

Does democracy breed accountability? The role of state executives in Nigeria, 1999–2007

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Abstract

Accountability is a key to the effective control and management of public funds by governments in all democracies. It has been argued that financial criminal practices have become institutionalised in developing countries due to a lack of democratic systems and a lack of accountability. The purpose of this paper is to examine whether democracy promotes accountability by considering the role of state executives in corrupt practices since Nigeria returned to democratic rule. The paper uses publicly available information such as law reports, press reports and whistleblower accounts to throw light on the role of state executives in financial criminal practices. The paper suggests that, despite the institution of democratic values, political and economic checks and balances and so-called anti-corruption agencies, the ruling elite have become more corrupt while most Nigerians suffer abject poverty. This paper therefore suggests that Nigeria needs to reform its political system and institutions to promote integrity, accountability, to fight political corruption and to build public trust in the Nigerian government.

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