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*African Dynamics in a Multipolar World*

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## **LIBERALISING GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*The collapse of socialism and communism in eastern Europe and the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, as well as the emergence of United States as the sole superpower, have made capitalism and liberalism as the veritable panacea for growth and development such that the developing countries look in the direction of Washington and its western allies, as well as western institutions such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation, for solution to their financial and socio-economic problems. Based on this development, this paper, using observation and the content analyses of speeches, policies, news reports, career background and interviews granted by the dramatis personae in the governance of Nigeria, therefore examines the pro- Western prescriptions for reform as it affects the average Nigerian citizen. It argues that the western mode has aggravated the standard of living of many a Nigerian resulting in poverty, high exchange rates, high inflation rates, high unemployment rates, low per capita income and corruption in high places, among others. This paper thus highlights the required antidotes, suggesting that some aspects of socialist mode of development should be considered as an alternative to the Western remedies before reaching the conclusion that for reform to wear human face it must take into consideration the cultural or traditional, socio-economic and environmental factors of the people. This, in the view of this paper, is the proper signification of real and meaningful development.*

**Key words:** superpower, capitalism, development, liberalism, poverty, socialism.

Nigerian leaders, since independence to the end of Cold War in the late eighties, officially maintained, behind the façade of non-alignment policy, a non-committal posture between the Western and Eastern countries. A stance informed by the country's involvement in the nonalignment group founded in Belgrade in 1961 by the former president of the extinct Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and General Sukarno of Indonesia. The Abubakar Tafawa Balewa-led government relied on the British High Commission in Nigeria for guidance and advice for policy formulations and implementation on foreign matters while it was the premier of Northern region and Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello who gave instructions to Tafawa Balewa regarding what to do at the domestic realm (Gambari, 2007).

The Nigerian economy during this period was mixed, a euphemism for a combination of both capitalist, a precursor of liberal mode, and socialist modes of development. The combination was not judiciously carried out because, in practice, the economy was pro-British with some welfare programmes. The coup d'état of January 1966 which culminated in the civil war was indeed a big distraction for the economy. Even then, the war was prosecuted without the country procuring foreign loans. The Yakubu Gowon-led military regime was lucky with a buoyant economy. But corruption in high places started soon after. However, sadly though, the proceeds that should have been saved for the raining day were squandered. The conscious attempt by Generals Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo to check the menace of corruption and profligacy coupled with the introduction of austerity measures at the twilight of the administration did not save the situation. The scenario was even worse under the democratic dispensation which succeeded it which squandered public funds via white elephant projects,

bloated cabinet under the guise of federal character, inefficient and ineffective programmes such as Green Revolution and corruption in high places (Afuape, 2011a).

The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced in 1986 by General Ibrahim Babangida as military president, with its attendant consequences (Afuape, 2011b, pp.74-75) reduced the socialist involvement and a more serious adoption of Western prescriptions for developmental problems as espoused by western institutions such as International Monetary Fund (IMF) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) otherwise known as World Bank. Consequently, against the popular opinion in the country, General Babangida procured the IMF loan and the economy nose-dived and things have never been the same since then.

Following the crisis over the annulment of 12 June 1993 presidential election, the Interim National Government (ING) led by the business mogul, Chief Ernest Shonekan did not make any meaningful impact. The Sani Abacha-led military regime and its successor, the Abdul salami Abubakar-led junta did not improve the situation. The latter was more concerned with solving the intractable Jun 12, 1993 crisis, as well as to establish enduring democratic structures. It was during this regime that the man that won the presidential election, Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola died under questionable circumstance, after meeting, in private, with some American diplomats which included Thomas Pickering and Susan Rice (Falomo, 2013). It was even the latter that came with the tea that Chief Abiola drank which subsequently led to the convulsions leading to his death (Fanikayode, 2013).

Be that as it may, the civil government that succeeded Abdul salami Abubakar regime was led by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and his known economic policy was National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). His successor in office, late Alhaji Umar

Musa Yar'Adua announced the Seven-Point Agenda as the policy thrust of his government. This agenda, his aides argued, was pursued with vigour until his demise in office on 5 May 2010. It is believed in some quarters that his failing health was a serious hindrance for the attainment of the policy objectives.

His erstwhile vice president, Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan succeeded him in office. Although as electoral gimmick he said he wanted to be president in order to complete the two term tenure of late Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'Adua, yet he announced what he called the transformation agenda. In his two-year in office anniversary he claimed his government had made great strides towards the attainment of the objectives.

Consequently, the preoccupations here are to (a) examine the contents of these policies, (b) argue that the educational and career backgrounds of some of the key members of each administration influence the policy, and (c) unfold that these policies are similar and their goals are largely, without taking into consideration the inherent Nigerian factors of corruption, misappropriation of public funds, leadership incompetence and all manner of electoral frauds, among others, to use western prescriptions to solve the country's problems. Some of the adverse consequences and problems of these policies are examined with the recommendations of some useful remedies after which some conclusions are reached. It is imperative here to explain the key concepts in this work.

## **Concepts of ideology, liberalism, public policy and governance**

### **Ideology**

It is pertinent to unravel the important concepts involved in this study. The veritable starting point is the concept of ideology. Thus, the word 'ideology' is etymologically traced to

the celebrated French man, A.L.C. Destutt de Tracy in 1796 as his brand of 'science of ideas'. As development progressed, the concept became identified with idea about society (Johnson, 1972). This idea is largely a function of individual with grit and grace, who have 'powerful expansive and simplified visions of the world, as well as high intellectual and imaginative power' (Shills, 1972).

However, the concept of ideology has, over the years, developed a pejorative signification and it has been used by politicians and critics to run down their opponents and their views. Besides, Williams (1995) explained ideology as a system of ideas and beliefs used to understand the world. This belief is used by the adherents to interpret and analyse the past in order to evolve a programme to shape the future.

Therefore, ideology is perceived in this study as the idea which guides people, whether activists or not, to analyse issues and events in a particular polity or globally. It is also the impetus which spurs revolutionaries into effecting changes in the society. The ideologies relevant to this work are liberalism and socialism.

## **Liberalism**

Liberalism is traceable to the Latin word 'liberalis' and it etymologically became popular as a political and social philosophy in the nineteenth century with its roots in the social contract theories as enunciated by the English philosopher, John Locke and the French thinker, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. It was, however, the United States that brought the liberal idea to practical prominence via its 4 July 1776 Declaration of Independence authored by the third American president, Thomas Jefferson. It was quickly followed by the French revolution (Roberts, 2012).

Besides, the major latter-day advocates of this idea were the utilitarian, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, among others.

However, Gamble (1985) and Williams (1995) delineated the features of liberalism, namely, constitutionalism, representation, equality, privatisation, free competition, minimal government regulation, the removal of inhibitions to the vibrancy of civil society, Anglo-Saxon democracy and liberty or emphasis on individual rights, the removal of censorship and state control of the economy. The liberals have a pessimistic view of human nature and they argue that the state should be subordinated to the society. It has also been explained as non-violent modification of social, economic and political institutions to guarantee unrestrained development in all facets of human endeavour and the rejection of intolerance in religious, moral and political realms. Consequently, liberalism has evolved over time with various variants such as ‘classical’ or ‘new’ or ‘neo’ or even ‘progressive’. The concern here, however, is to knit the various strands of the different species into a coherent whole. Therefore, in this investigation, however, liberalism connotes equality of the citizens, individual freedom, free enterprise, and government intervention during recession to revive the economy by providing the necessary funds and regulation, tolerance of citizens in terms of religion, morality and politics, as well as the belief in the rule of law and justice. It is indeed pertinent to turn to its rival concept, socialism.

### **Socialism**

The idea of socialism was espoused by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their popular book, *The Communist Manifesto* published in 1848. In it, socialism is seen as a reaction to the domination and exploitation of the workers, the proletariat by the capitalist which Marx and Engels called the bourgeoisie. The government of the industrialists is the dictatorship of the

bourgeoisie. Consequently, socialism is the nationalisation of the private industries and the betterment of the standard of living and working condition of the workers where the proletariat are paid according to their efforts. Religion, to Marx and Engels, is seen as the opium of the people which must be removed because it is used by the rich to justify their affluence and it is also used by the poor to argue that their poverty is ordained by God. The state or government is the instrument of oppression used by the bourgeois to oppress the workers and subsequently used by the proletariat to oppress the industrialists. To Marx and Engels, the removal of government ends inequality and the existence of classes. Therefore, socialism is seen here as state control of the economy, as well as the subsidization of some essential goods and services. Both liberalism and socialism are opposing ideologies and they are mere ideas until they become adopted policies in any state.

### **Public policy**

Policy, as well as politics and police, has its roots in the Greek word 'polis' (Rose, 1976) and there is a large body of literature on the proper signification of the concept. Thus, policy is a course of action. However, it can be a personal decision made by an individual to be put to use in private life. It can also be a corporate or business decision to be implemented by a corporate or business body. Therefore, a policy is conceived here as an agreement or a decision which is reached via a vote, a decree, a consensus or by the meeting of minds. If the decision is made by a business organisation with the goal of making profit, it is a business policy.

However, the prefix 'public' brings in government and its agencies. To Anderson (1975), public policy is a purposive course of action taken by government in order to deal with a problem. But in this paper, however, public policy is the purposive course of action or decision



made by government or any of its agencies to solve problems facing the state and the citizenry. Besides, public policy is perceived here as a process. The decision making as well as steps leading up to the decision aspect is just a stage of the policy process. The achievement or impact of the public policy on the polity is more important than the means by which the decision is taken (Rose, 1976). This broad definition of public policy brings into the picture governance.

## **Governance**

Superficially, it is possible to perceive governance and government as having the same meaning. The two are sometimes considered as synonyms (Fukuyama, 2012). Various definitions of governance have evolved over time. Some view governance as a kind of authority. Thus, Kaufmann and others (2007p.130) defined governance as ‘the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised’. In a similar but broader vein, the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP, 2013) views governance as the ‘exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences’. To Rhodes (1996), there are six different meanings of governance in contemporary social sciences namely, corporate governance, social-cybernetic systems, self-organised networks, new public management, the minimal state and good governance. The latter signification, according to *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific*, has eight characteristics namely, participation, rule of law, transparency, consensus oriented, responsiveness, equity and inclusiveness, accountability and effectiveness and efficiency. Another connotation given by the World Bank’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

Handbook (2013) perceived governance as the avenue by which ‘power is exercised through a country’s economic, political, and social institutions’. However, to *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)*, governance is the process of making and implementing (or not implementing) decisions and this process is perceived in both formal and informal structures. While government is understood as a form of control over people in a state, governance has a broader connotation which, in addition to this control or administration over people, includes other administrations which involve groups or informal structures other than government. These include organisations which maintain control over people in business in order to make profit, in corporate bodies and in other organisations where government is not directly involved in their administration. This latter connotation includes decisions or inputs into decision-making and implementation, as well as non-implementation by influential land lords or association of peasant farmers in the rural areas, co-operative societies, influential entrepreneurs or business moguls, civil liberty organisations (CLO) or non-governmental Organisations (NGO), research institutes, religious organisations, as well as their leaders, political parties, trade unions and the military, among others. To *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)*, all other actors or structures aside from government and the military that influence decision making and implementation are referred to as civil societies. This category of people may include those who are involved in organised crimes such as the kidnappers and militants in the Niger Delta and the Islamic fundamentalists such as the Boko Haram insurgents in the northern part of the country. This is the reason for professionals and nonprofessional to speak of corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. Consequently, formal government structures are one avenue for making and implementing decisions. There are also

informal structures such as ‘kitchen cabinets’, informal advisers and ‘powerful’ persons and families involved in the making and in the implementation of decisions. In this analysis, therefore, governance is operationally defined as the processes by which liberal policies of privatisation, constitutionalism, individual rights or freedom, equality and rule of law or justice are made (or not made) and are executed (or not executed) in Nigeria. However, whether it is governance or government, the two set out to achieve some objectives. These objectives are developmental.

Development is, however, multi-faceted. To Aboyade (1976), it is the maximal utilisation of the resources in order to attain economic growth and development. However, development can also be perceived from the social perspective. Almond and Powell (1966), as well as Pye (1966), conceive of development largely from the political point of view. To them, development is a product of a series of crises. In other words, crisis, as well as how it is resolved, is an integral aspect of development.

Therefore, in this analysis, however, development is all embracing, be it social, economic, technological and political. It is the preoccupation, here, to consider all these facets of development as they affect the average Nigerian citizenry. Consequently, the operational definition of development is the increase, improvement and the sophistication in the quantity, quality and the processes of producing the goods and services. This sophistication covers the social, economic, technological and political parameters or indices in a state. It becomes imperative to give a tangible theory to this analysis.

## **Analytical Framework**

This analysis is guided by the radical Marxist approach which is rooted in class antagonism between owners and non-owners of the means of production. In this analysis, therefore, the class conflict is between the governors, the haves and the governed, the bulk of them are the masses or the commoners or the poor. The former has enunciated policies as well as recruiting the members of the cabinet from the elite or affluent group, feeling less pain, as it were, when these policies are implemented. Their trade mark in Nigeria is to recycle themselves or their offspring in government establishment. The latter has always been at the receiving end, the consequent of any implemented policy, in the country, is continual impoverishment, where their number is perceived to be more than that of the rich. To Ake (2005), it is the economic structure that has been the basis of the conflict between the two classes. Consequently, the elites and their children are better educated and more successful politically and professionally thereby creating inequality in all spheres of life. The second manifestation is in the maintenance of the status quo by the privileged class of the society. This class is maintaining the existing social order which is favourable to it and therefore, using the economic structure to dictate the tone of political alignments and political interests. The third finding as documented by Claude Ake is as long as there is inequality in the state, there cannot be democracy and the tendency is high for the polity which is polarised along economic power to be repressive in order to curtail the call by the poor for redistribution of wealth and income. Ake's fourth contention is that what constitutes morality and value is determined by the economic condition, arguing that where there is no private property and no scarcity, there will be no theft. This radical Marxist approach is the veritable yardstick to analyse the policies of government since 1999 and this is, therefore, the next concern.

## **Public Policies since 1999**

There are three main policies which are central to this analysis. These are National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the Seven-point Agenda and the Transformation Agenda. These are the policies of the administrations of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, late Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'Adua and Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan respectively.

The policy of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

The civil administration which was sworn in on 29 May 1999 had Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the president of the country. However, the euphoria that ushered in the democratisation which commenced in 1999 made the general populace believe that the economy would improve. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, at inception, promised to improve the standard of living of the people. His initial focus was to right the wrongs inflicted following the annulment of 12 June 1993 presidential election. In addition, he embarked on the 'Muddling Through' approach made popular in the policy/decision making process literature by the Yale University scholar, Charles Lindblom (Lindblom, 1959) to attend to some of the political, social and economic problems using liberalism as the guiding philosophy. The huge external debts were also part of his preoccupations (Obasanjo, 2005; Okonjo-Iweala, 2005). However, the major policy thrust introduced by his government was the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

Besides, no concrete public policy was formulated until the twilight of the first term when the government introduced the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). NEEDS was introduced as a policy on 15 March 2003 and it was prepared by National Planning Commission (NPC) when Professor Charles Soludo was the Economic Adviser to Chief Obasanjo. The Administration even created on paper, State Economic

Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) (Afuape, 2008).

The introduction of NEEDS as a policy became imperative due to a number of factors. The first reason was based on the resolve of the Federal Government to attain the eight United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which range from reducing extreme poverty rates by 50 per cent to stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS by the year 2015.

NEEDS was also introduced as a political manifesto of a sort to promote Chief Obasanjo's second term bid. This factor is hinged on the fact that NEEDS was launched in March 2003, barely a month to the April 2003 presidential election.

It was also launched in order to douse the anger and fury of the citizens against the government which, hitherto, made and implemented some autocratic decisions and had hiked the fuel price (Aluko, 2006) coupled with subsequent workers strikes. NEEDS was also used as a political manifesto, in 2007, to receive the political support of the people for the PDP and its presidential candidate, late Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'Adua when Professor Soludo disclosed that NEEDS 2 would soon be ready.

A prominent reason for the introduction of NEEDS was based on the concern of the Federal Government to reduce the huge domestic and external debts. It was this urge for debt relief from the West that was the impetus for using NEEDS to further liberalise the economy by using western prescriptions.

NEEDS was launched to serve as a source of income for the government. The privatised enterprises, such as Nigeria Airways and Daily Times, generated income for the government through the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE).

The background of the key members of that government also informed the contents of that policy. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and his vice, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar were, at the time, successful farmers and school proprietors. The background, as well as the career profiles of the members of the Economic Management Team is also a factor. Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the Chairperson, has a good track record as a former vice president of the World Bank and a former consultant to the vice-president (Oyovbaire, 2006), aside from being educated in the United States. The man widely acknowledged as the brain behind the idea of NEEDS, Professor Charles Soludo was formerly a researcher and a consultant with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Similar background was acquired by Nenadi Usman, the Minister of State for Finance (and the subsequent Minister for Finance, following the deployment of Dr Okonjo-Iweala to the Foreign Affairs Ministry), and the former Director of Debt Management Office (DMO), Dr Mansur Muhtar. Under Chief Obasanjo, Dr (Mrs) Okonjo-Iweala and Ambassador Olu Adeniji received their emoluments as ministers in foreign currencies while others were paid in Nigerian Naira.

Besides, the core values of NEEDS are (i) enterprise, competition and efficiency at all levels; (ii) equity and care for the weak and vulnerable; (iii) moral rectitude, respect for traditional values and pride in Nigeria's culture, as well as selfless service; (iv) a value system for public service that results in efficient and effective service delivery to the citizens; (v) discipline at all levels of leadership and followership.

However, NEEDS was designed to attain four national goals, namely (a) poverty reduction (b) wealth creation (c) employment generation and (d) value reorientation and elimination of corruption. There were strategies enunciated for the realisation of the NEEDS

objectives. These were (i) empowering the people (ii) promoting private enterprise and (c) changing the way government does its work.

Besides, areas not covered under NEEDS were discussed by Professor Soludo at various functions anytime his attention was drawn to them. It was his brilliance and effort in the drafting of the policy which made Chief Obasanjo to appoint him as the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The position he occupied until he was replaced by Mr Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, the incumbent Governor.

### **The Seven-point Agenda**

Be that as it may, the general thinking has been that since the People's Democratic Party (PDP) is the party in power at the centre, that the policies of government after Chief Obasanjo left office in 2007 should have been the same. But like their military counterparts, the civil leaders want to show to the general public that there are differences in policies. In the case of Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'Adua, it was crystal clear to the public that Chief Olusegun Obasanjo not only openly persuaded him to be a presidential candidate, but also campaigned for him during the election. Many factors can be considered here as informing this decision. One reason is to support a candidate who belonged to the same group in the north with his erstwhile and estranged vice president, Atiku Abubakar. Another reason is the fear of being persecuted after leaving office. The third factor is the concern that some of the implemented policies would be reversed. While Alhaji Yar'Adua did not prosecute or persecute Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, he, however, reversed some of his policies. Aside from revoking the sale of refineries, he put aside his NEEDS policy, replacing it with the Seven-point agenda.



The seven-point agenda are (1) power and energy (2) food security (3) wealth creation (4) transport sector (5) land reforms (6) security (7) education (Press release, Presidency, published 1 August 2007). One similarity noticed in these agenda and the contents of NEEDS is wealth creation. However, these agenda largely remained on paper perhaps due to the failing health of the president and, since November 2009, he was not seen in public until his eventual demise was announced on 5 May 2010. Even if they were implemented to the letter, the implementation would have been based on the liberal policies identified with the west.

### **The Transformation Agenda**

Following the death of Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'Adua, the acting president, Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was sworn in, based on constitutional provision, as the new president of the Federal Republic. Consequently, he nominated an architect and the Governor of Kaduna state, Namadi Sambo as his vice-president. His nomination was approved by the National Assembly and Namadi Sambo not only assumed office as vice, but he also served as Dr Jonathan's running mate during the 2011 presidential election. That the two of them won the election is now a common story.

However, Dr Jonathan did not hide his belief in liberalisation. This is based on the appointment of Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a technocrat and a former Finance Minister vast with the World Bank and in western prescriptions to solve developmental problems. It even took her some time to come over to assume the office of Minister of Finance and the Co-ordinating Minister, Economic Management Team. This dual function has made her the most prominent member in the administration.

However, in 2011 when Dr Jonathan used his shoeless mantra to solicit for the people's vote, he also promised that his manifesto if elected would be based on a Transformation Agenda. This Agenda was vague to many until towards the mid-term when the key ministers in the administration explained what the Agenda was all about.

Therefore, the Transformation Agenda which are the policies, programmes and projects of this administration from 2011 to 2015 when the tenure of the government will lapse; and they are being co-ordinated by the National Planning Commission (NPC). The inspiration for the Agenda was drawn from vision 20:2020. This was the same vision that inspired Yar'Adua seven-point agenda. This Agenda, it is hoped, will transform Nigeria and will provide for the future needs of the people. The main contents of the Agenda are (a) macroeconomic framework and economic direction, (b) job creation (c) public expenditure management (d) governance (e) justice and judiciary (f) foreign policy and economic diplomacy (g) legislature (h) education (i) health sector (j) labour and productivity (k) infrastructure policies, programmes and projects (l) power (m) information and communication technology (n) Niger Delta (o) transportation (Usigbe, 2011; Anyim, 2013).

### **General Appraisal of Policies of NEEDS, Seven-Point Agenda and Transformation Agenda**

The three policies are mere political manifestos for the political leaders. Some of the contents are vague and ambiguous and many of the contents have no direct impact on the people.

For a government at the centre espousing such grandiose policies, how will such policies be implemented at the lower level especially in situations that other political parties are in control of political power? Even in some states controlled by the PDP, these policies are perceived as programmes of the president involved and not that of the PDP. Under the various

administration infrastructures remain dilapidated. The roads are in bad shape. Unemployment of youths is still giving the government sleepless nights. There is corruption in high places and a lot of incompetence on the part of leaders and ministers occupying political offices with external debts mounting. Consequently, the poverty rates are high and all this has led to high rate of crime and insurgency in the polity. Still, governments have liberalising policies in place in the country.

### **Problems**

The main problem of all development plans in this country is improper or outright non-implementation. This study noticed that the whole essence of these three plans is largely political gimmick to solicit for votes and to maintain that support throughout the duration of their tenure. Many of the contents in the three are not implemented. There is the problem of inadequate publicity of these policies. Government has not done much in terms of creating awareness regarding these policies.

Political instability is another inhibiting factor. Development is difficult in an environment characterised by crises. Consequently, proper implementation of policies takes place in a conducive and peaceful setting and not in a milieu of suicide bombings, kidnappings, political assassination, as well as ethnic and religious clashes.

### **Predisposing factors**

These three policies are deliberate attempt by the three democratic governments to westernise the Nigerian polity. This is because central to the three is the issue of privatisation, a euphemism for free market economy, the issue of implementing the western prescriptions based on the modalities of the World Bank and the IMF. The reasons for the acceptance of the western mode

is hinged on a number of factors such as the failure of socialism as an ideology globally following the disintegration of former Soviet Union, the educational and career backgrounds of the major actors and actresses in the governance of Nigeria, the programmes of some of the major political parties, as well as the yearnings of the major financiers of these political parties.

### **Consequences**

The acceptance of the western prescriptions by political leaders has left on its trail a lot of adverse effects on the citizenry, especially the general masses, those Marx and Engels referred to as the proletariat, the workers. Such negative effects are inflation which is said to have come down to a single digit (Anyim, 2013), high exchange rate, which is said to have stabilised (Sanusi, 2012), high unemployment, in spite of the propaganda of the government to have employed some 2,000 workers about the time of self-assessment of the federal government by Dr Goodluck Jonathan (Jonathan, 2013), high rate of crime, a product of high level of poverty in the country, decaying and decayed infrastructures, despite the inclusion of various promises for regular supply of power in some of the policies considered in this study, there is still epileptic supply of electricity. The culmination of all these is leadership incompetence to tackle all the highlighted malaise effectively and efficiently. There is corruption in high places. A good instance is the case of the business mogul, Femi Otedola and the Representative, Lawan Farouk. The other instance is that of the police pension fund that has been stolen under the headship of Abdulrasheed Maina.

These adverse consequences are also considered here as a function of unemployment and the insecurity of lives and property in the polity. This is because poor and idle hands are easy tools for all kinds of criminal activities.

**Panacea**

The responsibility for alleviating the adverse consequences lies largely with the government. Yes, reform is good in order to put life in a parlous economy. But it is not a matter of importing whole sale remedies that have been seen to solve similar consequences and problems elsewhere. There is the need to consider the environment and the culture of the people. This is the reason for this paper to insist that the westernisation process of the government should be gradual and some socialist antidotes should be adopted by government via the provision of some social amenities such as pipe-borne water, provision of good infrastructures for effective and efficient privatisation, subsidise certain essential goods or products such as the procurement of fertilizers and petroleum products. The government should be more efficient by cutting down on government expenditure in terms of reducing the number of political appointees in governance and the income allotted to them. That is cutting down government expenditure should not be perceived as reducing the number of employed public servants. It should be seen in terms of the political appointments. This paper believes that this can be done without compromising the federal character principles as stated in the constitution. The culture and the peculiar nature of the Nigerian environment should be taken into consideration. There should also be a concerted effort on the part of the government to confront corruption frontally by ensuring that corruption-free officials are recruited to serve and where an official is seen as corrupt, government should remove such a person and not to unnecessarily protect him or her. The need to make all members of both national and state assemblies to function as part-time should be given serious consideration. This will reduce the high emoluments which presently make them the highest paid globally.

## Conclusion

This paper has viewed liberalisation as westernisation of the Nigerian polity. It has argued that for a prescription to be effective in the West does not necessarily mean it will be effective in a developing country like Nigeria. It insists that Nigerian leaders should have the interests of the masses in mind in embarking on any reform. It, however, advises the government that the culture, traditions and environmental factors of Nigerians should influence the nature of the reforms to be adopted, thus, giving the reform a human face. It argues that the failure of socialism in Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union does not mean there is nothing good in the socialist ideas. It therefore implores the government to take some aspects of the socialist mode of development for implementation. This judicious combination of both western and socialist modes of development is, to this paper, the needed but gradual stride for meaningful and sustainable development.

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