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DEMOCRACY AND THE POLITICS OF PETROLEUM: COMPARATIVE AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

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Does a resource rich African country find it easier or more difficult to stabilize democracy? Nigeria has of course been an oil-rich country throughout its life as an independent country. Has Nigeria's oil wealth helped or hindered its efforts to democratize?

We plan to demonstrate that if the natural resources are discovered after democracy has started maturing, the new wealth would help stabilize the democracy. But if the mineral wealth comes before democratization, it could delay the democratizing process.

A positive example outside Africa is the discovery of oil resources in the waters of Norway and Scotland. This was a case of economic enrichment of already mature democracies. In the case of Norway the oil has strengthened the welfare state and stabilized democratic governance.

In the case of Scotland petroleum initially deepened Scottish nationalism and aggravated separatist sentiment for awhile. But the longer term consequences have given Scotland a regional legislature and more solid influence within the United Kingdom. The arrival of economic enrichment after substantial democratization has stabilized the democratic order in both Norway and Scotland.

With a developing country like Nigeria, on the other hand, the petro-wealth preceded stable democratization. The country became independent with three huge provinces of a federation which were inherently unsustainable for long. The oil wealth was mainly in the Eastern region. The debatable point was whether the petro-wealth contributed to the level of self-confidence of Eastern Nigeria. Did

this trigger the Eastern led military coup of January 1966? Did the East seek to control more effectively the petroleum located on their own region? And when Eastern Nigerians later became victims of the Northern counter-coup, and the genocidal anti-Igbo massacres, did the petroleum in the East strengthen the late Ojukwu's resolve to attempt secession from Nigeria? Pre-democratic petro-wealth had created impediments to Nigeria's democratic progress.

Another African example of natural wealth before national democratization was the former Belgian Congo upon attaining independence in 1960. Eastern Congo at the time was almost as well-endowed as Eastern Nigeria — but the Congo had Katanga minerals rather than petroleum. Just as oil-wealth later triggered separation and attempted secession in Eastern Nigeria, copper and other mineral wealth inspired Moise Tshombe to attempt the secession of Katanga from former Belgian Congo. In the second half of the twentieth century both Nigeria and Congo Kinshasa illustrated the proposition that natural resources before the stabilization of democracy was likely to militate against further democratization.

On the other hand, the Republic of South Africa had selective democracy for white people a century and a half before extending the full franchise to black people and other South Africans of colour. Whites had free and fair elections for themselves but not for the rest of the population. The country had a working parliamentary system, and a judiciary which had relative independence within the constraints of a racial political order. Even at the height of apartheid South Africa was acquiring democratically relevant experience.

Did the fact that South Africa had a racially selective democracy, alongside prior mineral wealth, help post-apartheid South Africa to enhance its democratic order?

While the Congo had seen its democracy collapse within a year of attaining independence, and Nigeria had a military coup in less than six years of attaining sovereign status, South Africa continues to have the most liberal constitution in Africa's entire history nearly two decades after the end of apartheid.

Post-apartheid South Africa had not only extended the franchise to citizens of colour, but had also abolished the death penalty, enhanced Press freedom, freely elected three different presidents since 1994, recognized gay rights, and legalized same-sex marriage and civil unions. Even selective democracy, combined with simultaneous mineral wealth, provided subsequent opportunities for further democratization.

However, all three well-endowed countries (Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of South Africa) had to confront a shared threat to democracy — the threat of plutocracy. Substantial mineral and petro-wealth in these three countries created potential rivalry between rule by the wealthy and rule by the people. Let us turn to these dilemmas more fully.

Democracy vs. Plutocracy?

Oil-rich Third World countries are indeed caught between the reality of plutocracy (rule by the rich) and the aspiration towards democracy (rule by the

people). The wealth of petroleum creates great disparities in income and major differences in economic power. On the other hand, the population as a whole can become restless for a greater say in how the wealth of the nation is distributed.

In addition to the choice between plutocracy (the power of wealth) and democracy (the power of votes) Nigeria was for awhile disrupted by militocracy (the power of soldiers and the military). Indeed, during much of the second half of the twentieth century, Nigeria was controlled more by soldiers than by either the economically rich or by people's power. Nevertheless, the country's petro-wealth created additional motivation for the military to control the economy.

Here it is worth distinguishing between *coup-prone* African countries like the Congo (Kinshasa) and Nigeria from the mid-1960s to the end of the twentieth century, and *coup-proof* African states which have never experienced military governments since independence. *Coup-proof* African states include South Africa, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya, Zimbabwe as well as the Kingdom of Morocco.

Ghana also used to be coup-prone. In this twenty-first century Ghana has become less *coup-prone* by demonstrating how an incumbent ruling party can be outvoted and be peacefully replaced. When such a change occurs through the ballot box more than once (as it has in Ghana) the prospects of becoming a *coup-proof* country improve.

In the case of Nigeria and the Congo this twenty first century seems to have made those two states less and less *coup-prone* but unfortunately more and more

conflict-prone. The Niger-Delta has been repeatedly disrupted by conflict and terrorism. And the tensions between Christians and Muslims have often exploded into violence — including terrorism against such foreigners, as United Nations personnel. In the former Belgian Congo a succession of civil wars has killed millions of Congolese.

In addition to plutocracy, democracy and militocracy, Nigeria has been struggling with meritocracy (rule by the learned and the skilled). Independent Nigeria's first Head of State was Nnamdi Azikiwe (popularly known as Zik). Azikiwe was not a philosopher-King, but he was arguably a philosopher President. I met Zik at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania where I was one of the speakers in his honor in the last quarter of the 20th century. His particular leadership was interpreted as a sign that Nigeria would develop into a meritocratic system of government — with leadership coming disproportionately from the educated class. This was in contrast to the Congo which in 1960 had only a handful of college graduates. Unfortunately the military coup in Lagos in January 1966 interrupted the merit-symphony in Nigeria. Instead a whole generation of militocracy (rule by the military) was inaugurated.

Ironically, the Nigerian civil war (1967–1970) reactivated elements of meritocracy within the separatist Eastern Region (Biafra). The Igbo had revealed technological skills in the second half of the twentieth century. Indeed, their triumphant economic skills in Northern Nigeria in the 1950s and 1960s contributed to their vulnerability as a people in 1966. For a while Eastern Nigeria

was well-endowed in education as well as in petroleum. The East was both skill-intensive and resource-intensive.

During the Nigerian Civil War innovativeness among the Igbo produced Africa's first-locally-made gun-vehicles. During that Biafran conflict the Igbo displayed levels of innovation which were unprecedented in post colonial African history. The Igbo created rough-and-ready armed militarized vehicles as well as the beginnings of Africa's industrial revolution. This renaissance was aborted by the oil bonanza from 1997 onwards.

Although warfare is inherently destructive, it also often releases inventiveness. During the Biafra war Nigeria was more internally innovative than externally prosperous. The Nigerian Civil War produced some of the high points of Nigeria's experience with technological innovation. Meritocracy manifested itself. However, the Nigerian oil bonanza after the 1973 OPEC price escalation created disincentives to Nigerian enterprise.

War had indeed brought out both the best and the worst of Nigeria in human terms. But *technologically* the power of spilt blood in Nigeria produced greater innovation than the power of sprouting petroleum. The pain of Biafra was technologically more fruitful than the profit of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting countries [OPEC]. However, democracy continued to be elusive in the last quarter of the 20th century.

On the Shores of Tripoli

A fourth resource-rich country which has been instructive was Libya under the late Muammar Gaddafi. Libya was oil-rich long before it could even experiment with democratization. Gaddafi was definitely not ideologically a “democrat,” but he did have some egalitarian tendencies. As a *de facto* Head of State, he declined such ostentatious titles as “President” and “His Excellency.” His Green Book was not a manual for democracy, but it was a manual for a more participatory society and a more inclusive world system.

Gaddafi used his petro-wealth partly to assert that a small country can be a player on the world stage, and not merely a pawn in the hands of the Big Powers. Over the decades Gaddafi was involved in such international conflicts as supporting the Irish Republican Army, funding the Palestinians, financing Muslim rebels in the Philippines, subsidizing Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam in America, and trying to defend Idi Amin from both his domestic and international adversaries.

Gaddafi also increasingly used his petro-wealth in support of Pan Africanism and the solidarity of African states. He helped finance some of the liberation movements in Southern Africa before the collapse of apartheid. He subsidized some of the meetings of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) and some of the projects of Afro-Arab solidarity under UNESCO in Paris, France.

He also allowed citizens of some neighbouring sub-Saharan African countries to find varied kinds of jobs in Libya. He invested in development

projects in such countries as Mali, Niger and even Kenya. Gaddafi's Libya owned multiple hotels in other African countries.

With Libya, as with Nigeria and the Congo, resource-wealth before democratization was an impediment to genuine maturation of democracy. But Gaddafi did try to promote a more egalitarian society, a more inclusive global system, and African solidarity.

On the whole Gaddafi in the last two or three decades in office had been a good African but a bad Libyan. He had been a bad Libyan by being intolerant of dissent, and being too long in power. Although he rejected titles like President or His Excellency, and preferred to live in a tent, he did suppress critics uncompromisingly.

But if he was a bad Libyan, in what sense was he a good African? He had invested in African countries often at great loss and on limited returns for himself. He had financed expensive African conferences from his own resources. He supported the very expensive Arabic translation of the eight-volume UNESCO General History Africa.

Black Africans had jobs in Libya when they were rejected elsewhere. Young Malians who recently enlisted to go and fight for Gaddafi did so out of sentimental attachment to the Libyan leader.

Black faces fighting for Gaddafi were not mercenaries necessarily. Gaddafi's money could have bought better skilled mercenaries than the peasants

of Mali and Burkina Faso. East European mercenaries would have been better trained.

Over dinner in Gaddafi's tent as his guest some years ago I found myself defending the Arabs against Gaddafi's hostility. I was also astonished when Gaddafi asked me to send him a copy of my father's book, *The Mazrui Dynasty of Mombasa*. It was part of his fascination with *Afrabia*. The book was published by Oxford University press in the 1990s.

By early January 2011 Gaddafi had paid a price for preferring his African identity. He had alienated fellow Arabs to a disastrous extent. The Arab League virtually gave the green light to the Security Council and the Western powers to bomb Gaddafi's Libya. His fellow Arabs threw him under the bus!

On the other hand, Gaddafi's Libyan adversaries in Benghazi had been stimulated by the pro-democracy uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt ["the Arab spring"]. Petro-wealth had not prepared Libyans for democracy, but the fall of Hosni Mubarak opened up new democratic possibilities. What Libya's oil could not achieve, Libyan revolutionaries tried to accomplish with the help of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and American air power.

The Era of the Digital Divide

In this twenty-first century almost all economies of the world are bound to be significantly affected by the computer revolution and the commercialization of the internet. But the cultures differ in their responsiveness to the computer and the

internet. Indeed, while some cultures are calculus-friendly (at ease with mathematics) other cultures are calculus-challenged (ill-at-ease with mathematics). Technical skills are often culturally-relative. South Africa continued to be Africa's technological vanguard. White South Africans were still ahead in modern skills, although they had declined in political power.

In the United States there is increasing evidence that recent immigrants from South Asia (especially India and Pakistan) have responded faster to the computer culture than most other Americans. Indeed, India is already emerging as one of the great digital powers of the twenty-first century.

On campuses in the United States there is indeed evidence that Korean-American students seem to be more calculus-friendly than Italian-American students. And Jewish-American students seem to be more at ease with the digital revolution than African-American students.

The question arises whether such differences also occur between the various cultures of Nigeria. Are some Southern cultures in Nigeria more calculus-friendly than some Northern cultures? Will this difference affect their comparative performance in the computer revolution? Is a digital divide in Nigeria likely to aggravate the local North-South divide? Have those regional differences slowed down the process of democratization?

Mathematical prowess differs by individuals as well as by cultures. Calculus-friendly cultures produce a larger proportion of people who are comfortable with mathematics. This does not mean that calculus-challenged

cultures produce no brilliant mathematicians at all; it only means that they produce far fewer.

Nor should we forget economic factors, especially in an oil-rich post-colonial society. Sometimes what may appear like cultural reasons for the digital divide may in fact be due to economic differences and financial access. If Southern Nigeria is economically *richer per capita* than Northern Nigeria, then the digital divide between North and South is likely to have economic as well as cultural reasons. Indeed, at this stage of this kind of research, we cannot be sure which reasons are weightier than which -economic or cultural reasons. More recently Nigeria's revenue has included income from natural gas, as well as from petroleum.

Nor should these issues imply that Northerners are out-skilled by Southerners on all fronts. While there is indeed evidence that Southerners are more economically skilled than Northerners, most of the post-colonial period reveals that Northerners are better at the political game. Even the electoral successes of Moshood Abiola in 1993 and Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 were due largely to the Northern support they received. Indeed, Obasanjo was initially rejected electorally by his fellow Yoruba in 1999, and supported substantially by Northerners. The only question which arises is whether Northerners were "too clever by half" when they supported Obasanjo. Was Obasanjo a good political investment for the North? Or was he a miscalculation?

The secret of ultimate stability in Nigeria does not simply lie in increasing the political power of the South — as the Obasanjo election might have done. It also lies in increasing the economic leverage and benefits of the North. There are wide-ranging proposals about how to increase the political power of the South — from rotation of the presidency to a confederal constitution. But few minds have addressed the problem of how to increase the economic wealth per capita of the North and enhance the North's economic leverage.

When privatization is more widely implemented, Northerners would have to be protected with a quota system and other safeguards. Methods of training young Northerners to become better entrepreneurs may have to be explored — ranging from special training to special loans to make their business more competitive. It is important to make Northerners more than merely inactive shareholders in the economy. Northerners should be energetic participants in wealth-creation. A similar challenge also faces South Africa. However in that southern Republic the divide in skills is between races (white vs. black) rather than between geographical regions.

Closing the digital divide between North and South in Nigeria may be part of closing the more general skill divide in the economy between the two regions. And closing the skill divide may be a precondition for closing the gap in *wealth per capita* between North and South. It is not enough to have a few highly visible Northern billionaires (the so-called “Kaduna Al-Hajis,” as their critics call them). The people of the North generally need a fairer share of the wealth of their

country. In the past Northerners benefitted from militocracy, but the future of Nigeria required greater Northern involvement in meritocracy — and wider federal democracy for all Nigerians. However, the democratic dream in Nigeria — though well ahead of the Congo (Kinshasa) — is still challenged by plutocracy and regional inequalities.

Socio-economic ideologies try to appeal to such economic interests as class, economic equity, trade union rights and the like. Plutocracy may thrive on this. Marxism, ujamaa and most other forms of socio-economic ideologies are weak in Black Africa. Ethnicity, nationalism and regional allegiance are socio-cultural ideologies. These are stronger systems of values.

In Nigeria — as indeed in most other parts of Africa — ethno-cultural ideologies are indeed much stronger than ethno-economic ones. My favorite Nigerian example is Obafemi Awolowo's effort to move Nigeria a little to the left. When he looked to see who was following him, it was not the dispossessed of all ethnic groups of Nigeria; it was his fellow Yoruba of all social classes and levels of income. Democratization was deprived of ideological rivalry.

My favorite Kenyan example is the late Oginga Odinga's modest attempt to move Kenyans a little to the left. When Oginga looked to see who was following him, once again it was not the dispossessed of Kenya of all ethnic groups. It was his fellow Luo of all social classes and levels of income. Oginga's son, Raila Odinga, has been more successful in mobilizing non-Luo-but not by ideological appeal.

Africa is a continent of surplus passion but deficit power. Nigerians as Africans feel strongly about many aspirations. In the controversial words of a very distinguished African philosopher president (a kind of philosopher king) Leopold Senghor of Senegal: “*Emotion is Black Reason is Greek.*”

But passion can become power if it is channeled in the right direction and if the contents of the goals are relevant and fruitful. If education is both an African and an American ideal, young Africans are probably more passionate about getting an education than young Americans. Young Nigerians often *walk miles* every day for an education. The meritocratic tendency is still strong. Petro-wealth has multiplied number of Nigerian universities, but has not enhanced the quality of the education available on Nigerian campuses.

But good education is more difficult to get in Nigeria than in the U.S.A.. And when one does get it in Nigeria, it may be good Western education without adequate relevance to Nigeria or Africa. Unfortunately, this has given rise to *Boko-Haram*, a militant movement inspired by Europhobia, (hostility to Western education). The best Western education on the African continent is probably at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Can we measure political development by the yardstick of declining scale of political violence? Let us try with Nigeria. The first two decades of Nigeria’s independence were the age of *regicide* and primary violence. The killing of the King or Head Executive as a trend was regicide. Of the seven supreme leaders of Nigeria in the first 20 years of independence, four had been assassinated. These

were the years of *regicide proneness* — plotting to kill the Head of State. Rivalry for oil-wealth was one of the causes.

The seven supreme leaders were Azikiwe, Balewa, Ahmadu Bello, Gowon, Murtala, Obasanjo and Shagari. The 50% who were assassinated were of course Balewa, Ahmadu Bello, Ironsi and Murtala Muhammad. Regicide was at a 50% rate — a high rate indeed. Ahmadu Bello was technically a regional leader but with immense federal and national power.

The next 20 years of Nigeria's independence (1980 to the year 2000) were to be of militarism and constitutional experimentation. These were the last years of Shagari, those of Buhari, those of Babangida and his immediate successors, and the emergence of Sani Abacha. Militocracy was still triumphant. The most promising experiment was the Babangida transition which collapsed ignominiously with the aborted election of June 1993. That transition would apparently have brought M.K.O. Abiola into power. Nigeria came quite close to democratization in 1993. Progress in democratization was in fits and starts.

In the Congo regicide began with the murder of the country's first Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, in 1961. The most recent Congolese assassination was the killing of the older President Kabila, who has been succeeded by his son as President since 2006.

In Nigeria the years of militarism and constitutional experimentation could have continued under Abacha with a new concept of presidential recycling from military ruler to elected Head of State. If Abacha had lived and run for the

Presidency, he would have been partially following the precedent of Jerry Rawlings who captured power twice by the barrel of the gun and later gained legitimacy through the ballot box and the electoral process. But Abacha died in June 1998 before that scenario could be attempted.

Deplanning the Economy and Planning the Polity

Elsewhere in Africa there had been politicians who believed in the economic ideologies of socialism and even Marxism-Leninism. Most of these collapsed in the nineteen-nineties as a result of the following factors.

- (a) The socialist experiments in Africa had failed to deliver the economic goods — from *ujamaa* in Tanzania to communism in oil-rich Angola;
- (b) The collapse of state-communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe undermined the legitimacy of African equivalents of Marxism-Leninism;
- (c) The end of the Cold War exposed fragile African economies to extra pressure from the West and from international financial institutions;
- (d) Structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank forced the pace of privatization and the return to market ideologies.

Five year central economic plans have disappeared from almost the whole of Africa. Some would say “Good riddance.” What Nigeria and Libya need now

are ten to twenty-year political plans. I realize that presidents and parliamentarians are elected for periods which are much shorter than ten years, let alone twenty. But fundamental political planning needs longer term units of time. That is why members of the European Union took decisions about long-term monetary union which did not depend upon which particular European government would be in power at which particular time. But such long-term planning requires high meritocracy.

The most fundamental goals in political planning which Nigeria and Libya need are in the following areas:

- (a) How to release the developmental energies of the Nigerian and Libyan peoples;
- (b) How to balance agriculture and industry
- (c) How to reduce socio-economic inequalities especially between regions, ethnic groups and religious communities;
- (d) How to sanitize the political and economic system — and reduce corruption;
- (e) How to empower women in the Nigerian system and the new Libyan regime;
- (f) How to stabilize civilian supremacy in Nigeria's and Libya's civil-military relations;
- (g) How to entrench human rights and civil liberties in actual practice and not just in the document of the Constitution;

- (h) How to reconcile the cultural autonomy of states with the collective principles of the whole nation.

It was in his 1975 Tom Mboya Memorial Lecture in Kenya that Adebayo Adedeji described the idea of a national plan as one of the three symbols of post-colonial sovereignty in Africa. Almost every African country had adopted a national economic plan — alongside a national flag and a national anthem.

Two decades later national economic plans in Africa had become an endangered species, partly in response to the declining role of the state from the 1980s.

Market socialism is one solution. This seems to be the route chosen by the People's Republic of China. One might even call the strategy "Market Marxism." But it has dealt a death blow to central economic planning even in Communist China.

The Nigerian and Congolese plutocratic elites in the first few decades of independence have been a money making elites rather than a wealth-creating elites. Individual Nigerians and Congolese have become wealthy while their countries became poorer. Great skills have been developed for making money, but not enough talent has been cultivated to create wealth. We have had urbanization in Nigeria and the Congo without adequate industrialization, Western consumption patterns without Western productive techniques. We need to find ways of motivating resource-rich countries into genuine entrepreneurial, innovative and risk-taking developmental strategies.

Corruption has been part of the problem which has produced money-makers rather than wealth creators. From time to time Nigerian regimes have attempted major anti-corruption campaigns. The brief administration of Murtala Muhammad included a vigorous attempt to clean up the public service and the university bureaucracies in Nigeria — a sometimes ruthless campaign to remove deadwood and eliminate nepotism. The Buhari Administration also embarked on vigorous efforts to restore greater integrity and ethical standards — though at the expense of individual liberty and due process.

The new Nigeria of the 21st century should consider having a special Ombudsman system on Corruption Control both at the federal level and in each state. Complaints about bribery, nepotism and other forms of corruption would be lodged to the Ombudsman who would be equipped with resources and staff to investigate, warn, and where necessary sue. Corruption can be a deadly cancer on both the economy and the political system, and deserves considerable investment of resources. The Ombudsman system may need the support of a Corruption Investigative Police.

There will need to be a different Ombudsman for Human Rights and Clean Governance. Complaints about violations of civil liberties, economic ethics at either the state or the federal level would initially be lodged within the Ombudsman system. One of the purposes is to increase mediation and reduce litigation.

North - South **Between Division of Labour and Division of Control**

The Concept of a Division of Labour is familiar enough on a farm of mixed husbandry in Africa. There is sometimes a gender division of labour as women cultivate the crops while men are in charge of the cattle. Or men go to the mines or cities to work for wages, while their wives look after the family farm and the children

While division of labour as a concept is so familiar, division of control in society may be less clearly articulated. In Malaysia political power is overwhelmingly in the hands of the ethnic Malays, which economic leverage is disproportionately in the hands of the ethnic Chinese.

What was the de facto deal struck between Blacks and whites in South Africa after Nelson Mandela's release? In order to avert a racial war, the whites said to the Blacks: "You take the political crown, we shall keep the economic jewels."

The whites transferred political power to the Blacks but retained the bulk of economic control. The whites retained the best businesses, the best mines, the best jobs, the best shops in the major cities. The Blacks acquired the power to govern within those constraints. The Blacks had received the political crown; the whites retained the economic jewels. Here again is a situation not of a division of labour but of a division of control — similar to the deal between ethnic Malays and ethnic Chinese in Malaysia.

The question arises whether in a de facto kind of way a similar division of control had developed between the North and the South in Nigeria. Was the North to be the hub of political power, while the South was the hub of economic activity and wealth? Were Northerners the equivalent of ethnic Malays — numerically strong, militarily protected but entrepreneurially less developed? Were Southerners in Nigeria the equivalent of ethnic Chinese in Malaysia — more westernized, more entrepreneurial and better endowed in material resources? Was this the de facto division of control between North and South? Was the North supposed to have the political crown while the South kept the bulk of the economic jewels? Was that the vision in the early decades of independence?

If this was Nigeria's national compact of division of control in much of the second half of the twentieth century, has it broken down in the twenty-first century?

Whenever this de facto division of control is seriously challenged, Nigeria's stability is at risk. The Igbo-led military coup of January 1966 challenged the division of control. Suddenly Northerners saw that they were not only economically marginal. They would now become politically marginal as well.

The root cause of the Nigerian civil war was not the anti-Igbo riots in the North late in 1966. It was the destabilization of the North-South division of control by the Ironsi-led military coup of January 1966. Also causal was the uneven distribution of economic skills between the Igbo and the Northern indigenes.

With the democratic election of Olusegun Obasanjo to the presidency in 1999, another challenge to the North-South division of control was posed. Will Northerners feel that their historic economic marginalization would once again be compounded by political marginalization?

Brilliant Nigerian minds have spent a lot of time exploring how to share political power in Nigeria more justly. Nigerian federalism has been studied with great sophistication. Some reformers have called for confederation in Nigeria.

But not enough time has been spent by Nigerian intellectuals exploring how to share economic power and economic skills more justly across ethnic and regional lines. The most dangerous economic inequalities in Nigeria are not class inequalities. They are economic inequalities between ethnic groups, religious communities, and between regions. Particularly difficult to handle is the problem of the maldistribution of economic skills.

Privatization of state industries could result in an ethnic take-over. For example, if Southern ethnic groups in Nigeria are stronger entrepreneurs than Northern ethnic groups, the privatization of the oil industry could result in a Southern private take-over of the oil industry.

The Northern sense of economic marginalization could be aggravated. The breakup of commodity Marketing Boards in Nigeria also resulted in opening up entrepreneurial opportunities. If the market forces were allowed free-play, these opportunities would have been swallowed up dramatically by southern entrepreneurs.

Against the background that one of the causes of the Biafra war was Igbo entrepreneurship in the North, it is most important that any new ventures in privatization should include a minimum quota for Northern entrepreneurs.

A form of affirmative action is needed in Nigeria if we still believe in saving the Union.

SHARIACRACY BETWEEN:

TYPICALITY	EXCEPTIONALISM
Nigeria inherited a legal system based primarily on British law, but with minor amendments to suite local conditions in each colony. Typical of other colonies.	Nigeria is the only African country outside Arab Africa which has seriously debated an alternative to the western constitutional and legal option.
Both constitutional arrangements and criminal law were primarily based on western systems of order.	That is what to debate about the <i>Sharia</i> is partly about.
<p>The language of interpreting the constitution and interpreting the laws was the imperial language, English.</p> <p>In Nigeria, as in most former colonies, this imperial and legal order was seriously flawed and did not deliver constitutional stability or respect for law.</p>	<p>Exceptionalism includes the fact that Nigeria is the largest concentration of Muslims on the African continent.</p> <p>Exceptionalism therefore includes the fact that Nigeria has more Muslims than any <u>Arab</u> country, including Egypt.</p> <p>But can exceptionalism support <i>Sharia</i> at the State level combined with secularism at the federal level?</p>

BETWEEN LINGO-CONSTITUTIONALISM AND RELIGIO- CONSTITUTIONALISM

TYPICALITY	EXCEPTIONALISM
Whether a federal system should permit cultural self-determination for its constituent parts has been faced by other federations before.	Initially Nigeria's federation allowed cultural self-determination for neither language nor religion.
Switzerland concedes cultural self-determination but in terms of language. Some cantons are officially French-speaking, some German-speaking, some Italian-speaking.	What the Sharia debate has opened up is Whether religion, rather than language, should be the basis of the cultural self-determination for constituent units in <u>Nigeria</u> .
India concedes cultural self-determination in terms of language — different states have a lot of say on the official language of the state.	In Quebec English-speaking Canadians have <u>no choice</u> but to put up with Francophone state Schools and Francophone road signs.
Canada is coming to terms with a Quebec which insists on making French the sole language of Quebec. The English-speaking minority in Quebec is disadvantaged.	In Zanzibar should non-Muslim Nigerians Similarly have to accept their minority status And conform? Or is that undemocratic?
	Is an imposed lingo-cultural policy any different from an imposed religio-cultural policy for the relevant minorities?

The Gender Question in Oil-Rich Africa

Muammar Gaddafi had ruled Libya since the military coup of 1969. He had been less important as a social or religious reformer domestically than in his efforts to be a political player globally.

On the gender question Gaddafi used symbolism. Far from regarding women as unsuited for military roles, or incapable of using firearms efficiently, Gaddafi theoretically entrusted his life to female bodyguards. These were often

referred to as “the Amazons.” Women in oil-rich Libya were more liberated than in oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

The Pope in history has had the physical protection of the Swiss guards and the spiritual protection of the Virgin Mary. Gaddafi had women body guards who were spiritually required to be virgins.

On the link between virginity and military effectiveness, Gaddafi in North Africa in the 21st century had shared a characteristic with Shaka Zulu of South Africa in the eighteenth century. Shaka wanted his male soldiers to be celibate, totally denying themselves sex. Gaddafi had wanted his female guards as virgins from the start — and committed to celibacy until military retirement.

But since the 2011 Libyan war erupted in the second half of February 2011, there has been no evidence of female soldiers protecting Gaddafi. Actually, there have been more female warriors in the opposition in Benghazi than among Gaddafi’s forces in Tripoli.

Much more interesting was Gaddafi’s decision from the 1990s that he was an African first and an Arab second. He got disenchanted with fellow Arabs — having first begun as a Pan-Arabist. His gender policy was perhaps more African than Arab. And in his last twenty years in office he had put his money more in Pan-African ventures than in Pan-Arabist projects. He saw himself less and less as heir to Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and more and more as heir to Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.

Let us now look at the gender question more broadly in postcolonial Africa. Uganda had gold mines before it prospected for oil.

Uganda has had a woman for vice-president under Yoweri Museveni (on and off) since the 1990's, but Uganda had a woman foreign minister as far back as the regime of the Idi Amin in the 1970's.

Both Liberia and Kenya have had women presidential candidates who had campaigned hard for the ultimate political office. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia did lose to Charles Taylor and Charity Ngilu in Kenya did lose to Daniel arap Moi. But both women put a spirited fight and demonstrated substantial support. Since then Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has served as the first elected woman President in Africa's history.

In the 1980's Winnie Mandela was the most famous African woman in the world. She was of course a South African. Mrs. W. Sisulu is another high ranking South African woman. Fran Ginwalla served as Speaker of the post-apartheid parliament in the Republic of South Africa before the United States had a female Speaker in the House, Nancy Pelosi..

Before Rwanda and Burundi collapsed in the 1990's they were experimenting with women Prime Ministers. Unfortunately Rwanda soon exploded into inter-ethnic genocide. 1994 was the fastest genocide in recorded history anywhere in the world.

Nigeria for quite a while was at the level of having its highest-ranking woman as a minister for women's affairs. Nigeria has since moved up to have full

female Ministers and a couple of other Ministers of State. Female empowerment has since included a brilliant woman-Minister of the economy. This may be significantly better than a number of other African countries. Female Nigerian talent has included reciprocal transfer between the Nigerian Government and the World Bank in Washington, D.C. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has served both as Director of the World Bank and Nigeria's Finance Minister.

On the other hand, Nigerian women are among the most economically independent in the whole of Africa. They are assertive individuals, and many of them know how to play the market. In some cities a female plutocracy is in the making.

As for Nigerian women in scholarship and science, Nigerian ladies compare well. It is true that Liberia had a woman president of a university long before Nigeria had a woman Vice-Chancellor, but as a country Liberia has since been led by a woman Nobel Laureate. And now Nigeria is catching up — first with a woman Vice-Chancellor at the University of Benin and later another female chief executive at the University of Abuja. Lagos State also started early with female academic leadership. Female academic leaders have become widespread.

Nigerian educational institutions are in dire financial straits, but within these constraints there is optimism that Nigerian women professors will not be left too far behind Nigerian men in the arts and, hopefully, in the sciences.

How does the gender divide relate to the digital divide? And what indeed is the digital divide?

The digital divide arises out of either unequal access to the computer and the Internet or unequal skill in utilizing them. In a March-2000 lecture in Lagos, I first raised the issue of whether there is a digital divide between different ethnic groups in Nigeria. Were certain ethnic groups in Southern Nigeria more computer literate than certain ones in the North? Were the reasons cultural or due to different degrees of economic access to computers?

On this occasion, I would like to relate the digital divide to gender rather than to ethnicity. Among Africans in the Diaspora there is strong evidence that African women are almost keeping pace with African men in computer literacy. At a conference at the Ohio State University at the beginning of June 2000 on “The Internet and Culture Change,” about half of the paper presenters were African women, complete with computer demonstrations and illustrations in the course of the conference, operated by the women themselves. Computer-literate women have since multiplied. A female meritocracy is in the making.

All this is quite apart from the phenomenon of African-American women (as distinct from women directly from Africa). It is even clearer among African Americans that the women are keeping pace with the men in computer skills. Indeed, African American women may already be outstripping their men in those skills, as well as in education more generally. Indeed, a high proportion of young Black males are in prison cells at the same time as females are in classrooms. Women are getting computerized; men are getting convicted. The gender divide is being widened by an inter-Black digital divide. The first Black First Lady in the

White House is probably the most computer literate First Lady in U.S. history (Michelle Obama).

The agenda for the African Renaissance is wide and complex. But two critical democratizing reforms needed to transform Africa are a new policy on language favourable to indigenous languages and a new policy on gender more supportive of female empowerment. Nigeria has made a start on gender reform—but has not even begun serious consideration of a new post-colonial language policy. The clock of history is ticking away. Time and tide wait for no policy-maker. Some language policies are less democratic than others.

Nigeria will never become a first rank technological power until it scientificates the major indigenous languages, and perhaps technologise Pidgin as well. While a combination of French and English is called Franglaise, and while a combination of English and Swahili is called Swahinglish, the Pidgin of Nigeria may one day have to be re-named Nigenglish.

In indigenous African languages today, Nigerian women are probably more proficient than men; in European languages Nigerian men are probably more articulate than women in Africa as a whole.

In command of Pidgin English market women in Nigeria may have a special eloquence and skills of persuasion. The women of Bendal State, as well as the men, are famous for their Pidgin power, with a Bendal music of its own. A female meritocracy may be unfolding.

At the moment the elite of Nigeria think of Pidgin as a form of vulgarized and “bastardized English.” However, it is worth remembering that the French language is descended from the vulgarized and bastardized Latin of Roman soldiers. Today the French language is widely regarded as the most beautiful in Europe.

Will Pidgin in Nigeria develop into Nigenglish and become a highly elegant medium of philosophical and literary discourse one day? The trend may have started already, especially among the women of the land. A female linguistic meritocracy may indeed be on the horizon already.

Nigerian women were not in high profile during the era of *militocracy*, when the country was coup-prone and repeatedly dominated by soldiers in power. These were the years from the mid-1960s to the end of the 20th century.

The country’s petrowealth also laid the foundations of a *plutocracy* — rule by the wealthy. Nigerian women participated in the plutocratic bonanza, but way behind Nigerian male beneficiaries.

Women as voters were slow to wield their influence, especially in Northern Nigeria. However, women as parliamentarians have increased in this twenty-first century, and some have served as Cabinet Ministers in the Executive Branch. A Woman-Head of State in Nigeria was inconceivable during the era of militocracy (rule by soldiers). But a female President in Nigeria is conceivable as part of democratization before the middle of this twenty-first century. What Liberia has achieved may be repeated by a Nigerian Woman in the years ahead.

Women as part of Nigeria's meritocracy may soon be winning more Nobel Prizes in different fields.

Oil-wealth had been an impediment to democratization in the first fifty years of Nigeria's independence. As this twenty-first century unfolds further, will the empowerment of women be the vanguard of wide democratic change? Will petro-wealth at last be the mother of government by the people rather than government by the affluent? The answer lies in the womb of history.

CONCLUSION

We have attempted to illustrate how resource-richness before democratization reduces the motivation for democratic reforms. Wealth which is not created but only mined produces an affluent *elite of leisure* rather than an *elite of labor*. The system which emerges is closer to a *plutocracy* (rule by rich) rather than *democracy* (rule by the people). We have used examples from two oil-producing countries (Nigeria and Libya) and two resource-rich but not oil-based economies (South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Other countries were also mentioned to sharpen points of comparison and contrast.

Nigeria has experienced a rich systemic diversification since independence. The country has experimented with federalism, militarism, liberal democracy, meritocracy and Islamic Law (the Sharia). But the country still needs an architecture of governance which is solidly institutionalized.

While pre-democratic petro-wealth slows down democratization, it does produce opportunities for a welfare state. Gaddafi's Libya was a kind of welfare state – affording medical, educational, residential and other forms of subsidies to the citizens.

Nigeria's petro-wealth did not result in a welfare state to serve all Nigerians but resulted in a local oil market which was subsidized. Until recently Nigerians would get their petrol below market-value. There were also many occasions when poor Nigerians helped themselves to oil outside the constraints of the law.

The dilemma for an oil-rich developing country is between using the national resources to create a welfare state or allowing its citizens to have subsidized access to the commodity without a welfare state.

In the case of Nigeria subsidized oil and cheaper petroleum reduced the cost of energy locally, but without a national health service or subsidized housing. Gaddafi's Libya, on the other hand, had provided elaborate welfare-services without necessarily subsidizing the local energy-market.

Subsidizing petroleum does help those who own cars, and promotes cheaper electricity. But such subsidies are more elitist and more selective than is a full-scale welfare state.

Abundant oil-wealth may not necessarily help political democratization but it can enhance economic rights and promote welfare opportunities for the citizenry.

In the case of Nigeria subsidized energy was one of the benefits of petro-wealth. While in the first fifty years of independence Nigeria was very coup-prone, the new political horizons have reduced the frequency of military rule but have aggravated conflict-situations. Both Nigeria and Congo (Kinshasa) have become less coup-prone but unfortunately still highly vulnerable to conflicts.

The struggle for democracy and the struggle for peace have become conjoined. It is still an open question when the abundant resources of each country would become a force for stability rather than a trigger of discord. The struggle continues.