



The Challenges of Development Plans in Nigeria's Civilian to Civilian Transition: Nigeria, Defying all Development Theories.

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Abstract

Development plans of government should act as trajectory and spring boards for the development of a country. Hence, it is difficult or impossible for a country to achieve development without adhering and implementing concrete development plans. Development plans are theoretically designed and supposedly based on the economic philosophy of the state. Nigeria's economic crisis appears to have defied all solutions in spite of the myriads of economic development plans by successive governments. The study seeks to investigate why? In view of the above, this paper examines Nigeria's Development plans in the context of development theories. It discovered that several development plans under different successive civilian regimes from 1999-2019. The paper relied on secondary source of data. It discovered that there has been incessant abandonment of development plans by successive regimes which has brought about the confusion in the philosophy of the Nigerian state. This paper recommends that the Nigerian state should have a document referred to as the Nigerian Dream which should be designed by representatives of Nigerians from the 774 Local Governments and 36 states of the Federation. It should contain the aspirations, philosophy and National Strategic Growth of the country. Also the unilateral termination of ongoing development plans by the Presidents should be entrenched in the constitution as an impeachable offence.

Key words: Economic and development plans, Economic Development, Civilian President, civilian transition and Development theories.

Introduction

Over the years, the Nigerian government adopted myriads of development plans in order to solve the economic crisis confronting the country. The various development plans include: Pre-independent plans of 1946, Post-independence development plans such as First National Development Plans of 1962-68, Second National Development plan of 1970-74, Third National Development Plans of 1975-80, Fourth National Development Plans (1981-1985) and the era of neo-liberal reforms which extended into the Fourth Republic (National population Commission, 2005). Explicitly, the philosophy underpinning the National Development Plans (NDP) was the state controlled economy in which the state financed the larger part of the plans, while the post National development plan era was an attempt to reform government structures to the dictates of market economy. Despite these plans and abundance of natural resources in Nigeria, the country is experiencing a deepening economic



crisis which manifests as pervasive high poverty rate, high rate of insecurity, high rate of unemployment, inadequate infrastructure and low industrialization with an economy that is mono-cultural and foreign dependent in nature. This economic crisis is further compounded by the kleptomaniac activities of the political elites, who perceive the country as an avenue for wealth accumulation and self-aggrandizement (Ojukwu and Shopeju, 2010).

Nigeria's political experiment witnessed twenty-eight years of military rule, during which there were truncation of civilian governments at two different periods, in 1966 and 1983 through military coups. The 1983 coup was particularly tragic for the reason that the opportunity to transit from one civilian government to another was aborted by the military, this engendered policy reversals and loss of civilian consolidation. Currently, Nigeria has witnessed an uninterrupted civilian rule from 1999-this period and ostensibly practices a Presidential system of government modeled after western democracy. One of the major contrasts between the Presidential system of government and other system of government is that the President functions as the Head of state and Chief Executive(Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 Constitution),which vests in the person, powers to formulate policies and direct economic development. However, this executive power has been exploited by successive civilian governments to generate different policies by different civilian government at different periods. Concretely, since 1999, every civilian administration on assumption of office, has formulated policies based on different development principles but the attainment of development seems elusive. From 1999-2017 Nigeria has witnessed four economic development plans, these are: National Economic Empowerment Scheme (NEEDS), Vision 2020, Transformation Agenda, Change Agenda Economic Recovery Growth Plan (EGRP), which were assumed to be formulated based on different economic theories.

This study argues that the successive transition from civilian to civilian government should engender a stable development plan and the attainment of development. Although, Nigeria has witnessed a stable civilian transition, Nigeria economic policies has witnessed policy inconsistencies, unstable development direction and nonattainment of development goals. The study therefore seeks to analyze the different economic policies from 1999 - 2019 to unravel the economic philosophies underpinning them and examine the tragic pit falls therein.

Theorizing Development

Beginning from the classical political economist such as such as Adam Smith to recent neo liberal theorist, the debate is concerned with the appropriate roles of the markets in coordinating economic activities. Smith (1937) argued that the state should perform three major functions: first to protect society from foreign attack. Secondly, to establish the administration of justice within the country, thirdly, to erect and maintain the public works and institution that private entrepreneur cannot undertake profitably. The state should protect the lives and property and only intervene when necessary. Succinctly put, this idea suggests that there should be a limited government, so that individuals can have free enterprise within an institution that administers justice and has the authority to uphold sanctity of contract. The classical liberal theory espoused by Smith was accepted by the United States and United Kingdom. The theory dominated their policies until the great depression of 1930s. In the



1970s the state regulationist approach replaced the classical liberalism to complement the imperfections of capitalism (Kotz, 2000).

The state led development was practiced by most African states and other developing countries especially during their early independence. For example, most developing countries in Africa and Asia, adopted a state led development intended to bring about sustained industrialization. This model of development also known as state centrism or controlled economy or traditional public management; is a type of economy in which governments tend to play a key role in their economies through demand – side macro-economic management. These demand side measures include various ways of boosting domestic demand, such as minimum wages, coupled with the protection of local industries through import tariffs (Fine and Padaychee, 2001). This approach was adopted by the newly independent countries in which state or public sectors occupy a special place in their economies (Kozlov 1977:432). The state-controlled economy was adopted by the Nigerian government immediately after independence as an approach to economic development and was the philosophy behind the Import Substitution Strategy, Indigenization policy and the various development plans of 1962-68, 1970-74, among others. During this period, the state led development produced economic growth and improvement in social infrastructure in the short run, but ultimately failed to provide sustainable progress, partly, due to the vicissitudes of world market but more prominently to the predatory nature of the state (Meyns and Musanba, 2010). The state led development became counterproductive engendering developmental failures, an attempt to search for the solution to the crisis of the Keynesian state approach led to the emergence of the neoliberal theory which is an updated version of the classical liberal theory.

Reformation of Liberal Theory into Neo-Liberal Theory

Neoliberal theorist includes the School of Austria Economics associated with Ludwig Von Mises, Friedrich Von Hayeck, who had apathy towards centralized state planning and are committed to the principles of private property and the school of Chicago associated with Milton Friedman and Friedrich Von Hayeck. According to Harvey(2005:2), neo-liberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedom and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such parties.

The central thrust of the neoliberal theorist is how individuals can achieve their goals. In essence, the government has a role to play in the pursuit and realization of individual's objectives. According to Friedman (1962), there are two ways a society can organize economic activity, these includes: (i) centralization and coercion, and (ii) facilitating a market place for the trade of goods and services. Friedman argued that centralization cannot guarantee freedom and economic development. He therefore, recommended that for individuals to benefit from the promise of government while avoiding the threat to freedom; the scope of government must be limited and power must be dispersed.

The main thrust of Friedman's (1962), neoliberal theory is the organization of the bulk of economic activity through private enterprise operating in a free market as a system of economic freedom necessary for political freedom and the reliance on the market by



government to organize economic activity. Making a clear link between economic freedom and political freedom, Friedman indicated that free markets were not opulence but harbors the very foundation for personal and political freedom. He identified areas in which government should not intervene, these includes; tariffs and import quotas, subsidies, rent, regulation of industries and banks, transport, amongst others. Friedman's chief argument about neo-liberalism is that, it is a consequentialist libertarian, that is, the reason for adopting minimal government is due to its beneficial consequences. The beneficial consequences of neo-liberalism are; economic progress, efficiency, technological development, among others. As Friedman puts it neo-liberalism rests on the elementary proposition that both parties to an economic transaction are bilaterally voluntary and informed (Friedman, 1962:5).

In the contemporary era, neo-liberalism has undergone rigorous modifications but the underpinnings of Friedman's assumptions on neo-liberalism are still the same. It is pertinent to state that due to the present-day globalization, which entails the increase in flow of capital and technology among countries, and the collapse of communist states in the early 1990s; neo-liberalism has experienced some transformation and it is at present the dominant policy framework of most states of the world. The transformation experienced in present day neo-liberalism are evident in three critical areas, these are; the new role of the state in the promotion and enforcement of neo-liberalism, the role of international organizations in the promotion of capitalism and the activities of multinational corporations in the discharge of the neoliberal objectives. These areas shall be analyzed to show the advance of neoliberal theory through the years and the motives behind the adoption of neoliberal policies by the Nigerian state.

One of the modifications of neoliberal theory in recent years is the new roles that states perform in the promotion of neo-liberalism. The assertion by Friedman that parties voluntarily participate in economic transaction has been transformed as modern states acts as institutions for the promotion and enforcement of neo-liberalism. In this sense, the role of the state is not just to guarantee freedom of enterprise but to use all its powers to extend freedom of trade within and beyond its borders. The enforcement of free market is nowadays encapsulated in the policy of states and the rule of law. This explains the Decree number 25 which led to the establishment of the Technical Committee on Privatization and Commercialization (TCPC) and Bureau for Public Enterprise as organs for the implementation of privatization policy in Nigeria. Also, the developed countries have been able to dictate neoliberal policies to the less developed countries, for example the United States has been able to dictate neoliberal policies to the African countries (Kotz, 2000). Furthermore, the interconnectedness of states in the past decades has led to increase in trade flows, foreign direct investment, among others, hence, most countries now attempt to solve their economic crisis through foreign direct investment as the modern approach to solving development problems, in doing this, efficiency is mostly neglected.

The role of key international agencies is also critical in understanding the development of neoliberal theory over the years. Major international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, among others, plays major roles in diffusing and foisting neoliberal principles such as free trade, privatization, deregulation, through the Washington Consensus (Barnett, 2006). Also, countries such as the United States make use of these



agencies to pressurize countries into accepting neoliberal policies (Kotz, 2000), a good example are: Structural Adjustment Programme and National Economic Empowerment Development Scheme of 2003 in Nigeria. Most of the recommendations of these international agencies emanate as pre-conditions for securing foreign assistance from the international organizations. These reforms are viewed as donor conditionality and imposition by financial institution (Common, 1998:442). For example, the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme in Nigeria, was a precondition for receiving loans from the World Bank.

Modernization theory was propounded by some writers to mean development. Modernization is portrayed as a kind of final stage in the social and economic development of societies. The central idea of this theory is that, the development logic of economic growth in general and industrialization in particular will impel societies towards a particular direction of change (Coetzee, 2001). Most modernization ideas are based on the history of Europe and North America; hence it was based on the report of the movement of the western societies from feudalism to capitalism. The idea was also based on the attempt to provide a theoretical framework to describe the road that newly decolonized countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America had to take, in order to reach their development destination.

Modernization theory further argues that all societies progress through similar stages of development. Therefore, the underdeveloped countries should transform in themselves by following the Europeans models. The developed countries have the task of helping the undeveloped countries to get out of the traditional cycle through investment technology transfers and closer integration into the world system. For example, Rostow (1960), outlined the five stages of development, these are: Traditional stage, Precondition for Take-off, Take off stage, Drive to Maturity and Era of Mass Consumption.

Dependency theory arose as a reaction to the modernization theory. Contemporary dependency theory is largely Marxist in origin and was adopted by third world scholars such as Andre Gunder Frank and Walter Rodney. For example, Gunder Frank (1979:140) argues that the incorporation of the third world countries within the process of world capitalist development is the cause of their underdevelopment. The dependency theorist therefore suggests that the solution to the underdevelopment is for the third world countries to delink from the World capitalist system. Dependency theories has been criticized for focusing only on international economic order, rather than focusing on the social structure of the third world, which has led to the compradorization of the state and economy. Despite this criticism, the dependency theory has been able to bring to light the incorporation of the third world states into the capitalist system characterized with unequal exchange. They have also exposed the role of multi-national corporations (MNCs) in the exploitation of resources of the underdeveloped countries.

Theoretical Framework

Elite Theory and Theory of Primitive Accumulation:

The elite theory and theory of primitive accumulation forms the structure upon which this research is built. The elite theory is significant to the research in the sense that it provides a

scientific explanation into the underlying interest for the incessant change in development plans in Nigeria.

Scholars such as Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels, referred to as classical elite theorist influenced the empirical study of the elites. Classical and contemporary elite theorists share the motive of explaining State outcomes through the actions of elites. As Lopez (2013), puts it, if political sociology is concerned with the relationship between state and society, elite theory is based on the assumption that elite action has a causal effect on such a relationship.

The central argument of the classical elite theorist is the idea of elite inevitability. Classical elite theorists adopted the inevitability of elite rule to counter the assumptions of liberalism and Marxism. They claimed that both democracy and socialism (as a classless regime) were impossible outcomes because the society is necessarily elite driven Lopez (2013). The foremost theorist of the classical elite theorist is Pareto perceives elites as the small number of individuals who, in each sphere of activity, have arrived at a higher echelon in the professional hierarchy. He argued that people are always governed by elites who possess some marked degree of qualities which distinguishes them from other members of the society. These qualities he said are intelligence, character and capacity of whatever kind. He went further to classify social classes by adopting the elites as a standard of comparison. He stated that elites represent the higher stratum, the others namely non elites he thought as the lower class. The elite stratum according to Pareto is composed of (a) Governing elites that consist of the rest of the individuals who directly or indirectly have a considerable role in government. (b) non governing elites that consist of the rest in the elite stratum. He argued that in order for the elites to perpetuate itself in power, it adopts various means such as using force, death; capital punishment, financial ruin, exclusion from public office, exile and ostracism (Mariotti, 2020). The elites manipulate overtly and covertly the political power to their benefits.

On the other hand, Primitive accumulation was postulated by Karl Marx (1818-1883) as the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. According to him, it appears as primitive because it forms the historical stage of capital and of the mode of production corresponding with it. In the writings of Karl Marx, the concept was used to uncover the origin of the capitalist mode of production through historical analysis. Seen as a historical process that gives birth to the capitalist mode of production, the concept had a limited though powerful use in Marxian historiography (Kozlov, 1977). Due to the capitalists' thirst for profits primitive accumulation espoused by Marx has transformed into economic imperialism through the instrumentality of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and rent seeking behaviour, political corruption and prebendalism. In Nigeria for instance, primitive accumulation comes in form of theft, looting, graft, expropriation, money laundering, enslavement and internal colonization (Ojukwu and Shopeju, 2010).

The obsession for material gains at the expense of the development of the Nigerian state, suitably describes the actions of the Nigerian elites. In an attempt to gain more the Nigerian elites adopt different means, including abandonment of development plans and the formulation of new ones to suit their selfish interest. This study is of the view that the successful transition from one civilian government to another should engendered stable



development plans that should bring about socio-economic development, but what exists in Nigeria is that development plans are perceived by the Nigerian elites as a means of primitive accumulation, this explains the incessant changes in development plans by the Nigerian elites. As asserted by Saliu (2011), Primitive accumulation is a threat to democracy because it constitutes a deprivation as well as denial for the citizens who had expected democracy to wipe away their tears after many agonizing years under military dictatorship.

Development plans in Nigeria's civilian to civilian transition: Why Nigeria has defied all Development Theories.

Development plans can be defined as a conscious effort on the part of the state to influence, direct and in some cases even control changes in the principal variables (i.e. consumption, investment, savings, exports and imports) of a nation over a period of time in order to achieve predetermined set of objectives (Anyawu, 1997). This definition recognizes the role of the state in bringing about development. In essence it recognizes the interface between the economy and the state giving it a holistic view. This also means the economic crisis of Nigeria cannot be discussed in isolation; it has to be situated within the context of the state. As rightly noted by Ake (2001), the crisis in Africa presents itself to our consciousness as a crisis of the economy or more precisely a development crisis, however, it is not simply an economic crisis.

It is at least a crisis of the state as it is a crisis of the economy. This perspective suggests, that one can define development plan as a vision of the state towards achieving national priorities, it is an important instrument for planning and accelerating development of a country. Fritz and Menocal(2006), were able to shed light on the essential attributes of development plans, these includes; development plans should transcend a particular regime, it should reflect country owned policy, development strategies and peculiarity of the country and should foster the national and foreign interest of a country. In line with the above, it is also pertinent to state that development plan is necessary due to the fact that, development is neither accidental nor does it take place naturally of itsown, it is expedient to plan it deliberately. Development planning entails process which ensure that national policies and strategies are realized and development concerns at all levels are fully integrated into the overall development plans (Ejumudo, 2013). Therefore, Nigeria's development plans should entail implementing deliberate plans that are targeted at transforming the structure of the state from a weak and dependent economy to a productive one, stimulating development which should transcend particular regimes or government. Development plans are not supposed to exist in a vacuum, but should be formulated based on theories or philosophies that underpin them.

As discussed earlier, successive Nigerian government has formulated myriads of development plans but the plans have not been able to transform the industrial and economic structure of the country. Factors such as colonial legacy, social pluralism and its centrifugal tendencies, corruption of leaders, poor labour discipline, poor planning, inappropriate policies are the challenges confronting development (Ake, 2001). Fritz and Menocal (2006), in diagnosing reasons for the success and failure of state led development argued that the difference does not appear to be primarily attributable to corruption – which was generally present in both – but rather the problem of state 'capture'. State capture implies that benefits



from state interventionism are diverted into private pockets, but more importantly that the policies themselves are no longer driven by the logic to yield development but rather are intended to yield benefits for limited groups.

An attempt to diagnose the challenges affecting Nigeria development plans, Ake (2001) asserted that there is no failure of development because it was never really on the agenda in the first place. This assertion is not only controversial but worrisome. This study questions why Ake made such assertion, in spite of the plethora of development plans in Nigeria? However, the study extrapolates that the major reason for him to make such assertion was that the Nigerian political elite are not concerned with national development that could transcend particular regimes for the reason being that personal interests are placed above national interest, this explains reasons for the thwarting of development plans and introduction of another by different government even when the objectives of the latter development plans were not achieved.

A critical analysis of the development plans in the Fourth Republic reveals that in spite of the stable transition from one civilian government to another, the philosophies underpinning the development plans has been unstable. As it stands, the Nigerian state lacks particular philosophy; it is difficult to ascertain if it is a capitalist or socialist state. Successive Nigerian governments have most times displayed a swing between capitalism and centrally planned economy, which has engendered uncertainties, lack of projection in the economy and reversal of development plans. This study therefore, examines the various development plans in Nigeria's fourth Republic with the aim of bringing to fore the challenges inherent in them.

National Economic and Empowerment Development Scheme (NEEDS): NEEDS was an attempt to position the private sector as the engine growth of the economy. The theoretical and philosophy underpinning the development scheme is the neo-liberal theory. The document stated that the private sector will be the executor, investor and manager of business, this in consonant with the neoliberal theory. The government will play the role of enabler, facilitator and regulator helping the private sector, create jobs and generate wealth, deregulation and liberation will diminish government control and attract private sector investment (NEEDS, 2004:IX). The goals of NEEDS include; wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value Re-orientation. NEEDS document also recognizes that there are few jobs since manufacturing is stagnant, therefore, it hopes to create about 7 Million new jobs by 2007 by making it easier for private enterprises to thrive.

In order to provide adequate jobs, NEEDS proposed developing the industrial sector by relying more on local resources and on imports, be guided by a local research and development strategy that seeks to promote science and technology based and medium size enterprises. The main aim of NEEDS is to process the crude products in Nigeria, so that more jobs will be created. The targets for the sector are 7% annual growth, 70% capacity utilization, and 70% of investment made by the private sector by 2007(NEEDS,2004: xix). NEEDS hope to diversify the Nigerian economy by targeting at a growth on the non-oil sector; 3.3% in the year 2003 to 9.5% in 2007. The devaluation of the naira under NEEDS brought inflation into the Nigerian economy.



NEEDS was confronted with challenges which hindered it from achieving its objectives. For example, the policy of devaluation was primarily intended to boost export and discourage import, however, ninety percent of Nigeria's export comes from oil whose prices are fixed by OPEC irrespective of whether Nigeria devalues its currency or not. Yet, the importation of certain critical inputs resulted in 'importation' of external shocks and inflation into the economy (Alabi, 2009:313). Also, the sudden rolling back of the state through privatization policy under NEEDS has obnoxious effect on Nigerians, especially when situated within the environment in which the policy was implemented. It was reported that due to the frequent power outages, lack of funds to procure inputs and reduced demand for locally manufactured goods, led to low capacity utilization rate; from 29.5 percent in 1998 to just 38 percent in 2008 (Report of the vision 2020, 2009:36), that is, just an increment of 8.5 percent for a period of 10 years. The government depended largely on foreign direct investment (FDI); as a result, the manufacturing experienced a decline in growth from 21.5 percent in 2003 to 8.85 percent in 2007 during the global economic crisis (Report of the vision 2020, 2009:37). Also, most of the foreign investment went into oil production making the Nigerian structure to be more dependent. Most of the privatized agencies of government were sold to the cronies of those in government, hence they could not perform effectively and provide jobs that was envisioned by the NEEDS document.

Vision 2020:20: Another strategy adopted by the Nigerian state is the vision 2020. The vision's statement is that by 2020 Nigeria will be one of the largest economies in the world, that by year 2020, the country will be able to consolidate its leadership role in Africa and establish itself as a significant player in the global economic and political arena. The two broad objectives of the vision are: make efficient use of human and natural resources to achieve rapid economic growth and translate the economic growth into equitable social development for all citizens.

To attain this overarching goal of reaching the top 20 economies by 2020 the country will need to enhance here economic development, performance as illustrated by the under listed key parameters:

Polity: By 2020 the country will be peaceful, harmonious and a stable democracy.

Macro Economy: A sound and globally competitive economy with a GDP of not less than \$900 billion and a capita income of not less than \$400 billion per annum.

Infrastructure: adequate infrastructure services that support the full mobilization of all economic sectors.

Education: Modern and vibrant education system which provides for every Nigerian the opportunity and facility to achieve its maximum potential and provides the country with adequate and competent manpower.

Health: A health sector that supports and sustains a life expectancy of not less than 70 years and reduces to the barest minimum the burden of infectious diseases such as malaria, HIV/Aids and other debilitating diseases.

Agriculture: A modern technologically enabled agricultural sector that fully exploits the vast agricultural resources of the country ensures national food security and contributes significantly to foreign exchange earnings.



Manufacturing: A vibrant and competitive manufacturing sector that contributes significantly to GDP with a manufacturing value added of not less than 40% (Vision 2020:3).

The vision was able to bring to light the challenges encountered during the past development plans and stated that weak implementation of the plans has constrained the country's growth and development. The vision revealed that other reasons for the underachievement of the development plans is weak political will. Other areas identified are poor and decaying infrastructure, epileptic power supply, weak fiscal and monetary policy co-ordination, fiscal dominance and its implications for inflation and private sector financing, pervasive rent seeking behavior by private and public agents, including corruption, weak institution and regulatory deficit, amongst others are the domestic and external constraints to growth and development (Vision 2020:4). Nigeria's minerals and metals sector are key sector critical to the implementation of Government's economic diversification strategy, and the attainment of the growth, wealth creation and poverty reduction goals of the vision.

The vision 2020 just like other development plans has good intentions and wishes but the implementation was a far cry from the objectives contained in the document. In buttressing this assertion, Eneh (2011) argued that the Vision 20:2020 like other developmental plans and programmes was nothing but a mere vision which much unrealistic targets. Furthermore, the vision was confronted with impediments such as lack of political will and infrastructural challenges such as electricity that would have stimulated Small and Medium Enterprises were in a deplorable condition. The period witnessed the abandonment of heavy industries which should serve as means of employment generation consequently engendering high rate of unemployment, the economy was still oil dependent. The National Bureau of statistics (2007&2020) stated that the rate of unemployment in was 3.9% in the year 2007but increased to 9.6%. Vision 2020 has been abandoned and replaced by several development plans since the end of President Yar'adua's government, and this is a major challenge of the plan.

Transformation Agenda: The transformation agenda was initiated by President Jonathan Goodluck's government in the year 2011. The Transformation Agenda was meant to touch every aspect of the socio-economic and political life of the nation; certain key areas were summarized by the National Planning Commission blue print (NPC, 2011). These include job creation, good governance, agriculture, security, power sector among others. This will examine the performance in some of the sectors. The transformation agenda therefore emerges from integration of action plans and strategies designed to eliminate the mistakes of successive past administrations in policy formulation and implementation.

The underlying philosophy of the transformation agenda was to provide a transition of the Nigerian economy into a capitalist economy. It was an attempt to attempt to provide an existing structure for development of capitalism or what Dunmoye(2003) refers to as nurturing capitalism. Transformation in capitalist societies is part of capitalist development. This is a departure from the narratives that replete literature perceiving transformation as a complete change in something or structure in a way that improves them (Alao and Alao, 2013), hence equating transformation with change. Transformation is not the same as change. This study, argues that transformation adopts the pre-existing structure of the economy in



order to bring about a transition to the next epoch, while the philosophy underpinning the economy remains the same. Transformation agenda was therefore an attempt to free up market opportunities by removing market obstacles similar to the transition from feudalism to capitalism in England (Mushtaq, 2005).

The transformation agenda was marred with a high level of corruption which was its major impediment (Gyong, 2011). The agenda was marred with insecurity, epileptic power supply in spite of the partial privatization in the power sector and poor physical infrastructure (Alao and Alao, 2013).

Economic and Recovery Growth Plan (ERGP): ERGP was formulated by the President Muhammadu Buhari's civilian administration, 2 years after assumption of office. The government assumed office on the Change mantra, hence, jettisoning the transformation agenda. The change mantra was more of a political slogan than a concrete development plan. This study argues that the theoretical underpinning change philosophy is only obtainable in a Socialist state. As Marx envisaged, the movement from a socialist state to a communist state will require a break away from the existing pre-conditions of exploitation to a new system that is devoid of exploitation (Wayper, 1973). Introducing a change philosophy in a country that is transforming its structures seems to be confusing with uncertainty. The confusion is whether Nigerian state is a socialist state or a capitalist one? Does change mean the government will take over all the expenditures in the economy? Does it mean a centrally planned economy? This study argues that transformation is the highest that can be derived from a capitalist state. This apparent confusion seems to be behind the delay in the formulation of any development plan, in spite of the raging economic crisis besetting the country in 2015. This delay consequently deepened Nigeria's economic crisis to the extent that in the year 2015 the rate of unemployment in Nigeria increased four consecutive times with about 75.9 million unemployed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

The ERGP was formulated based on 3 broad objectives, these are: (i) Restoring growth - Monetary and fiscal stability, external balance, economic growth and diversification; (ii) Investing in the Nigerian people - Health, education, social inclusion schemes, job creation and youth employment schemes; (iii) Building a globally competitive economy – Improving the ease of doing business, investing in infrastructure and promoting digital led growth (Economic Recovery Growth Plan, 2017: 15&16).

ERGP contains the following projections: (i) The inflation rate is projected to trend downwards from the current level of almost 19 per cent to single digits by 2020. (ii) Real GDP is projected to grow by 4.6 percent on average over the Plan period, from an estimated contraction of 1.54 percent recorded in 2016. Real GDP growth is projected to improve significantly to 2.19 per cent in 2017, reaching 7 per cent at the end of the Plan period in 2020. (iii) Crude oil output is forecast to rise from about 1.8 mbpd in 2016 to 2.2 mbpd in 2017 and 2.5 mbpd by 2020. Relentless focus on electricity and gas will also drive growth and expansion in all other sectors. (iv) Privatizing select public enterprises/assets, and refurbishing local refineries to reduce petroleum product imports by 60 per cent by 2018. (v) Nigeria is expected to become not only a net exporter of refined petroleum products by 2020 but also a net exporter of key agricultural products such as rice, cashew nuts, groundnuts, cassava and vegetable oil that take up a lot of foreign exchange. (vi) Unemployment will

reduce from 13.9 per cent as of Q3 2016 to 11.23 per cent by 2020 which translates to the creation of over 15 million jobs during the plan horizon or an average of 3.7 million jobs per annum (Economic and Recovery Growth Plan, 2017).

EGRP was marred with policy inconsistencies, economic uncertainties, epileptic power supply, corruption and insecurity. The government could not successfully diversify the economy, hence it relied on oil, the external shocks from oil brought about huge loss of jobs, the economy contracted by 2.06% between April and June 2016 and economy went into recession (National Bureau of statistics, 2016). The country also slipped into recession in the 2020, due to the oil gluts caused by the covid 19 Global pandemic. Instead of 7% which the EGRP projected by 2020, the Nigerian economy witnessed a negative growth of -2.48% with an inflation rate of 14.23 percent in October 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

The rate of corruption increased as Transparency International ratings for the year 2020 indicates that Nigeria rates 149 out 180 countries. Insecurity, particularly the farmers-herders crisis impacted negatively on food production, the projection of being an Agricultural product exporter envisaged by ERGP is now replaced with scarcity of food as there are hike in Agricultural products.

Discussion of Findings

The study discovered that the transition from one civilian government to another has not produced a stable development plan in Nigeria. The four transition periods have brought about four development plans with none not being able to achieve its objectives. The study also discovered that the Nigerian development path is characterized with confused philosophy which makes it difficult to define the theoretical underpinnings of the development plans. This study extrapolates that the weak and dependent structure of the country has not changed over the years, despite series of development plans put in place by successive civilian governments, this makes Nigeria to have defied all development theories.

Conclusion

Development may become elusive in Nigeria considering the rate at which development plans are being thwarted by different civilian governments. The paper recommends that the Nigerian state should have a document referred to as the Nigerian Dream which would be designed by representatives of Nigerians from the 774 Local Governments and 36 States of the Federation. It should contain the aspirations, philosophy and National Strategic Growth of the country. It also recommends that change of development plan should not be done by the President alone, there should be consultation with the stakeholders such as National Assembly, Non-governmental organizations and representatives from grassroots. Unilateral termination of development plans should be entrenched in the constitution as an impeachable offence.

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