

Cathartising Leadership Challenges and National Development in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective

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Abstract: *The Nigerian social order in confronted with a multitude apparent challenges impinging devastatingly on leadership and upon the peoples social life. Paradoxically, in bringing about national development in Nigeria, even national resources rather than being outlets for solution are often profoundly transformed into acute problems. There virtually exists a scarcity of creative, relatively stable and enviable leader with structural leadership oriented process for ordering useful oriented social life and proactive national development; a paucity of dominant leadership values which defines useful and predictable relations between the rulers and the ruled, between levels of governance among individuals and principal political actors and between the diverse social groups in the Nigerian nation. In this interregnum, leadership challenges at the ostensible level of ruling are transported into the people's problems thereby, threatening the existence of the Nigerian national entity. This paper sets out to analyze and explain these protected challenges of leadership and national development in a framework of the Nigerian historical experience.*

Keywords: *Cathartising, Challenges Leadership, National Development, Nigeria.*

I. Introduction

This paper attempt at examining Nigerian society and look at its leadership and national development as holistic and objectifiable entity whose purpose and direction has however, been decisively pillaged by its own domestic bourgeoisie. In recent times, these domestic bourgeoisie are being collaboratively carrotted by its appendage of tyrannical intellectual import substitution pseudo-class who have being compulsively propelling alien imperatives as panacea for national development employing all disguises, operationalised fallacies, deceptive and bunkum policies in cheap elusive categories of language, symbols, resources and cosmetic instruments of nation building which soundly appears ever than before, much more irrelevant and unrealistic about the people or masses of Nigeria. The paper makes no pretence but readily invoke the dose of History upon them, as Sa'ad Abubakar (2012), once said "those who ignores History does so at their own peril".

II. Conceptual Clarification

Perhaps the simplistic and best definitions of leadership out of its variety of conceptions as given by Kukah (1988), West (2005) and Ifamose (2004) is the one that refers to it as the activities and behavior of individuals or group of individuals as these relate to public realm of governance, or it is the pursuit of the operation of organized power for public interest or a political arrangement concerned with what is 'common' to the whole community. One unique thing about this conception is the fact that this public or common interest is an historic phenomenon both in the sense of its character, structures and values at any epoch in the formation of historical forces. It involves the art of production, nature and distribution of public resources and values; the building of the structures within which production, nurture and distribution take place; the determination of mobilizable resources for production, nurture and distribution; these includes the morality which underpins the production and allocation process together with the socio-economic relations which derive from this; and a balanced understanding of the environment of production and distribution which are all vitally central to the activity and business of leadership. And this inevitably applies equally to the matter and conception of national development which is the result or ultimate goal of leadership. Thus, one is consequent to the other, as one informs the other explosively requiring clearly that there is an inevitable link between leadership and National development; the absence of which poses serious challenges which demands seriously appropriate catharses.

III. Historical Background, Methodology and to the Problem

The reason so many people are duped by simplistic and vague methodologies, political sound-bites and definitional ignorance about Nigeria is that the evolution of Nigerian political leadership and development in the context of world politics in so poorly understood by most people and therefore words like leadership, national

development, corruption, socio-economic formation and the likes are thrown around by military and civilian leadership for political effect undeterred to history or definitional accuracy. This paper attempts to unfold the political economy of Nigeria in order to locate and catharticise the basic problematic of leadership challenges and national development in Nigeria.

Although colonialism may not necessarily be held responsible for all Nigerians leadership doom and under development since independence, as Hamman (1994) highlighted, there is no doubt that most of the roots of Nigeria present day leadership and developmental challenges can be traced to the loss of leadership ingenuity after colonialism. In fact, one crucial lesson that was historically learned was that the colonialist no doubt established their governance by force as is still happening in the country today. Thus, it is crystal clear that after so many years of innocuous legislation and dubious claims of indirect rule the colonial leadership forcefully imposed the exploitative capitalist ideological world view on the people. Thus, by coercion the law enforcement agencies they left behind via, soldiers, police, immigration officers and other arms of security agencies automatically and overwhelmingly became tools of terror in the hands of the successor's elite leadership class. These law enforcement agencies were transmuted into veritable tools of perpetuating and covering up all forms of injustices and atrocities committed by various arms of the state. This no doubt underscores the conception and reality of leadership and national development from the very start and to some extent clearly explains substantially why today military and civilian leadership in Nigeria has been a doom to leadership, national development and the people of Nigeria.

In fact, according to Kukah (1988) the post colonial conquest leadership as obtained in Nigeria was accordingly from the very beginning truly largely illegitimate. In short, from the time the British made their incursions and finally established themselves, the whole landscape was littered with illegality, dubious legal documents ceding territories to the British, but whose contents were even unknown to the signatories.

More fundamental than this, the British consciously raised up stooges as leaders whose claims of leadership was betrayal of their people and armed them with the instruments of coercion as a means of legitimacy. Similarly, their politics were equally dominated by the quest for privileges and taking over the batons of power. Thus, the leaders of the independence days suffered from lack of total absence of leadership will and commitment as well as a competent back up of politically efficient successors. Leadership could not be clearly established where there exists virtually no tradition of discipleship.

It might be pointed out that the nature of social formation in Nigeria has among other vital things destroyed substantial number of talented elite labour force either through the military or civilian mis-leadership process entrenched to refuel the growth of fools as specialists and expatriates in various relations of productive life in the country. This consequent loss had deepened the country's inadequacies overtime, and have effected leadership and growth of the country profoundly and questioned the nature and quality of the Nigerian ruling class as once maintained by O'Connell (1967).

Part of the problem Pye (1972) explained lies with the fact that there was obviously an absence of clarity on lines of authority and the pressures of military rule which has been made the roles of traditional rulers more complicated on one hand, and on the other the country's dismal experimentation and abysmal results with such earlier systems as the West Minister parliamentary system and the American presidential system.

Thus, it becomes all the more clearer that the real problem with Nigeria leadership challenge is not the system but is it about greed, corruption and unrestrained selfishness which replace's leadership will and commitment to national development. And much more, the net result is often represented as the problem of competition for scarce resource, which ensured massive looting of the countries resources using different categories of deception by the ruling bourgeois classes, creating mass poverty and national backwardness.

Lubeck (2007) critical analysis of the political economy of the Nigerian state did revealed that this leadership problem, challenges Nigerian Security interest and development because it became institutionalized through decades of extreme negligence. The key elements of the Nigerian political economy is explained in the context of the oil complex which comprise federal statutory monopoly over mineral exploitation (the 1969 petroleum law; Revenue Allocations Decree 12 in 1970; the land use decree of 1978; a nationalized oil company (the NNPC) that has majority holding in its production, arrangements with foreign companies, the security agencies of the Nigerian state along with the private security forces of the companies (to ensure costly investments are secured), multilateral financial and regulatory agencies, and the oil-producing committees themselves within whose customary jurisdiction the wells, refineries and pipelines are located.

Thus, in spite of the country's rich political economy, the oil complex has brought neither prosperity nor tranquility to the country as a whole. This is clearly a leadership challenge, which at the heart of the country, comprise tough politics and management of oil revenues by the bourgeois ruling class. Thus, in spite of the country's vast resource wealth, there is a representation of the most sordid, chaotic, socially unjust and inequalities in the political economy revealing practice a reality of paradox of plenty, enormously wealth on the

one had (with vast orgies of consumption for a tiny ruling oligarchy, yet marked by poor economic performance and overgrowing inequality on the other. Thus, the Nigeria dilemma is best explained by understanding these structural institutions and incentives produced by the political economy.

Regionally, in unfolding this complex political economy, Alabo (2012) explicitly runs a vivid breakdown of the Nigerian's northern region represented in what he explained as "deprivation and its principles: why the north is poor". In his research he clearly relates the siphoning galore of Nigerian fulcra-economy by the generality of the ruling classes military or otherwise in the region. According to him poverty has bred millions of destitute persons who have become instant and easy recruits for Boko Haram.

Thus, historically, since the 1960s, political mechanisms have been developed by the Nigerian class to allocating the oil rents called "revenue allocation process" since then, petro-dollars inserted into a fragmented and contested polity have fed a cycle of state decapacitation; a government radically weakens by corruption and instructional decay, even as intra-state conflicts and civil democratic forces paradoxically became consolidated. Lubeck et al (2007) explicitly recounted that although Nigeria earned over \$400 billion in oil revenues during the last 35 years perhaps \$50 – 100 billion of these petro-dollars have simply disappeared through massive fraud and corruption. In fact, transparency international regularly ranks Nigeria as one of the most corrupt country in the world. According to official source from the recent past anti-corruption chief, in 2003, 70% of the country's oil wealth was stolen or wasted and by 2005 it was 40%. But surpassingly, there is hardly a consolidation for the country's poor and this is a measure of extent to which the Nigerian state is being pillaged by a forcefully rapacious criminal oligarchic ruling class. Thus, in a nut shell there is a mountain of leadership problem since the post colonial history of Nigeria and this has constituted in large measure the history of revenue allocation, presently determined by an inefficient political leadership mechanism represented by the sharing of oil revenues. To put this problem on the scale of national development, it is discerned by Aigbohan (2005) that between 1960 and 2004 national annual per capital income remained largely static, between \$200 and \$250 in constant dollars while income distribution deteriorated markedly. Moreover, World Bank sources are replete with concrete information as cited by Jeromy (2005) that today some 80% of the oil monies are accrued by 1% of the population with 70% of private wealth held abroad, even as it is estimated that at least three-quarters of the country's inhabitants live on roughly \$1 per day.

Thus, clearly the quality of the Nigerian ruling class from all indications basically problematic, creating a vacuum of leadership challenge. It is against this background that one has charged the so far existing leadership in Nigeria with tyranny and a lack of leadership will to the big responsibility of governance and development in this country.

IV. The Catharsis

In a social order like the Nigerian one which historically was created fostered and underdeveloped first by colonial domination and second rapaciously ravaged by its domestic ruling class, has clearly made one's parameters call for a radical historical framework of catharsis, which combined a vision of a better or just social order and workable political leadership which, solidly encapsulates the ideal tenants of leadership, working political culture and national development that places actors and their clients, and fundamentally, the people and spectators both within and outside to experience the reality, perceive and contributes towards the solution to problems of leadership and national development. After all, there are no settled historical laws that all leadership in Nigeria must be terribly a failure. In fact it will be criminal or even suicidal to equate the existing Nigerian social order with the interest of the mass of impoverished citizens. This had informed some serious scholars to advocate for the utility of a radical approach in terms of class action which includes the dynamics of class formation. However, the usefulness of this approach without fashionable cosmetics of "class analysis" lies in a clear identification of the problem of leadership and resources of "nation-building" being padded by the class action of a just elite stratum.

A serious historical survey of leadership in the rest of the whole world reveals clearly that the so called "socialist reforms" are the most viable instruments for actively moderating the sharper edges of industrial capitalism everywhere as was applicable during the period of worlds global depression, the crash of the wall street, the United States economy during president Bush and now the Health policy package under president Obama. Indeed, it has become clearer that the modernists assault from the right on the welfare state in an attempt to recalibrate the social matrix and socialism a "catch all" phrase to inflame passions of people who often do not even know what the term means "a super back-up plan when things go wrong", is indispensable. Ignoring this is a recipe for disaster.

Until the questions of leadership and national development in Nigeria are made people – oriented, the challenges shall remain and deepen.

V. Conclusion

The paper has provoked discussion on the crucial matter of leadership and national development in Nigeria and clearly in sighted that unless leadership and National development are cardinally made peoples' oriented with fundamental stake in their welfarism, it shall remain as a tool, a mirage in the hands of the ruling class to dooming the masses and this country.

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