

# EXTERNAL DYNAMICS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EMERGENCE OF NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

By

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## Abstract

*The External dynamics responsible for Nigeria's fourth republic has received significant attention in the history of Nigeria's democratization process. Perhaps, the study contributes as accurately as scholarly possible the external dynamics responsible for the emergence of Nigeria's fourth republic in 1999. This contribution aims to identify the global trend of political changes towards democracy that influenced emergence of Nigeria's fourth republic. In addition, the processes of these dynamics have been critically analysed. Qualitative research method is adopted, in which both primary and secondary data were used in this study. The target respondents interviewed through purposive sampling technique involved Nigerian politicians, electoral officers, non-governmental organizations and the academics. The findings revealed that the external factors have considerably tailored the re-emergence of democracy in Nigeria in 1999. The study therefore documents how external pressure and global appeal for democracy have shaped the transition to Nigeria's fourth republic. This study concludes that powerful countries and international organizations influence and promotes democratization through imposition of sanction or isolation. Other influencing factors include incentives through international democratic institutions as well as the impact of snowballing that affects the third wave democracies. The study recommends respect for human rights and other principles of democracy that could encourage powerful and influential democracies and democratic organizations to further assist Nigeria to strengthen its fourth republic.*

**Keywords:** External Dynamics, Global appeal, External pressure and Fourth republic

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## Introduction

Formally established on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1999, Nigeria's fourth republic is a product of the third wave democratization. Perhaps Nigeria like many other African countries that was under the authoritarian regimes has been categorized in those influenced by third wave democratization in that period. While democratization is concerned with the transition to democracy, it is about political changes or dynamics towards democratic direction. It is pertinent to however note that the dynamics comes from internal and external borders of Nigeria. The focus of this paper narrowed to external dynamics. The question therefore is that: What are the external dynamics responsible for the emergence of the fourth republic in Nigeria? Why these dynamics are considered responsible for the emergence of Nigeria's fourth republic dispensation? How the Nigerians does perceived and views the fourth republic? The study addresses these questions by analysing the interview responses. The contribution is therefore an attempt to analyse the political changes around the world that influence the transformation of the fifteen long years of military rule in Nigeria. Practically this research contributes to

understanding not only the international trends which leads to emergence of Nigeria's fourth republic but it's an attempt to contribute theoretically and methodologically as well as to the development of model for external factors responsible for emergence of the fourth republic, generated from interview responses. The contribution further recommends strategies for sustaining and consolidating the gains of democracy.

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this contribution is not only adding to the literature of democracy or the history of Nigeria's fourth republic but also a contribution to understanding the role of external pressure and global appeal in the emergence of Nigeria's fourth republic.

### **Conceptualizing Democratic Transition**

Democracy is constitutional rule or government where people select amongst themselves representatives to discharge responsibilities concerning their welfarism and allocation of values and resources effectively (Isma'ila and Othman, 2016). It is more than three decades since the beginning of "third wave democratization", which has been related to 1990s influence of globalization that increase the spread democracy around the world.

A number of dynamics were said to have been responsible for a country to have transit to democratic regime, for example, the mainstream literature of 1960s and 1970s (Lipset, 1959; Almond and Verba, 1963; Moore, 1966) were of the view of modernization approach to democratization, they espoused that socio-economic development was associated with democratic government in developed countries (cited in Rakner, Menocal and Fritz 2007: 4). Certainly "all transition specialists conceived that poor economic performance increases the possibilities of authoritarian breakdown, as it increases democratic breakdown of the incumbent defeat in stable democracies" (e.g. Diamond and Linz, 1989; Bermeo, 1990 and Przewosky and Limongi, 1997 cited Zagel, 2010: 5). He further observed that Haggard and Kaufman (1995) noted the impact of economic crisis on regime change. It was however considered as a process oriented approach, emphasising the importance of decisions, ideas and the interaction among strategic political actors in bringing about transitions in 'unlikely places'.

The approach emphasized the uncertainties and possibilities surrounding transitions to democracy. It stressed that "consensus emerged that economic development *per se* was neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for democratic transition" (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Przeworski and Limongi, 1997 cited in Rakner, Menocal and Fritz., *ibid*: 9). From whatever perspective scholars viewed factors responsible for transition to democracy, the most salient issue is that there has been increasing democratization around the world. Huntington's "waves of democratization" is the prominent literature especially, the "third wave" illustration of how democratic struggle spreads around the world in the last four decades. As Geddes (1999:115) aptly stated "transition to democracy have occurred with surprising frequency at the end of the twentieth century, where elected officials govern more countries than at any previous time in human history". Democratization era is related to Nigeria through globalization in a number of ways, the notable ones are;-The ideological hegemony, and outsourcing economic opportunities for the countries and MNC for the North. Most certainly the ideological hegemony attempts to spread and promote the ideals of democracy thereby popularizing the values and ideals of democratic struggle, which culminate to pressure on military regimes to liberalize and ultimately democratize. The practice of democracy in Nigeria for the fourth time can therefore be considered as a result bandwagon effects of the political changes around the world that are moving towards democratic direction.

## **Critical Theory**

This contribution adopted Critical theory perspective in order to better explain and understand the external dynamics responsible for emergence of Nigeria's fourth republic. According to Nowlan (2009) the theory "provides a better understanding of present social conditions, how these conditions evolved, how they are transformed, how they interact with each other, what laws govern their transformation, and how they maintain their validity".

Scholars observed that transition to the Nigeria's fourth republic emerged through popularizing the values and ideals of democratic struggle, which culminate to pressure on military regimes to liberalize and ultimately democratize. The relevance of this theory in this content emerged from the fact that it helps explain how the era or the regime is transformed as a result of organized changes in the struggle for democracy within the country.

## **Methodology**

Both primary and secondary data have been used in this contribution. Qualitative research method of data collection and analysis of in-depth interview methodology was adopted, the sources of the data therefore includes secondary and primary sources. Heaton (2000) refers to the combination of secondary and primary data collection and analysis as complementary analysis. It rely mainly on secondary data with primary research conducted in support of the former. It is therefore used to provide additional comparative or collateral evidence using different sources of data or verify the result of the main analysis. The most commonly sources of qualitative data include interviews, observations and documents (Griffin, 2004 and Nicholls, 2011). A non-probabilistic, purposive sampling technique is suitable in the conduct of analysing the external dynamics responsible for the emergence of Nigeria's fourth republic. In other words, "under non-probability sampling the organisers of the inquiry purposively choose the particular units of the universe for constituting a sample on the basis that the small mass that they so select out of a huge one will be typical or representative of the whole" (Kothari, 2004:59).

In this contribution, respondents to the interview emerged from Nigerian Politicians, Electoral officers, Non-governmental organizations and the academia. These respondents were selected based on the fact that they possess best knowledge regarding the topic of the research. They contributed both in theory and practical understanding of external factors responsible for the emergence of Nigeria's fourth republic.

Nvivo software has been helpful in this research, in the sense that it made it easier for this study to categorize data into themes. And by creating graphs to demonstrate the relationships between the main themes and sub-themes, it became helpful for development of models which visually describe conceptual and theoretical data.

## **External Dynamics**

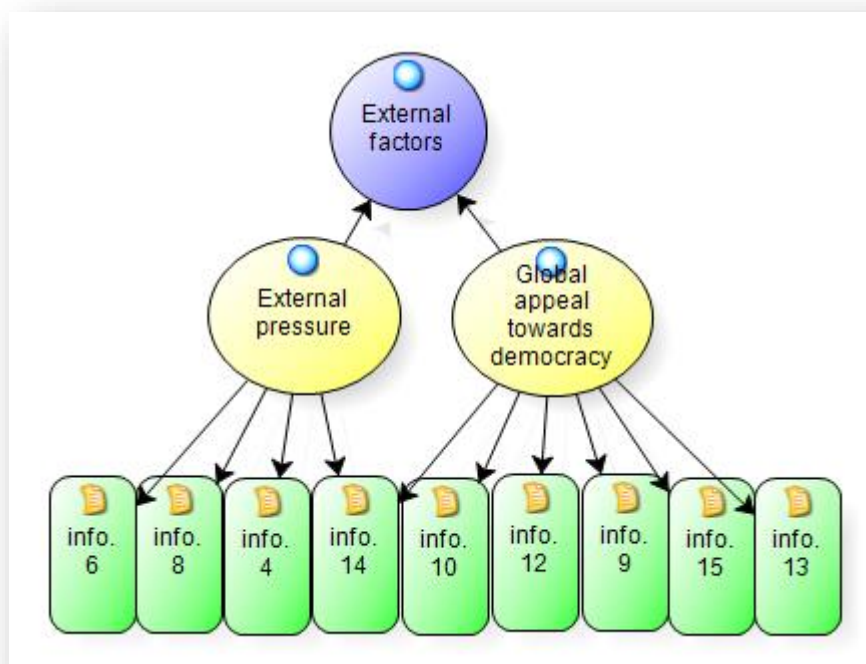
The role of globalization as a process that linked different ideas and societies across the world, made it possible for the ideals of democracy spread to Africa. The end of cold war and sudden show of interest in democracy from a number of countries under military or authoritarian regimes in Africa attracts them to open up their political space (Ibraheem, 2003). Africa's democratic experiment has consistently been shaped by external factors (Siegele, 2007). Thus, Centre for Democracy, Development and Rule of Law postulates (CDDRL) that the role of external factors is likely to vary considerably across four categories which are; "(1) transition to electoral democracy; (2) consolidation of substantive, liberal democracy; (3) liberalization of autocratic regimes, and; (4) post-conflict democratic development". The influence of external dynamics alone has a significance contribution

towards emergence of fourth republic democratic experiment. The question now is that in what ways does international factors influence democracy in Nigeria as in other parts of the world? What external dynamics or factors leads to replacement of non-democratic regimes with democratically elected one in Nigeria?

The main international influences in Nigeria are multi-lateral organizations, regional bodies and foreign powers. “It is however difficult to gauge the extent of influence each has in Nigeria. Although Huntington analysis on waves of democratization was based on measuring the proportion of democratic regimes over time” (Strand, Hegre, Gates and Dahl, 2012:1); it has been widely accepted that during the 1970s and 1980s, especially the end of the cold war, United States is the major promoter of democratization around the world, thus Nigeria among the recipients. Fukuyama (1992) thought the worldwide trend towards more democracy and expanded political and civil liberties was virtually unstoppable in the last decade of the twentieth century. “External actors have long shaped the trajectory of democracy in Africa. Africa’s post-Cold War democratization surge has shown that external influences, including the liberalization of neighbouring countries, has affected the pace and scope of change” (Siegele, 2007:1).

### Data Presentation and Analysis

External dynamics are significant in understanding the emergence of fourth republic democratic experiment in Nigeria. The figure below 5.1 indicates the views of Nigerians as perceived by the informants with its dimensional relationships developed from the interviews. These are external pressure and global appeal towards democracy.



*Figure 5.1:* External factors responsible for the emergence of the fourth republic

Source: Nvivo 10 Output Generated from Interviews, 2015

## External Pressure

Since the end of the cold war democracy has become not only the acceptable political system in all countries, under all circumstances, but also its promotion has become part and parcel of the relationship with the international community, particularly the developed countries and multilateral institutions (Ottaway, 2007). Although several literatures on transition to democracy during the third wave tend to focus on internal dynamics for political change, “the role of external factors was especially strong in Africa. The transitions were not only of the determination of the national political actors but also of external pressures and incentives” (Rackner and Menocal, 2007:10).

Meanwhile, Nigeria’s travails, which are exceptional within the developing countries, are surely unique in their scope and persistence. The issues of long years of military rule and flagrant abuse of human rights so serious that international community had to interfere. Lack of progress and dubious nature of the process of transition programmes by the Babangida and Abacha regimes as well as incarceration M.K.O Abiola, the winner of the 1992 presidential election, Chief OlusegunObasanjo and Shehu Musa Yar’adua and the execution of Ken SaroWiwa were the most significant reasons for international community to disrespect Nigeria in the 1990s.

The response of the United States to Nigeria's political crisis was the imposition of limited sanctions. Immediately after the June 12, 1993 Presidential elections were annulled, the United States cancelled \$11 million in assistance intended as budgetary support to Nigeria's Ministry of Health; terminated development assistance, except humanitarian aid through nongovernmental organization; ended military assistance and export of defence related materials, denied entry into the United States of Nigerians who formulate and implement policies that hinder transition to democracy; decertified Nigeria for not doing enough to counter trafficking by its citizens in illegal drugs; and requested the withdrawal of Nigeria's defence attaché in Washington, D.C (Ayam,2008:127). Not only did the US impose sanctions on Nigeria but also, after a fact finding mission in Nigeria in July, 1995 by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiatives, Nigeria was diplomatically isolated and suspended from the common wealth. Hence not only did the European Union imposed sanction on Nigeria via common position 95/515/CFSP and the United States but also declared the country as pariah state (SIPRI: 2012).

However when Nigeria returned to democratic rule after the election of OlusegunObasanjo as President in 1999, the sanctions was withdrawn and the country was accorded with respectability and confidence.

The above however, were viewed by this research informants based on the following excerpts.

*There was pressure from the international community. A lot of sanctions and threats was put to the military rulers that the wishes of the people must be respected. To my observation, these are what led to the re-emergence of liberal democracy in Nigeria (Informant 14-EMB staff).*

*Pressure from the international community led to the re-emergence of democratic process in the country (Informant, 4-Grass root politician II).*

*This was supported by external pressure from the international community. Worldwide the era of military regime was rejected. Any country that was having military dictatorship was isolated from the international community. There was lots of pressure. As far as your question is concerned, you can see that a combination of internal and external factors were*

*responsible for the re-emergence of liberal democratic agenda in Nigeria from 1999-present (Informant, 6-Academician I).*

*Foreign powers coming back and imposing their own policies and decisions. For example, instead of the national development policies, we now had structural adjustment policies which were imposed by foreign powers; the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In other areas, like the control over banks, influences of international organisations and foreign military bases and so on were becoming more visible. So the return to democratic governance was to return to sovereign process of governance. Two reasons are therefore involved in this; to avoid military dictatorship and to ensure sovereign and popular democracy (Informant, 8- Academician/ NGO-executive-ARADA).*

## **Global Appeal towards Democracy**

Global appeal has to do with how the idea of democracy has been promoted through technical aid and incentives as well as how it is accepted around the world. Although history has indicated that democracy hardly progress steadily and persistently. Nevertheless, it is “indisputable that twentieth century witnessed the largest number of transitions to democracy in history” (Zagel, 2010:6). Today the expansion of democracy for the past 30 years around the world has been described as the greatest achievement to humanity. Perhaps its acceptability is an indication that it is the best form of political system. The trend in which the European countries, UN and US and other pro-democracy international organizations promote democratic assistance or aid in order for developing countries to accept democracy cannot be over emphasized. O’ Loughlin (2004:24), writes that democracy is “aligned with economic development as strongly promoted by United States and its allies”. However, democracy and development are rooted in grassroots’ initiatives and transparent governance. According to Hale, (2003) that through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which is the US leading organization for the promotion of democracy and economic freedom, billions of dollars have been spent in the 1990s in promoting and sustaining democracy globally.

Moreover, among other institutions that US funded for the promotion of democracy includes Freedom House, IREX, the African-American Institute and the Asia Foundation, The International Foundation for Electoral System, (IFES), and American Bar Association etcetera. In the words of Cornillon secretary of the Inter- Parliamentary Union (1998), projected democracy to seem to be the subject of broad consensus and its promotion is high on the agenda of international bodies. Certainly these organizations injects considerable amount of aid in the promotion of democracy, which as a result have significant influence on the mind-sets of political actors in a political transition. However, these because aid dependent countries could likely be susceptible to political conditional ties; of the influence of international donors.

Although there were condemnations and sanctions against Nigeria as a result of human rights records and failure to transition to democracy, international organizations continued to render assistance to the country but only restricted to emergency and humanitarian aid. It was established that the EU budgeted 7 million EUR to support human rights and democracy. However immediately after the return of democracy in 1999, bilateral and multilateral aid donors began restored assistance. During 1999 and 2000, the EDF Committee approved financing proposals valued at a total of EUR 100 million for projects including micro-project programmes in the Niger Delta. Thus the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the largest bilateral donor of democracy aid to Nigeria. In 2009

USAID estimated that it “would provide USD 17.552 million for various forms of democracy assistance in Nigeria” (Adetula, Kew and Kwaja, 2010:3).

It is therefore imperative to note that the influence of internal actors through aid for democracy, coupled with favourable international climate, what Huntington (1991) referred to as snowballing effect- where favourable global atmosphere leads to diffusion of democratic ideas around the world, Nigeria is not an exception.

The above however, were viewed by this research informants based on the following excerpts.

*The first is the worldwide global trend for democracy that all countries of the world were democratising. Fundamentally, the waves of democratisation that was moving round the world made it imperative for the military also to see the foolishness of military rule and that military rule was no longer fashionable (Informant, 10-Academician III).*

*The external factor had to do with the acceptance of democracy worldwide, so Nigeria should not be an exception (Informant, 12).*

*Around the 1990s, there was a new wave of democratisation in West Africa. Democracy became the norm of the day. There was worldwide pressure if a country was not practising democracy. Nigeria had no choice but to adhere to the international system (Informant, 13-Snr. Prog. Officer, NGO-CDD).*

*Having accepted democracy as the best system of government worldwide, Nigeria had played a vital role in Africa and being the head of African countries, the world didn't want Nigeria to go the military way (Informant, 14-EMB staff).*

*External factor was associated with world-wide recognition of liberal democracy as the best system of government (Informant, 15-Grass root politician III).*

*Nigeria is part of the global system and within the context of globalisation there were changes that took place which brought in this new freedom. It started with Togo, Ivory Coast and others where there was clamour for civilian democratic system of government in the 1990s. Nigeria was also oblivious of that situation and Babagida's government recognised the clamour for democracy right from the 80s started the transition to civil programme but it was unsuccessful because the elections were inconclusive (Informant, 9-Academician III).*

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

On one hand both the secondary and primary data discussed above described not only the increasing acceptability of democracy as the best form of government around the world, especially after the end of the cold war. On another hand, it observed and analysed the role of powerful countries and international organizations in promoting democratization. Above all, it described the role of external pressure in form of imposition of sanctions by US on Nigeria as well as diplomatic isolation and suspension from Commonwealth Nations for gross human rights abuse and when Nigeria refused to democratize, especially during military era. It is therefore attempted and explained these and other factors responsible for the emergence of Nigeria's fourth republic, particularly in regard to external forces with specific focus on external pressure. More so, the data also described the role of powerful countries and international organizations in promoting democratization. It described the role of global appeal for democracy in form of incentives by US and Europe through democratic institutions such as Freedom House, IFES, USAID and EDF. The impact of snowballing towards democratization that affects the third wave democracies was highlighted. And

Nigeria was part of the countries that benefited from those incentives and technical aid as well as the snowballing effects. The description is therefore an analysis of the factors responsible for the emergence of Nigeria's fourth republic, particularly in regard to external dynamics with specific focus on global appeal on democracy.

## Recommendations

1. Nigerians should note that democracy is a global wave, but internal dynamics and pressures should supersede the external ones, for sustainability and development;
2. If democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people to really actualised; local and domestic needs then it should sprang from within;
3. Political culture is imperative to the consolidation of democratic rule, in Nigeria the external dynamics have deprived it that practice, as a result Nigerian political system are superimposed, control and steer by foreign super powers, which should be addressed;
4. Any wave that did not consider citizens internal dynamics should be discarded by the internal dynamics and waves; and,
5. Democracy and development should be consistent to people wishes and culture, any external factor that cans poster inconsistency should be avoided in Nigeria's fourth republic.

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## **Appendix**

### **Research Informants**

Informant 1- Honourable Member of the Parliament (MP), National Assembly, Representing Ndokwa West and Ndokwa East and Ukwuani Federal Constituency, Delta State, South-South zone.

Informant 2- Honourable Member of the Parliament (MP), National Assembly, Representing Ajeromi/ Ifelodun Federal Constituency, Lagos State, South-West zone.

Informant 3- Grass root Politician, Wuse Federal Capital Territory Abuja from North-Central zone.

Informant 4- Grass root Politician, Damaturu Yobe State from North-East zone.

Informant 5- Distinguished Senator, Member of Parliament, National Assembly from Bayelsa Senatorial District, Bayelsa State, South-South zone.

Informant 6- Academician, PhD Political Science Department, Bayero University, Kano

Informant 7- Academician, Political Science Professor and former (immediate past) Chairman of (EMB) Electoral Management Body-INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) of Nigeria.

Informant 8-Academecian (Professor)/ NGO Executive, African Research and Development Agency (ARADA).

Informant 9- Academician, Political Science Professor, University of Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Informant 10- Academician, Political Science Professor, Bayero University, Kano

Informant 11- Electoral Commissioner, Kano State Independent Electoral Commission (KANSIEC), Kano State, North-West zone.

Informant 12- Electoral Officer, Fagge Local Government, Kano State Independent Electoral Commission (KANSIEC), Kano State, North-West zone.

Informant 13-Senior Programme Officer, Centre for Democracy and Development, Nigeria Office, Abuja

Informant 14- Electoral Officers II and III, EMB Staffs (Deputy Director and Assistant Director Statistics Department and Electoral Process Department respectively). Independent National Electoral Commission Headquarters, Abuja.

Informant 15- Grass root Politician III from Enugu State, South-East.