi	193.3 billion
26	Kwara	154.1 billion
27	Lagos	457.4 billion
28	Nasarawa	179.5 billion

Source: (Nnodum & Ukagwu, 2023)

Data Emanating from National Bureau of Statistics graphically indicate the gloomy and gravely devastating catastrophe confronting Nigeria due to lack of accountability in our process of democratization.

Table 3 above shows the 36 states of Nigeria shared a total of 9.27 trillion as federal Allocation between June 2019 to Dec. 2022 a period of 43 months which form the bulk of the second tenure of President Muhammadu Buhari. Economic and financial specialists have shown that state administrations, especially those with oil-producing capacities, have not effectively used their allocated resources to foster the development of their respective regions. The authors urged civil society organisations and anti-corruption institutions to thoroughly examine the financial expenditures of the governors, emphasising that a significant number of governors misappropriated the funds allocated to them by the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC). The governor of Kaduna state recently made a statement on his acquaintance, a fellow governor, who allegedly stored a sum of five hundred million naira (N5,000,000) at his residence, consisting of the newly introduced currency notes. (Nnodum, Aina, & Ukagwu, 2023). According to Dr. Muda Yusuf, the Director of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise, there is a significant need for increased advocacy and a stronger need for enhanced responsibility over all incurred costs. The researcher reached the conclusion that the matter of accountability and transparency in public spending, which guarantees the attainment of value for money, poses challenges within the public sector. He pushed for the use of digital systems to manage government spending in order to effectively combat corruption.

Challenges of Leadership Accountability on Democratization Consolidation in Nigeria

Weak Institutions and Political Parties: Political institutions are the formal structures inside governmental systems that are responsible for the formulation, implementation, and enforcement of laws and regulations. Throughout history, a recurring phenomenon has been the involvement of some entities in conflict resolution, the formulation of economic policies, and the establishment of social systems. As Jega (2007) asserts, these fundamental institutions, which have been integral to the theory and implementation of democratic governance, include the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. In contemporary society, with limited deviations, these establishments and the constitutional framework that delineates their functions and interconnections have endured, resulting in a heightened division of power among different tiers and branches of government, particularly between the executive, legislature, and judiciary.

This paper established that there is a strong correlation between democratization and the issue of weak institutions. Unless Nigeria overcome the malaise of weak institution and imbibe the ethos of accountability it will continue to struggle with the burden of democratization and accountability and concomitant lack of social development. Disobedience of court orders too is also rampant as there is no standing mechanism to check the executive flippant disobedience to court orders. On six separate occasions between 2015 and 2018, this dispensation refused to release Sambo Datsuki and Elzaksaky. The Shiltles leader suffered the same fate despite the court ordering his release. Parastals under the executive have also been accused of dispensing state functions without proper accountability and

transparency. The score card presented recently by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development Sadiya Faouq, on the impact of the National Social Investment Programmes offers another opportunity for the public to reexamine the current national poverty-reduction strategies. While the government claimed appreciable success. Most critics insist that the result neither match the resources deployed nor meet the global standard of accountability and transparency.

With over one trillion naira of public funds already spent the minister owes Nigeria more comprehensive and transparent explanations and details. Farouq said fifteen million Nigerians were impacted through the NSIP's. Given the steady rise in the number of the poor in the country this figures is viewed with skepticism More unsettling is the confirmation by the minister that between 2016 and 2022 the project have gulped over 1 trillion. (Punch editorial board 2023, February 23rd).

Political parties in present day Nigeria

Political parties in Nigeria exhibit a dearth of well-defined ideologies. According to Ibaba (2010: P. 196), the phenomenon of cross carpeting by party members may be seen as a contributing factor to the erosion of democratic norms.

The absence of internal democratic processes inside political parties is a significant obstacle to the functioning of political parties in Nigeria. Political parties sometimes lack a comprehensive membership registry and fail to consistently hold internal elections. Consequently, party members are not adequately informed about party affairs, leading to a concentration of decision-making power in the hands of party leaders or influential figures. In contemporary political contexts, personal allegiance to influential individuals sometimes surpasses commitment to party ideas and programmes. Hence, the absence of inclusivity and inclusion of marginalised groups, including women, youth, those facing adversity, and those with impairments, poses a significant challenge to political parties. According to Oloror (2012), the indices will also fulfil their intended purpose, which involves bolstering democracy to ensure its longevity and effectiveness as a governing mechanism.

Godfatherism and the issue of Accountability in Nigeria Democratic Experimentations.

In certain regions of Africa and other emerging nations, the phenomenon of godfatherism has emerged as a prominent topic of political discourse. The phenomenon of the political class in society actively seeking control over structures and institutions may be attributed to the concentration of power and resources within a select few elite individuals. In the early stages of our democratic development, the power struggles among individuals within the political elite have given rise to instances of violence, exhibiting many manifestations and degrees of intensity. The political landscape in Nigeria has been marked by the prevalence of godfatherism, party politics, as well as tribal and religious influences. The study conducted by Ohiole and Ojo (2016) examines the phenomenon of money-bag and bullion van politic.

The practice of godfatherism in Nigerian politics is a situation in which influential politicians help some of their loyalist to be elected into political offices through imposition and manipulations. The activities of political godfatherisms are contrary to the principles of internal democracy, which encourages mass participations and mobilization. In Nigeria godfathers create antagonistic group within the party and also create political contest within the same party culminating to the winner takes it all. This being the major intentions of godfathers, they sponsor their godson into political offices who later reward them with public resources or wealth. Godson or daughters, allow godfathers to abuse state institutions corrupt the system and destroy state economy for personal gain. They rule by proxy. The stronghold of godfatherism in Nigeria politic continued to affect the aspiration of the country to attaining the best democratic practice in many ways. Godfatherism gives undue advantage to a particular individual to excel over others and grant unmerited favour on its candidate over the others in political contest. It allows tyranny to lord over the people. It aids and even subvert popular will, fairness, truth and justice and is enemy to national development and political emancipations (Joshua & Coastman 2021).

The impact of godfatherism in Nigeria democratic experimentation have further weaken and diluted the fabric of democratization and accountability in Nigeria and resulted in a wide range and variety of problem having serious and negative impact on our elections, politics and administration of our nascent democracy.

Leadership and Accountability Crises

Lack of positive leadership has become a bane in Nigeria politically economically and socially. This is manifested in political corruptions, economic uncertainty, poverty, greed and alarming rate of insecurity. Since 1999 the different dispensation never disappoints Nigerians when it comes to character deficiency in political leadership. Hon. Salisu Buhari resigned as Speaker because of Toronto University forged allegation. Leadership is the acceptance of responsibility, to be accountable and to understand the ultimate goal to be attained. Leaders shape nations, communities and organizations. Good leadership should have integrity, self awareness, courage, respect for rule of law, empathy and gratitude.

According to Ugwuegbu (1992) "leadership in an organization is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group in it effort towards target achievement. Leadership also carries authorities and power with it. The major and fundamental challenges confronting Nigeria is the issues of positive and pragmatic leadership which would propel speedy democratic ethnic, culture and accountability ethnic and culture. Due to deficiency in leadership qualities

successive leaders in Nigeria are unable set up transparent institutions capable of securing economic progress governing effectively and protecting territorial integrity of Nigeria (Ifeoma, 2020).

Our leaders see public institutions as a mechanism for material accumulation and a rear opportunity for self-enrichment (Mukoro, 2018). Appropriation of the commonwealth by public officials reduces the ability of the Nigerian state to meet the end for which it was established. Political leaders in Nigeria are mentally stunted and not been liberated from the animal feeding frenzy. The ruling class uses political positions to grow their fortunes leaving the welfare of the people unattended due to abuse of the principle of accountability as enshrine in the constitutions.

Though challenges of democratization and accountability is not the only threat to good governance in the country, the fact is that effective leadership is crucial for the institutionalization of good governance and sustainable development. Unless there is leaders with capacity dedication, commitment and vision, nation building remains a mirash.

Nigerian democracy and the texture and quality of political leadership has gotten to a deeply worrisome dimension. Power, aggression, impunity of political decisions and violence has become instruments of statecraft in the hand of political principalities. Nigerian economy is overstretched by problems of poverty, widening income inequality between the rich and the poor, disinvestment, inflation, mass unemployment, dept crisis, lack of infrastructure, illiteracy and political corruption. The basic instrumentality for socio-economic development is enactment of deliberate policies that will open up the windows of transparency, accountability and inclusiveness, to enable leaders held accountable in political action and inaction in the process of enthronement of democracy.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The issue of accountability and transparency is pivotal in democratic experimentations and is critical for efficient functioning of modern economy and for fostering social economic development. Accountability in democratic dispensation is cardinal in ensuring resource wealth and values in the society are authoritatively and equitably distributed also manage for the benefit of the citizens in order to promote national security, prosperity and industrializations. (Obiekwe & Christian 2016).

Lack of accountability in democratization process present prime opportunities for outright perpetration of corruptions which is the fundamental and major reason for the current state of underdevelopment and economic castration and stagnation of Nigeria (Egbebullem, 2016). Though Nigeria is one of the most endowed clime with human and natural resources corruption have subjected the country to a state of economic impotency and hunger. (Kalagbor, 2001: p. 178-183).

The fundamental factors militating against accountability in our nascent democracy are (a) overbearing effect of godfatherism, the making of godson responsible and accountable to the godfather and not the state or institution (Ohiole & Ojo, 2016).

Weak institutions which is the oil political and economic corruption need to thrive. Good governance is a measurement or index of how public institutions functions and conduct public affairs, manage resources and guarantee the realization of the general interest to benefit the people with due regard to the rule of law. Legal framework, visionary and honest bureaucratic institution. Weak capacity, integrity, accountability and transparency of officials and institutions have prevented effective and responsible management of common resources weaken the fabric and spine of national development (Manhayan, 1988: p. 145 – 146). Political parties should serve as institutions for recruiting, pragmatic, visionary and patriotic leadership. But with lack of ideology and issue based politic and internal democracy political parties in Nigeria becomes the bases for recruiting incompetent leadership

Lack of accountability in the defense budget is the major reason why defense budget has continues to rise astronomically but failed to be translated to sustainable security of lives, due to pervasive corruptions. Insecurity in Nigeria poses a threat to life and property hampers business activities and discourages local and foreign investors social economic growth and development. Nigeria is still under siege by terrorists and subjected to life of fear, misery, and anguish.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of accountability and transparency within a democratic system is to protect essential principles such as the public interest, public trust, the rule of law, and good governance. Accountability within the context of democratisation entails establishing clear public expectations on responsible political power utilisation, financial integrity, and ethical conduct. Accountability is pivotally significant in democratic experimentations. The liability of public official to give satisfactory explanation of the use of entrusted power and resources, prevent political power from being corrupt or be corrupted absolutely. Therefore enforcement of accountability will reduce mindless corruption and entrenched productive leadership.

The study analyses lack of accountability in Nigeria democratic experiment as being the bane of economic political and social development, and good governance and concluded that institutions and process of leadership selections must be strengthen while political parties and role of godfatherism must be scrutinize to reduce the worrisome corruption in our body polity. This work affirmed the importance of democratic accountability as a source of political legitimacy at all level of governments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. There must be strong advocacy for continuous improvement on data driven decision making and improved communication with partners, stakeholders and the general public. Since democracy is essential and pivotal for economic, political and social emancipations.
- ii. Since corruption is endemic in government administrative procedures, there should be a legal framework that harbour no respect for corrupt public official, but prescribes commensurable, appropriate and prompt punishment. The immunity clause in the 1999 constitution should be expunge to pave way for speedy trial of perpetrators of corrupt tendencies.
- iii. The mindset of Nigerian elite is tailored towards, individual accomplishment and slave mentality. Therefore advocacy for political mobilization and education should be intensified. In order to raise the consciousness of the citizens and liberate the mindset of the elite from such despotic mentality.
- iv. Head of democratic institutions should not be appointed by the president to avoid undue influence and interference. The fight against corruption, must be holistic and should not be used as weapon against political opponent. Men of proven integrity should be voted into position of leadership and power. Such men would on the basis of principle respect democratic processes and institutions.

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