

THE NEXUS BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Democracy has proved not to be an exclusive path to economic progress, if by economic progress is meant improvements in key economic metrics notably, production and income. Democracy has however held out with regard to economic development. Development here means the unfolding of abilities, capacities and freedoms, leading to a high quality of life for all, and an enduring competitiveness among nations. Nigeria has yet to experience the democracy that fosters such outcomes. That may explain why, nearly forty years of practicing democracy, and abundant as her endowments remain even today, neither economic development nor meaningful economic progress appears to have taken place in the country. If western liberal democracy is recognised as alien to the peoples of Nigeria, then the period following its adoption by the country could rightly be considered as a period of collective learning. The outcome of this collective learning indicates no clear grasp of how democracy works or how it can deliver its much vaunted dividends, what with the reality of the hegemon of globalisation and its proponents posing as altruistic do-gooders. The poor outcome could also only have been, given the ethnic-intense power tussle among the elite, and the lack of progress in forging one nation out of the several nations that constitute Nigeria. The obvious way forward is to do things differently. Using the dialectical, thematic approach, secondary and anecdotal data, and the hypothesis of Socio-economic formation, the study found that Western liberal democracy is incapable of being practiced in present day Nigeria. It therefore recommended a system that reflects the economy of Nigeria and its substructure. This can be found in the strikingly similar indigenous political systems in the nation-states that comprise Nigeria, and is best approached by true federalism and homogenous partitioning.

KEY WORDS: Democracy; Economic development; Development; Globalisation; Indigenous political systems.

Introduction

Democracy has attracted great appeal around the world. Under the impression that a way exists to make the people take charge of their own affairs, also that the majority effectively represents the whole, and further, that the 'hood' sometimes makes the 'monk', the word 'democracy' has been appended to all manner of societal arrangements to masquerade the usurping of people's free will, in order to repackage the reality and elicit public appeal. Thus there are today all manner of democracies: liberal, defensive, direct, indirect, Islamic, presidential, parliamentary, authoritarian, participatory, even social democracy. Almost all forms of governance shelter under the banner of democracy, from what is practiced in Russia to the United Kingdom.

Nigeria is no exception as liberal democracy was hoisted upon the nation on the attainment of nationhood. Since it was good for the colonial masters it was considered good for those to be freed. The hope expressed even in the constitution was that a strong and prosperous nation would emerge. However, the form bequeathed at the time, parliamentary democracy, was new to the nation-states which joined hands in the new union. Therefore, as living together as one nation was new to the peoples of Nigeria, so

also was the democratic system of governance given to them. These had to be understood, accepted and upheld not just within each indigenous group but collectively and before the eyes of the world. A few short years of collective practice proved otherwise, dashed the hopes of a strong, vibrant economy and ushered in the military.

Although the military option was overcome at least for some time, the idea of democracy remained. A change from the parliamentary to the presidential system, presumably by the people themselves, indicated that they found nothing in the parliamentary system which their colonial masters held dear. Also, that they hoped to propel themselves out of underdevelopment (and poverty) using democracy as the overarching rudder by which the ship of state was to be steered, ensuring orderliness and fairness. It was a great expectation because democracy (even poor democracy) was deemed by many, for example Haperin, Siegle and Weinstein (2004), to be capable of delivering above autocracies on just about any economic measure of consequence. A question which arose and continues to arise is whether this is true for Nigeria. What has been the experience with democratic practice in Nigeria? Taking up this question from the perspective of the economy, and the great

expectation at independence, we examine the economic outcomes under the democratic experimentation in Nigeria and seek lessons there-from.

Conceptual Clarification

For the avoidance of ambiguity, we indicate here, if briefly, the manner in which some key concepts are to be understood. By democracy is meant the system of governance in which ultimate power belongs to the people. To exercise this power, the people chose representatives. Their choice is renewed periodically through elections that are free and fair. The economy of a nation comprises its wealth, and the processes of producing, exchanging and consuming goods and services. Development is the unfolding of abilities inherent in the peoples, the promotion of individual and societal capacities and competencies, and the cultivation of freedoms. Globalization refers to the dissolution of artificial barriers around information, goods, services, humans and financial capital.

METHODOLOGY

Data came from diverse secondary and anecdotal sources, which include FAO, UN, USAID, WORLD BANK and WEF. Data obtained were both quantitative and qualitative and were analysed using dialectical, thematic approach without codes.

Theoretical Anchor

This discourse is theoretically anchored on the hypothesis of Socio-economic Formation (Ake 1981). Briefly, there are, in the society, a substructure made up of the economic system, and a superstructure which consists of the ‘non-economic aspects of social life’, both of which are interdependent. While the superstructure arose from, and can clearly be understood by looking at the substructure, the latter can be fundamentally affected by the former. For example, the manner in which exogenous changes such as technology are allowed to impact the substructure can alter the dynamics of the substructure, fundamentally. The realisation that an altered substructure inevitably gives rise to an equivalently altered superstructure, leads to much touchiness as exogenous trends break. A surface tinkering of the superstructure in a manner that does not connect with and shift the substructure, produces no enduring effect, and may even give rise to further contradictions and struggles. Therefore, to have a beneficial and convincing effect the superstructure must reflect the substructure. As we shall see, liberal democracy nestles precariously at the societal rudder in Nigeria but remains unconnected with basic economic dynamics and thus allows nothing but exploitation in various forms to arise,

especially through the instrumentality of the State.

A basic assumption of the hypothesis of socio-economic formation is the primacy of economic conditions. This is the idea that the bottom-up approach provides the most authentic explanation of the society, the approach that begins from the basic economic activity and condition, and proceeds upwards by tracing other non-economic links and structures such as the political. These non-economic links and structures are usually consequent upon the basic economic condition. The case of Nigeria is however different. While the basic economic condition, the sub-structure, developed naturally within the various nations that came together to form Nigeria, a political system was imposed on the union at inception, arising from a non-existent sub-structure. The advent of oil introduced new elements which altered the basic economic condition, thereby creating further distortion.

DISCUSSION

Democracy and The Economy

The growth of the economy is an important economic metric because it is natural and therefore existential. As the economy grows it supports and services the well-being of the increasing human stock. A stagnant economy

soon retrogresses, attracting all the afflictions of a contracting economy. Even if an economy does not increase the quantity of a particular service, for example music, there is a constant need to improve its quality, its appeal and utility through ever improving delivery channels whether human or non-human. This in itself is growth, if initially qualitative. Often a qualitative improvement (such as packaging) unleashes a quantitative boost in demand and output once freedoms of association, speech and trade are unhampered, and so long as authoritarian interference is excluded. Democracy being a clear scheme for excluding authoritarianism, and promoting freedoms, the search for a link between democracy and economic growth was inevitable, and has yielded interesting results. It turns out that democracy is not necessary for economic growth, no matter the measure of growth adopted. Neither has it proved to produce growth rates higher than that fostered by other systems of governance. A popular measure of economic growth is the real output (or real gross domestic product) growth. This adjusts for inflation and allows a meaningful comparison of output of goods and services across places and periods. Adopting this measure and mindful of both the long haul and the stages of economic development, the Chinese economy has

grown rapidly in the past decades according to the World Bank (2024a), maintaining in its slow times, growth rates that can hardly be matched by many flagship economies of the democratic world. The Chinese society itself can hardly be considered democratic if by democracy we adopt the views of the editors of Britannica (2021) as the ‘form of government in which supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic free elections’

Democracy has, in addition, proved not to be necessary for economic resilience such as robust return to a growth path after economic shocks. The most recent pandemic occasioned by the COVID-19 virus, which proved to be a major and world-wide economic shock, is a case in point. In 2022 (thus post COVID), the fastest growing economies included Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and war torn Iraq, all of which arguably are democratic only in name.

Aside economic growth, democracy is not required for some key economic conditions. A ready example is industrialisation, which is the transition from a largely agricultural economy to a mechanized real economy, and which, while no longer the most sought after

economic development path, remains a highly priced economic outcome among nations of the world. It took place in North Korea, China and Soviet Union, all without democracy. Therefore, democracy is not a requirement for admission into the revered club of industrialised nations. In addition, the development of cutting edge technology, inventions and innovations, generally believed to have a strong voice in economic progress, as well as adaptation and deepening in specific sectors, which matter for nations off the cutting edge threshold; in both situations democracy has proved not to be condition precedent. Hence we find Russia and North Korea thriving in high-tech, military related endeavour and Cuba in health related focus, all of which impact the economy notably.

No economy has been shielded from economic crises of various kinds as well as contagion and instability occasioned by distortions in price fundamentals on account of democracy. Indeed, the link between democracy and economic crisis isolated by research indicates the increasing risk of democratic breakdown consequent upon crisis, and differing degrees of resilience to crisis. Delfs, [Andersen](#) and [Krishnarajan](#) (2018) noted that some democracies actually

breakdown given a crisis, and found that only higher quality bureaucracies provided greater shield from impoverishment for the masses.

What then is it all about, the acclaimed link between democracy and the economy? It is all about economic development. In this respect, democracy does hold out as a leading model. It has, as its strong points, the prospect of inclusion, the possibility of society-wide engagement and the release of potentials; also the level playing ground provided by the rule of law. These encourage wide-spread participation in economic and political processes, the harnessing of opportunities by participants, the promotion (or occupation with matters) of equalities and freedoms, all leading to economic development, which must be seen as the unfolding of abilities endowed in the human persons, the generation and cultivation of tangible and intangible capacities of the society, and the enthronement of freedoms. According to Sen (1999) development actually means freedom, freedom on all fronts including the freedom to grow old. These must of course become economic realities not merely prospects, and must stretch into the long term, not some flash in the pan. Democracy is therefore tooled to promote economic development which, as

already stated, allows the abilities with which the peoples are endowed to unfold, cultivates capacities and promotes freedoms.

A fundamental feature of economic development, especially one fostered by democratic endeavours, is the rising quality of life, which includes a large dose of multi-dimensional freedom. This aspect of freedom is crucial because there has been a remarkable lack of freedoms through the ages. Leaders always yielded to the urge to hold back freedoms from the peoples, wherever such leaders were active, whether in the State, the Church, Science or wherever. Democracy distinguishes itself by committing to restoring freedoms to the peoples. Therefore, democracy has the potential to unleash innate abilities, creativity and innovation by breaking bonds and yokes including cultural ones which die hard.

Another fundamental feature of a developing economy (again, especially if democratic practices have brought all hands on deck) is that it exhibits competitiveness among nations, arising from the internal dynamics of the nation. Competitiveness will not just exist but will be perpetually enlivened, again through internal processes. Enlivening here corresponds to waves of deepening abilities and the optimisation of endowments as well as strides in capacity upgrades. Although

other systems of governance may well achieve every one of these outcomes, democracy has an excellent prospect of bringing them about simultaneously owing to its configuration. This prospect actually hallmarks democracy, therefore there is a need to isolate the features that safeguard this prospect, that distinguish and confer on democracy an edge over others. They are:

- (a) Inclusiveness, which ensures the open participation of all and sundry in economic and political processes leading to the unfolding of their individual and collective abilities, and
- (b) Rule of law, which ensures that no one is above the law, and thus provides a level playing ground, protects capacities developed individually and collectively, and protects individual and common future.

Through the interplay of these two particular features of democracy, and other related ones, economic outcomes are delivered. In particular, the development of the economy results from their interplay irrespective of initial conditions. As such by looking out for economic development the practice or presence of true democracy can be easily detected. Where such outcome does not occur, it can safely be assumed that democracy is yet to take root or perhaps relapsed. Economic development itself can

be traced to three simple economic outcomes: a rising quality of life, competitiveness among nations and freedoms. Looking out for these three economic outcomes can constitute a simple three-way test of the presence of democracy. We shall apply this test shortly.

For now, let us address the question: what is the place of democracy in the scheme of things in Nigeria? The answer is: right at the top of all undertakings. It is the basis of every collective act. It is also the overriding consideration in the highest level of political management. It is therefore the rudder with which the ship of State is meant to be steered. To transform it from the realm of concepts and give it real teeth, two systems - quota and zoning - were developed and enshrined in all our rule books. They became active from the grassroots all the way to the highest levels in all spheres of government. This move aimed at realising a fundamental feature of democracy, namely inclusiveness. It aimed at leaving out no one in all political and economic processes. In addition, and to protect everything, there is an elaborate judicial system and a well-defined administrative structure, which addresses the second fundamental feature of democracy, namely the rule of law. Efforts were made to capture local customs (tradition) and religion in the legal system. These efforts enshrined

democracy at the highest level of national political management as an instrument of governance, the practice of which should bear rich, bountiful fruits. One fundamental fruit is economic development.

Economic Development - An Indicator of Democracy

We have argued thus far that from its configuration, a fundamental outcome of the practice of true democracy is the development of the economy. We now apply the simple three-way test of the existence and practice of democracy using economic development. The three simple outcomes which are aspects of economic development and thus constitute tests of the practice of democracy are: rising quality of life, multidimensional freedoms and competitiveness among nations. We take them in the reverse order.

Competitiveness among Nations: This concerns the goods and services each nation takes to the table of trade with other nations in exchange for what it lacks. What are they? Are they the work of the people? How do they fair in the context of terms of trade? How sustainable are they? From the composition of Nigeria's exports, the bulk of what she presents to others today do not emanate from her internal workings. Thus far

they are mostly nature's gifts (minerals) extracted using foreign technologies. Therefore, they feature nothing distinctly Nigerian, no outcome of the labour of her people, her industry, her culture. Only for a few years before the advent of oil did Nigeria's competitiveness among nations arise from her internal workings. Those were the proud era of agricultural produce. In the present era of oil, Nigeria's competitiveness can be said to be negative because it simply does not arise from national efforts and knowledge. It is exogenous to the people and their economy, can thus build only frail linkages which cannot develop the economy. The Economic Complexity Index (ECI), a well-known metric, attempts to assess the productive capabilities of nations and the current state of their productive knowledge. These are key factors that determine a nation's competitiveness. ECI reckons with the diversification of the economy as reflected in the complexity of its products. World Bank's (2024b) computation using the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) product classification for Nigeria shows negative values all the way from 1995. And in 2021, while not belonging to the so-called least developed countries (by virtue of endowment), Nigeria came out as the 6th lowest in the world, ranking 126th out of 131

countries. When use is made of internal workings as a basis of international competitiveness, the picture painted by this metric agrees with our simple test above.

Another globe wide metric is the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI). Irrespective of the level of development, GCI investigates how productively a country uses their resources. Reflecting the levels of development, several related aspects of the economy described as ‘pillars’ are assessed, grouped and woven into the index. This integrates the micro and macro aspects of competitiveness. For the first group described as ‘basic requirement’, the pillars are institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, all of which are obvious factors affecting the competitiveness of primary resource dependent nations. The second group brings in ‘efficiency enhancers’ which are relevant to economies walking the path of development. These are: higher education and training, goods market, labour market, financial market development, technological readiness and market size. The third group has the 11th and 12th pillars which are business sophistication and innovation. According to WEF (2019), Nigeria’s rankings show that although it was more competitive than 31 countries in 2012/13,

five years later (by 2017/18) it had become more competitive than only 12 nations. At no time has Nigeria been in the first 100 competitive countries of the world. Figure 1 shows how the country ranks each year since 2012/13, showing at the same time how many nations she is better than world over. This clearly indicates how little, if at all, economic development is taking place in Nigeria.

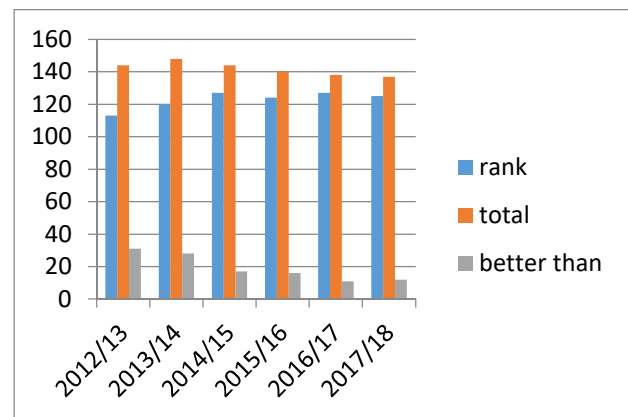


Figure 1: Nigeria: Global Competitive Index

Multidimensional Freedom

Multidimensional freedom consists of five distinct freedoms, according to Nobel Laureate Sen (1999). These are: protective security, transparency guarantees, social opportunities, economic facilities and political freedoms. As he conceptualised it, freedom is not just the primary end of development but also its principal means. Development is thus intertwined with freedom, is all about freedom and freedom is an integral part of development. As

democracy takes root, freedom becomes ubiquitous and is encountered everywhere in the economy, in the polity and social life. Democracy thus shines brightest in all matters that concern freedom, being all about free people.

In Nigeria today, some parts of the country, for example, the North East and the South East geo-political zones, have been under siege for years and have indeed been taken over by bandits who make forays from time to time into the as yet unoccupied parts. Some citizens have long been sacked from their homes through acts of terror, and for years these people have taken up residence in camps provided by the government as internally displaced persons. The camps were provided by the government therefore they are official residences of internally displaced citizens of Nigeria. In such areas, the citizens who are displaced do not have the freedom to visit their farms or their farm lands let alone carry out any farming activity. This freedom was theirs before Nigeria's independence. Its lack today evidences the loss of freedom and lack of development under Nigeria's democracy. As in protective security, so also in other aspects of security in the Nigerian society. The retrogression is manifest. Some public officials who were considered corrupt

and/or inept a few years ago appear today as upright and effective leaders.

Index of Economic Freedom (IEF) is a globe-wide index which attempts to measure freedom using 12 qualitative and quantitative factors grouped into four categories: Rule of law, Government size, Regulatory efficiency and Open market. Nigeria's relative lack of freedom is evident in the returns. The highest score within the last decade (58.7%) has whittled down to 53.1 in 2024 (Heritage 2024). As Figure 2 shows it is a rapid fall in the degree of economic freedom in recent years.

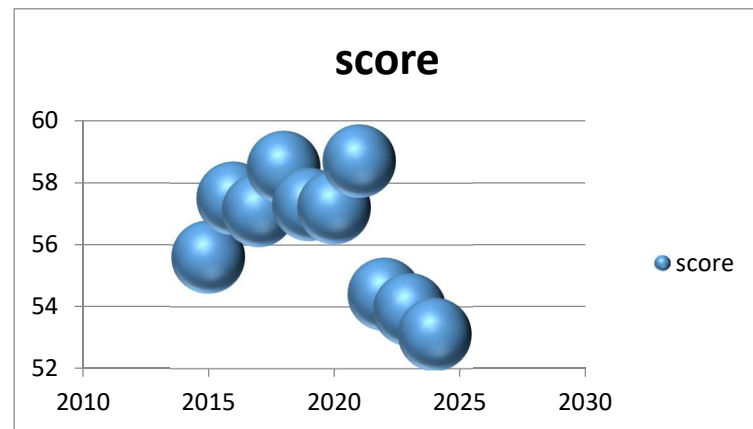


Figure 2: Nigeria: Index Of Economic Freedom

Freedom in the World Index is yet another globe-wide index of freedom. It attempts to assess freedom from two important perspectives: Political rights and Civil liberties. It was found again and again that Nigeria scored below average. The verdict

returned as always was: 'partly free' (Freedom House 2024)

Rising quality of life

What is quality of life (QOL)? Whose perspective counts? Although no definition is yet universally accepted, it is generally understood that the concept points to much more than the absence of disease. It encompasses other domains such as social, spiritual and so on. The World Health Organisation (WHO 2012 pp2-3) found the middle ground when it defined QOL as "an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns". For global comparisons in the context of cultural plurality, however, we cannot but fall back to the broad concepts of the substructure, and for each society, the superstructure emanating there from, in so far as these can be scaled. We have the World Bank's human development index as a possible tool to do this.

But before then, let us briefly consider two anecdotal notes on the direction of quality of life in Nigeria.

The first has to do with the price system and access to consumer goods. In the 1970s and early 1980s, cars were so priced that a fresh university graduate, upon securing a job in

the private or public sector, and confirmation of their appointment, could apply for and obtain a loan to enable them purchase a new motor car. The loan was so geared in relation to their remuneration that it was to be paid off within three, maximum five years. Since the car was new, no unmanageable problems were expected to arise from its usage. It was always comprehensively insured. Today, new cars seem off the table for fresh graduates while the amortisation period of a possible loan for a used (not new) car extends for so long that it discourages the loan in the first place. Comprehensive insurance is seen as an unnecessary and insurmountable burden. Therefore, no fresh Nigerian graduate can aspire to own a new car within the first few years of graduation. This is evidence of progress in a certain direction.

The second anecdotal note comes from the education sector and human development. At a point in the political development of the country, a common examination was created for admission into the undergraduate programmes of all universities. The very good aim was to streamline resource allocation and overcome wastes attributable to duplication and information asymmetries. The pass mark for this examination was fixed by the creators at 50% i.e. 200 out of the 400 possible marks. Over a decade later the pass

mark was reduced by the same authorities (to 140 out of 200), even though the growth of university classroom space had fallen behind population growth rate, or to put it differently, the number and proportion of those seeking admission had increased in relation to available spaces. Again this is indicative of the direction of progress.

Let us return to human development index (HDI). In a somewhat comparable way, it is a summary of achievements by different societies in key domains of human existence. The domains are: standard of living, health and knowledge. According to UNDP (2024), Nigeria's 2022 HDI value was 0.548 which ranked her as 161 out of 192 countries surveyed worldwide. On the basis of this the country's quality of human development was considered low. It had always been low.

The inequality adjusted human development index (IHDI) provides a clearer insight into the country's development performance. Over the period 2010 to 2022, inequality across the spectrum of the domains increased, leading to a loss in HDI of 32.7%. When appropriately adjusted, the HDI for 2022 was then 0.369, which reaffirmed the low level of human development. And this, after years of democratic efforts to develop, and abundance from nature by way of natural resources.

Nature's gift to Nigeria by way of mineral resources is truly abundant. Notwithstanding past exploits, crude oil and condensates reserve is currently 36.966 billion barrels according to the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC 2024). Even if daily output of 2 million barrels can be achieved (this has not been possible for many years and is above OPEC current quota), the reserves will last for over 50 years. Associated and Non-Associated gas reserve is currently 208.83 trillion metric feet, which is fabulous and in increasing demand. These huge reserves and the accompanying income in foreign exchange have led to a never ending struggle for control at the centre and a situation where the oil is more of a curse than a blessing (Saidu et al 2016). The poverty and lack of development in the country can therefore not be attributed to lack of resources.

Democracy, Nationhood, Insights from the Economy

From the foregoing it is reasonable to conclude that although the Nigerian economy has grown tremendously over the years, it has not been developing. Else, that whatever developmental gains it could make over the years were eroded by reverses. As such, economic development, which is a basic fruit

of democracy is missing in Nigeria notwithstanding that she started off as a democracy. It is not out of place to wonder if democracy is what has actually been practiced these years. The question thus arises: what has been practiced in Nigeria for decades, is it true democracy or Nigeria's variant of democracy, consisting of what Nigerians have been willing to learn about true democracy, and the much they have been willing to practice as a people?

This question appears justified by the outcome of the failed republics. The violent termination of the first and even the second republics, and the reflections that such traumatic events ought to induce, appeared to have yielded no positive fruit with regard to democracy and nationhood. These two concepts remain in the front burner because they were the two new elements in the new project or new nation called Nigeria. Serious reflection on the two concepts by all stakeholders, followed by positive action, might have prescribed a different route leading to the idea of inclusion and thus participation by all in political and economic processes, the unfolding of the abilities of the burgeoning population, the development and protection of capacities of the much endowed economy, in short, economic development, equality and freedoms. The opportunity to

better appreciate and practice these two concepts slipped away unused each time.

Let us consider democracy. As something new to the nation-states, the immediate task at the commencement of nationhood was an understanding of what democracy meant, how it was to be practiced and how it could have been capable of meeting the needs of every group. It is true that some groups, for example the Igbos, were said to have had a republican political system prior to the formation of Nigeria, yet even for such groups the western democratic system was something quite new. An environment in which one is contending with a new system of governance, right in the midst of different and suspicious groups, against whom one even had to jostle, does not sound like a supportive learning environment. Not surprisingly, very little of the true democracy appeared to have been learnt during and after the first republic, which terminated in such a violent and bitter way. The second and third republics indicated no better understanding of democracy and no better conduct with respect to democratic practice. What then was the purpose of the military interventions? They can be considered a waste of the people's time, a suspension of the painfully slow unfolding of the people, which after the military departure, could only continue from

where it stopped. The interventions corrected nothing; instead they strengthened every evil that they sought to correct. In particular, a wicked contradiction is indicated when military rule seeks to correct undemocratic practices.

Second, we consider Nationhood. A brand new nation was to be forged from the numerous nationalities that made up the new State, Nigeria. To achieve this required the recognition of the innumerable differences existing between the different nations and their cultures, and building upon them in such a manner as would anchor the diversity that was to be their strength, their rock. It further meant subordinating the existing nationalities to the new nation which did not yet exist but which was being forged. It finally meant enthroning the new nation above all else. This was no mean task and was, for the peoples, simply unprecedented. The very best and utmost positive energies were needed for the endeavour. But it was doomed at birth. The quest for power harped on the differences between the peoples from inception and led to a civil war. After the civil war ethnic enclaves continued as the strongholds of politicians. The achievement of a mere feeling of oneness among the various peoples thus proved unattainable. Indeed, till the present day, the integration

and unification of Nigerian peoples appear to be an elusive undertaking. The identities of the tribes loomed larger than they were at the beginning, with little prospects of diminishing. Loyalty remained to the nation states, and not to the new nation. Trust proved nonexistent, mutual suspicion and fear continued to reign. It remained so bad that ethnicism reared its head in the politics of Lagos, the melting pot and commercial nerve centre of the country, in 2024. These circumstances can hardly harbour democratic practices but rather opportunism, domination, subordination and coercion. The instrumentality of the State proved to be an excellent instrument to further tribal or regional agenda rather than a united and peaceful country.

The Role of Globalisation

In varying degrees, globalisation refers to the global dissolution of the rigidities around the movements of goods, services, persons, financial capital and ideas including technology. This progresses with or without the consent of world authorities. The lack of consent or outright refusal by any authority triggers a counter current, making globalisation a strong force which must be taken into account by all. Dissolving the rigidities expands physical and non-physical

connectivity, promotes outburst of indigenous capacities and the proliferation of products that are basically the embodiment of technology.

Technology and capital are at the forefront of globalisation. As such, multinational organisations and capital rich countries play special roles in its unfolding, which in itself is a permanent game of realignments that seek the ultimate goal: relative strength. Economic interaction is the principal tool of engagement, and economic power, as the substructure of international social formations, determines much of the non-economic formations. The formations, whether at regional or global levels, are aimed at promoting economic progress subject to the status quo of power relations. Each formation provides greater collective strength to keep deviants in check, to maintain the system, and pursue shared prosperity as it is charmingly expressed.

For a developing nation, the beneficial relationship is that which allows economic development to take place. This must checkmate domestic political vagabondage, promote outburst of indigenous capacities and sift proliferation of products which stifle or take away domestic initiatives. Globalisation makes this hard to achieve because it provides endless opportunities for

domestic political leaders to truly misgovern their nations so long as they do not challenge subsisting power formations. It also brings home to Africa, the exploitative nature of the old model in which Africa was Europe's source of raw materials and the destination of manufactures. No nations are available to play the same role for Africa. Therefore today's model of economic development needs to be different, and this can be effective only if the status quo is disarranged. To these challenges must be added the reality that globalisation is able to neutralise the outburst of indigenous capacities through absorption (or brain drain for human based capacities), direct investments (for direct exploitation of mineral deposits and agricultural produce) and exchange rate instability and capital flight (for financial capital).

For a poor nation pursuing democratic ideals, the implications of steering the State in a manner that redefines existing international relationships, thus ensuring that economic development takes place, often initiates a collision course with globalisation. Rather than readily support poor nations in search of economic development, globalisation and its proponents present a fighting front to whoever dares to be different. This takes place through multinational organisations whose prosperity may be immediately at risk,

and international coalitions that would rather maintain the status quo. With the freedoms from true democracy and the right budget, much can be initiated and actively promoted including regime change, by those who deem themselves to be negatively affected, or those who are deliberately propped up to subvert progressive governments. Leadership irresponsibility in the nations of the so-called first world, which constantly result to subverting genuine regimes in countries overseas, is often part of the effort to maintain the status quo.

Globalisation is thus a force all by itself, which was not there in its present form when the West developed but now has to be reckoned with by whosoever wants to develop economically. Its proponents remain implacably committed to the status quo (existing power relations), and are ever willing to change policy direction to stay on course. Lanzafame and Qureshi (2023) think that emerging economies, subject to capital limitation, are likely to return to the discredited industrial policy following the moves of advanced countries. Already China and India have joined the train. Within the next couple of years the United States will inject a whopping \$680 billion to push domestic investment in strategic manufacturing sectors while the European

Union will be spending E750 billion in selected areas by 2026. These are unambiguous moves to bring home to their countries jobs that migrated earlier as globalisation progressed. Where are these jobs coming back from? Developing countries! So these are schemes to grow their already developed economies by dispossessing the poor economies of what jobs they already have. These proponents of globalisation thus attempt to redirect or whittle it down consciously so as to take care of their economies, while urging on the rest of the world. They seek to maintain the power relations by remaining at the fore front of the globalisation process.

THE Nigerian Economy Today

Today, the basic capitalist contradiction has become full blown in Nigeria, namely the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production or the phenomenon in which a rapidly increasing work force is producing what is appropriated by a diminishing number of people. In addition, the use of political power by the leaders to create economic base for themselves has matured fully. As such the instrumentality of the State is fully deployed to illegitimately appropriate oil blocks and other things of value, and introduce and

uphold extortionist devices of various kinds. This has gone hand in hand with the degrading of genuine forces of production and crass oppression of the masses. The steady diminution of genuine forces of production is evidenced by the gradual withdrawal of international capital. Shell Plc, Exxon Mobil Corp, Eni SpA have all sold their onshore operations, and Microsoft will shut down its engineering section, reducing exposure. We recall the hands behind Shoprite Holdings Ltd, Guinness Nigeria Plc, Bayer AG, Sanofi SA, Kimberly-Clark Corp, Procter & Gamble all of which are gone. As a testimony to the grave oppression required to keep the people in check, the Nigerian landscape today resembles one huge battle ground in which all manner of coercive forces are unleashed on the people in innumerable road blocks and camps. Through these road blocks billions of naira are brazenly siphoned from the system every year. Beholding the picture of the road blocks, one would think that the nation is at war, hence the audacious restrictions of freedoms. It is no wonder that there could not have been, and even now, there cannot be, economic development.

To consolidate the illegitimate appropriation of things of value, exclusion rather than inclusion is the norm. This runs in direct

contrast to what democracy stipulates, its main strength. Furthermore, the law cannot be applied equally to all, it must be applied to keep the people in check. To achieve this, State capture at all costs is practiced so as to control and direct the forces of coercion. This again runs in direct contrast to the ideals of democracy, which provides a level playing ground for all by ensuring that no one is above the law. There is therefore no room for democratic ideals.

Conclusion: The Way Out

The way out cannot be to attempt to enthrone democracy, especially western liberal democracy, because it is unknown to the peoples, not understood by them, and in taking advantage of the situation, the leaders are bent on capitalising on the differences between the peoples. There is also a lack of cultural fortitude to wade through the unification storms. Furthermore, group after group from seemingly diverse backgrounds have arisen to lead Nigeria only to end up exploiting this lack of understanding by the people, indicating that the spoils of the game appear to be the overwhelming motivation for the power disputations. A continued period of learning is possible, that is, a continuation of how it has been since independence. But this has never yet led to

economic development. Liberal western democracy is thus incapable of being practiced in present day Nigeria.

The way out will be to adopt the form of governance known to the peoples, what they practice in their nation-states. This is not liberal western democracy as we know it.

To arrive at what it might be, the reality as it is needs must be taken into account. This reality begins from a highly corrupt elite class, to the highly visible and badly abused differences between the peoples, and includes the reality of different languages and cultures. The genuine prospects of development, which require good hearted practice, with the unavoidable falling and getting up to try again as children learning how to walk do; these prospects can hardly exist anymore let alone be realised in an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust, of intentional manipulation by the leaders. Therefore, each nation needs a congenial, homogeneous environment in which to unfold its abilities, and at its own pace; and in experiencing the challenges of the modern world, will learn to value the advantages that accrue from strength and numbers. This recognition in itself awakens the urge to join hands in a great union, driving the desire to strive to reach heights attained by other great nations of the world. A true federation and

homogeneous partitioning is what comes closest to this picture.

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