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Nigeria and Ghana: A Comparative Study in Governance and Development

E. O. Frank
Department of Political Science
Benson Idahosa University
Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT - A recent BBC debate on the future of the African continent monitored in Benin City, hinges the development of the continent on good governance and developmental strides expected to be spear-headed by three countries. Libya to the north, South Africa in the south and Ghana in the West. Nigeria was excluded. Again a recent data on the influx of foreign investments to West Africa indicated that investors including Nigerians in the last eight years preferred Ghana to Nigeria, in spite of both nations practicing democratic system of Government. These facts goaded this comparative study, to reveal the factors responsible for the preference of Ghana to Nigeria. The study revealed that on both the HDI and HPI, good governance, the rule of law and development, Ghana is ahead of Nigeria. A further inquest on these variables indicated that there are standards of governance which had been set in Ghana in which all government at both the national and regional levels seek to surpass. Thus the quality of governance affects development in all respect, thereby attracting investors to Ghana than Nigeria. The study concluded that Nigeria should also set a stern norm against corruption which is the valve through which 'altruism 'was re-introduced to the body politics of Ghana and as a panacea to Nigeria's development in the democratic dispensation. This is one way for Nigerians to obtain democratic dividends as in Ghana.

Key words: Comparative, governance, development, Ghana, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

A comparative study of two independent nation-state smacks off a lot of contentious issues in respects of the indicators of governance and development. This paper would not pretend to be any different. In spite of these difficulties, this article attempts a qualitative comparison of Nigeria and Ghana in respect of governance and the human development thereof.

Nigeria and Ghana are two countries in the West African sub-region with similar political history. These similarities include, among others, the fact that they emerged from great kingdoms to become independent states in October 1, 1960 for Nigeria and March 6, 1957 for Ghana respectively. Before and after independence, agriculture consisting of cocoa, palm oil, groundnut and timber products made up the GDP of Nigeria, while the Ghanaian agricultural products consisted of cocoa, timber, gold and allied products, which made her GDP. In Nigeria the main political party that catalyst the nationalist struggles towards independence was the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), in Ghana it was the United Gold Coast Convention (UGGC) which radically advocated for the transfer of the reign of Government to Ghanaians in the shortest possible time.

One of the instruments for the nationalist struggle for independence was the use of strikes and boycotts, such as the famous Pa Imoudu's 1948 railway strike. In Ghana in the same 1948, the general boycott and strike attracted jail terms to the notable political figures including Dr. Joseph Danquah. Mass media was to play significant role in the struggle in both countries. While the *"West African Pilot'* played prominent role in the anti-colonial movement in Nigeria, the *"Accra Evening News'* performed that role in Ghana. The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), the radical Youth Wing of the NCNC facilitated the Nationalist struggle in Nigeria, similar Youth wing of the United Gold Coast convention led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah which later transformed into the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) asked for 'self-rule now'. Both countries also had similar experiences in militarism. What then is the problem?

A cursory observation of the two nations seems to indicate that Ghana is better developed than Nigeria in all indices of development and governance. A recent evaluation by discussants on the *BBC African Service* on the future of Africa, hinges the prospect of the continent by the erudite discussants on Libya to the north, South Africa to the South and Ghana to the West to the exclusion of Nigeria the assumed 'giant of Africa'. Belatedly, many Nigerian youths have been studying in Ghana to avoid incessant strikes and subsequent closure of the Universities in Nigeria. Furthermore, Ghanaians are no longer seen around taking up teaching and many other menial jobs in Nigeria, as was the case in the late seventies when their economy had collapsed. The rate of foreign investments in Ghana in the last eight years has surpassed that in Nigeria in the view of this paper. It is the evaluation of these issues, which this paper seeks to achieve.

This article seeks to identify the norms, values and the processes which has enhanced the operations of the democratic institutions in Ghana, to be able to provide 'public good' in the quantity and quality which has assuaged the yearning of the people. Put differently, it seeks to unveil the correlation between the quality of governance, high performing economy and resultant development as obtained in Ghana, which have led to Ghana being touted as a potential leader in West African sub -region, to the neglect of Nigeria which had been referred to as the 'giant of Africa' before now. Furthermore it seeks to unearth the variables, norms and principles which had enabled democracy to blossom into development in one state and not in another, when both are democracies with similar histories.

This study seeks to provide qualitative data and information about the two sister nations and possibly answer why Ghana is rated a potential power in West Africa rather than Nigeria. In a recent BBC discourse, on the future of Africa, the three nations were cited as holding the prospect of the continent. They are; Libya to the north, South Africa to the south and Ghana to the west. Nigeria did not make the list in the informed opinion of the discussants. The issues in the study are development and governance. How can development be conceptualized in this context?

Development

The word development is often a subject of intense debate because of its fluid nature. However, for the purpose of this study caution is exercised to avoid the term *economic growth* being taken as development. This is because a state could have tremendous economic growth, as a result of upward changes in the price index of its products, leading to enormous accumulation of foreign exchange. This paper adopts Dudley Seer's idea of development as its operational meaning. In 1969, Seers conceived development as involving not only economic growth but also conditions in which people in a country have adequate food and jobs and the income inequality among them is greatly reduced. As he puts it, the questions to ask about a country's development are;

What has been happening to poverty?
What has been happening to unemployment?
What has been happening to inequality?

If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. In 1977, he added another essential element, 'self reliance'[1]. The analysis that follows is conducted against this conception of development.

The Approach

The framework of analysis of this study is the political economy approach. It is an approach which gives primacy to the material condition, particularly economic factors, in the explanation of social life. When an individual achieves a level of economic well-being such that he can take the basic economic necessities, particularly his daily food, for granted, the urgency of economic need loses, its edge. The fact that one is not constantly preoccupied with, and motivated by economic needs, show that the needs are being met. Just as economic need is the primary need, so economic activity is man's primary activity.[2] It is in this context, that nation-state which has met the primacy of relative human conditions for her people would be regarded as being developed.

There are various indicators of development which can be used to measure explicitly. These are life expectancy at birth, infant mortality rate, school enrollment ratio, gender equality in education, employment etc. and democratic freedom (freedom to choose own political leaders). For instance the higher the life expectancy at birth the more developed the country is. Today the life expectancy at birth for the average Nigerian is about 51 years. Attention has however shifted to broader definition of development which captures sustainability and incorporates environmental protection, political freedom, meeting basic needs such as achievement of better nourishment, shelter, health, education, living condition and better conditions of employment for low income groups in developing countries etc.[3] These indices of development are known as Human Development Index. Nigeria and Ghana are compared on the basis of these indices.

Comparative Analysis

On the Human Poverty Index (HDI), a country by country measure of level of income, using basic choices opportunities available, shows that Nigeria and Ghana place great emphasis on youth development as both countries have elaborate youth programs. As a result, infant mortality is taken very seriously internally and internationally as it is one of the MDGs. However, the facts on the ground indicate disparaging degree of results. The UNICEF ranked Nigeria as being the 14th highest Under-Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) in the world. Comparatively, almost all the countries in the UNICEF rankings which had worse cases than Nigeria, recently suffered natural or man-made disasters. Nigeria's neighbors, including Ghana, Niger, Benin and Togo, only Niger had a worse rate than Nigeria's. According to the report, the U5MR in Nigeria was 201 per 1000 children in 1990. The current rate is 194 per 1000. It however, needs to be reduced to 77 by 2015, to meet the 4th MDGs target.[5] This means invariably that Ghana with 30.5 per 1000 (U5MR)[6] is ahead of Nigeria in the U5MR indicator. Put differently, of two children born today, one in Ghana and the other in Nigeria, the Ghanaian child has a better chance of surviving beyond five years of age than the Nigerian counterpart. The paradox of the situation is that, the causes of these differences are identifiable and treatable. The point is that Nigeria's per capita investment in health has stagnated at a low rate of $10 per child as against the recommended $34. Even this low allocation of current expenditure is not optimally utilized.

Clearly, the higher the life expectancy at birth, the more developed the country. It is posited that life expectancy in Nigeria currently stands at 51 years. Life expectancy in Ghana improved from 55 years in the 1980s to 56 years in 1996.[7] It is expected to be higher now. Ejeviome Otobo (2002) confirmed the database expressed in this paper on Nigeria's indices of life expectancy in his treatise.[8] It is instructive to affirm that longer life expectancy is a function of various variables all acting in combination to enhance life chances. These ranges from the availability of medical services, to food, shelter and a host of other social services which conditions for their availability are made possible by the quality of public policy.

Nigeria and Ghana had similar military experiences in governance from where they both transited to democracy. How have they faired in this dispensation? A discourse in governance and democratic freedom is as contentious as the subject mater of this paper. However, the World Bank policy paper defines governance as 'the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development.' Governance involves actions of publicly vested authorities.[9] Nigeria's democratic practice include all the elements in the democratic checklist, with two additional elements which have sucked the benefits of democracy out of the economy. These variables are gross socio-economic inequality and corruption. The institutions have functioned less than adequately because of limited apprenticeship in a democratic setting, the absence of institutional autonomy…and institutionalized corruption. Thus Nigeria was ranked among the six most corrupt countries in the world (in total samples of fifty-five to eighty five countries)…by international anti-corruption nongovernmental organization, Transparency International.[10]

Ghana on the other hand has been able to improve the quality of governance and its associated institutions, through the norms and values which developed in the post-coup years. The quality of governance improved dramatically since that 'bloodletting', as no future leader wanted to go the way of those generals or, as they say in Ghana, get 'the Rawlings treatment. Today, it could be safely said that democracy is working in Ghana and more importantly, the economy is doing well within its limits.[11] In contrast to Nigeria, the situation is going from bad to worse. Instances abound of this. When the revenue Mobilization and Allocation Committee queried the NNPC on dubious accounting in 2003 or so, the Senate invited the then NNPC GMD...to explain. He failed to appear and the President (the Oil Minister) did not compel him to appear. The issue is still pending. In the area of privatization, we need to check out how Global Infrastructure purchased Delta Steel Company, Aladja, Delta state, when it was not even involved in the final bid? The Nigerian Senate will do well to investigate the Pentascope NITEL Management contract. Why the value of NITEL suddenly dropped from the initial offer of US$ 1.3 billion to about US$500 million in which it was finally sold to TRANSCORP, a company in which the then President has substantial share holding. By 1999 NEPA had a capacity to generate about 2,700 mega watts; it is generating less than 2,500 after an investment of over $3 billion.[12] This perhaps explicates why Benin-Ore-Shagamu-Lagos road is impassable after several years of budgeting funds for road construction in the country. There is every reason for Ghana to be ahead in governance and development given the above scenario of democratic governance.

Employment and poverty

The statistics on the incident of poverty in Nigeria indicate poverty in Jigawa state of Nigeria with a population of 4.3 million people is 95 per cent, bringing the total number of people within poverty bracket to 4.1 million; Kebbi, 89.7 per cent, population 3.2 million, 2.9 million in poverty; Kogi, 86.6 per cent, 3.2 million people with 2.6million in poverty; Bauchi, 86.3 per cent, 4.6 million people with 4.0 million in poverty; Bayelsa, 20.0 per cent, 1.7 million people with .03 million in poverty; Edo, 33.1 per cent, 3.2million people with 1.06 million in poverty.[13] The picture painted by the above statistics when considered for the thirty six (36) states, shows a very grim picture of the incident of poverty in Nigeria.

Poverty is an unusual phenomenon, but good governance and the application of the rule of law often mitigates it. The situation in Ghana is certainly better than Nigeria. This is because in the 1970s it was bad; an indication was the numerous Ghanaians who came to Nigeria for all grades of jobs including menial jobs. An indication of an improved and better situation is the absence of Ghanaians everywhere, all have gone home because there is employment and the economy is robust. However, statistics shows that the upper poverty line drawn at 33,000 cedis about (Us$17) per annum, as much as 36 per cent of the population would be regarded as poor, and the 7 per cent of the population subsisting on some 17,000 cedis (about US$8) per annum are classified as desperately poor.[14] The situation would have improved with responsible governance. The situation is expected to be far better now that Ghana has struck oil along her continental shelf.

Governance is defined broadly as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which government are selected and replaced, the capacity of the government to formulate and implement sound policies, and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them. This definition include clusters such as the 'government effectiveness' which combines the quality of public service provision, the quality of the bureaucracy, the competence and independence of the civil service and good policies to deliver dividends.[15] The indicators measured the extent to which the citizens are able to participate in the selection of governments and include the role of holding those in authority accountable for their actions. The practice of governance in Ghana is more transparent and the citizen's choice during elections are respected. The outcome was the 2001 Rawlings supervised election in which his Vice President, John Attah-Mills lost to the opposition party and opponent, President John Kufuor, the first time in the history of Africa in recent times. Kufuor repeated the feat when he floored Attah-Mills again in 2004.[16] Rawlings is acknowledged as the father of modern day Ghana, who halted the country's fast slide into the bottomless pit of elitism, corruption and inefficiency, the very ills plaguing Nigerian democracy.

Governance in Nigeria on the other hand, has not been able to rise to the level Ghanaian governance have attained. It would be recalled that the 2007 election in Nigeria could be described as fraud personified. Both local and international election monitors condemned it as the worst election in the history of Nigeria. For instance, the total votes declared in Oyo state for both the presidential and the governorship elections were in excess of the total registered voters. The chairman of Independent national election commission (INEC) was later to declare that the voter's registers used for both elections contained names of underage people and double registration of names. He declared the registers unfit for the local government election. This invariably invalidates the previous elections conducted with the same registers. Unlike in Ghana, no incumbent lost the elections except where the party gave out the state, as was the case in Imo and Kano state respectively.

The implication for this form of governance for Nigeria is enormous, because politics is a process for offering the best option for the management of the economy to the people for choices to be made via elections. But where this is denied as was the case in Nigeria's recent election, the option is only to put the economy at the disposal of uncertainties. This perhaps explicate why Ghana is ahead of Nigeria in all indicators of governance. Thereby attracting foreign investments far more than Nigeria. It would be recalled that Ghana has recently celebrated her one year of steady power generation and supply to the economy, a feat Nigeria has not been able to achieve.

The nature of politics in Nigeria as described has great consequences for the quality of public policy. It throws up political *dramatis personae* that are impervious to opinions and therefore unable to enrich the quality of public policy. An optimal public policy is base on openness, to evaluate all the possible options or alternatives available before choosing a course of action, with minimal cost and maximum utility value. The poverty of Nigeria's public policy was observed by the World Bank officials when they opined that Nigeria's high poverty situation is blamed on the leaders, whom they said are impervious to advice. This is reflected in the poor maintenance culture of the country, the penchant of successive Nigerian leaders to engage in fresh road construction contracts while existing ones are turning into death traps. Nigeria has not got its due from the World Bank because it is not often open to advice.[17] What this means is that beyond governance, Nigeria is also poor in the quality of public policy outputs. This was further confirmed when it was observed that we in the international community are outraged by poor governance in the Niger- Delta. This is not what we expected to see when two years ago we supported debt relief.[18] The aggregate output of all these lead to low quality of public service delivery and eventually low quality of life for Nigerians unlike in Ghana.

Finally, education is a mechanism for human resources development. Educational institutions in Ghana, supported by Ghana Educational Trust Fund (GET-Fund) has made the country's educational system the envy of all.[19] Education in Nigeria is characterized by the following indices: University Senior Lecturer earns \$360 and Professor \$439 per month, while in Ghana it is \$3000 for Senior Lecturer and \$4800 for Professor per month. Nigeria's annual budgetary expenditure on education is 5-8 per cent.[20] This is far below the UNICEF's proposed 25 per cent of budget on education. It is also on record that when Ghana went to the World Bank for loan, one of the conditions stipulated for her was to withdraw the subsidy on education, but Ghana rejected the condition[21] and rather decided to do without same. Today, Ghana's educational system is without strikes, and many Nigerians are taking advantage of the steady Ghana educational system, as against the strike-ridden Nigerian system. What are the lessons we derive from this analysis?

What can Nigeria learn from Ghana and vice versa?

Is there anything wrong in the practice of democracy in either Ghana or Nigeria? If in the affirmative, what is to be done? Nigeria and Ghana both have democratic institutions. The analysis so far indicates that governance in Ghana seems better than in Nigeria most probably due to greater accountability. Sound public policy geared towards the benefit of the lowest social group in the economy has become a norm, which the leadership in Ghana have made a standard to surpass. A confirmation of this fact was stated by the President during the celebration over the discovery of crude oil in Ghana. He opined that with such money coming into the coffers of a sensible leadership, schools, hospitals and roads, ought to be available in abundance.[22] A norm of placing the people's interest above all other should be imbibed by the leadership in Nigeria. This is because, in serving public interest, individual interest is by so doing also being served.

It has become crystal clear from the Ghana's case study that dealing with 'corruption' decisively is a *'sine qua non'* to the practice of good governance, as those who assumed leadership position in governance would have reference point for caution. It would be recalled that the concept of *'Rawlings kind of treatment'* has become a reference point to all subsequent Ghanaian leaders. The exemplary leadership displayed by Rawlings having dealt with past corrupt leaders. Thus the President after him and many to come have a standard on which they must strife not to live below. This has made 'good governance' a watch word. This has shown that a correlation exist between 'good governance and economic and social outcomes, because when resources are not stolen away, they would be plough into the various social sector. This would in turn add value to the citizens; the Under-Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) will improve, school enrollment ratio will increase couple with effective and efficient public services. Socio-economic development is the outcome of such governance.

It has been noted that Nigeria has instituted the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the other related agencies such as Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to deal with corruption. It has commenced the confiscation of resources acquired through corruption and the prosecution of offenders in the courts of law. It is the position of this paper that the EFCC should not see anyone as 'sacred'. It conditions of intervention in any corrupt situation should be made public so that people could volunteer information. Perhaps Ghana should adopt the establishment of a body similar to EFCC rather than resulting to execution of corrupt persons.

It is important to note that the state owned enterprises are operating effectively in Ghana in spite of its reforms. The Electricity Corporation of Ghana is effective. Effectiveness is not only found in private companies. The reforms of the state own enterprises in Nigeria should be distinguished from privatization as in Ghana. The reform in Nigeria has created very rich and very poor classes. A distinction should be drawn between reform for effectiveness and privatization in Nigeria.

Nature of politics

Ghanaian politics takes the form of offering alternative policy approach to issues; hence there is considerable period of politicking through which there is interaction between the people-voters and the politician seeking office. Through such interactions, the voters get to know the options available and make up his mind base on the alternative thought to be the best choice for the economy. The voters' choice is respected. This adds value and result in qualitative selection through elections. This correlates to the quality of public policy output from the political realm and effective public administration organs.

This would be the most difficult element to adopt in Nigeria because the political culture which had developed over the years is completely the opposite of the situation in Ghana. This explicates why rigging in elections, leads to low quality of the executives and low quality of public policy is the order of politics in polity which does not conform to the standard discussed herein. It is however hoped that the situation in Nigeria would change for the better while that in Ghana would continue to improve.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that in all the indices of governance; the process by which those in authority are selected and replaced, voice and accountability, the independence of the media, which serves the important monitoring role of holding those in authority accountable for their actions and political stability and the absence of violence, Ghana's evaluation database are ahead of Nigeria's excepting for the independence and the number of the media. Nigeria is ahead in the spread and share number of the mass media. These media are threatened with all sorts of means ranging from eviction from their location to arson which come in different guises. The media organ which played a substantial role in the abrogation of the third term bid of the last government in Nigeria had problems in its Abuja and Lagos offices respectively. This is unknown in Ghana, at least not in this scale.

On development, Nigeria has a larger reserve of foreign exchange than Ghana, but we dare to state that this is not synonymous with development. First it is coming from a mono-product, which means the other sectors of the economy remain largely underdeveloped. Secondly, man is at the center of development. If the large foreign reserve is not translated into economic wellbeing for the citizenry to the extend that pervasive poverty is addressed, unemployment is frontally tackle, inequality is reduced and self reliance is achieved, then certainly the large reserve of foreign exchange can hardly pass for an indication of development. Today Ghanaians hardly go out to other West African countries in search of survival. This is because the economy is doing well towards the direction of development opined herein. Whereas, more Nigerians have joined the 'brain drain' even to Ghana. Many more Nigerians of all classes are spread all through the West African coast than Ghanaian. This is a clear indication that Nigeria's economy is under stress.

It is consequently concluded that the norms and values which direct governance and development in Ghana have enhanced a better development of *'man in the society'*. Nigeria should learn and synthesize these norms and values for adaptation so that Nigerians could be developed with their resources within the nation-state.

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ENDNOTES

Corruption was rife in Ghana, before J. J. Rawlings lined up all the coup infested Generals that had polluted the land with unmitigated graft and gross governing incompetence at stakes and executed them in one fell swoop in what is generally termed *'Rawlings kind of treatment'*. This act created a norm to be avoided by all subsequent leaders in Ghana.