

IT'S TIME FOR THE BLACKMAN'S REVOLUTION



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HOW TO SAVE NIGERIA NOW FOR FUTURE NIGERIANS

DR YAQEEN HABEEB

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DEDICATION

I give all praise and adoration to God Almighty for all His favors and protection over me to this day.

I dedicate this work to:

- my parents for the morals and ethics I imbibed from them, I appreciate their love and care for me;
- all men and women of integrity and conviction all over the world and
- Jameelat, my 8-year-old daughter who was lost to a fatal road accident on her way to acquire education, an avoidable death, if we had good roads and sensible drivers.

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PREFACE

Growing up in the tick of the hinterland as the eldest son of an astute disciplinarian and religious cleric in a traditional African setting where the main source of livelihood is farming; life appeared to be an intolerable and stoical process. It was a background that I will forever continue to appreciate owing to the indelible impact it left on me in terms of my stamina to navigate through life; and the opportunity it gave me in terms of its being a testing ground for my personal philosophy of life. Although I cannot place a finger exactly on which, between nature and nurture is responsible for my working spirit and logical outlook on life, it is obvious from my background as a child that there was no room for laziness and subjectivity. Life was simple in that there was nothing close to political and social worries in the farm, yet it was tough in that we had to toil profusely to earn every inch of everything we live on and sometimes we ended up earning less than our input. Life was purposeful in that we must uphold all standards of morality, virtue and decency, yet ordinary in that we must accept the status of our living and remain within the boundaries and limits we grew up to find ourselves in life. We must accept the status quo, and this was my break-off point and the defining element of my philosophy of life.

I am not the type of person who believes in transferring the responsibility of our circumstances to external actors and/or factors. I do not believe in a limit or boundary pre-determined

for our lives, neither do I subscribe to accepting an unfavorable status-quo because there is nothing we can do about it. Although, I hold in high esteem parenthood, teaching, role models and societal values and norms, I do not however believe, that we should allow anyone or any setting to unduly determine the course of our life or simply put, our destiny. Finally, I do not believe in any earthly or human condition that cannot be changed. All these to me are nothing but fatalism.

My personal philosophy of life is the Philosophy of Responsibility; that man is responsible for his own condition and men are collectively responsible for their own condition. Every human being has an ultimate and unique purpose, some unimpeachable potential and some daunting problems or challenges. Thus, we all have a responsibility to learn, work and act responsibly to discern our purpose, harness our potentials and tackle our problems. If we do this then we have taken control of our lives and set the stage for our real destiny to manifest. Man can indeed change his condition as we bear full responsibility for our conditions through our past and present choices and actions. We have no one else to blame for our conditions. Our life conditions are the exact measure of our attitude, knowledge, strategic choices, pro-activeness, and inactions. Thus, I believe we can change whatever conditions we find ourselves in and we must act to change whenever we deem our conditions not favorable.

Change process may include revolution, reformation or mere change. Revolution is a method for societal change. It involves dramatic turnaround and leads to a far-reaching transformation of a society. On the other hand, reformation is a gradual and incremental process of modification without

fundamentally altering the nature of society. Revolution is however not absolutely synonymous with change but they are both driven by the philosophy of responsibility. While the scope of the former is often limited only to the socio-political domain, the latter is far-reaching and an all-round process of psychological, social and political change. But if we agree to adopt a working definition of revolution to mean an all-round conscious and astute pursuit of transformation that will permeate our personal, social, and political life, which connotes our destiny, then it will be apt to say that my philosophy of life is that of Responsibility for Revolutionary Change.

From my own background, my distinguished father of blessed memory had good reasons (plausible given the circumstances, times and space of his own judgment) to insist vehemently that I should not pursue secular education beyond primary two when he withdrew me from school. I rebelled by sending myself back to school after a year just because he travelled. On his return, he allowed me to continue but then, set the end of primary education as the terminal point of my secular education. It appeared my destiny was to remain in the forest to tend to the plantations. Seeing the sharp contrast between the purpose I have discerned for myself in life and that of a farm hand, I took the responsibility to defy all odds, to be a positive deviant and to disobey my own very dear and respected father (for which I later apologized sufficiently and was forgiven appropriately) and pursued education; getting a distinction at Senior Secondary Examination, good scores at Cambridge Advanced Level, First Class Honours first degree, MSc and capping it with a PhD. Following the insistence of the university to retain me after my undergraduate degree

performance, I became a university lecturer, later teaching in two Nigerian universities.

I may not be listed in Forbes magazine, nor might I meet anyone's criteria of a successful individual, but I carry in my heart, an indelible joy of personal fulfillment, having impacted on the future of many young entrepreneurs as a university lecturer for a period of eight years, having designed a fiscal formula for my country as a finance resource person to my country's constitutional conference, having contributed immensely to the top-rated and leading banking institution in my country where I received several awards of excellent performance rising to the peak of the professional cadre, having established one of the best schools in my state as an educational investor, having employed many Nigerians as an entrepreneur, having sponsored the education of hundreds of students through my private scholarship scheme and sustenance of many citizens through charity and humanitarianism, having been a principal participant in the organization of many national peace conferences where all religions in Nigeria are brought under the same roof to discuss peaceful co-existence, and with others having provided water, healthcare, food, education, disaster relief, etc. to thousands of people through a Non-Governmental Organization that I lead in Nigeria and so on. I could not have achieved all these if I had remained in the plantation with primary school leaving certificate as my highest education. It is now convenient for people to say that it is my destiny to become who I am today, but the same people would have also said it is my destiny to become a peasant farmer had I remained in the plantation, if I had not positively deviated when I did. I practically refused

my status-quo and took steps to pursue the destiny I discerned for myself, and by divine authorization I am who I am today. So in a nutshell, my history provided the first and most radical opportunity for me to test my philosophy of personal Responsibility for Revolutionary Change, and glory be to God today, I have no regrets.

But what exactly is the measure of Responsibility for Revolutionary Change and how exactly does one measure success? If I can be deemed to have succeeded at the personal level, what about the social level? In other words, what about the society I live in? Two things are said to rule the world; knowledge and money, and I have seen how these two things work; at close quarters, as a PhD holder who owns a school and as a senior bank management staff and investor, yet I am quite sad about the society in which I live and am wary of its future. So, as I move towards the end of my sojourn on earth, I have asked myself severally; what do I give back to the world through my immediate society?

There are two things that should come to mind when one thinks about an ailing or dysfunctional society; where does its future lie and what can one do to help?

As regards the question of where the future of the Nigerian society lies, it is in the youths that accounts for nearly 50 percent of its population. How sad that these virile young men and women are the victims and at the same time the vanguard of the erosion of our nationhood? They are the ones who received very poor standard of education that leaves them unfit for any serious job let alone being self-employed. They are the ones whose skills/labour/knowledge utilization was not planned for. They are the ones to suffer from the huge

infrastructural deficit of the country. They are the ones whose interests is least considered when it comes to legislation. They are the ones whose reality is not addressed by our antiquated curriculum of education, in a fast-paced technology-driven world. They are the ones that carry the most sophisticated gadgets of information, yet remain the most gullible. They are indeed the victims. They are the vanguard in that besides the manufacture and sales of poisons disguised as drugs and processed foods and drinks, the youth are at the epi-center of every other perversion. Many of them are the foot-soldiers of insurgency, rebellion, kidnapping, banditry, armed-robbery, thuggery and political violence, cyber-crime, drug abuse, and the list is inexhaustible. In addition, every other malady of our nation from corruption to injustice is only possible as a result of the involvement and/or ignorance of the youths. They are the vanguard in that they are by default, the standard torch-bearers of our civilization (whether we like it or not) because they are the parents of the coming generation.

Still on the youths, for whom it has been an empty tradition in Nigeria to be referred to as the 'leaders of tomorrow', which is perhaps apt in theory but remains to be seen in reality today. It is a universal principle in societal life that for any expected outcome, there must be a precursor. Projections are only premised on trends, in other words, no purposeful and sustainable outcome occurs from coincidence or accident. Except if the youths are to become the leaders of tomorrow simply in biological sense, whereby they are the ones with the most likelihood of being alive when the present generation of leaders are dead, thus leaving no option other than the mantle of leadership inadvertently falling into their hands.

For if being the leaders of tomorrow is to be evaluated using real and obtainable socio-political parameters, one is forced to ask; what is the build-up, observable on the part of our youths today that signifies or indicate their ability to take on the mantle of leadership of Nigeria tomorrow? What are they doing at the moment that prepares them for the huge task ahead? The very few who are doing very well in sports, entertainment, ICT and related fields are noteworthy. But President Buhari came under fire recently for adducing that the Nigerian youths are largely lazy. In his defense of Buhari, Prof Ishaq Akintola, in the April 23rd edition of *The Eagle Online*, asserted that the President has said nothing new, citing several precedents from Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, Governor Seriake Dickson, Senator Shehu Sanni, to General Badamasi Babangida, and top-most, the late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who in 1974 at the launching of a book by the late Chief Gani Fawehinmi described many of the youths as being 'pathologically lazy'. So, what will Nigeria and indeed Africa become under the present crop of youths, tomorrow?

As regards the question of what can one do to help, Abraham Maslow was right to have placed self-actualization at the top of his pyramid of man's needs; a stage where one can influence the society. After rummaging through the thoughts of social scientists, it became clear to me that one can influence the society through artistic talent, knowledge, money, and politics. In my own humble opinion, politics in the Nigerian context has been bastardized by a savage thirst for money and power, same with the arts that have been reduced to spurious entertainment and mere fun seeking. Money in the hands of an ignorant fellow is catastrophic,

but knowledge and especially a relevant one that will spur a positive revolutionary change, remains the only viable means of influence, particularly in the Nigerian context. It however requires hard work.

As least expected, one of the most remarkable lessons I have learnt in life is from an employee of mine, a young chap in his early thirties. He said to me “Sir, do you know the richest place on earth? Well, I will not allow you to answer for fear that I may have to correct you Sir, I will rather go ahead to tell you that the richest place on earth is not the banks nor the gold mines, but the graveyard! Yes, that is where a lot of people go with ideas, information, and knowledge that could transform the world, yet they never saw the light of day because they died with them. So, make sure your grave will not be another very rich place”. I laughed out but then a serious reality dawned on me. The young man went further to say, “Sir, you accused my generation of being indolent and ignorant, but your own generation is being cruel, mean and lacking conscience because you are doing nothing to help us! It rather pays your mean generation that will spend twenty years in public office without any remarkable achievement to maintain the status quo because if we are knowledgeable and responsible, your peers will not be in-charge of our affairs when you are supposed to be in adult homes”.

After this hard talk, I finally decided as a representative of the old generation to bare my mind in writing on the state of the nation and the challenges of its future, so that it will serve as a pathfinder to the already boiling population of African youths in their agitations and search for relevance, using Nigeria as a case study. The book may also serve to awaken

the consciousness of every patriotic Nigerian to the state of our nation and the direction we are headed, perhaps we may change our orientation and accept responsibility for a revolutionary change in our state of affairs.

In this book, I submit that Nigeria is heading towards the status of a failed state, Nigeria is comatose and that the indices are palpable in the political, economic and social spheres. I submit that consequently, we must act to stem this tide of events and that the time to act is now. And, in acting, we must be discerning enough to avoid somersaulting into a cesspit. Thus, we must strive to get a purview of the right course of action by acquiring a thorough insight into our situation.

I make bold to say that all the attempts that have been made at revolutions in Nigeria have failed - and will continue to – because and so long as they were conceived and executed on erroneous understanding of the situation, governed by selfishness or regional/religious favoritism and thus they all became one-step forward and ten steps backwards. The revolutions failed because they targeted regimes instead of the socio-political orientation of the people, thus the highest success they could record - if any - is to replace one bad government with a worse one.

Having exerted critically to gain sufficient insight into the Nigerian reality, it is thus obvious that any thought or clamor for a violent political revolution – as one occasionally hears from some brazen youths in the streets – is not only juvenile but ignorant and detrimental at the same time. He who comes to the table of equity must come with clean hands as the saying goes. The question of the feasibility of a violent revolution has been dealt with in subsequent pages of the

book, but assuming that we are wrong to assert that from the angle of feasibility in the context of Nigeria, it should be an alternative forgone, the very consideration of its usefulness reveals that it is fundamentally counter-productive and disadvantageous. Sheer violence cannot produce any meaningful change in the Nigerian socio-political situation.

Nigeria cannot be changed from Aso Rock, as Aso Rock is itself a victim of the Nigerian society. The bad governance we have always seen is as a result of the bad people we are. So, to revolutionize Nigeria, we need to change our orientation as a people. We need to gather together as like-minds in the patriotic project, and the way to go is to establish an active, formidable, virile, tough, unrelenting, astute, sagacious, sophisticated, all-encompassing and vibrant national movement for mass orientation. In heralding such a movement, there stands the need of a book that can serve as a manual, inspirer or guide, and this is my major aim of writing this book.

This is neither an academic book nor a rigorous data analysis based on any universal theoretical model, rather it is a book addressing a real and practical situation; meant to inspire a movement for revolutionary change. The writing style is to maintain the attraction and convenience of reading by both the public and the academic community. We also kept the articulation and referencing minimal (and purposefully chose the Harvard referencing style; where referencing is contained within the body of the work, to ensure a lively reading). Our approach leaves room for the academic community to subject any aspect of the book to further investigation.

This book is the first of its kind in that it discusses not just the problems but the remote causes and most importantly,

the solutions, which is a kink away from the tradition of highlighting or emphasizing the problems without talking about the solutions. Furthermore, it differs from others in that it calls for action with a clearly stated course. We are positive that you will join us in this patriotic campaign to save our dear country. If we are able to save Nigeria from becoming a failed state and preserve it as a worthy legacy for generations of future Nigerians, then we would be able to save Africa.

Nigeria is almost synonymous to Black Africa and blacks are indeed great people except for our orientation and attitude, which we must change in order to progress. As it is aptly said in Africa, it is from the blackest pot that you fetch the most whitish pap. The Asians got their steps right, the United Arab Emirates and Qataris from the Arab world are on track, it is now time for the blacks to achieve same through a non-violent Blackman's Revolution.

Yaqeen A Habeeb, PhD
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STATE OF THE NATION

“Some people tell me your country may break up. Please don’t let it happen.” - Nelson Mandela, interview with Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmed 2007.

<http://saharareporters.com/2013/12/09/mandela-was-angry-nigeria-dr-hakeem-baba-ahmed>

Judging from the flaws in our national life, any conscious and informed mind can predict that Nigeria will run into a state of total crises in the near future if nothing is done swiftly and this fate holds by-and-large for the rest of Africa. The only question being whether or not one feels concerned. We may not mind the fact that governments will continue to frantically put up defenses to trivialize this obvious truth.

Leaving aside the argument over the appropriate term that aptly qualifies the situation or what cause(s) we can succinctly adduce to it, what is obvious is that there are so many things wrong with Nigeria as a country as it is with Africa as a continent. And the syndrome has been arguably traced to the black race. Yes, the situation of the Blackman in all his countries is so palpable to the extent that it unwittingly seems to give a veneer of validity to the racial illusions of the Editor of American Renaissance, that the Blackman is

scientifically proved to be less intelligent than other races. To further illustrate the validity of his thesis, this checkered racial propagandist gave an illustration: *the most developed African countries today are the ones that are most colonized like Nigeria and South Africa, and Haiti, which was not colonized at all, is the most backward*. Though it may not lead to his conclusion about low IQ for Blacks, but there is something in this illustration that sends a message to every one of us.

With Nigeria, dismal is the standard and whatever is not bleak is just an exception. Though we call it home and it will continue to remain home (for our dead remains at least), it has aptly been described as a grave yard for our elites as they study in the UK, own houses and do vacation in the US, shop in Dubai, check into Indian hospitals, invest in South Africa, Europe, and China, but when they die, their corpses are brought home to Nigeria for burial. In the case of the overwhelming majority whose life cycle is confined to the shores of the country, one is only lucky to reach the official average life expectancy of 42 years. Verily, if you are lucky not to die by the litany of potholes on the roads, a mafia-looking police officer will put a bullet in your heart over fifty naira. If you escape that, the kidnappers await you, and if you are lucky enough to get home, the avalanche of fake and toxic processed foods and drinks in the street will send you to hospital where you will eventually die from fake drugs, striking doctors, or infectious toilets.

Africa is indeed in its worst state of penury where it is being gored by its own horn. It is no longer the white man recruiting our fellow blacks to capture us for the most dehumanizing slavery, nor the Queen colonizing us through our Emirs, nor

the politics and diplomacy of neo-colonialism; rather, it is now we against ourselves. The fate and future of the black continent may not be as alarming as that of my own beloved country, Nigeria where the symptoms of an ailing society and a fragile state is all too apparent.

In diagnosing the situation, one is sure to encounter theatrical arguments over the cause(s) of the situation, and more so a needless fuss over the correct adjective to qualify our present state, or the direction in which we are headed and persistent and sturdy denial by governments yet indications are evident all over. And since national matters call for harmonization of thoughts, our call must be based on shared, realistic and dynamic thoughts not necessarily on political pronouncements.

Political stereotypes and academic narratives have always stood in the way of frankness in socio-political discuss. Thus, in writing about a national situation whose palpability leaves no room for controversy, one still has political correctness and academic fuss to deal with. As patriots, while we should be sensitive to the description of the country, politicians will be wary of negative political publications during their regimes. As a matter of fact, while citizens should exercise caution as they put pen to paper with regards to the state of the nation, it is to be expected that university professors will be quick to display their dissuasive and dismissive academic theories. Meanwhile, history has shown that none of the great nations of the world was ever built by university professors nor by status-quo politicians, but by revolutionaries like you and I who will stand up to call a spade a spade and put its square pegs in the square holes in terms of action.

Nigeria has been sufficiently described many times as a fragile state, sometimes as a failing state, and a few times as a failed state. The 2019 Fragile State Index produced by Fund For Peace, <https://fundforpeace.org/2019/04/10/fragile-states-index-2019/> ranked Nigeria as the 14th most fragile state in the world. Professor Ben Nwabueze elucidated on Google's rating of Nigeria as a failed state in his article; Why Nigeria is Now Qualified as a Failed State, in the Vanguard of 3rd Feb, 2018. In February 2011, the Air University Alabama, U.S.A, published a 156-page work on Nigeria's State Failure by 2030. And in our usual dismissiveness and reactivity, many of our academic pundits had drawn up polemic stereotypes as a defense mechanism. While some strove to achieve this through a stunt of statistical analysis, some asserted that describing Nigeria as a failing state favors the foreign policy predilection of western governments, and others have shifted the blame, accusing the western governments of being responsible for our failure due to their exploits during colonization and even afterwards.

While it is obviously useless to submerge ourselves in academic dogma and pedantry in the face of a dire situation, it is nevertheless necessary to clarify that :

1. The same sources of statistics used to expound the failed state status of Nigeria which we question today, are the resort of our references in many other discussions;
2. The claim that countries whose researchers posit Nigeria as a failing state are the same countries that are responsible for our failure due to years of colonization is an escapist narrative;

3. Statistics on its own is not the fact in essence; it is rather a professional tool in the most, for communicating, presenting and interpreting facts. The real facts are the things in actual existence, experiences and occurrences that are known and felt even without statistics.

In the midst of the ruse, the African wisdom comes in handy; that if a deaf man cannot hear the sounds of the drum, he could at least see the dance steps of the crowd. It thus follows that we need not be academicians to understand our own condition. Statistics is a systematic handling of data, which is a theoretical academic tool most useful to the one who is absent from the scene of occurrence or more precisely, to a distant researcher. People who are affected directly by an occurrence need no data interpretation to understand their plight. We need no statistics to know that there is hunger in the land, that there is no security in the country; not in the borders nor the interior, that there is widespread subversion of government authority, that certain individuals and families are above the law, that insurgent groups are proliferating everywhere, that the health and educational sectors are dismal, that we depend too largely on imported products, that the spirit of nationalism is at its lowest ebb, that regional agitations have far superseded national ethos, that the political elites by-and-large see public office as an opportunity rather than a responsibility, that cultism have taken over our educational institutions, that corruption has eroded the essence and effectiveness of the civil service, that security men are now complicit in terrorizing the citizens they swore to protect. We need no statistical thesis to

know that we are gradually heading towards a failed state if the tide is not reversed or at least stemmed. To buttress this, we will look at the indices.

THE POLITICAL INDICES

SELFISH BARONS ARE RULING AND MAKING DECISIONS

*“You don’t necessarily need atomic bombs to destroy a nation.
Politicians who value their pockets more than the life of
citizens always do that every day” - Israelmore Ayivor,
in his book; Leaders’ Ladder.*

Since Human beings are not solitary beings, we therefore live together in a society. But again, man is naturally selfish and hence will ordinarily tend to live at the expense of another; for selfishness is a part of the nature of every man, which is something we all have to deal with in order to fit into a civilized society and to attain nobility and respect within the society. So, to prevent the individual interest from usurping the public interest and undermining harmonious co-existence, an institution called government is born, which also protects the society from the selfishness of other societies. This institution is also to be overseen by individuals who strive for influence in public space those who seek to determine how society is run, and this is the origin and essence of politics.

We must keep note of the fact that government exists in order to protect the society from the constituent selfishness of the individual members. It therefore follows that the

politicians who take control of government must not be selfish, else government becomes a mere burden on the citizens, an obstacle in the way of their progress, and a tool for emasculating the masses for which people will now fight violently to grab, as it is indeed the case in Nigeria and Black Africa today. Thus, it becomes obvious that in the nations that progress, politicians see public office as a responsibility to serve as much as they can, while here in Nigeria and indeed most of Africa, it is seen as an opportunity to grab as much as they can. In fact, politics is now seen in Nigeria, as the fastest track to make money.

Selfishness is therefore the order of the day in our political space and by-and-large in Africa. Who is it amongst the multitude that has ever held the saddle of public office and has not used it to enrich his or her lineage, folks, kin and kindred to the colossal detriment of the nation? If there are, they will be very few indeed. Once in a public chat, a fellow discussant submitted - quite naively in my view - that the White Man (West) is also as corrupt, if not more corrupt than the Blacks. My response was that he and his like-minds can say whatever suites them, but they must learn to distinguish the critical difference between the corruption of Western elites and that of African elites. While the white man indulges in corruption to the advantage of his country and the disadvantage of other countries and the detriment of the rest of the world, the black man practices corruption against his own country to the detriment of his fellow citizens, to a little “advantage” of himself, but surely to the larger benefit of foreign countries.

While corruption is abhorrent in any form, the difference here must be noted; we plunder our countries for others and

they plunder other countries for theirs. No white man will divert the money meant for the building of hospitals, roads and classrooms to buy a personal estate in another country, and leave his own countrymen to die of curable diseases, road accidents, and ignorance, those who have statistics to contradict this position should do that.

The selfishness of the Blackman that he takes to public office can be lucidly seen in very simple examples. The internet today is awash with information on anything whatsoever you want to know about. Amazing videos, audios, slides, and documents are in surplus abundance for free. How many of these free contents are uploaded by the Blackman? An average Blackman will wonder why these white guys have made knowledge of practically everything so cheap because if he were to be the one in possession of that knowledge, he will hoard it to himself, and perhaps go to the grave with it, while his people continue to suffer from a lack of that knowledge, forgetting that you also stand to gain when you share even for free as far as the internet is concerned. The average Blackman will never invest in anything that he will not personally and directly benefit from, not even when his own progeny are to benefit from it. This is why there are only few long-term investments in our society as people cannot see a reason why they should use their life savings to buy a plantation of perennial crops for the benefit of the children tomorrow. This is why there is no long-term plan in governance and there is no blueprint for the many governmental entities of the nation, as politicians do not want someone else to benefit or share in the credit of whatever project/program they initiate. This is why there is no continuity in governance because politicians are

pursuing their own self-glory to the detriment of the country. Each successive government normally abandons projects that the predecessor started. We must not fail in this regard to commend the Buhari administration for a remarkable policy of continuity of government initiatives started by the previous administration. For the Whiteman, it is the nation first, but for the Blackman, it is himself first. There is no doubt that, not every Blackman can be so described, but the problem is that we are largely being ruled by those who fall under this category, and this is driving the nation into a cesspit.

A nation is a cross-generational project to be planned by its founding fathers and developed and built upon by successive generations, but when selfish barons are in power, the nation becomes a treasure to be devoured and plundered and unfortunately, this is the case in Nigeria and indeed in most of Africa. If we analyze Nigeria and many African countries in the light of the above, it becomes clear that we are faced with an existential danger. Unlike the European nations that colonized us which are tribal states with ancestors, we are a drawn-up colony that fought for independence when the original founders (the Brits and not those who fought for independence) have not deemed it fit for us to rule ourselves. There are many who believed that Nigeria got independence before she was ready for self-rule, and this can be said for the rest of colonial Africa. So, it is clear from the foregoing, that our very foundation was built to plunder our land, and we were planned for the supply of the needs of another country. When we took over governance from the founding fathers who were plundering our resources for the Queen, rather than double our spirit of patriotism and nation-building in

order to make up for the time, opportunities and resources we have lost to the Brits, we ended up plundering our own nation more than they ever did. It is also important to note the difference between the plundering of our land by the Whiteman and our own self-plundering. A huge difference is palpable not just in dimension but in nature. The Brits at least developed the land from where they were plundering. They at least ensured the security of the land, educated us to the level that will aid their plundering and also helped us key into the modern world, in addition to building roads, rails, and bridges to enable them carry valuables to and through the port (which they also built) out of the country to their own country. On the other hand, we directly transfer the money meant to build and maintain all these infrastructures to 'invest' in or hide in European banks. We deal in arms smuggling knowing fully well that large number of families will die from these guns on daily basis and the devastation the country is going through via armed conflicts. The difference is clear.

Metaphorically, the Brits were tending and merely milking our cows (not even milking them dry) and we felt cheated, so we sent the common 'thieves' away and replaced them with 'armed robbers', and today, we are now selling or destroying the entire cows. If Walter Rodney were alive today, he would have had to write another book to be titled, "How Africa Underdeveloped Africa" as a worthy sequel to "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa". Our parents used to tell us that there could be no doubt that governance under the Brits was far better than what our politicians have been doing to our nation in the name of governing it. I used to argue with my

MONEY-CENTERED POLITICS AND POOR POLITICAL ORIENTATION

“Educate children of the poor, so that they can get out of poverty. Poverty does not breed confidence. Only confident people can bring changes. Poor, uneducated people can also bring change, but it will be hijacked by the educated and the wealthy...give young Nigerians good education.”

**- Nelson Mandela, interview with Dr.Hakeem
Baba Ahmed 2007.**

Stemming from the question of how and why informed intellectuals of the Nigerian society are not generally involved in the leadership of the country or why the collection of political elites does not represent the standard gauge of the country's intellectual profile, there is the need to re-examine our political process and political orientation.

Starting with our political orientation, Nigeria is no doubt blessed with brains, minds and intellect, such that the nation is unequivocally an ocean of intellectual property in all aspects of life, excelling and championing knowledge, productivity, drive and innovation in every corner of the globe. Our versatility, penchant for learning, education and information is both typical and well-known. Houston Chronicle,

father feeling that he was not patriotic enough to appreciate Nigerian leaders. I wish he is alive today for me to apologize to him as I also make bold to say the same now. Largely, people without a conscience, or a national consciousness rule us, and it is thus easy to predict what becomes of our country if things continue this way. Political selfishness and greed amongst our ruling elite has become so intricately woven into the fabric of our society that a mere one man or handful of patriotic men in power can't change anything, and we have seen this proved once again with the coming of the Buhari administration.

Nigeria has suffered more than enough disservice, plundering and pillaging, first from the Brits and now from her own citizens. We are only lucky to have survived this far, and yes “luck” is the word to use because the secret of our survival against all statistical odds has defied all logical explanation. There is hardly any other country that could survive what our country has survived, as succinctly captured by a former UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, who was reported to have said that *“if the amount of money stolen from Nigeria in the last 30 years was stolen from the UK, the UK will cease to exist”*. And the explanation of one former President of Nigeria who is also part of Nigeria's problems was that, *“God must be a Nigerian!”*

If selfishness and greed continue to dominate our political space, then we can confidently conclude that Nigeria will soon exceed its elastic limit where it will crash and cease to be a sovereign country. Yes, because we cannot continue to be lucky forever and all religious scriptures agree that God does not like selfish, greedy and corrupt people.

<https://www.chron.com/news/article/Data-show-Nigerians-the-most-educated-in-the-U-S-1600808.php> reports on reliable data that Nigerians are the most educated in the US. Above all, our ranking on the intelligence quotient index is quite impressive.

Obadiah Mailafia in the Vanguard newspaper of July 4, 2017 writing under the caption, “Smartest people, mediocre nation” <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/07/smartest-people-mediocre-nation/>

observed that “British Nobel laureate Dorothy Hodgkin once noted that Ishaya Shuaibu Audu, pioneer Nigerian Vice-Chancellor of ABU Zaria, collected all the prizes at St. Mary’s University Medical School London; his successor, Iya Abubakar, was a highly talented Cambridge mathematician who became a professor at 28 and was a noted consultant to NASA. Alexander Animalu was a gifted MIT physicist who did work of original importance in superconductivity. His book, Intermediate Quantum Theory of Crystalline Solids, has been translated into several languages. Renowned mathematician Chike Obi solved Fermat’s 200-year old conjecture with pencil and paper while the Cambridge mathematician John Wiles achieved same with the help of a computer working over a decade. A Nigerian family, the Imafidons, was voted “the smartest family in Britain” in 2015. Philip Emeagwali won the 1989 Gordon Bell Award for his work in super-computing. Jelani Aliyu designed the first electric car for American automobile giant General Motors. Olufunmilayo Olopede, Professor of Medicine at the University of Chicago, won a McArthur Genius Award for her work on cancer. Winston Soboyejo, who earned a Cambridge doctorate at 23, is a Princeton engineering

professor laurelled for his contributions to materials research. Washington University biomedical engineering professor Samuel Achilefu received the St. Louis Award for his invention of cancer-seeing glasses that is a major advance in radiology. Kunle Olukotun of Stanford did work of original importance on multi-processors. National Merit laureate Omowunmi Sadik of State University of Binghamton owns patents for biosensors technology...” Nevertheless, what is the orientation of the average Nigerian you can find anywhere out there about politics? His or her definition of politics will be most likely that politics is a dirty game; his or her interest in politics will be a case of no interest, and his or her pride will be that he or she is not a politician, and his or her view of politicians will be that of deceivers and uneducated or half-educated desperadoes, thugs, and goons who are ready to lie, cheat, kill and destroy whole communities just to get to power which they will in turn use to cause further pillaging, looting and destruction of the society. This is a very detrimental and suicidal outlook on politics and we shall briefly discuss this under four headings in line with the four typical orientations listed above.

It is highly irrational to think of politics as a dirty game merely because of the experience and encounter with politicians and their unpatriotic exploits. Politics is in a real sense a noble game, which should be viewed as such in retrospect for Nigeria and Africa. The good news however is that we can revise our views about this if we work on our orientation. The genuine struggle for influence, leadership and control of public affairs cannot be said to be a dirty game or an ignoble act if the essence of politics is understood. Influence, leadership and control which are the three corner stones of politics

are indispensable in any collection of social animals and in the case of man referred to as a society, hence you lead or you are led, you influence or you are influenced, and you control or you are being controlled. Our orientation about a concept determines our definition of that concept, and our definition in turn determines our outlook on that concept. If we adopt such dialectical definition of politics as *“who gets what, when, and how?”*, or if we define it as a *“mere struggle for power”*, or if we define it as *“a means of livelihood for people who have nothing more noble to do which has now turned into a lucrative business, more lucrative than other known careers and businesses”*, then we will be both wrong and right at once. We will be wrong in the sense that these are not informed and comprehensive definitions of politics, but rather, narrow-minded and limited-perspective definitions. Yet again, we will be right as Africans and especially Nigerians; because these are the definitions, we have imbibed from our political experience as a people. Politics is about the welfare of the individuals, survival and flourishing of the society, nation building, and economic well-being for all, public health and safety and security, service to humanity through the connection of our immediate environment. This is the essence of politics and since these are common interests then it is expected that people will have different and sometimes opposing ideas about how to achieve these same objectives. Thus, politicians are those who compete for control over state apparatus in order to implement their own ideas of how to achieve these political objectives, using means that will not destroy the very essence of politics, for if the means to power jeopardizes any of the essence, then the aim is defeated. This is the correct

and rational understanding of politics and what politicians should be, for anything short of the above is nothing but greed and legitimization of oppression and exploitation, which has been our lot in Africa. The erroneous view of politics earlier highlighted can be corrected if intellectuals agree to enter the game with the right perspective and proper orientation and take it over. Why should we intentionally submit our collective destiny to a people we consider as hooligans in the first place?

So long as we think, it is trendy and noble to say we are not interested in politics, our entire lives will be left in the hands of those who want it and these are the very undeserving people who will mortgage our destiny and that of our unborn generations. As the saying goes, *‘all that is needed for evil to thrive is for good men to do nothing’*. Not being interested in politics is not being interested in one’s life, because politicians determine everything in our lives.

No doubt, there exists a strong apathy amongst the intelligentsia against the tag of being “politician”, but this stigma is baseless and counter-productive. We can be politicians and be so rightly against all odds (real and myth). The odds are no doubt great and compelling, but nothing can stand in the way of the will of the people to change. The odds generally come in the form of violence and thuggery, bribery and subversion, god-fatherism and cultism as well as other forms of aberrations, which are both malicious and daunting at once, but there is a sense in which these obstacles are being exaggerated and dreaded reaching mythological levels. This is a real and imminent challenge to the genuine, viable and capable army of the Nigerian intellectual elites, but to believe that

there is any challenge that is insurmountable in the face of will power, collective determination, and persistent effort is to believe in a myth. Interestingly, if there is anything common amongst nations that have succeeded in turning around the fate of their countries, it is the fact that at a point in time, there was a collective resolve on the part of the people to challenge all existing myths, which they eventually succeeded in shattering and their nations are the better for it today.

However, it is instructive to note that the impediment holding back people that are more deserving from politics is not just the common political orientation of Nigerians but much more excruciating is the money-centered political process of Nigeria. Huge amounts of money are required for the registration of political parties, to the cost of party forms for primary elections, to the cost of campaign, to the cost of buying the delegates at the primaries, to the cost of buying individual voters at the polling units on general elections days, and to the cost of getting a political appointment within the Executive Arm etc. The truth of the matter is that the political offices in Nigeria is now up for sale to the highest bidder and out of the reach of the common deserving folks. We choose to use the phrase 'deserving folks' because it is obvious that with the way things are, this country is not set for progress. Who should rule a country? Who should rule a State? Who should rule a Local Government and who should be making laws? Of course, the answers will be those who have led a desirably good and law-abiding life, and have the reputation of requisite knowledge and background experience about how even at least segments of the organized society works. Besides the very successful businessmen and women who are

not common, who amongst the career or professional people in Nigeria can afford the amount of money spent to buy political offices today even at the peak of their careers if they have never stolen? Only, if such a career person has a political god-father ready to bank-roll his ambition.

Which retired general, permanent secretary, judge or professor who did not steal while in office will be able to buy the nomination forms of the APC or PDP today? This is just nomination form, the cost of campaign, bribing of delegates and voters, (and the most recent dimension that Nigerian politics have taken makes money for court case to appear in the list) are all untold realities. To appreciate the extent of this monstrous reality, we take the gubernatorial race as a case study. If we keep aside the N22.5 million for APC expression of interest and nomination form, we can estimate what it takes to erect billboards in every inch of the state and funding rallies in all Local Government Areas, then the millions to bribe delegates, the cost of branded campaign vehicles, the billions distributed down the party structure to mobilize them to go out and canvas or rig for the party, the cost of securing favor from the security architecture and maybe officials of the election umpire, the average 3000 naira for vote buying at general election multiplied by an average of 500,000 voters in a gubernatorial race, then we are sure that the cost of running for the governorship office cannot be less than N5 billion as a conservative estimate. Who can save this amount of money in 35 years of service? Now, what do we expect from this governor when he or she gets into office? We may say but not all these are the official procedure except that of nomination forms and campaign expenses, we may also say

that if the forms are affordable to everybody, there will be so too many applicants such that selection becomes difficult or impossible. Reasonable as these may sound, the truth is that the so-called official procedure does not work in reality. The reality is that if a noble-minded, knowledgeable and experienced man wishes to contest and a street urchin also intends to, so long as the former hasn't got the money and the latter has it (through any means, say a god-father), the street urchin becomes the governor, after which he may come back to use his office to persecute the noble man!

On the issue of the emergence of too many contestants, as a justification for high and unaffordable cost of nomination forms, should money be the major screening factor? Is there any compelling reason why some form of examinations, public opinion poll or public perception index of interested candidates cannot be used to screen candidates and bring down the number? What is the expected lot of a society whose criteria for leadership is money except movement from bad to worse? And what is the fate of a state whose political process is as characterized above except that it will fail?

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

"You know I am not very happy with Nigeria. I have made that very clear on many occasions. Yes, Nigeria stood by us more than any nation, but you let yourselves down, and Africa and the black race very badly. Your leaders have no respect for their people. They believe that their personal interests are the interests of the people. They take people's resources and turn it into personal wealth. There is a level of poverty in Nigeria that should be unacceptable. I cannot understand why Nigerians are not more angry than they are"

**- Nelson Mandela, interview with
Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmed 2007.**

Despite being in the 21st century, the reality of the Nigerian political space is akin to that of medieval feudal lords and the commoners. In the then historic ages of empire states, the people were almost like slaves in the eyes of the rulers and the rulers were gods in the eyes of the people. Consequently, these rulers were only accountable to their desires as none could dare think of leadership accountability to the people, as they were in fact rulers and not leaders. This was by-and-large the case except may be in some few medieval religious empires.

While these was the norm around the then known world, the Greek philosophers were arguing out the shape of a form of government known as 'democracy', a supposedly people-driven and public-oriented system of government. By democracy it was hoped, that the people will have leaders who are accountable to them since they are the ones who give the mandate. This was the original purport of democracy until further instruments and features were developed to put in check, the abuse of mandate, even after it has been secured.

Now, although democracy suffered a stunted growth considering when the idea was first expounded in the Hellenistic ages up to the 21st century when it has become by-and-large, the global norm, one can say it has achieved a considerable amount of widespread maturity. However, one can hardly say that democracy has achieved its aim commensurately with the widespread acceptance it has received. It is doubtful if the lots of the people living in many democracies today is in any way better than [and in many cases even comparable to] monarchies today. Why is this so? To answer this question, as it is with other questions of appraisal, we must first delineate the parameters or key-performance-indicators against which we wish to evaluate democracy, and narrow down our evaluation to Nigeria and indeed Africa. We have now set ourselves on an endless ocean of academic exercise. But social problems are not solved through academic pedantry; they can best be approached through a common-sense perspective.

As common sense is obvious, so it is obvious that governance is about ensuring common security, health, social, and economic well-being of the people. If this is anything to go by, then democracy has failed in Nigeria, and indeed Africa.

And if democracy is to be evaluated by its own definition and structural composition, then democracy has also failed here as all its instruments from electioneering to the checkmating processes like recall and impeachment have been subverted. In a nutshell, democracy was adopted to ensure political accountability, but it has now become a legitimate means of robbing the people of their rights to genuine political agitations. The politicians now act as they choose, knowing that the people cannot [will not] hold them to account, despite being in a so-called democracy.

The next relevant question going forward is; why is it that politicians can't be held to account by the people they are either governing or representing? The immediate cause is cultural corruption that has made the people highly susceptible to subversion, but the remote cause is lack of political awareness. Indeed, it is the latter that results in the former. Yes, it is the lack of political awareness amongst Nigerians that led to the masses accepting to be bought over. You will hear them say during elections for example, as an excuse for selling their mandates for a paltry price of two thousand naira, that, *'this is the only time we can get them to listen, after the elections, we have no power over them again'*. This directly underscores the point under focus in this chapter that it is the same political ignorance that made people think they can't hold leaders to account after they have gotten to office, that made them resolve to taking their revenge [in their own pathetic estimation] by collecting bribes to vote. What is unknown to the people however is that the politicians are only spending a small fraction of the people's common resources, which they either have stolen or will steal to bribe them for vote.

If the people had known how real democracy operates, or know how to get information about the activities of the government, or they understood the gravity or enormity of the crimes and atrocities perpetrated against them by people in political offices, or they know how much of their future and those of their generations unborn has been mortgaged by politicians and understand how the power of media and international relations politics operate to check governments, if they had known all these, they would have long risen up to put the politicians in check and would perhaps not have allowed their interests and hopes to be subverted and Nigeria would have been much better for it today.

On November 27, 2007, the Daily Independent Newspaper carried an article where one Ikechukwu Amaechi, a newspaper columnist quotes an unnamed House of Representatives member friend of his as saying;

“The welfare of the Nigerian people doesn’t count on the all-important issues of governance. Most of the debates that go on in the floor of the houses are mere theatrics. Most decisions are taken during executive sessions away from the prying eyes of the people, and it is all about how to share money. If Nigerians know half of what transpire at the corridors of power, whether in the executive or legislative arms of government, there will be a revolution in this country. And that explains why people kill and maim in order to acquire power in Nigeria. Power means everything. It opens the door to the country’s till. Ironically, this enormous power comes without responsibility.”

In response to this, Muhammad Isah, in his book; *‘Islam, Nigeria, and the Quest for Justice’*, wrote:

“Nigerians do know – and this applies to scores of millions of them; the literate, half literate and the non-literate amongst them – that those who represent them in government are thieves. They know that when their presidents, governors, legislators, ministers, commissioners, and council chairmen and other sundry public office holders and their coteries build stupendous mansions, ride exotic cars, own chains of businesses, eat imported can food and drinks, fly expensive flights, go abroad to treat common cold and shopping for toiletries, and engage in other sundry acts of insanity, they do so with the money stolen from public coffers...”. The spontaneous question that comes to mind here is, if Nigerians do know what transpires at the corridors of power, why has no one raise an eyebrow, let alone start a revolution as contended by Amaechi’s friend? The simple answer is that treasury looting and all other forms of corruption by politicians have become an accepted norm among the masses such that if they had similar opportunities, they will equally loot.

The above response of Isah may seem to have succinctly captured the cause of our situation on political accountability in Nigeria, and this will be the common line of explanation out there, but the reality is a bit more complicated. That the masses can’t or won’t hold leaders accountable because they share the same corrupt mindset is true but it’s not true for the entirety of the Nigerian masses. The larger chunk of the masses is being tranquilized by ignorance. And by ignorance here, we do not merely mean lack of awareness of the existence of corruption in the corridors of power. Yes, they

may know – as it's generally accepted – that politicians and government officials are corrupt, but do they really know their extent and implication? But over and above the issue of corruption is the ignorance of their socio-political and socio-economic realities, their rights and limitations, the relevant socio-political laws, the powers and limitations of individual offices and government as a whole, the political provisions and processes, the process of revenue mobilization and allocation, the details of government day-to-day activities, the details of government budget and spending, etc. Even when the politicians went ahead to pass the *Freedom of Information* bill during Jonathan's regime, they had only fulfilled a moral obligation knowing that no civilized society exists without accountability, and that there is equally no accountability without information. However, what they are surer of is that most Nigerians will never care to know what bill has been passed, what the bills contains, and in what ways that affects their society and consequently their lives. Ask an average Nigerian graduate today about the revenue allocation from the federal government to his/her state or the budget of the state for the year, the answer is sure; '*I don't know oh*', or '*what's my business with that?*' But ask the same person the name of the pet cat of the girlfriend of any footballer or musician in any far away land and you will be sure to get an encyclopedic answer!

Between The Indolent Elephant Bull And The Smart Poachers

One may continue to wonder why the populace of a supposedly great nation will behave like this. The problem here can be perplexing but the answer is not far-fetched; we are like a tranquilized elephant. Our similitude is that of some skillful poachers and a dominant and powerful elephant bull that owns a very large and supportive expanse of vegetative territory with lots of females to protect and breed. This dominant bull unfortunately has a form of laziness and an unfettered engrossment with cuddling, which the poachers have carefully studied. The poachers capitalize on this weakness and lure the bull elephant to a cuddling frenzy. So that instead of patrolling and moving with the herds to protect its family and territory, it is otherwise engrossed in cuddling, so that while that is going on, his females and calves are being slaughtered and butchered for their tusks.

The moral lesson of the above similitude is that we are a people that are too engrossed with entertainment even at the total expense of information and knowledge. We prefer to waste all our lifetime watching sports, Nollywood, Hollywood, Bollywood, Kaniwood, Zeeworld, or playing high-definition computer simulations known as games, fun-chatting and multimedia adventuring on social media, delinquent music and party after party, and all other forms of idle pastime. While engrossed in this fickle nonsense, we are oblivious of the socio-political realities and happenings around us. We know almost nothing and care less about governance and the activities of government. The politicians have known this about us, and so they further encourage us and facilitate the means to

this social distraction, to keep us at bay. This is how they have succeeded in tranquilizing us for ages and buy themselves the freedom to loot our future and do as they please with the powers in the public office without check.

This stack and sordid reality is well illustrated during electioneering campaign, the only window of opportunity that is known to us for calling our politicians to account for their stewardship. But instead of them finding themselves on a hot seat when they climb the rostrum or mount the podium to address us on why they should not be kicked out of office, a man to whom we have handed over our lives for four years will rather imagine and pretend he is on the dance floor as an entertainer, and will suddenly discard his demigod image to display his 'shaku-shaku' skills. Why is this so? Because they know the values and understand the mentality of the people they are dealing with; entertainment, fun-seeking and nothing more.

We are also very lazy. This is what President Muhammadu Buhari was referring to back then in London when he said Nigerian youths are lazy, a statement which attracted condemnation from several quarters. But what he said was an understatement; and if we must tell ourselves the truth, most Nigerians are lazy, not just the youths. But what kind of laziness is being referred to here? Is it that we don't have people in farms tilling the soil? Is it that we don't have factory workers working round the clock for mass production? Is it that we do not have business men and women moving here and there to provide goods and services? We do. But laziness is not just in the physical sense but also in the mental sense, and our type of laziness is the mental laziness. Mental laziness is when

we can't think out-of-the-box to get practical solutions to our real problems, when we cannot engage our minds creatively and innovatively to expand our economic opportunities so that we do not have to line up in wait for stipend that the politicians use to buy up our rights to hold them to account. Mental laziness is when we deliberately avoid hard thinking and critical probing of our socio-political conditions. Mental laziness is allowing government officials to distort and misuse public procedures and instruments for their personal gains and to our own detriment while we only lament instead of making deliberate and concerted efforts to dig deeper into their exploits and confront them. Mental laziness is when we accept indirect slavery.

Closely related to our mental laziness in the chain of attitudes that held us captive to the politicians that are supposed to be serving us, is cowardice. We are supposedly free but we display all the attitudes of a captured people; captured not by foreigners, but by our own people whom we have allowed to behave as if they are invincible. We are so afraid of standing up for our rights let alone the rights of others and we will spare no opportunity to infect those who want to stand up for us with our fear and cowardice, by reminding them of all forms of consequences and dangers that lurk ahead; real and imagined. The late Fela Anikulapo Kuti has captured it succinctly in his song; *'Sorrow, Tears, and Blood'*, *"I no want die, I no fit die, I no get house, I don get house, Mama dey for house"*. These are the cowardly excuses we trump up when we allow public officials and politicians to dehumanize us and get away with it.

Our educational curriculum as a nation is another tranquilizer. Our curriculum is bereft of socio-political education and the political elites have ensured that it is kept that way. Any citizen of Nigeria on completion of secondary education should be fully aware and trained to be conscious of the socio-political environment. They should be aware of their political rights and obligations, how governance operates and its implication on their lives. Government as a subject today is only administered to students in the Arts, while the so-called civic education is only geared towards submissiveness and subjecting the citizens to the government and nothing in the direction of equipping the citizen with information and preparing them for political activism in terms of knowing their socio-political rights and how to demand for them. The masses of Nigeria have not been educated and enlightened to understand that governance is built around them and not them existing for the sake of government, that government is meant to serve them and not to rule them. That nobody or entity is above the law. That there are procedures through which anybody or entity can be brought to book on account of their actions, that the people are more powerful than any army in the world if only they know their rights and how to stand up for them.

It serves the political class that we remain tranquilized in our engrossment with fun and entertainment. It is in their interest that we continue to behave like cowards and they will do anything to ensure that the type of education we receive is that which will only help to perpetuate the vicious yoke of our enslavement. This is a very precarious situation for a nation of over 200 million people, but in the end, the slave masters

have nothing to lose as they have taken measures to immunize themselves from the colossal and eventual consequence of this state of affairs, knowing fully well that a nation that exists in this manner where the political elites have blindfolded the masses in order to pillage the country and abuse the powers of public office will definitely end up as a failed state sooner or later. Some of the cushioning and precautionary steps they have taken to fortify themselves against the imminent failure of the Nigerian state [going by the way they are running it] is to ensure citizenship through birth for their children in other choice countries, get their kids educated in Europe and America, and invest Nigeria's resources that they have stolen in expensive real estate in several cosmopolitan headquarters of the world. This they have done so that when the ship eventually sinks, they are assured of an escape strategy and a safe landing. So, it is the poor masses that will sink along with the ship.

Now this reality doesn't make Nigeria a zoo as Nnamdi Kanu delinquently put it, but it does serve as an indicator of a fragile or failing state, as Acemoglu and Robinson captured it in the preface to their 530-page book titled; *'Why Nations Fail'.....'As we write this preface, North Africa and the Middle East have been shaken by the Arab Spring started by the so-called Jasmine Revolution, which was ignited by public outrage over the self-immolation of a street vendor, Mohammed Bouazizi, on December 17, 2010. By January 14, 2011, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who ruled Tunisia since 1987 had stepped down, but far from abating, the revolutionary fervor against the rule of privileged elites had already spread to the whole of the Middle East. Hosni Mubarak who*

had ruled Egypt with a tight grip for almost thirty years, was ousted on February 11, 2011. The fates of the regimes of Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and Yemen still hang in the balance. The roots of discontent in these countries lie in their poverty. The average Egyptian has an income level of around 12 percent of the average citizen of the United States and can expect to live 10 fewer years; 20 percent of the population is in dire poverty. Though these figures are significant, they are actually quite small compared with those between the United States and the poorest countries in the world, such as North Korea, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe, where well over half the population lives in poverty. Why is Egypt so much poorer than the United States? To the Egyptians, the things that held them back include a corrupt and an ineffective state and a society where they cannot use their talents, ambition, ingenuity, and what education they can get. But they also recognize that the roots of these problems are political. All the economic impediments they face stems from the way political power in Egypt is exercised and monopolized by a narrow elite. This they understand is the first thing that needs to change. Yet in believing this, the protesters in Tahrir Square have sharply diverged from the conventional wisdom on the topic. When they reason about why a country like Egypt is poor, most academics and commentators emphasize completely different factors. Some stressed that Egypt's poverty is determined primarily by its geography; desert soil and low rainfall. Others point to cultural aspects of Egypt's culture that are inimical to economic progress. A third approach, the one dominant among economists and policy pundits is that the rulers have been applying wrong economic policies. To these academics

and pundits, the fact that Egypt has been ruled by narrow elites feathering their nests at the expense of society seems irrelevant to understanding the country's economic problems. In this book, we'll argue that Egyptians in Tahrir Square, not most academics and commentators, have the right idea. We'll show that the people's interpretation of Egyptian poverty turns out to provide a general explanation for why poor countries are poor. Whether it is North Korea, Sierra Leone, or Zimbabwe, we'll show that poor countries are poor for the same reason that Egypt is poor. Countries such as Great Britain and United States became rich because their citizens overthrew the elites who controlled power and created a society where political rights were much more broadly distributed, where the government was accountable and responsive to citizens, and where the great mass of people could take advantage of economic opportunities. We'll show that to understand why there is such inequality in the world today we have to delve into the past and study the historical dynamics of societies. We'll see that the reason that Britain is richer than Egypt is because in 1688, Britain had a revolution that transformed the politics and thus the economics of the nation. People fought for and won rights that are more political and they used them to expand their economic opportunities. The result was a fundamentally different political and economic trajectory, culminating in the Industrial Revolution." I needed to quote them extensively to drive home my point about the very situation in our country Nigeria, which the entire passage captured so succinctly.

THE DANGERS OF FAULTY ELECTORAL PRACTICES

“What about the corruption and the crimes? Your elections are like wars.” - Nelson Mandela, interview with Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmed 2007.

Nation building and development is a task for all and sundry. While the leaders or government have a responsibility and role to steer the course of state and national affairs, the followers or people have a responsibility and a role to tolerate, accept, support, follow, and in many cases, defend or champion the initiatives of the government. If the situation in a country is in any way different from what has been described above, then that country is sure to either be hovering around a point, or in a worst-case scenario, retreating as she will invariably be taking a step forward and two steps backward. But we can be sure that definitely, such a nation will not progress, and the reason is not far-fetched. If the public will not support the initiatives and actions of the government, they will continue to unnecessarily criticize, antagonize, sabotage, and openly disobey or form bulwarks in the way of the government. The government in turn will continue to engage all machineries and instruments of power at its disposal to politically conquer and subjugate the

people; it will be a case of ruling a people as against leading them, this will heat up the polity, create fear, take away freedom, civil liberty and consequently creativity, and divert the creative energy of the nation; both the government and the people, to socio-political affairs and resultantly neglecting the socio-economic matters of development and public well-being as the level of mutual suspicion will be high. No genuine initiative of the government will be welcomed and all genuine effort coming from the people will be seen as a potential threat in disguise. This is how the nation becomes locked down in a cesspit.

Legitimacy gives the aura of credence, acceptance and support a government receives from the people in order to avoid the situation described above. For a government to be accorded legitimacy, it must be a representation of the will of the people, in other words, it should be a government that the people have chosen or accepted to be in power. And people in this sense, refers to the majority of the people as there can be no universal common ground of opinion as far as socio-politics is concerned. This question of legitimacy has been a serious bane in the politics and governance of Nigeria and indeed Africa. As a continent, Africa has passed from the abyss of colonization to the bondage of military dictatorship, and now only to find herself in the deceit of democracy. Without necessarily providing any empirical or academic evidence, one can say almost without fear of contradiction that the only reason democracy gained a widespread acceptance around the world today is because in essence, it is meant to ensure that the people have a hand in the choice of those who govern and represent them. But when the democratic process

does not fulfill even this most basic essence, whereby it is being maneuvered in a way that the people's choice no longer counts in the emergence of their rulers and representatives, then democracy becomes nothing but cheating, manipulation and deceit, which is the case in Nigeria today. By-and-large, political office holders and sometimes whole governments lack legitimacy because they are in office against the will of the people.

Before an illustration of lack of legitimacy in Nigerian politics, let's quickly look at some of the consequences of illegitimate governance on the nation like self-help, polarization, and underdevelopment. The common reaction of the masses, albeit the politically mobilized bodies, to an illegitimate government or one they think has usurped their mandate is normally not to go back to sleep or wait for another four years like the majority of the masses, but to resort to self-help by taking the laws into their hands at any opportunity they could and in many instances causing severe damages to the nation, while in their own estimation, they are only trying to make the government unpopular. Nigerians have witnessed instances of some group or the others claiming to '*make the country ungovernable for the government*'. For instance, there is no gainsaying that many were not happy when Yahaya Bello controversially became the Governor of Kogi State, and the resultant outcome was that his well-intended screening exercise of civil servants was botched calculatedly to the detriment of the fragile civil-service economy of the state, which made him seriously unpopular. Those behind the sabotage of that exercise may or may not have achieved their aim, but invariably, the damage of that singular act will continue to

have domino effect in the State.

During Jonathan's regime, there were a number of narratives on the Boko Haram insurgency. One of the popular narratives is that they were being sponsored by the enemies and detractors of the Jonathan's administration in order to discredit his government. At some point, Buhari was accused of Boko Haram sponsorship as a protest against his defeat at the polls by Jonathan at the 2011 polls. He had to deny that threatening court action, (https://youtu.be/ob6Esl8_8Qs). That narrative is obviously faulty because, Jonathan is gone today but Nigeria continues to suffer from the menace of Boko Haram. Now under Buhari's regime, the havoc that has been wreaked by herdsmen is seriously unheard of. Meanwhile there were voices of dissent that the North skillfully rigged the election against the sitting President in the election that brought Buhari to power. The accusation about malpractices was so rife, with a feeling of disenchantment in a section of the populace, which was symbolized by Minister Peter Orubebe's exuberant outburst at the collation center. Thanks to God for the better judgment of the then President Jonathan, who conceded defeat. The present regime has also claimed that the killer herdsmen are being 'sponsored' in order to discredit the government, and if this turns out to be true, then the point becomes clear about what resort to self-help could do in destroying a nation just in order to discredit a government. This illustration does not in any way conclude that the aforementioned governments were illegitimate, but rather, that when people deem a government to be illegitimate, they can resort to self-help. For references on both accusations, see <https://www.thecable.ng/>

pdp-insists-apc-buhari-behind-boko-haram and <https://dailypost.ng/2019/01/pdp-reacts-buhari-govt-claim-herdsmen-boko-haram-sponsorship/>.

Polarization is another colossal outcome of illegitimacy in politics. Polarization can be seen in a nation divided against itself in that there must be some people, albeit few, who will support the government regardless of how it emerged either because they benefit from the government being in power or that it serves their ego and sentiments for the government to be in power. Thus, polarization is seen when a regime has its staunch but few supporters up against the dissent of the majority of the people. Polarization is also seen when a government tries to whip up the sentiments of its region, religion, or ethnicity into a formidable and fanatical support base as a buffer against popular opposition, thereby dividing the people or country along the lines of religion, region, and ethnicity. An interesting example of this is the case of the United States under Donald Trump. Trump under the Republican flag, was able to skillfully and successfully whip up the sentiments of certain demography in the United States to snatch power in a way that is still being suspected as manipulated or rigged. The consequence of this is a polarized United States where Americans are divided amongst themselves in a way that is unprecedented since the civil war. With the republicans, white Caucasians, pre-dominant Christians, and rural Americans on the one hand against the democrats, other religious groups and moderate Christians, other demography and urban Americans on the other hand, the country was held to a standstill. This disunity under Trump seriously undermined the might and reputation of the United

States in the international arena. It came to a point when the government was almost shut down over the Mexican border wall. All this to the spectacle of her traditional foe like Russia which many in the United States have accused of rigging the American election in favor of Trump because they knew he will mess up America from the inside. Let us not forget to mention the risk in the face of other foes like China, Iran, Cuba, North Korea and hydra-headed network of danger from the Middle East. Now if polarization could deal such a lethal blow to the United States, one of the most developed economies and democracies in the world, one can only imagine the extent of damage it can and has been doing to the less developed democracies of Africa, including Nigeria. Today, as we experience in Nigeria, polarization has become so pandemic, that when the tenure of a serving public servant expires or his/her retirement is due, the official procedure of the next most senior officer taking over will be protested vehemently by the religious and ethnic kindred of the outgoing one if the new one is not from the same demography, as though it is their birth right or it is a statutory provision that a particular region must occupy that position. When a public officer is to be prosecuted in line with the laws of the land, the agitation, reaction and protest is not whether or not he committed the crime, but sadly, which region or religion does he belong to. This is a very dangerous situation for a nation to find itself, where nothing is viewed from the national perspective, but rather from narrow religious, regional, or sectional interest, and this situation is the direct result of political polarization.

The foregoing does not in any way suggest that the existence of political polarization anywhere and as experienced in

Nigeria is solely caused by the illegitimate ascension to power by governments. The point however, is that illegitimacy of government will lead to political polarization, which portends serious implications as it predisposes the nation to threats both from outside and within.

The economy is always the first to receive the ripple effects of political struggles and stalemates as there is always an economic setback that occurs from political crises. If the government does not boycott vital projects that in the long run may potentially empower its perceived enemies, the antagonists of the administration will keep sabotaging the little the government is willing to do. In another vein, illegitimacy leads to a desperate uncompromising effort on the part of regimes to perpetuate themselves in power by installing their puppets and stooges to carry on their power and cover their backs to avoid vendettas and probe. This perpetual cycle continues and festers until the whole government machinery is fully in the grip of just a few cohorts and cronies. The effect of this is that they will continue to loot the public wealth mercilessly knowing fully well they are secured. This is what has resulted in the plundering of underdeveloped nations today. There is therefore the need for an electoral process and practice that ensure that the rights, mandates and choices of the people are respected, as the consequences of the absence of such process and practice portends great danger to the polity.

In view of the above, how much can we say of the electoral process and practice of Nigeria today in terms of ensuring political legitimacy? In the first place, our politics is money-based as has been discussed in the previous chapter.

The very people who are detested and abhorred by the masses for stealing and looting their commonwealth that would have ensured better healthcare delivery, education, pipe-borne water supply, electricity, security and other social amenities, the very people they accuse of being responsible for their plight and penury are still the only ones by-and-large that can afford the financial requirement for most electoral offices including governorship and presidency. So, from the onset the process has lost legitimacy in eyes of the ordinary people.

Secondly, '*godfatherism*' has become a serious factor in the Nigerian political space to such an extent that only few can dream of getting to any political office without the anointment of the powers-that-be. Who are these powers-that-be? Money-bags and political heavyweights, mostly former office holders now turned kingmakers. The same people, whom the people have been up against - albeit as powerless as in their hearts - as enemies of the masses, are the same people that choose those whom citizens will eventually vote for. The level of socio-political disdain is such that such candidates can only have legal legitimacy and not social legitimacy.

Another big obstacle in the way of the people's choice is delegates' primary election. Here, a pre-selected few, mostly hungry-men will be bought by the highest bidder, camped [or locked-up] somewhere, fed like chickens and monitored to ensure that they vote for their sponsors. In some cases, some of these so-called delegates can neither read nor write their own names. I had a personal experience as a gubernatorial aspirant where delegates who could not write either our names or serial numbers assigned to us were directed to draw

number of strokes corresponding to the aspirant's number! The outcome of this shameful and illicit transaction is what is presented to the people as candidates of the party for vote in the general elections. Technically therefore, the people really have no choice. This autocracy in democracy is demonstrated by the bitter war of attrition between political office holders and party stalwarts over who controls the party convention in order to be the one that decides who the delegates in the primary elections are. In order to ensure that the people's choice really matters from the onset, the option A4 was introduced for example in some party constitution like the All Progressive Congress so as to subject the primaries to open voting as it is done in other climes like the United States, but history has borne witness to the scorched-earth battle that took place between Adams Oshiomole, the party chairman and several governors over issues on either the party or governor's choice of candidate, or the adoption of direct or indirect primary which is still raging unabated till today. This is not in any way a reflection of people's choice, it is king anointment.

With the candidates imposed on the electorates, our elections have been rendered into mere recycling or choosing between the devil and the deep blue sea. If the electoral process is such that can guarantee the voters choice, then the nation can move one step away from illegitimate governments. But rather than this, our electoral process is severely compromised in several respects. The electoral body acts like a mediocre actor in a comical movie where it conducts elections that it sometimes declares 'inconclusive' itself or are routinely challenged as being highly marred with so many anomalies and irregularities from filing of papers to counting

of ballots to collation of results etc., to the extent that some of the candidates who the people have voted for and were sworn in were later disqualified by the Judiciary up to the Supreme Court and the candidates the people did not vote for were declared winners. This according to Sam Omaseyi of TVC News is '*Courtocracy*' and not '*Democracy*', as it is the court that now decides who goes to a political office as against the people's decision. No thanks to the ineptitude of the electoral umpire and the shenanigans of the political parties and their candidates.

Finally, the high level of insecurity, thuggery and rigging that accompany the nation's electoral process is the most visible alert that things will soon fall apart, if remedial actions are not quickly taken. Elections are now nothing but wars fought with the mantra of 'no retreat, no surrender'. The 2019 elections in Ekiti, Kogi and Bayelsa were quick reminders of war scenes, but many elections in the country are equally appalling. See <https://punchng.com/kogi-bayelsa-polls-and-democratic-reversal-in-nigeria/>. Gone are the days where street urchins are engaged as thugs, now it is the government security apparatus including the military that are now allegedly used to chase away and murder voters and rig elections, See <https://m.guardian.ng/news/how-fake-police-overpowered-66241-officers-in-kogi-beyelsa/>. Thus, if one follows sequentially from the last five paragraphs, it inevitably takes us back to the reality of a state at the risk of falling apart on account of political illegitimacy.

ZERO NATIONALISM AND HIGH DIVISIVE JINGOISM

“What do young Nigerians think about your leaders and their country and Africa? Do you teach them history? Do you have lessons on how your past leaders stood by us and gave us large amounts of money? You know I hear from Angolans and Mozambicans and Zimbabweans how your people opened their hearts and their homes to them. I was in prison then, but we know how your leaders punished western companies who supported apartheid.” - Nelson Mandela, interview with Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmed 2007.

To understand and sufficiently appreciate the role of nationalism in the survival, growth and advancement of a nation, one instructive question to ask would be; what is a nation? To appreciate this approach, let us look at the definition of nationalism. Simply put, nationalism is identification with one’s own nation and support for its interest especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interest of other nations. But, taking a more detailed look, Wikipedia defines nationalism as; an ideology that promotes the interest of a particular nation [as in a group of people] especially with the aim of gaining and maintaining the nation’s sovereignty [self-governance] over its homeland. Nationalism holds that

its nation should govern itself, free from outside interference [self-determination], that a nation is a natural and ideal basis for a polity, and that the nation is the only rightful source of political power. It further aims to build a single nation identity based on shared social characteristics such as culture, ethnicity, geographic location, language, politics [or the government], religion, traditions and beliefs in a shared singular history, and to promote national unity or solidarity. Nationalism therefore seeks to preserve and foster a nation’s traditional culture, and it encourages pride in national achievements and it is closely linked to patriotism.

We took the pain on the above definition in order to identify what a nation is and to demonstrate how it is connected to nationalism at once. And, from the above, it can be aptly summed, that a nation is the largest collection of people with a distinctly shared origin, and or geography, and or ethnicity, and or culture/religion/tradition, and or political history. It is very important to demystify these factors of national identity as we proceed to discuss the dearth of nationalism in Nigeria. There is no doubt that patriotism and the reflections of the national spirit or nationalism as captured in those definitions, is in near absence in Nigeria and undoubtedly likewise, is the fact that one particular ray of thought amongst the many factors that are responsible for the escalation of this socio-political malady dangerously appears to be apt without thorough insight. It could be deduced that Nigeria is not a true nation in the real sense of that word. Having been carved out on paper and created in Berlin; it reflects too much heterogeneity for a smooth, harmonious and progressive existence as an entity for cohesive national life. People of distinctly different

languages, background, history, culture, religion, and geography bunched up together on a piece of paper in a distant land for the mere sake of ease of administration and exploitation by the colonial masters. Viewed from this perspectives, Nigeria is simply an instrument of business interest and since the business is over it has outlived its usefulness and should thus be dissolved, for so long as it remains, it symbolizes nothing but a contraption.

Truly, the above thought appears so unassailable that one may easily fall prey to it, for actually, looking at the European nations for instance, one can argue that they achieved greatness as a result of the high spirit of nationalism and hence patriotism in them, which is in turn consequent upon their existence as homogeneous nations of distinct tribes, the Englishmen are in England, the Frenchmen in France, the Germans in Germany, the Greeks in Greece, the Latin speaking tribes in Italy, the Russians in Russia, and so on and so forth, such that if one is to make a comparison of Europe with Nigeria, the whole continent of Europe will be one country, like Nigeria with different tribes and ethnic groups. One can argue further that if they had been separate tribes like we have in Nigeria, the direction of pull of their agitation energy would have been centrifugal [pulling apart] and not centripetal [pulling together] thus explaining why true nationalism and patriotism are scarce commodities in Nigeria.

The above argument appears plausible on the surface, but there are three key points not considered in it, thus making it a surface argument. One of the perilous consequences of the existence of many homogeneous tribal nations as states in a particular geography is bitter tribal wars. The Europeans for

centuries battled themselves in a mad competition for ethnocentric superiority fueled by nationalism. The rivalry between Europeans was so tense that Europe became too small a stage for a show down. Consequently, they exported their tribal wars to the rest of the world in the form of the mad race to colonize the rest of the world, and thus the scramble for Africa. The climax of this tribal wars is what culminated into the world's biggest disasters; the first and second world wars. Now European nations are able to survive and overcome many disasters not just out of sheer luck but mainly due to their human capital resourcefulness in the form of scientific, administrative, economic, and political knowledge. Their tremendous leap ahead of the rest of the world in terms of civilizational advancement provided a buffer, so that despite the huge setback occasioned by the wars, Europe still stands tall today. In fact, Europe was so advanced that were it not for the wars, that continent would perhaps have been mistaken for another planet on earth.

Seeing the havoc their tribal quarrelsomeness was wreaking on their peaceful coexistence, the Europeans inevitably resolved to unite under a unifying confederation called the European Union. Now the obvious deduction from this is that if the tribal nations that constitute Nigeria were to exist as sovereign entities, what happened in Europe would happen here still, only that in this case, they may not be able to survive as viable entities fighting each other. Another important point to note is the level of civilizational advancement of the European nations compared to the Nigerian tribal nations as at the time they were integrated into one country - Nigeria. With the different ethnic groups in Nigeria as

independent nations today, we will probably not survive the international realities of today's world. The Europeans used to live under one empire or the other and it took centuries of efforts, struggle and hard work, scientific and technological breakthroughs, national cultivation, economic ingenuity and military advancement, to attain the state where they could exist as viable international entities and sovereign nations. We back here in Africa have not reached that level of comprehensive sophistication comparable with the European nations of the late 19th and early 20th century and this explains why they could overrun and colonize us. As of now when the whole world has become a single global political stage, it will be difficult for us to close up of our backwardness and attain global eminence. If we are to continue to exist the same way we were before colonization that made our colonization relatively easy, as patches of tribal territories, Africa will become another balkanized region worse than anything we already experienced, as predatory powers in the international community will incite and ignite conflicts to enable them supply arms and plunder our natural resources more than they are already doing. What is happening in South Sudan speaks volume, and the Nigerian civil war between 1967 and 1970 is another good illustration of how the world became divided in support of both sides of the conflict. Their major interest on both sides, was the new-found oil.

It is this foresight that made the great pan-African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, to call for a single united African state as opposed to even the individual countries we have today, at the first Organization of African Unity (OAU),

conference held at Addis Ababa (1963). The call was to enable Africa to better face the harsh challenges and realities of the present world and stand up to its enemies who have just withdrawn from open colonization but surely have not withdrawn their predatory interest from Africa.

Nigeria became a serious entity to reckon with in the international community and not just in Africa, obviously because of its size and composition. After all, our common political history as a colony of one government is enough heritage to bind us as a nation, for if the different regions in Nigeria now would have been made sovereign nations, they would have been nothing more than what they were [in reality] before amalgamation; mere protectorates. The point is; Nigeria is better the way it is as a single nation than in its constituent parts.

What makes a nation great? Is it its human or material resources? It goes without saying that it is the human resources. And when it comes to the human resources, who make a nation great, is it the government or its people. This is where we should note that it is the people that make a nation great by their love and sense of ownership for their nation, by their pride and sense of belonging in their nation, and by their spirit of valor and sacrifice for their nation. All these are what culminate into the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. It is the nation first and individual last and in extreme cases of nationalism and patriotism, there is even no individual in the practical sense of nationhood, it is the nation and the nation alone, the individual does not exist exclusive of the nation. Hence it is the people's willingness to pursue a course and live a life-style and principle that lead to the greatness of their nation that is

the major factor behind the greatness of all great nations.

Europe achieved its greatness and world-dominance due to the sense of patriotism of the citizens who were willing to cooperate with the government and make untold sacrifices for the sake of their nation. This was seen not just in their military who go into battles with the belief that even when they die, their lives continue so long as their country exists, but also in the public servants as doctors, judges, teachers, and policemen who believe the greatness or fall of their nation depends on their own very action. And above all, when any of these citizens rise to power as politicians, it becomes a golden opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism. The same goes for the United States where patriotism is at its height, the Russians, the Canadians and Australians. The Asians followed suite and you can see patriotism in the Chinese, Japanese, and the Indians. The latest examples of patriotism and nationalism are the United Arab Emirates and the Qataris.

The case of Nigeria on the other hand is an irony, where the level of patriotism and national solidarity is so dismally poor that when the word Nigeria is mentioned, what comes to the minds and even the lips of the citizens, depending on who and where they are, is shame, scorn, disdain, mockery, or a feeling of pessimism and lack of hope. At the macroscopic level, there exists no indication or demonstration of public zest and agitation of national and patriotic concerns. All forms of internal struggle and politicking are devoid of national objectives and patriotic concerns. There is a dearth of national conscience, and where it exists, all forms of divisive affiliation have taken precedence and priority over the sense of patriotism and nationhood. The conscience and loyalty of

Nigerians by-and-large is being buried in all forms of partisanship, ethnic jingoism and religious or sectarian bias. So that any Nigerian is certainly more Muslim or Northern than he/she is Nigerian or as the case may be more Southern/Eastern or Christian than he/she is Nigerian.

At the microscopic level, our soldiers may be sacrificed on the battle ground since they have no choice, but the top military officers and national security advisers will divert defense funds for their personal use and leave the poor, helpless and defenseless citizens of the country to be slaughtered like chickens, alongside the young soldiers, many of whom only enlisted in the army due to poverty and unemployment. <https://qz.com/africa/553028/nigeria-will-arrest-its-ex-security-chief-for-2-billion-arms-fraud-while-boko-haram-ran-riot/>. Many of our police officers cannot ignore the smallest and most tattered currency notes of naira just to carry out any service for once, let alone engage mere thieves. <https://guardian.ng/news/police-extortion-was-our-biggest-challenge-during-five-weeks-of-lockdown-nigerians-lament/>. Our security men will allow literally anything to pass for any sum of money and very few of them is ready to die for the country. The arms used by bandits and herdsmen are being smuggled around either through the connivance or complacency of our security men. Which should we talk about next? Is it the teachers and lecturers who demand bribes and sex (sex for marks) from students to allow malpractice knowing fully well that in the end the nation's human capital is going to comprise of quacks and mediocres? <https://youtu.be/FAxG8F9sX58>. Is it parents who are paying for their children to buy examination question papers? Is it the judges who condescend to subversion of

the law and give away justice to the highest bidder? <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/05/justice-for-sale-how-some-retired-and-serving-judges-senior-lawyers-pervert-justice/>. Or is it the medical personnel whose embezzlement in the hospitals and health facilities has cost the lives of many and further endangering the lives of many more. No nation can continue to survive if things continue this way.

The politicians or our so-called rulers are the worst. They are rulers indeed; nothing but thieves who have rigged themselves to the corridors of power only so they can plunder the nation. And, it looks to me that the domino effect of lack of patriotism started from the door steps of the politicians and rulers of the country as the civil servants and security personnel may be carrying out their orders or acting in cahoots with them.

Our myopic mindset about what constitutes progress and a good life is taking a serious toll on our national and individual progress. Richness is when our nation is strong, united, and viable even if we may not have much in terms of material possession individually. Because a strong and viable nation will not only ensure prosperity for its citizens but also attract people from other parts of the world to come and also contribute their resourcefulness and resources, just like we go to Dubai to spend our money on shopping, India for health services, UK, US, and Malaysia [even Ghana these days] for education. On the other hand, poverty is when our nation is underdeveloped, disunited, insecure, and dirty even if we have billions of dollars as individuals. We will never be safe and free, we will never be respected outside, and we will never have peace of mind.

THE SOCIAL INDICES

WEAK INSTITUTIONS AND POWERFUL INDIVIDUALS

The operational levers of any organized society either as a nation or a state, are its institutions. A nation or state has its essence, existence and direction defined by its socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic institutions and thus for a nation or state to survive and progress, it must have, viable, strong and functional institutions, which will serve as interphase between the state and individuals, and between individuals and individuals. Institutions are the way society is structured to run and the instrument that ensures that it runs smoothly. Going by the functional and operational paradigm of the individual and society, since the individual cannot exist without the society and the society can well flourish without a particular individual, it thus follows that the society which is common to many different individuals and plays host to many individuals exists as an entity on its own, independent of any individual in order to ensure a harmonious, coordinated and orderly communal existence. The various forms in which the society exists as an entity independent of the individual are what are known as institutions.

Without institutions, there will be no society as the earth surface will be simply pieces of geographies occupied and exploited by individuals. There will be so much disorderliness, chaos, and backwardness such that it is impossible for life to

exist. Consequently, there will neither be nations, states, nor countries. Nations progress when state institutions are not just in existence but are stronger than the individuals so as to prevent state apparatus from falling into the selfish hands of individuals, or to immunize the state against being thrown into disarray or endangered by the action of one or some individual(s). This is another obvious area of malady of the Nigerian state as it has an array of very weak institutions and very powerful individuals.

According to Geoffrey Martin Hodgson, in the *Journal of Economic Issues* of March 2006, all human societies are characterized by more or less complex and overlapping networks of regular social interactions and practices. Whether economic, political or cultural, such repeated interactions require agreed and predictable rules – ways of doing things; such sets of rules constitute institutions. Language, for example, can be understood as an institution, constituted by the rules governing the use of sounds for meanings and communication, likewise, systems of marriage or burial are institutions, which vary greatly over time and place, their specific forms being shaped by the rules, which govern them. Unemployment insurance systems, relations between genders or age groups, educational practices and provision, and labour markets are also governed by rules, or institutional arrangements. Economic activity – whether silent barter, the operation of stock markets, the conditions for opening a new business or obtaining credit – are all shaped by ‘the rules of the game’ (North, 1990) which forbid some forms of behavior and encourage others and the form which such rules take may either hinder or promote growth. Politics is also profoundly influenced by rules, which

steer political behavior in different directions, consider the contrasts between politics in federal and unitary systems, or between presidential and parliamentary systems, or between proportional representation and first-past-the-post electoral systems – all of which structure politics and distribute power in different ways. Institutions can be formal or informal; formal institutions are normally established and constituted by binding laws, regulations and legal orders, which prescribe what, may or may not be done. Informal institutions, on the other hand, are constituted by conventions, norms, values and accepted ways of doing things, whether economic, political or social; these are embedded in traditional social practices and culture, which can be equally binding. So, for example, laws, which grant, recognize and protect individual land ownership establish formal institutions governing property rights in land, whereas communal systems of land tenure may be thought of as informal, embodying rules, which have been established by custom and convention and do not permit private ownership, purchase or sale. Both institutional arrangements have different implications – institutions which ensure strong property rights in land (or anything else for that matter) may enhance productivity by enabling owners to use their property to obtain credit and inputs, but may also deepen inequality, (by giving rise to landlessness, for example). The institution of communal tenure, on the other hand, may guarantee access to land for subsistence, but may not promote growth through increased productivity. Likewise, formal political institutions – the rules expressed in constitutions and electoral laws, for instance, or in the separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary – are supposed to set the rules about

political behavior, the use of legitimate power and authority, decision-taking and patterns of governance; but there are also informal political institutions – patron-client relations, old boy networks, *guanxi* in China, for instance – which embody private forms of power and influence, and which may operate behind, between and within the formal institutions, hence substantially influencing how public power is used to make or prevent decisions that benefit some and put others into disadvantage. Nonetheless, institutions are best thought of as durable social rules and procedures, formal or informal, which structure the social, economic and political relations and interactions of those affected by them.

Writing on how weak institutions plague fragile states, in the April 4th edition of Vanguard online, Adewale Kupoluyi, writes: “William Easterly is a Professor of Economics at the New York University, who in a 2006 publication; *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Harm and So Little Good*’, enunciated that, fragile states are plagued by two factors, namely: political identity fragmentation and weak national institutions in their development. According to him, states with poor institutions have negative effects on growth and public policy implementation”. Relying on this line of argument, what any serious democracy should strive for should be the development of a state where institutions are stronger than individuals or persons, no matter how powerful. What usually transpires in the Nigerian public affairs tends to suggest the opposite.

Just few examples will suffice. The aftermath of an announcement by a one-time Inspector-General of Police; Ibrahim Idris, ordering the immediate withdrawal of all police

officers attached to political office holders, Very Important Persons, (VIPs), and prominent individuals in the country and the failure to bring such lawful instruction into reality signaled the weak nature of state institutions in the country. VIPs in this context, refer to notable figures such as federal, state and local government officials, traditional rulers, politicians and celebrities, among others. According to the police, assigning close protection to professionals or executive protection of specialists to the VIPs, is well intended in order to shield them from the high possibility of crime and criminality pervading the land such as kidnapping, suicide bombers, armed robbery, political violence and assault, among others. To the police, the level of the risk would determine, which individual VIP would receive close protection because it is assumed that the role they play in society is so critical that they cannot be allowed to carry on their business unprotected.

Can the nation afford to allocate such officers to VIPs without negatively affecting normal police operations? The Police Service Commission once lamented that more than 150,000 policemen were attached to VIPs and unauthorized persons in the country, out of about the 400,000 police officers and men in the entire Nigeria Police Force.

Hence, with the deployment, disproportionate number of the nation’s policemen are engaged in core police duties of protecting lives and ensuring peace while larger proportion relative to the number of the VIPs are busy providing personal security to ‘prominent people’ on guard duties. It means that some prominent people in the society have more policemen protecting them while the bulk of the work for members of the force rests on protecting the majority. The standard

recommendation by the United Nations Organization is that there should be 340 police officers per 100,000 people and minimum police strength of 220 per 100,000 people. In Nigeria, citizen-police ratio with a high population of about 200 million people stands at one police officer for every 500 citizens, meaning that we are far behind the prescribed standards, even where almost one third of the Force are not engaged in VIP operation.

Aside from the shortage of personnel caused by such indiscriminate deployments, some of the policemen that should have been distinguished men and women have been turned into servitude. What we see is usually photographs on social media, showing police officers carrying bags for wives of politicians and officers holding umbrellas over foreigners by shielding them from the sun. Not only that, some beneficiaries regard having police escorts or orderlies as a symbol of prestige and would go to any length to ensure that they always have such officers at their beck and call. The officers in turn get special allowances, accommodation, attend high class parties and eat special delicacies with their bosses. I often see some of them whenever I travel when they fly business class with their principals.

In some cases, these personnel have been accused of being used as hatchet-men by their pay masters as well as using them to settle political scores and deal with their opponents, contrary to what they should ordinarily do. This is aside from all manner of alleged illegal activities ranging from extortions, unlawful detention, among others that have continued to earn the Force bad reputation and image. It is because of these reasons that many Nigerians are of the view that

the deployment of personnel to important personalities was purely informed by mere ego and revenue accruing to the Force at the expense of their primary duty of safeguarding lives and properties of all. A senator once accused top police officers of making money illegally from the deployment of their men for such duties.

This abuse and rot are not strictly limited to the Nigeria Police Force. In a short video, which went viral sometimes ago, the Minister of Interior, Mr. Abdulrahman Dambazau, was seen seated in his flowing white kaftan and looking as if he could not be bothered as his security escort, allegedly an officer of the Department of State Services, was seen religiously cleaning his shoes with seeming zeal at a public function. While the orderly was cleaning Dambazau's shoes, his service pistol was protruding loosely from under his jacket!

How far could the IGP's tall order had gone? We recall that in 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari directed those police personnel attached to unauthorized persons and VIPs be withdrawn and deployed to confront the many security challenges plaguing the nation. Thereafter, police authorities commenced the implementation of the withdrawal order, but the exercise was eventually stalled. Before then, IGP Solomon Arase had tried to withdraw the cops attached to dignitaries, but the order was disregarded and years after, police officers were still copiously seen guarding these powerful individuals. When Arase took over from Mohammed Abubakar, one of his first assignments was to order for the withdrawal of such police officers, but the order was also violated, again. Before him was Ogbonna Onovo, who had similarly given the same directive, but was not obeyed. Hafiz Ringim, who took

over from Onovo also tried to enforce the order but failed. His successor, Mohammed Abubakar also declared that police personnel should be withdrawn from individuals but the directive was also never complied with.

Later, Idris had insisted that there was the need to deploy officers to schools in the north-east, to prevent a recurrence of the students' kidnapping, hence, the justification for the renewed call. Already, a symptom of failure was lurking around, as the IGP himself was foot-dragging and recanted his earlier order for the withdrawal of police personnel, adding that a new date in April had been set as deadline for the directive to be carried out. He further disclosed that interested persons could apply for re-validation through the Commissioner of Police of the State they are domiciled before the expiration of the new date. The IGP equally ordered that all task forces set up to carry out the order stand down pending a fresh announcement to be made.

A situation where people, who served as governors and ministers, some years back, still go about with their police security details is totally wrong, ridiculous and unacceptable, especially in a security-challenged environment like ours. It does not happen in sane climes. Why should individuals be more powerful than institutions of the state? The truth is that the nation cannot be battling with the upsurge of serious crimes such as rape, kidnapping, armed robbery, abductions, assassinations and other homicidal crimes and at the same time, coping with a terrible self-imposed shortage of police manpower. Beyond this release-and-withdrawal syndrome, a more enduring way towards a better secured country and its people is to have a well-funded, more responsive and

adequately empowered police that can truly protect not only the powerful few, but indeed all Nigerians.

It goes without saying, that the illustration given above using the police force is only a metaphor for the rest of Nigeria's weak and feeble institutions where one person or a gang controls a national political party, where an individual pockets the whole judiciary, where a single politician dictates to the National Assembly, where one individual can crumble a bank, where a few elements run the entire armed forces and intelligence agencies like their backyards, and where some selected few are popularly above the law. These are no doubt symptomatic of a feeble and fragile state.

The January 30th Edition of the online PM News platform carried the submission of a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Democracy Development (CDD), Prof. Jibrin Ibrahim, that the greatest challenge facing Nigerian democracy was weak institutions. According to him, it is not an exaggeration to say that Nigerian parties, which are one of the democratic institutions, are weak because they do not practice internal democracy. Ibrahim said that the situation had made the political parties not to have the belief, values and practice that would contribute to building democracy in the country. *"The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) sometime ago declared that at least 18 of the registered political parties in Nigeria are operating with invalid national executive committees whose tenures had expired. Virtually all parties have very little respect for internal democracy; that is to say that they do not conduct their internal affairs based on the principles enunciated in their constitutions and rules. More so, party officials and candidates for elections are not elected in*

accordance with the rules of the game and party conventions become occasions in which governors and godfathers simply impose candidates,” he said.

Ibrahim said that the lack of internal party democracy weakened internal coherence of most political parties and created a situation where the judiciary became the arbiter “*of who the candidates are rather than delegates*”. He said that another reality in the political field was that political ‘godfathers’ who used money and violence to control the political process operated many political parties. He added that the politicians often decided on party nominations and campaign outcomes, and that when candidates tried to steer an independent course, violence became an instrument to deal with them.

CHAPTER 8

WIDESPREAD INJUSTICE AND A COMPROMISED JUSTICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

The strength and viability of a state is not only a function of its arsenal of either military might or foreign reserve, neither is it deduced from its size. All these parameters are only instrumental in external defense and economic pursuit. The real problem of state failure and fragility is more internal with respect to its constituent, constitutional, integration and other socio-political issues, one of which is its laws and judicial strength.

Nations and states are as strong as their laws, legal settings and judicial system. If we leave aside the issue of the Nigerian borrowed laws, the problem of insufficiency of law, the weakness and porosity of the available laws, the inefficient and imbalanced judicial system, the archaic justice delivery system are serious threats. Where laws are weak or insufficient, and the system of legal administration is flawed, insecurity, unrest, economic exploitation, political oppression and social degradation will become rife. Consequently, the level of dissent, agitation and lack of patriotism will predispose the state to all forms of divisive shock, as it is with Nigeria today, and worst still, this situation precipitates divisiveness and lack of patriotism. Pervasive hatred, rancor and acrimony from the citizens towards the state is worse than an invading army.

Aside glaring issues in the Nigerian constitution, majority of Nigeria's body of laws – where they are not borrowed – are enacted by decree. Many Acts, including that of the Police Act are many decades old and no longer in tune with either the practical realities of the country or general policing developments in the modern world. Due to the lack of efficacy and in some cases absence of relevant laws, public office holders have become fond of reckless actions that either threaten the unity and well-being of the nation or portend long-term economic risks.

In all these, nothing could be worse than a legislature that is mainly characterized by self-serving politicians, who merely focus on enriching themselves, protecting or pursuing their narrow political interest, to the detriment of the poor masses who they are there to represent. By-and-large, this is the kind of legislature that Nigeria has. This arm of government, has presented itself as one irony of fate to Nigeria. They are supposed to be the bastion of the nation's democracy, public welfare and national development, by making and amending laws and carrying out oversight functions on the executive machinery of government, but by their actions they have become parasitical to the nation. They – according to a former governor of the Central Bank – consume a quarter of the nation's resources, yet the level of productivity is not commensurate. The attention of the typical Nigerian legislator is on how to enrich him or herself, or cement his or her political alliance and interest. Many of them are former state or federal executives and fugitives from law who merely went to the senate for political protection. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/222275-lawyers-accuse->

[fugitive-nigerian-senator-threats-life.html](https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/222275-lawyers-accuse-fugitive-nigerian-senator-threats-life.html). Consequently, all the laws they will pass will be far from being in the interest of the nation but definitely in their own interest and that of their allies and families. Lekan Sote in the Punch of 23 January 2019 affirmed this stating that, *"though they are elected to make laws for the good governance of Nigeria, they rather legislate for their personal purposes"*. <https://punchng.com/what-nigerian-legislators-do/>. In the end, the country is left with weak and inadequate laws.

The article by Fifehan Ogunde; *'How Much Does Legislation Cost Nigerians?'* in Stears Business magazine of 15th Oct, 2019 provides a useful insight. Nigeria reportedly has the second highest-paid federal legislators in the world with each senator earning around \$597,000 per year in salaries and allowances. This results in a total of (about \$65 million) over ₦30 billion (going by current exchange rate of about N500=\$1 in 2021) per year and ₦120 billion (\$260 million) at the end of each legislative tenure. Given that the members of the Senate are only required to sit for at least 180 days a year, this equates to ₦1.6 million a day. For the entire National Assembly, the annual cost for 109 Senators and 360 House of Representatives comes to around ₦113 billion (\$226 million) a year - enough to pay 191,954 civil servants the minimum wage. This is happening in a country that has the highest number of people living in extreme poverty and the majority of its population living on less than \$2 a day. To put things into perspective; the US economy, which is nearly 60 times larger than Nigeria pays members of its Congress less than half of the earnings of their Nigerian counterparts. Unfortunately, the country also suffers a greater opportunity cost - we lack basic welfare and

infrastructure such as access to clean water and electricity. A significant part of the ₦69 billion spent annually could have been reinvested into income-generating infrastructure or public services particularly in the power, transport and education sectors. Some argue that this is evidence of misplaced priorities, especially when you consider that the proposed capital expenditure for health or education in 2020 is ₦20 billion less than the annual salaries of the National Assembly. So, can paying lawmakers high emoluments be justified? In countries like Singapore which has the highest paid legislators in the world, high pay has been justified on the basis of attracting the best hands to public office. This is hardly the case in Nigeria where the academic qualification required for membership of the senate is a secondary school certificate and the certificates of some of the high-profile politicians have been shown to be questionable. Neither can the high pay be justified on the basis of law-making output. 274 bills were passed by the Nigerian Senate between 2015 and 2019. On the contrary in the USA, 442 laws were passed by Congress between January 2017 and January 2019 alone. While it's difficult to value the impacts of any given bill, the volume contrast is glaring. <https://www.stearsng.com/article/how-much-does-lawmaking-cost-nigerians>

The problems with legality, law and justice delivery in Nigeria goes beyond the aforementioned to include corrupt lawyers and judges and frequent disregard for the rule of law by the executive. So that there is nowhere left without a rot and its own attendant damage to the judicial system as all three arms; the legislators that are supposed to make laws, the judiciary that are supposed to interpret laws, and the

executive that are supposed to enforce them, all have their fair share of the undoing of justice delivery in the country.

As regards the absence of justice in Nigeria on account of weakness of our laws and disservice of the judiciary, it suffices to draw attention to the submissions of the men of the judiciary themselves as captured by Oladimeji Ramon, in the July 6, 2017 Online Edition of Punch newspaper, titled; *'Trouble with Nigerian Justice System – Lawyers, Judges'*.

'Executive lawlessness is at its height as reflected in flagrant human right violation by the government at the presiding level and carried on further by the law enforcement institution; that could now arguably be described as a rogue force in terms of extortion, bribery and corruption, negligence of duty, extra-judicial killing, selectiveness in law enforcement and high-handedness.'

According to Yuri Fedotov, the Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, on 15th November 2013, *'Weak rule of law and lack of good governance pose a major threat to social and economic development the world over, and they have hindered progress in attaining the Millennium Development Goals,'* said Mr. Fedotov. *'Effective and humane justice systems and institutions are fundamental to building societies that facilitate growth and development. Rule of law refers to a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly broadcasted, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with*

international human rights, norms and standards’.

In a November 2017 article in the Bayero Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence titled; ‘*A Conceptual Analysis of the Rule of Law in Nigeria*’, Professor B. A Haruna, and A. M. Yusuf, gave a comprehensive insight on the rule of law which is captured as follows; ‘*Rule of law as a substantive legal principle, refers to the prevailing of regular power rather than arbitrary power; the principle is that all citizens are subject to the judicial decision in their states and that such decisions are the result of constitutional principles. The rule of law implies that government authority may only be exercised in accordance with written laws, which were adopted through an established procedure. The principle is intended to safeguard against arbitrary rulings in individual cases. In a political system which adheres to the paramount principles of the rule of law, the law is supreme over the acts of the government and the people*’. The rule of law suggests a number of prepositions:

- i. Adherence to the rule of law as a guide to everyday social and legal interaction and a means of prevention of anarchy
- ii. Rule of law as an indicator of all being equal in eyes of the law
- iii. Equality in the law as well as before the law
- iv. People should be ruled by the law and should obey it
- v. The law should be such that people will be able to be guided by it
- vi. Constitutionalism and the rule of law are cornerstones of the constitution and reflect a country’s commitment

to an orderly and civil society in which all are bound by enduring rules, principles and values of a constitution which is the supreme source of law and authority

- vii. Rule of law as a regulator of the relationship between the state and individuals by pre-established and knowable law. The states no less than the individuals it governs must be subject to and obey the law. The state’s obligations to obey the law are central to the very existence of the rule of law. Without this obligation, there would be no enforceable limit of the state’s power over individuals;
- viii. The law in our society is supreme, no one, no politician, no government, no judge, no union, no citizen is above the law. All are subject to the law. No one can pick or choose the law to observe and obey. Each must accept the rule of all laws.
- ix. The rule of law requires that (judicial) decisions are made by a court, which is independent of any influence or pressure, by the executive and legislative branches of government.
- x. The number of literature available on the alarming and detestable level of injustice and illegality in Nigeria is overwhelming, but one of the most comprehensive yet brief is the submissions of Oludara Akanmidu, in Quartz Africa magazine, July 6, 2018 Edition. He reported that, nearly ten years ago the Central Bank of Nigeria conducted a deep assessment of the country’s banks. The 2009 exercise exposed large-scale fraud committed by a number of Bank CEOs.

To save the banking system from collapse, the Central Bank took over a number of institutions and spent billions saving others. In addition, criminal charges were laid against five CEOs for offences, which included fraud, market manipulation, concealment and grant of credit facilities without adequate security. Only one case has been prosecuted successfully. The others appear to be stuck in an unending cycle of dismissals, appeals and re-trials. The bank saga and the failure to bring the bank executives to justice underscore the fact that the Nigerian justice system isn't working. The problems – the subject of a great deal of discussion – range from judicial corruption to a lack of judicial independence to delays in the justice system. The cases of the bank executives provide a useful case study through which to examine the weaknesses of the Nigerian judicial system. These include the capability of prosecutors and the ability of the court system, including judges, to actually bring cases to closure. This is particularly true in corporate cases, which are often difficult to prosecute under the criminal law.

The fact that Nigeria has a number of corrupt judges is common knowledge in the country. Over the years, there have been various allegations of corruption in the judiciary. In 2013, two High Court judges were suspended and recommended for retirement by the National Judicial Council for misconduct bordering on corruption. Similarly, in 2016, a raid carried out by the Department of State Services revealed that cash worth USD\$800,000 had been found in the homes of senior judges suspected of corruption. Judicial corruption reduces public confidence in the country's justice system. This means that suspected incidents of directors' misconducts are

less likely to be reported given the prevailing belief that justice is unlikely to be served. Similarly, it can affect the attitude of investigators and prosecutors who might have less incentive to investigate and prosecute cases diligently. While it would clearly be untrue to accuse all judges in Nigeria of corruption, it is reasonable to conclude that judicial corruption remains a huge problem. But since none of the judges involved in the trial of the bank executives have been accused of corruption, it's necessary to look to other causes for the failure to bring the bank executives to book.

One of the main problems in the bank executive cases has been endless delays in the judicial process. The trials' time line tells the story. Criminal proceedings started in 2009. About six years later, in 2015, the Court of Appeal struck down the case against two of the executives on the basis of lack of jurisdiction of the trial court. A declaration of lack of jurisdiction means that the court lacks the power to try the particular case. In itself this isn't a bad development. After all, compliance with relevant rules on jurisdiction is essential to ensuring justice is done. But the fact that it took six years for this decision to be reached highlights severe delays in Nigeria's court system. Following the Court of Appeal's decision, the High Court, in deference to the superior court, dismissed the pending case against the third bank executive. In a curious turn of events a year later, in 2016, the Supreme Court overturned the Court of Appeal's decision and ordered a re-trial of the bank executives. This meant that, nearly 10 years after the initial trial, a fresh trial was started, and with it is room for further appeals.

There is currently no end in view. While appeals and cross appeals are inevitable parts of litigation, the lengthy time

spent on them is not. This delay has been attributed to several factors. Initially, the trials suffered from several unwarranted adjournments at the request of the defense lawyers.

Another weak spot has been the prosecuting authority. The unit responsible for prosecuting these kinds of cases, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, has been severely criticized for its inefficiencies. To worsen the problem, the trial judges were changed several times. One judge was elevated to the Court of Appeal while a few others were transferred to different divisions of the court leading to a fresh trial each time. These issues significantly delayed trial proceedings.

Another question to consider is whether the failure to successfully prosecute the directors is a reflection of the difference in the treatment of high-profile offenders versus ordinary Nigerians. Cecilia Ibru, the only bank executive who was convicted, was sentenced to just six months in prison and required to forfeit shares and other assets worth over USD\$1.2 billion. Compare this with the case of David Olugetoye, an armed thief, who was sentenced to death after being found guilty of a £50 robbery. Granted that armed robbery carries the death penalty, however, it seems that carting away millions of money should attract a stiffer penalty.

In addition, rich offenders can afford highly skilled lawyers who can devise different strategies to delay or prevent, successful prosecution. Poor offenders on the other hand, don't have this benefit. The recently introduced Administration of Criminal Justice Act of 2015, which aims to promote speedy dispensation of justice, promises to improve the situation. Time will tell.

THE HYDRA-HEADED MONSTER CALLED CORRUPTION

“That corruption is the bane of Nigeria’s socio-economic development is to state the obvious. Today, in Nigeria, there is a consensus among well-meaning individuals and foreign nations that corruption has inevitably become a major clog in the quest for sustainable growth and development. It is further agreed that it must be halted before it shut down the country.” [Michael M. O., *Journal of Nigeria Studies*, Volume 1, Number 2, Fall 2012].

One thing still remains a puzzle today to all socio-political thinkers and it is simple; given the level of corruption in Nigeria, how the country still manages to exist as a sovereign state. Putting it simply as David Cameron, a one-time British Prime Minister put it when he referred to Nigeria as ‘*fantastically corrupt*’, he said, “*If the amount of money stolen from Nigeria in the last 30 years was stolen from the UK, the UK would cease to exist,*” <https://africacheck.org/spot-check/did-david-cameron-say-uk-would-cease-to-exist-if-money-looted-from-nigeria-were-stolen-there/>. But even this has grossly understated the level of corruption in Nigeria

as it looks at only the aspect of looting of public treasury which comes along side many other practices under only one sub-head, amongst the many types of corruption that is deeply rooted in Nigeria and Africa.

NOW LET'S LOOK AT SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

“By some estimates, close to \$400 billion was stolen between 1960 and 1999.... That is a staggering – almost “astronomical” - amount of money because if you were to put 400 billion dollars bills end-to-end, you could make 75 round trips to the moon!”

Antonio Maria Costa, UNODC Executive Director, - Anti-Corruption Climate Change: it started in Nigeria, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/speeches/2007-11-13.html>.

“In 1965 when Nigeria’s oil revenue per capita was about US\$33, per capita GDP was US\$245. However, in 2000 when oil revenue grew to US\$325 per capita, per capita GDP remained at the 1965 level, implying that oil revenue accumulated over the 35-year period between 1960 and 2000 did not add value to the standard of living of Nigerians.” [Sala-i-Martin, X. and A. Subramanian, 2003. ‘Addressing the Natural Resource Curse: An Illustration from Nigeria’. Working Paper Series WP/03/139. IMF, Washington, D.C.].

“Half of Nigeria’s \$40 billion annual oil revenue is stolen or wasted”. [Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA)- Mutual Evaluation Report Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism 2009].

‘The Economist magazine of October 10, 2019 revealed that about 582 billion dollars has been stolen from Nigeria since independence in 1960. This was according to the Chatham House.’ [Jide Ojo, The Punch, October 16, 2019].

Concisely, a comprehensive reflection on corruption in Nigeria quickly reveals the following;

1. It has become too familiar as a topic even to be discussed, almost the norm.
2. It has become too systemic that many have become pessimistic over the possibility of its eradication.
3. It has become so entrenched that many are calling for its consolidation and legal adoption as an economic activity.
4. Its dimension, scope, and effect are too encompassing for any successful summary.
5. Almost all Nigerians are corrupt and almost all Nigerians are ‘fighting’ corruption.
6. The volume of literature that has been produced on corruption far surpasses any other topic in Africa.
7. There is a dearth of understanding on the scope and extent of corruption in Nigeria, such that many works and statements on corruption in the country often focuses on just one aspect of corruption and thus it is imperative to understand all the types of corruption, in order to effectively tackle them.

Perhaps the best imagery to illustrate the vicious circle of corruption in Nigeria is described on the social media using a typical Nigerian school. The principal tasks the teacher to

collect a 200-naira levy, which is illegal and unwarranted. The teacher in turn inflates it to the students to the tune of 250 naira, and the student tells his mother they are required to pay 300 naira, and the mother tells the father that the kids are required to pay 400 naira, and the father says okay, I have heard. Then he goes to the office the next day and gets the money by cheating the nation. This is the vicious cycle of corruption.

Even the briefest review of literature reveals an avalanche of diverse and varying definitions of corruption. But quite unfortunately, all the different definitions of corruption have their manifestation in Nigeria. From inflation of public expenditure, to 'budget padding', bribery and extortion, non-remittance or under-remittance of revenue, subsidy scandal, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds, pension funds scandal, crude oil theft and illegal bunkering, power sector graft, sales of adulterated food, hazardous drugs and substandard goods, sex or money for scores in school, exam malpractice, nepotism, tribalism, election rigging and vote buying, judicial compromise, wanton compromise of security personnel, by-pass of public procedures, etc, etc. All the types of corruption are endemic in Nigeria. Corruption can be seen in many forms or dimensions. These include Political Corruption (grand), Bureaucratic Corruption (petty), Electoral Corruption, Bribery, Fraud, Embezzlement, Extortion, Favoritism and Nepotism etc.

For the records, on February 2, 2020, Transparency International released its Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2019 highlighting perceived levels of public sector corruption in 180 countries/territories. Nigeria (joined with six other

countries) is 146th on the log scoring 26 out of 100 points. The 2019 index revealed that Nigeria dropped two places from the rank of 144 in 2018 and scored one point less from the score of 27 in 2018. This speaks volume to the fact that Nigeria is getting more corrupt as other ratings (Action Aid) have revealed dwindling performances with the most alarming indication that vital institutions like the police have gotten more corrupt. It will be recalled that as soon as Muhammadu Buhari won the 2015 presidential election, everyone in the country in all spheres began to re-orientate and readjust in terms of ethics, sanity and discipline in public life. But unfortunately, after under-studying the new government's capacity to detect, arrest and prosecute culprits, citizens began to relax and things started going from bad to worse in the anti-corruption crusade, so that at best, either wittingly or unwittingly for Mr. President, he is only recovering looted funds in his fight against the monster, which barely touches its surface as it has grown too humongous, let alone winning the war. But is it really true that corruption is part of our DNA? Whatever is the answer to that question is not our focus here; our focus is to demonstrate the fragility and failure of the Nigerian state with corruption as an index. What else do we need to demonstrate the fact that if nothing cogent and fundamental is done, with the way corruption is becoming entrenched and getting more deep-rooted, that in the nearest future there may be no state entity called Nigeria? Mr. President has himself captured this in his famous quip, *'if we don't kill corruption, corruption will kill us!'*

Already, it has become lucid to all and sundry that the most celebrated messiah of anti-corruption has not been

able to help us with the problem by any remarkable leap. It has become clear that it is not a problem to be solved single-handedly by any president whomsoever and however well-intentioned, in the first place. We have all realized that even though institutional corruption might have reduced a little, social corruption has become even more emboldened. And with the two maximum tenures of Buhari heading to sunset, one is almost sure that corruption will bounce back with even more vengeance.

With around 580 billion dollars stolen from the country, which is more than the entire budget of the nation since independence and which is sufficient to educate, employ, secure and provide maximum health care for nearly the entire African population, this graphically shows the level of damage Nigeria has suffered. With the policemen, soldiers and other security agents on our highways and borders competing for who could collect the most bribe, even while downplaying its prevalence, while all forms of contraband haulage including arms and ammunition move freely through their numerous checkpoints for armed robbers, kidnapers, insurgents, warring groups, and bandits to wreak wanton havoc on the country and even cripple the countries army, it is only a question of a couple of years before things completely fall apart and the center will no longer hold.

THE ECONOMIC INDICES

BRIEF ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA

PREAMBLE

Without the need for overarching academic discussion, the economic indices of Nigeria state failure are quite palpable. Despite Nigeria's vast wealth of natural resources, she is as at today still referred to as the 'poverty capital of the world' <https://www.borgenmagazine.com/the-poverty-capital-of-the-world-nigeria/>. Suffice to say that the first aspect of the state to suffer from the endemic and systemic corruption just discussed is the economy. It thus goes without saying that where corruption is most prevalent, the economy is most deplorable. As academicians continue to worship their formalities, models, idiosyncrasies and complexes, and as economists continue to find figures to interpret, with the CBN rather curiously claiming that in the midst of falling oil prices and global pandemic the Nigerian economy is stronger and more resilient and where economic growth and GDP will be highlighted as positive merely in figures on paper without anything tangible in real life to show, while the average Nigerian hustler out there is unemployed (over 33% unemployment rate), hungry and homeless. He is unable to afford even the inefficient local health care, while top government officials and the few rich who can afford it travel outside for health care. He is unable to find portable drinkable water,

lives in darkness most nights, have access only to poor education, if at all, and can hardly find the required capital for any small business. This is the Nigerian economy through the eyes and living reality of the average Nigerian who doesn't need figures and statistics to understand where the shoe pinches him. This is the same Nigeria where a child is born every four seconds. Worst still, the already insufficient amenities and provisions for economic life are deteriorating fast, without replenishment. So how on earth will a country whose state capacity and capabilities are on the downward spiral handle an exponential increase in its population? The deplorable state of the economy speaks volume about the failing state of Nigeria. The CBN, other political economists and even the National Bureau of Statistics may churn out large amount of data and paint the most rosy picture of the economy on paper, but the ordinary man in Nigeria sees the economy in terms of the stark realities presented above.-

A post on the social media by an anonymous revealed that we were far more productive in 1980 than we are today. In 1980 the key metrics are as follows:

- 1) We are a net exporter of refined petroleum products. Today we import all our refined petroleum products.
- 2) We ride in locally assembled cars, buses and trucks. Peugeot cars in Kaduna and Volkswagen cars in Lagos. Leyland in Ibadan and ANAMCO in Enugu produce our buses and trucks. Steyr at Bauchi producing our agricultural tractors. And it is not just Assembly, we were producing many of the components. Vono products in Lagos producing the seats. Exide in Ibadan producing

the batteries, not just for Nigeria but for the entire West Africa. Isoglass and TSG in Ibadan producing the windshields. Ferodo in Ibadan producing the brake pads and discs. Tyres produced by Dunlop in Lagos and Michelin in Port Harcourt. Tyres produced from rubber plantations located in Rivers State. Today, all these industries are dead!

- 3) We were listening to Radio and watching television sets assembled in Ibadan by Sanyo. Today we watch and listen to Korean and Chinese electronic imports.
- 4) We were using refrigerators, freezers and Air conditioners produced by Thermocool.
- 5) We were wearing clothes produced from the UNTL textile mills in Kaduna and Chellarams in Lagos. Not from imported cotton but from cotton grown in Nigeria. Today, very few tanneries, if any, and textile mills are in operation.
- 6) Our water was running through pipes produced by Kwalipipe in Kano.
- 7) Our toilets were fitted with WC produced at Kano and Abeokuta.
- 8) We were cooking with LPG gas stored inside gas cylinders produced at the NGC factory in Ibadan.
- 9) Our electricity was flowing through cables produced by the Nigerian Wire and Cable, Ibadan and Kablemetal in Lagos and Port Harcourt.
- 10) We had Bata and Lennards producing the shoes we were wearing. Not from imported leathers but from locally tanned leather at Kaduna.

- 11) We were mainly flying our airplanes, the Nigeria Airways, to most places in the world. The Airways was about the biggest in Africa at that time.
- 12) Most of the food we eat were being grown or produced in Nigeria.

We were producing all of the above and more in 1980. Today, we import almost everything. There lies the source of the terrible exchange rate we are experiencing today. Everybody has a critical role to play in reversing the ugly trend. It is not enough for us to complain about the exchange rate or bring out what others are not doing or are failing to do, the key question is what are you producing or what are you planning to produce to change the narrative?

For the fulfillment of academic righteousness, the reality ahead of Nigeria economically can be perceived under five basic sub-headings;

1. Brief facts and figures
2. Alarming debt profile
3. Economic dependence
4. Infrastructural deficit
5. Alarming population growth

BRIEF FACTS AND FIGURES

A cursory look at the major economic indices of Nigeria, as highlighted earlier, paints a rather dismal outlook. Indices such as the ones highlighted below, collated from several local and global institutions, are indicative of a failing state.

1. 8.2 million youths in Nigeria became unemployed just between the third quarter of 2015 and the third quarter of 2018, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.
2. 66 percent of the federal government's earnings is spent on servicing its debts in the first half of 2018, according to the Budget Office of the Federation.
3. According to World Poverty Clock, The Brookings Institute, Nigeria is ranked 1st among countries with the highest number of poor people.
4. According to National Bureau of Statistics, 1987 was the last year that economic growth in the agriculture sector was as low as it was in the second quarter of 2018.
5. According to the UNICEF or UNFPA-United Nations Population Fund, a baby is born every 4 seconds in Nigeria.
6. According to UBEC and UNICEF, 13.2 million Nigerian children were out of school in 2015, up from the last count of 10.5 million in 2010.
7. According to Central Bank of Nigeria, the annual fall in the value of the naira against the dollar between 2000 and 2017 was 6%. Indeed today, in 2021, USD \$1.0 is equivalent to N500 in the parallel market.
8. According to Transparency International, out of 180 countries Nigeria's corruption perception ranking was 148th as at 2017.
9. According to Central Bank of Nigeria, 93.8 percent is the contribution of oil and gas to Nigeria's exports revenue in Q4 2018 (<https://nairametrics.com/2019/03/12/balance-of-payment-brief-shows-nigerias-oil-sector-accounted-for-93-8-of-export-revenue-in-q4-2018/>).

ALARMING DEBT PROFILE

Nothing can be more alarming than a nation of over 200 million people living on debt. The debt profile of Nigeria is alarming and our future has been mortgaged! The fact that we have to borrow so much to survive indicates that we are not creating enough utility value to cater for ourselves. The rate at which we live at the mercy of other nations in almost every sector of the economy is an indication that at best, our independence is only a statement of political correctness. By borrowing so much, we have taken decision from the hands of the future generation as everything they have to work with has been mortgaged. We are not oblivious of the vacuous defense from government quarters that Nigeria's debt/GDP ratio is still sustainable.

The huge governmental borrowing has effectively mortgaged our future especially if we consider the servicing of these loans. And, like the Federal Government, the states within the Federation have equally recklessly mortgaged their future due to serious unsustainable debts. Worst of all, we are not sure of the judicious spending of these loans such that they will translate to viable investments that will offset the liability and become assets to the nation. We are practically eating the food of our unborn generations. What can we call such a situation if not a failed state? On March 17, 2020, as reported in the Vanguard newspaper, the Senate, after approving the 22.7 billion dollars foreign loan requested

by President Muhammadu Buhari, raised an alarm that the total debt profile of Nigeria then stood at 33 trillion naira. In her remarks, Debt Management Office Director-General Patience Oniha, who was quick to say that there was no cause for alarm with regard to the total debt profile of the country, which she puts at 85.39 billion dollars or 26 trillion naira as at September 2019. She however noted that annual deficit budgeting and poor revenue generation forced the country into taking loans, which has accumulated to 26 trillion naira as at September 2019. She admitted to a serious concern over how public debt of the country skyrocketed. <https://nairametrics.com/2019/04/05/nigerias-total-debt-profile-now-n24-3tn-dmo/>.

The situation was expressly captured by Bamidele Samuel Adesoji in Nairametrics, on January 10, 2020, which highlighted how Nigeria expended 1.31 billion dollars to service external debts in 2019. Nigeria's debt profile continues to snowball and its attendant cost is worrisome. Specifically, the country's total debt stock comprises both external and domestic debts. As at June 2019, the country's total external debt stood at N8.32 trillion (\$27.1 billion). Overall, at the same period, Nigeria's public debt stock stood at N25.7 trillion (US\$83.8 billion). External debt service payment accumulated to \$3.95 billion in the 5 years spanning 2015 – 2019. Data obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) also confirmed that external debt service payment stood at a whopping \$1.31 billion at the end of November 2019, compared to \$1.47 billion spent in the corresponding period of 2018. In 2015, which marked the start of President Muhammadu Buhari's first term in office, Nigeria paid \$378.9 billion for

external debt service. Fast forward to 2018, the sum of \$1.47 billion was recorded while \$1.31 billion was paid in 2019. This means external debt service payment alone rose by 245.9% between 2015 and 2019. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/nairametrics.com/2020/01/10/nigeria-spends-1-31-billion-to-service-external-debt-in-2019/%3famp>.

Experts continue to stress that while the country's debt to GDP ratio is sustainable for now, the cost of servicing the debt is eating deep into the country's already depleting revenue. Critics of this government have complained about the government's penchant for debts, believing that it could put the future of younger Nigerians in jeopardy. Recently, the former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, in a statement that, *"the fact that Nigeria currently budgets more money for debt servicing (N2.7 trillion), than capital expenditure (N2.4 trillion) is already an indicator that we have borrowed more money than we can afford to borrow."*

To implement figures contained in the 2020 budget, debt service was expected to reach an unprecedented level as proposed by the Federal Government. President Muhammadu Buhari signed the N10.59 trillion 2020 budget in December 2019. Meanwhile, the budget, which was 18.8% higher than that of 2019, was largely expanded to service debt. As contained in the budget, the Federal Government budgeted N2.45 trillion to service debt in 2020. This is just slightly below N2.78 trillion, budgeted for the total capital expenditure. It should be noted that in the 2020 budget, the overall budget deficit was N2.175 trillion. This means the 2020 budget deficit was largely due to debt service payment as it gulped 23.1% of Nigeria's budget. Experts continue to stress that the

2020 budget lacks the capacity to drive key developmental metrics in the economy. Though the Federal Government continued to express optimism for an improved revenue base in 2020, critics believe it was biting more than it can chew as it approached World Bank for another \$2.5 billion facility and by mid-2021 Senate had approved yet another \$6.183 billion external loan to fund the 2021 Appropriations Act <https://nairametrics.com/2021/07/07/senate-approves-fgs-6-1-billion-loan-request/>. If the country's revenue base fails to improve, critics argue the nation may be sitting on a keg of gunpowder.

ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

At the very best, our independence as a country can only be seen to be so in political terms. While a lot of foreign interests still weigh in strongly on our political life as a nation, which is a discussion for another day, our point now however, is that the word independence when used for Nigeria should be qualified as to the type of independence because in all ramifications, Nigeria is economically dependent. We import literally everything we need to survive and exist as a nation, from basic food to drugs and even textbooks. Even when we say we farm, all the agro-chemicals and farm implement and machines are imported. We depend on others to refine basic crude oil, and even militarily, we are not independent as almost all our military hardware is imported. So, what happens if we fallout politically with any of these nations that supply us these basic necessities of life? The obvious answer is that we will never allow ourselves to be in a diplomatic row with them, meaning that we are still dependent. Another critical factor of our pseudo-independence is our mono-economy; that is, over-dependence on oil. The implication is that over 200 million people are literally living at the mercy of other nations. Our fate hangs in balance on a simple decision from a single country that may choose to buy or not to buy our crude oil. Our Naira is on hair-trigger vulnerability. Our national budget has no buffer and soon becomes a piece of paper fit for the dustbin with the slightest

crisis on the international scene that affects global oil price, and in this regard, the COVID-19 pandemic is a very recent example. The budget had to be reviewed in tune with the dictates of the pandemic.

The foregoing summary suffices to send the message, as it is crystal clear to an impartial observer of the Nigerian state. However, for a detailed insight into the subject matter, please read, Adekunle Alaye's article; '*Dependency and Underdevelopment of Nigerian Economy*', in the Global Journal of Politics and Law Research Vol 7, No.1, January 2019, and that of Obasesam Okoi; '*The Paradox of Nigeria's Oil Dependence*', on Africa Portal 21 January, 2019.

'Politically, it was assumed that indigenous governments, representing the interests of local people rather than alien groups, would have sovereign state power at their disposal. Their relationships with the government of other sovereign states would be those of independent nation-states entering into treaties and agreements within the framework of international law.'

Economically, it was assumed that following independence the process of 'diffusion' would continue, as capital, technology and expertise spread. Foreign aid and investment would increase the productive capacity of the less developed economy.'

However, a different perception of the relationship between sovereign states is conveyed by the term 'neo-colonialism' originally coined by mainly Third World Leaders (Nigerian leaders inclusive), who found that the achievement of constitutional independence and sovereignty did not give total freedom to the governments of the newly formed nation-states. Politically, autonomy was found to be something of a facade behind which lurked the continuing presence of powerful Western financial and commercial interests. The end of colonial government was seen by leaders such as Kwamme Nkrumah, the first Prime Minister of Ghana and author of a book titled, *"Neo-Colonialism": The Last Stage of Imperialism*, as not ending economic colonialism. The essence of neo-colonialism is that the state, which is subject to it, is in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus political policy is directed from outside".

From the above, it could be seen that Nigeria was only granted political independence in 1960, which means that the direct control of the national apparatus ended but economic control by the Western capitalists still persists. In other words, Nigeria achieved political independence but not economic independence, and this inability to achieve her economic independence intensifies her dependence with the consequent entrenchment of her underdevelopment.

The road to economic crisis was essentially ideological. The policies of colonialism, capitalism and imperialism foisted on the country resulting into flagrant disarticulation of the national economy, had severally been used by scholars to explain the present state of the economy. By means of division

of labour, the nation was reduced to supplier of export crops such as cocoa, cotton, groundnut, palm produce and at the same time receiver of manufactured and consumable goods from Europe and America [and now China, India, and other Asian countries].

The travails of the Nigerian economy stem largely from two main factors. First, the oil boom of the 1960s and the early 1980s brought about major windfall for the country which consequently led to less priority being accorded to the agricultural sector, which once was not just a vital sector of the national economy, but also the only aspect of production we had to offer the world and indeed the mainstay of the economy. From 1970 to 1992 for example, oil revenue moved from 26.3 percent of the total national revenue to 76.7 percent, while non-oil revenue dropped from 73.7 to 23.3 percent. Now as of recent, following the collapse of crude oil prices in 2018, which triggered unpleasant memories of the 2014 and 2015 crash in world oil prices, the Nigerian government found itself in uncharted waters. It continues to struggle to revive the economy amidst dwindling oil revenues compounded by unemployment, poverty and insurgency. Global poverty projections released by The Brookings Institution in 2018, based on data from the World Poverty Clock, shows that Nigeria has overtaken India as home to the largest population of people living in extreme poverty, with 87 million citizens living on less than \$1.90 a day compared to India's 73 million.

Based on the recent world poverty projections, the signs of Nigeria's leadership failures [another synonym for state failure] are now even more glaring as nearly one hundred million Nigerians are in danger of falling into extreme poverty by

2022. This startling revelation implies that despite being the largest oil producer in Africa, Nigeria is unable to translate its oil wealth into rising living standards for its growing population. Transformations in the global political economy following the fall of crude oil prices in the 2018 crash, further accentuated Nigeria's governance challenges. The situation seems compounded by the fact that Nigeria's 8.6 trillion budget was based on a conservative estimate of the world oil price using a \$60 per barrel benchmark at a time the price of oil at the international market was \$75 per barrel. Although the price later escalated to \$86 per barrel, it began a downward trend in the last quarter of 2018, closing at a year low of \$59 per barrel. At the same time, oil production in Nigeria was 2.1 million barrels per day, below the budget projection of 2.3 million barrels per day. Besides, the major oil multinational corporations operating in Nigeria have been cutting back their operations for a variety of market, security, and political concerns.

Arguably, the collapse of oil prices over the years not only poses a strategic danger to the country's growing importance in the global economy but has been the new catalyst behind its domestic predicaments. For example, Nigeria's forex market responded negatively to the fall in oil prices as the local currency dropped from the 363 naira per US dollar that it traded for a better part of 2018 to 370 naira per dollar. Should the fall in oil prices be sustained, it could lead to a shortage of the US dollar in the domestic market, further driving down the value of the naira. The far-reaching implication is that changes in the price of oil have the potential to instigate changes in domestic conditions, which can lead to protracted instability.

Following the decline in oil revenues in 2015, the Nigerian government was forced to seek economic diversification and identified agriculture as one of its key goals to help address the country's dependence on food imports. There has also been significant progress in the Telecoms industry, which seems to carry the weight of employment in Nigeria. A report from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that Nigeria's economy grew 1.81 percent in the third quarter of 2018. In that quarter of review, Nigeria recorded an average daily oil production of 1.94 million barrels per day, lower than the average daily output of 2.2 million barrels per day. The oil sector contributed 9.38 percent to real GDP in the third quarter of 2018, while the non-oil sector added 90.62 percent. The non-oil sector grew by 2.32% during the third quarter, driven mainly by the Telecoms industry, in addition to agriculture, manufacturing, Trade, Transportation and Storage, as well as Professional, Scientific and Technical Services. Despite the rhetoric on economic diversification, crude oil still accounts for over 81 percent share in Nigeria's total exports.

Arguably, the growth in the non-oil sector has not translated to improvements in the living standard of Nigerians due to high unemployment rates. For example, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that the total number of Nigerians classified as unemployed, meaning they have no job at all or worked less than 20 hours a week, increased from 17.6 million in the fourth quarter of 2017 to 20.9 million in the third quarter of 2018. Also, the national unemployment rate rose from 18.8 percent in the third quarter of 2017 to 23.1 percent in the third quarter of 2018. In the fourth quarter of 2020, over 33 percent of the labour force was unemployed

and estimated to reach 32.5 percent for 2021. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1119227/forecasted-unemployment-rate-in-nigeria/> When compared against the 87 million Nigerians living on less than \$1.90 a day according to The Brookings Institution's report, the evidence is overwhelming that millions of Nigerians are living in extreme poverty.

The resurgence of insurgency in the Niger Delta in February 2016 caused a 50% shut down of crude oil production by May 2016. This period also coincided with the fall in crude oil prices from US\$50 in 2015 to \$US40 by 2016. The loss of export revenues due to falling oil prices meant that the government would have difficulty financing development programs. Analysts attributed the collapse of oil prices to surging global supply driven mainly by the hydraulic fracking revolution in North America. Hydraulic fracking is an innovative well-simulated and environmentally friendly drilling technique that makes it possible to extract natural gas from shale, which was once impossible with conventional drilling technologies. Nigeria experienced a significant drop in its crude oil exports to the U.S. as domestic production rises in America following the fracking revolution. There are growing concerns that shale production has the potential to drive down the price of crude oil, which could plunge Nigeria into a macroeconomic crisis. As U.S. crude oil imports from Nigeria continues to decline, Nigeria may have to keep depending on external borrowing to fund its federal budget. What seems significant about this paradox is that oil price volatility has the potential to threaten Nigeria's fragile democracy should it continue to have full sway over the economy.

Another reason for the structural deficiency of the Nigerian economy could be attributed to the twin problems of mismanagement and corruption by the political elites in Nigeria under various military and civilian regimes. On the roles of Multinational Corporations on the economy of the Nigerian state, Multinational corporations are actors in international relations. They are transnational actors with the capacity to act under international law. As a single functioning entity, a multinational corporation has been designed as a firm beyond the boundaries of any country. The multinational corporations are, therefore, a group of international businesses, which come together as corporations. They are non-state actors, but many of them are richer than many states in the third world in which they operate. The multinational corporations include the oil and the other minerals companies. They also include such companies as the Coca-Cola, Nestle and similar others, which produce consumer goods, while there, are some others engaged in manufacturing of products. Such organizations as the Shell BP, Chevron, General Motors, the Coca-Cola company, etc. transact businesses worth billions of local and foreign currencies every year. They are not only involved in direct investment but also participate in global trade. The way they have grown over the years attest to both their virile and expansive nature as well as to the profitability of the activities in which they engage in.

From the above, it could be seen that the existence of the multinational corporations has led, in essence, to the growth of international oligopoly and competitive production through their application of sophisticated technologies, expansion of their markets in various countries. The activities of these

multinationals in Nigeria have primarily been in the oil and gas sectors, but they are also increasingly involved in trade, banking and insurance among others. It is noteworthy however that multinationals like UAC, John Holt trading activities predate the oil giants in Nigeria. While their involvement in the manufacturing sector has been limited, it is nevertheless necessary, to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of their activities in Nigeria. The multinationals have a monopoly of supply of both capital and technology compared to local Nigerian economic actors. They also dominate in all the stages of scientific and technological processes in their areas of interest, accounting for virtually all the research and development and owning most of the patents granted and registered. Because of their disproportionate strength within the Nigerian economy, multinationals have preferential access to local capital markets. Their subsidiaries in Nigeria are able to borrow from local banks and financial institutions on better terms than local businesses and entrepreneurs simply because their credit is backed by the worldwide financial resources of the parent company.

The irony behind local financing of multinational enterprise is that it can be used to acquire existing local firms to squeeze them out of businesses, thereby neutralizing whatever modicum of local competition that exists between foreign and local firms. Related to the above is the suppression and closure of many local industries in Nigeria as a result of unfair competition and rivalry. They are actually underdeveloping the economies of Nigeria in all ramifications. For example, a giant public enterprise like NITEL (and its subsidiary MTEL) was exterminated and replaced by ECONET (and

its various successors), as well as MTN and other foreign telecommunication networks. What is more, these multinationals perpetuate heavy and untold exploitation of the vulnerable Nigerian citizens who are their customers as they don't appear to have the right protection from the regulatory agencies. The technology, which the multinational corporations are expected to transfer in the form of knowledge and skill, and in some cases in the form of craftsmanship as well as industrial application of science, has been found not to be as absolutely helpful to those countries (Nigeria inclusive) in the sense that the transfer does not usually lead to the acquisition of real technological know-how by the host countries.

The technology that is transferred is managed by the agents of the multinationals themselves and the local application of the technology is usually limited. The home countries from where the multinationals come usually find their greatest export advantages in the production and sale of the products, which come from the application of their modern technology. It is always suspected that if the hosts of the multinationals are allowed to acquire technology, such policies are likely to have the impact of eliminating or drastically reducing the need for the various multinational corporations.

The negative roles of Nigerian elites must not elude our mention. Nigerian bourgeoisies are responsible for the domination of Nigerian economy by foreign investors. In Nigeria, trading and the so-called contracting activities are regarded as the quickest way of increasing income. Those who control the means of production in Nigeria do so with the support and collaboration of the governing class. The alliance between domestic and international exploiters is a serious

problem for African development, especially the use of state power by the political-cum-economic elites to rob Nigerians. In this sense, the economic elites connive with the governing class officials to divert public fund for private use. For example, Ajaokuta Iron and Steel Industry, the Nigerian Machine Tool Company, Osogbo, Aluminum Smelter in Akwa Ibom, etc. in spite of all the huge amounts already committed into these obvious white elephant projects; they still constitute a drain on the nation's economy because of politics and inbuilt corruption in Nigeria. We must all recall how Obasanjo-Atiku regime literally gave out Ajaokuta Steel and Itakpe Mining Company to Indians from Otta farm, and how the latter vandalized and plundered the complex, which resulted in a revocation by late President Yar'adua of the notoriously one-sided concession agreement. See the article: *'Nigeria Cancels Sale of Steel Plant'*, by Mathew Green, in the Financial Times of April 3rd, 2008. The result was a protracted litigation at the ICJ, which delayed the developmental moves on the complex until recently.

Foreign Oriented Policies: The inability of Nigeria to conceive, design and implement manufacturing activities on their own has led to the new type of economic domination of the economy by foreign companies who subtly dictate terms and types. Indigenous elites here play a key role in bringing in the policies of these neo-colonialists of Western Europe, or those of the new economic colonizer [China], into the country.

INFRASTRUCTURAL DEFICIT

"Nigeria requires an estimated sum of \$3tn to bridge its infrastructure gap over a 30-year period. This amounts to roughly \$100bn per year, with a total federal budget of less than \$30bn for 2019 and the dependency of Nigeria's income on oil revenue with unpredictable global price fluctuation, Nigeria no doubt lacks the fiscal space to self-finance the required infrastructure investment". [Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, at workshop on maximizing finance for the development in Nigeria, by World Bank Group, Abuja, Sep 23, 2019].

It is quite interesting to open the discussion on Nigeria's infrastructural deficit with a scenario between a Nigerian road user and VIO officers. The officers pulled over the hustling commercial driver and were perusing his papers, while the angry man looked on quietly while confidently relaxing on his seat without any form of apprehension, as one could see in his countenance that he is merely waiting for the officers to mutter a word for him to let loose his resentment. Then the following conversation ensued;

VIO officers – *Mr. Man your car is not road worthy*

Driver – *Is Nigerian roads car worthy? Is it not the Nigerian roads that damaged my car to the level you are seeing now?*

The conversation led to a laughter including the VIO officers who were obviously dazed by the man's response. It apparently took them some couple of minutes to regain their grounds and resume their case with the man. We must all realize that an unexpected person; a commercial driver has brazen up to make a national point – 'Nigerian roads are not car worthy'. This is talking about even the insufficient road network we have. Nearly all major roads are still the ones constructed decades ago by the military and have since deteriorated due to lack of proper maintenance. The insufficient hospitals are not 'patient worthy' as they are so ill-equipped, short-staffed, and unkempt for any member of the ruling elites to do a simple medical checkup, which is why they always fly abroad. Even when we were locked down under COVID 19 pandemic and national and international flights were suspended, some of our wealthy and ruling elites still found their ways abroad for medical attention. This probably means that if every Nigerian can afford to go abroad, nobody will use Nigerian hospitals. The main reason for the existence of a government is the welfare of the people through provision of infrastructures and other social amenities. This is why it retains the sole right to the control and management of the nation's natural resources and furthermore, it is empowered by the social contract to tax the citizens. There is no gainsaying that from the angle of infrastructure and social amenities like pipe borne water, electricity, hospitals, schools,

transportation facilities, etc., and the rate at which the population is growing, if Nigeria is not already a failed state, it will soon fail if nothing serious and drastic is done.

The role of infrastructure in national development and consequently survival cannot be overemphasized. Taking a quote from the work of Julia Bello and Alex Porter; '*Building the Future Infrastructure in Nigeria until 2040*', in the Institute for Security Studies, West Africa Report Nov, 2017, physical infrastructure is described as '*the backbone of any developed economy and a pillar of quality of life*'. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development dedicates several goals to infrastructure development, thereby recognizing its cross-cutting nature and fundamental importance for human progress. Specifically, Goal 6 addresses the need for clean water and sanitation for all. Goal 7 tackles the need for universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services, and Goal 9 focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation. The extent and sophistication of infrastructure matters hugely for both economic growth and human development. Scholars agree that the net impact of infrastructure development on the economy is 'positive and significant'. It has been argued that sub-Saharan Africa's lack of structural economic transformation and its weak integration into the global economy is at least partly a reflection of '*inadequate investment and development of infrastructure*'.

Improvements in roads, reliable and cost-efficient electricity supply and ICT and increased access to these types of infrastructures directly and predominantly increase physical as well as technological and business capital. Such

improvements boost economic activity and demands for goods and services, create jobs in the short to medium term, and make economies more competitive. In fact, infrastructure is one of the key categories in the World Economic Forum's yearly Global Competitiveness Report. Good infrastructure mitigates the impact of distance and so serves to integrate the national market and to facilitate trade with other countries and regions.

Good quality roads and railways, for example, make it easier, cheaper and faster to transport goods and people, while airports and seaports connect firms across international boundaries, facilitating trade and investment,' according to the Global Infrastructure Outlook. On the other hand, improved water and sanitation infrastructure drives human capital via its impact on health, education, equality and empowerment, all fundamental components of economic productivity and growth. According to the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program, on average, poor sanitation infrastructure costs countries approximately 2.8% of GDP per year.

Expanded access to clean water and improved sanitation is key to improving health outcomes across the population, in particular to preventing the spread of communicable diseases, such as cholera, diarrhea, typhoid, hepatitis A, polio, etc. Children who don't have access to clean water, improved sanitation facilities or electricity are more likely to contract a communicable disease, which can impair their ability to fully develop physically and mentally and can negatively impact their productivity later in life. Poor sanitation also contributes to malnutrition, which in turn compromises educational achievements.

Open defecation, a by-product of the lack of adequate sanitation infrastructure, perpetuates a vicious cycle of disease and poverty. The countries where open defecation is most widespread are characterized by the highest number of deaths of children aged under five years as well as the highest levels of malnutrition and poverty, and major income inequality. The provision of electricity infrastructure, on the other hand, also has direct implications for health as it can help reduce dependence on traditional cook stoves, which are associated with respiratory infections in children and respiratory diseases in adults. Further, better access to (affordable) electricity improves educational outcomes and is generally associated with increases in female employment rates. Lastly, access levels to infrastructure also affect income inequalities, marginalization and poverty. Without adequate transport and communications infrastructure, poorer communities cannot access core economic activities and services, such as health-care and education.

As Nigeria faces multiple and simultaneous pressures to advance economic growth and human development in the context of a large and rapidly growing population, the greatest drag on Nigeria's economic growth as at present is the country's substantive deficit in basic physical infrastructure, which also severely compromises human development. The World Economic Forum's 2016-17 Global Competitiveness Index ranks Nigeria's infrastructure at the bottom – 132 out of 138 countries – and according to the organization's 2016 Executive Opinion Survey, the poor supply of infrastructure is also the largest constraint to doing business in the country.

In a similar vein, Nigeria's 2017 Economic Recovery & Growth Plan (ERGP) points to 'deplorable infrastructure' as one of the main factors that 'seriously undermined' economic performance in the past.

Despite some progress over the past decades, levels of access to basic physical infrastructure such as clean water and improved sanitation, electricity and (paved) roads in Nigeria are inadequate given our income levels and rapidly growing population. Further, access levels tend to be below the average of its African income peers, and Nigeria significantly lags behind most of its global income peers.

The situation for access to clean water and electricity is similar. The situation is most glaring and palpable and the need for change is urgent, and a number of Nigerian policy documents, including the ERGP, acknowledge this and propose various strategies and more or less specific objectives. Further, Nigeria's National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (NIIMP), approved in 2015, provides a strategic framework for transformation of the country's weak infrastructure base.

Energy and roads tend to be at the forefront of policy formulation and budgetary allocations. Sector-specific strategies such as the Partnership for Expanded Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (PEWASH) spell out the negative implications of poor infrastructure and low access levels to clean water and improved sanitation on people's health with a focus on rural areas. In June 2017, the Federal Government inaugurated a technical working group for the development of the first operational plan for the implementation of the NIIMP. Looking to the future, rising incomes and rapid population

growth are bound to significantly increase future demand for infrastructure in Nigeria. Over the next 23 years, Nigeria's population is expected to increase from its then estimate of 190 million people to almost 330 million, representing more than 74% increase. Without drastic improvements in Nigeria's basic physical infrastructure, this growth will compound the existing deficit. Prioritizing basic physical infrastructure and ensuring that people have access to the associated services is likely to catalyze progress across multiple systems, in particular the economy, health and education.

In 2016, Nigeria had one of the lowest levels of access to improved basic infrastructure anywhere in the world, ranking 162 out of 186 countries, according to the World Economic Forum, WEF traditional infrastructure index. In Africa, Nigeria ranks 32 out of 54 countries, and among its global lower middle-income peers only Sudan and Papua New Guinea perform worse https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rc=t=j&url=https://www.jetro.go.jp/ext_images/switzerland/pdf/TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2016-2017_FINAL.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwin5M2L4-XxAhUahv0HHTPzBlcQFjADegQIFxAC&usg=AOvVaw3Srn7hww1-uujx8xt5LlSr

On the current development trajectory, by 2040 Nigeria is expected to still rank only second-last in this group. Nigeria's infrastructure deficit is evident across all categories as the country performs worse than its average African income peer and significantly worse than its average global income peer. On average, half of the roads in the world's lower middle-income countries are paved compared to about only 16% in Nigeria. Close to three-quarters of Pakistan's roads and 55% of India's roads are paved. In the category of access

to electricity, the gap between Nigeria and its global peers is smaller yet still significant. More than 80% of the population living in the world's lower middle-income countries have access to electricity versus only 60% in Nigeria.

Nigeria's population growth has not been matched by an increase in the delivery of water supply, sewerage and sanitation services. Nigeria also lags behind both African and global income peers in access to clean water and improved sanitation facilities. In 2016, almost 90% of the population of the world's lower middle-income economies had access to clean water compared to less than 70% of Nigeria's population. In other words, with the exception of a few outliers, most of Nigeria's global income peers are quite close to the SDG target of universal access to clean water. The discrepancy between Nigeria and its global income peers is worse in the area of access to improved sanitation. Only about 30% of Nigerians have access to improved sanitation facilities compared to, on average, more than 50% in the country's global income peers. Current access levels in Pakistan are more than twice as high as in Nigeria. Essentially, by 2040, the gap between Nigeria's performance and that of its African and global income peers is essentially forecast to remain. Continued rapid population growth in the future is going to strain service provision even more and therefore presents a major challenge to government's capacity in Nigeria, going forward.

POPULATION GROWTH VERSUS ECONOMIC GROWTH

Nigeria's urban population growth has not been accompanied by a commensurate increase in social amenities and infrastructure. More generally, economic growth has not kept up with population growth. Hence, leading to the enormous slums outside city centers. In effect, Nigeria has no population policy that would limit births and Nigerians have traditionally valued large families. Yet the country's rapid population growth, especially in urban areas, poses difficult economic, social, and public health challenges. A huge, rapidly growing population is not necessarily a source of national strength. [Duruiheoma, NPC Chairman, 51st Session of Commissions on Population and Development, New York, 2018].

Back then in school, one of the most interesting discussions between students of Economics was the argument between Thomas Malthus and Carl Marx. While Malthus, the English economist argued against population saying that population will grow by geometric progression while food production will grow by arithmetic progression thereby causing starvation, Karl Marx, the German sociologist and economist retorted back by calling Malthus a capitalist.

According to Marx, every child has a mouth and two hands, meaning that production will double with increasing population. Furthermore, Marx argued that knowledge and technology will help to maximize production in leaps and bounds far exceeding the volume of population growth. The passage of time has obviously proved Karl Marx to be right today except for Nigeria or black Africa. The world population has quadrupled since then, and there is more housing, food, medicine and infrastructure than ever before. In fact, the richest countries in the world today are the most populous and this is owing to planning, knowledge, hard work, and discipline. China is a quarter of the entire world by their population yet they are the first or second largest economy. Forget that their GDP Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) per capita is about one-third of that of the U.S.A, that's only because they are six times as many as the Americans so that by the time you divide their gross earnings by their population, the per capita figure is less.

For Nigeria, the absolute reverse is the case. Our population is growing exponentially and yet our economic capability, viability, productivity, and sustainability are reducing drastically. The youths that account for the greater proportion of our population are largely unemployable, no thanks to dismally poor standard of education. Social pervasions like cultism and drug addiction have further taken a serious toll on their capacity as our future work force. We must however acknowledge the impact of highly dynamic youths in ICT, sports and entrepreneurship who make Nigeria proud internationally. Our educational pursuits have not in significant terms increased and improved food production, medical and pharmaceutical

independence, dependable local content manufacturing and technology, economic and public management etc. Kogi State recently enacted an education law and made compulsory the writing of examinations such as primary six leaving certificate, common entrance, basic education certificate, just to raise money for the state and not for the improvement in education standards. With all the handwritings on the wall, Malthus's argument might someday still hold true for Nigeria, if it is not so already.

According to Samson Ezea in The Guardian newspaper of 16 June 2018, on *'Dissecting Causes and Consequences of Nigeria's Population Growth'*, he said; *"recently, to the surprise of many Nigerians, the Chairman of the National Population Commission (NPC) Eze Duruiheoma, said Nigeria's population consists of approximately 198 million people. He disclosed this when delivering Nigeria's statement on sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration at the 51st session of Commission on Population and Development in New York. He disclosed that urban population within the country has been growing at an average yearly rate of about 6.5 per cent for over 50 years"*.

"Nigeria remains the most populous in Africa, the seventh globally with an estimated population of over 198 million. The recent World Population Prospects predicts that by 2050, Nigeria will become the third most populated country in the world. Over the last 50 years, Nigeria's urban population has grown at an average annual growth rate of more than 6.5 per cent without a commensurate increase in social amenities and infrastructure".

“In addition, the 2014 World Urbanization Prospects report, predicts that by 2050, most of the population, 70 per cent, will be residing in cities. The 2010 human mobility survey report revealed that 23 per cent of the sampled population was of more females than males,” the Chairman said. He added that the population grew substantially from 17.3 per cent in 1967 to 49.4 percent in 2017. He also said young people of teen age and adolescent girls and boys, women of childbearing age and the people of working age were mostly involved in urbanization and migration among the population.

Ordinarily, the rapid growth of Nigeria population should be a plus to the country, but it seems not, due to several factors - growing unemployment, poverty, lack of basic amenities, belligerent economy and others. These factors have become sources of worry to many Nigerians; especially because the development has not discouraged reproduction among Nigerians. So the questions are; what are the likely effects and consequences of rapid increase in the population of Nigerians without corresponding economic and technological development and growth?

ONLY TWO
OPTIONS ARE LEFT

THE URGENT NEED FOR A TURN-AROUND

Based on the foregoing, the country is now faced with only two options; either we do something about this critical situation now, or our children will have no country to call theirs in the future! All that has been discussed thus far in this book no doubt portrays a very sad-denying picture of Nigeria. As gloomy as it appears, it is the inescapable reality. Unfortunately, Government hates to hear this reality. Government wants to paint rosy picture to avert any agitation and also to ensure successes of their various political parties in future elections. We are here not writing in support or against any particular person, party or particular government. We also did not set out merely to paint a gloomy picture of our own beloved country just for the sake of doing so, or in order to score any cheap point against any interest or cheaper still to discredit anybody or entity. Neither is this merely another cry of a wailer. The aim however, is to actually achieve a noble and patriotic goal; to prompt us to act towards the prevention of the failure of Nigeria as a state and as a country.

Let's proceed by setting forward a similitude. When a human being is sick and is to be genuinely treated, then the nature and extent of the disease condition must first be ascertained as clearly and promptly as possible in order to

guide the treatment procedure and manner as to what type and gravity of medication or surgery is required, and how urgent that is required. In this case, any attempt to downplay the nature and extent of the ailment will be to the detriment of the patient. Poor diagnosis will lead to ineffective treatment and no good result can be expected. Nigeria, beyond all forms of doubt, is in a serious mess, and we are all getting our fair share of this mess as citizens, worst still, we are furthermore staring at a more dangerous situation for our future generation, and as such it behooves us to realize the real nature and extent of the mess we are into and the danger facing us and since it is not an individual challenge but a collective one, then we need to call our attention to the situation as this is the only way a societal move towards a remedy can be initiated. This is the only way available to the people, who are at the center of nations and states. States exist for the service of the people, and people make up nations. The act of understating or overstating the fact of issues is called stereotyping and propaganda, which are the ways and the business of the media, regimes and politicians, while the act of turning the other cheek on obvious socio-political realities is called political correctness, which is the order in government. The people on the other hand have no business and should have no business in media stereotypes, propaganda, and political correctness. All these will only further enslave the people, for while stereotype helps the media to maintain patronage, it disorients the people, and while political correctness helps to consolidate the regime or government, it tranquilizes the people away from the factual realities of socio-political and socio-economic life. The leaders and politicians in whose

interest anybody may seek to be politically correct are in no way in the same shoes with the people. These are people [especially in the Nigerian and indeed African context], that educate their children abroad, get medical attention abroad, shop abroad, invest abroad, have their retirement estates abroad. As such, they have no single stake in Nigeria and so their realities are far different from ours. Thus, we must say it as it is in order to share a common understanding of our common reality as a people so as to discern what course of action is most appropriate and expected from us, going forward.

We as a people cannot continue like this and neither should we allow the government to continue to handle things as they are doing. It has been said amply that one cannot continue to do things in the same old way and expect a different result. That doesn't happen even in Nollywood. With the present situation and trend in Nigeria, if nothing seriously far-reaching, deep-rooted and wide-spread is done or at least initiated urgently, we can be sure that in the nearest future there shall be no place where our children can call their country. Yes, there might be a territory at least in the files of the United Nations officially called Nigeria with a worn-out loosely-bound army given a mandate to enforce its authority. And, all that will remain of our already degraded and feeble institutions can be imagined if we only look at the present crop of students who have been given to delinquency and perversions ranging from idleness, indiscipline, laziness, fun-fair and social engrossment, to the alarming ones like drug addiction, cultism, kidnapping and armed robbery, and exam malpractice. If this is the credentials of the people that will be in charge

of the country in just a couple of years then the prognosis is clear. What becomes of the security in this country tomorrow with the present rate of mass and open slaughter in the face of compromising, indifferent, corrupt, and poorly organized and badly managed security architecture? What becomes the future of governance in the face of the present rate and trend of greed, corruption, mediocrity, and mismanagement? How will our children feed and survive, treat, house, educate, and clothe themselves in the future with the present trend and rate of population growth, oil mono-economy, huge foreign debt, poor infrastructure, economic dependency, low productivity and inadequate local production? How will they handle their micro- and macroeconomics in the face of poor education and an attendant lack of skills and resourcefulness in terms of science and lack of craftsmanship in terms of technology? How will the country's sovereignty survive the onslaught of hostile nations and greedy imperialist governments who have already turned the country and the rest of the continent to their back yards if we still continue to depend on them for almost everything, including imports and loans? We ought to realize that all these is being said against the backdrop of the fact that within 50 years' time from now, Nigeria's population will have already doubled. We would be dealing with practically 400 million people whose lives and livelihood are hanging on the hair-trigger volatility of international crude oil price, if our crude had not been exhausted by then.

Time is running out for Nigeria, and we are in deep trouble if we don't act quickly to reverse the trend. There is no future for the 'so-called' future leaders. They must stand up today to chart a course of a beneficial future for themselves. They

must stop eating the crumbs that drop from the tables of the elites. They must stop asking for less. They must stop mortgaging their future through the sale of their voting rights. They must stop buying jobs because it is only the children of the elites that will be able to afford the price. They must ask for competency, not mediocrity, real education for scientific knowledge and skills and not mere certificates. It is not too late for the old brigades to stand up to create opportunities for positive heritage and legacy for our children and children's children.

There is no sensible human being, or well-meaning Nigerian, or educated and rational person from anywhere for that matter that will opine that we the people of Nigeria should still continue to sit and watch, while continuing our lives in the old ways. So, we practically have only two choices; we either start to do something about this now or our children will have no country tomorrow. **AND THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!**

THE FATALISTIC ILLUSIONS

Fatalism has always been with man. Time is a continuum and every time, day, and period has its own responsibility such that when deferred, it further compounds the situation. In addition, when there is a responsibility, it certainly falls on the shoulder of someone or some people. The people are the shoulder upon which responsibility of societal change falls. The people are the wheel, which drive political change. This is so because the people are the center of communal existence, which is the basis of society and society is in turn the basis of nationhood, which then necessitated the existence of a state. Therefore, the whole socio-political structure and system is built around the people. In addition, the people are the essence and real custodian of society as they are the ones most affected by all elements and dynamics in it. However, it is also man's characteristic to abandon responsibility both at individual and social level. The cause of abandoning or reneging on social responsibility varies from cowardice to ignorance, procrastination, misplacement of priority, defeatism or fatalism. Whether or not there exists other factors totally exclusive of those listed above, we are at least sure that they are all present in the context of failure and political apathy on the part of the Nigerian people.

Interestingly, when one looks at all the causes listed above, there is a significant and usual connection between ignorance and the others; to such an extent that one can say

without reservation that ignorance is almost at the heart of the Blackman's entire predicament. When we talk about ignorance here, the socio-political realities of today have taken such a peculiarity that one has to explain even what 'ignorance' is. Ignorance here is neither a lack of awareness nor lack of information or literary skills, but the real instructive question is what are we aware of and what information do we have? One may ask, are we aware of the irrelevant things while oblivious of the key dynamics and everyday metrics that affect our present lives and shape our future? If the answer to this is in the affirmative, then this brings in the factor of misplaced priority in our social-political life. Is the information we have about the socio-political environment and occurrences in them, the right information or are they merely distractions, stereotypes and half-truths? This is a serious and fundamental challenge in Africa, such that the larger chunk of its people is absolutely ignorant, and for the few who are fortunate to be classified as learned, what do we really know? This aspect is a serious bane on socio-political progress. Another aspect of ignorance is the ignorance of the consequences of our lifestyle on our national life and also the consequences of our political indifference or dormancy as a people. The late Afro-musician, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, attributed cowardice as the reason why Nigerians will accept just about anything that comes their way in the form of oppression and governmental excesses. We fail to realize that in actual sense, the people are more powerful than any government because government gets its first credential for existence and legitimacy from the people. The government also relies on the support and obedience of the people to remain in control, so that all that is needed to

bring any government to the correction table is as simple as a civil disobedience. No doubt there will be casualty in standing up against a government or regime, and the number of casualties varies and depends on the level of civilization or brutality of the regime, and it looks like Nigerians cannot afford or are not ready to sustain anything more than one casualty. We are ready to capitulate once the government is brazen enough (which they are more than ready) to put down one man. The common thought behind this unspoken mindset is that even that one man can be me, and I don't want to die. This is what everybody says which was well captured in Fela's song; *'Sorrow, Tears, and Blood'*. The level of cowardice is so appalling that even the misgivings and exploitations perpetrated against us in our personal and business lives will go scot-free. For example, an average Nigerian will allow himself to be exploited to the most detestable levels by service providers like electricity distribution companies (Discos) and GSM operators without even the slightest effort to seek redress through the arbitration of regulatory bodies even when these agencies have been created to enable us eschew the difficulties of approaching the regular courts, neither do most Nigerians even with our "education" care to even know the regulations bordering around the services we subscribe to. For example, electricity tariffs are governed by MYTO, the Multi-Year Tariff Order, which sets out the amount of tariffs by different Distribution companies and for all the different customer types. All associated costs were considered before arriving at these, yet DISCOs go ahead to charge far beyond the tariff. One may ask, how many Nigerians are aware of MYTO? I once took up one of the DISCOs that overcharged me

over three million naira (N3,000,000) between January 2015 and December 2018, and eventually got redress. But how many Nigerians are ready to do even this? The last dimension of ignorance we ought not to leave out here is the ignorance of our socio-political history. As a people, we have always admired great nations, comparing and contrasting ourselves with them in terms of achievement, advancement and development, but we hardly asked ourselves, what was the story of these nations and the role and sacrifices their people made for their countries to have reached the heights they achieved today. These two factors; ignorance and cowardice, have resulted in our indifference, defeatism and fatalism whereby we have come to commonly conclude that nothing can change or needs to be done. A professor recently said to us in a small gathering that Nigeria cannot change but I said sir, Nigeria can change, and proceeded to show him how that can be possible.

We need to realize that all the great nations of the world today that are the envy of Nigerians became what they are due to the efforts of the people. Great nations are not built by governments but by the people. All the heroic figures of politicians and their achievements are only hinged on the level of socio-political awareness, commitment and activism of the people. All of these nations at some particular time in their history, went through one form of revolution or the other, which were certainly at the instance of the people. The great names we now see in the form of leaders and politicians are the intellectual and socio-political offspring of those revolutions. The social and political order and culture that drive their national lives today are the outcome of those revolutions. It

is now time for us as the Nigerian people to stand up for our only beloved country, which is the only place, as it were that we can call ours and home and most importantly, the only place we can leave for our children in the future to live the dream life we have envisaged. We need to rise up especially now, so that the rest of Africa can rise up behind us before our children become slaves to the Chinese for example, to whom we have now virtually mortgaged all our future. For it looks clear from the cumulative experience as it stands now, that direct slavery and colonization under the West, will be a child's play compared to what we will be made to experience in the neo-colonization under the Chinese scramble for Africa.

We need to rise to this call now as never before. We are at a most critical juncture in history whereby all the indicators predict extremely bleak future and fortunately we can still do something about it. We must rise and break away from all our fatalistic illusions that have held us back for decades and now pose a threat to our future generations both born and unborn. Chief amongst these fatalistic illusions are these three:

1. We shall get it right one day: But the question is when? When are we going to get it right? Is it when things have fallen totally apart? And how are we going to get it right by doing nothing? As far as all known facts and experiences of life are concerned, something cannot come out of nothing and so nothing has ever been achieved by doing nothing; not in the physical sciences and not in the social sciences and not even in the arts or businesses. As Roosevelt aptly puts it; *"you cannot*

continue to do the same thing same way and expect a different result".

2. God will rescue Nigeria: Now once God has been mentioned it becomes a question of faith and religion to which one has a right and freedom of belief. But it is also an absolute fact and principle that religious beliefs must be based on scriptural teachings. I am glad that I am not an atheist and speaking from an informed understanding of the scriptures of the two predominant religions of Nigerians, Islam teaches that God does not change the condition of a people until they change their own attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics, and Christianity teaches that heaven helps those who help themselves. Former President Obasanjo once said quite instructively, *'that God must be a Nigerian'*, looking at the way we have been lucky to survive things that broke other nations and rendered them into historical relics. Undoubtedly, God cannot be a Nigerian as He is no human that needs an earthly home in the first place. Simply put, Nigeria is only being lucky. But for how long should we continue to push our luck? Let's not become akin to a man who crossed the road and forgot to look out for oncoming vehicles and fortunately he made it to the other side without being knocked down and consequently on account of that, it became his habit to cross the road carelessly, thinking that God must be his friend, and would always save him.

3. Nigeria will change but not in our generation: This is a historical and sociological ignorance. Socio-political change is a trans-generational phenomenon. No far-reaching societal change can be initiated and consolidated just within one generation. The dream change in Nigeria may only be realized in the most matured form by another generation, but our generation must certainly initiate and start the process. Whatever ingredients that will form the agenda, must pass from our generation as a heritage to be learnt and inculcated from the cradle by those who will perfectly nurture it to blossom. If we do nothing now, let's be rest assured that our future children shall curse us for being the cause of their predicaments which can be seen even right from now by those who have eyes.

NIGERIA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL REALITY

A mere power change or regime overthrow through any means (and especially through the legitimate means of the ballot) may be drastic but will only produce a short-lived psychological sense of fulfillment; it does not solve the fundamental problem in any meaningful way. The reason is that the problem of Nigeria is neither due to any political party nor any ethnic group nor region. Put more succinctly, it is neither APC nor PDP nor any other political party for that matter; neither Hausa, Igbo, Fulani nor Yoruba; neither north nor south; neither east nor west. The problem of Nigeria is not with any president or Aso Villa (or presidency as they say) for that matter, the problem of Nigeria is the people of Nigeria, such that Aso Villa itself is a victim of the Nigerian people.

No political party, president, or government can single-handedly achieve the desired far-reaching and deep-rooted turnaround of the country. As far as the reality of Nigeria is concerned, that will be a very tall Utopian dream. The kind of government we have in Nigeria is a reflection of the people of Nigeria, and the socio-political and economic situation is a product of the nature of society and people of Nigeria. Our society is sick and it is this sick society that produces sick politicians and consequently bad governments. The ailment is in

our moral compass as a people which have long been lost. Our cultural ignorance and mental laziness, our misplaced priorities, our socio-political short-sightedness, our socio-political ethics and orientation, our shared selfishness and greed, our indolence and yet desperation to get rich by cutting corners, our values and ethos, our blind sentiments of religion, ethnicity and tribe, all these and many more, are the bane of our nation and not necessarily the people at the helm of affairs at any particular time. The problem our leaders pose to us is only in terms of compliance, in that many of them capitalize on the rot amongst the Nigerian people to further exploit us for their own selfish political gains, rather than providing the necessary kind of leadership that can herald the way for the renaissance of the people.

But what kind of leadership and governance do Nigerians expect or deserve? Let's look at the process of getting political power in Nigeria. Somebody wants to be your representative where the laws and decisions that shape your life are taken, or your governor/president that presides over your terrestrial life, and he rallies you in the rain or sun and all he has to do to convince you of his fitness for the post is his thrilling dance steps to delinquent music jamming from mega speakers! We have experienced this as all that is required to get your vote as though they are to represent you in a dancing competition. Furthermore, we ask a politician for paltry sums of money, a pouch of onions and rice in exchange for our votes, mortgaging our lives, future and that of our unborn generation for two liters of vegetable oil, 5g of rice and may be three thousand naira, (in fact far less in most of our rural settings), and we then turn around when they are in office to blame them for

lack of performance and for looting. Who started the looting first? We, of course. Isn't this shameful? We elect people we have all the while regarded as scums for as low as ice cream money or simply because they are from our extraction and we expect the country to progress? Whenever we are involved in any issue involving government officials, we will never allow the law to take its course for once nor allow the officials to do their job, we will rather spontaneously pull out our phones in pride and start calling these politicians in high places to wade in and use their influence to thwart the process or outcome in our favour, and we tag this as "long leg" and then brag about it. When these same politicians who are the original owners of the 'long leg' also feel pressed to use it in their own favour or that of their immediate family members, we start to cry foul and complain bitterly as if we are not the very breeders of such sharp practice.

How can we ever have sanity and discipline in our public life when we crucify petty thieves and sanctify and worship the more obvious and dangerous criminals who we are 100 percent sure have looted our common wealth even years ahead? In our society, a ward counselor or even a mere political thug is respected than a university professor so long as he has a better car. Ours is a society where we do not care about the source of wealth, rather the propensity to throw it around, such that even the very divine institution of marriage has been hard hit by materialism. Even parents these days will only accept a rich man (regardless of his source of income) and reject a noble but poor man as a suitor for their daughters. This is a society where parents have planted materialism in their children from the cradle. Parents enroll their kids in

choice and expensive schools not because of any quality or standard of education, but simply due to the grandeur, status, and pride they acquire by so doing, and these kids are fully aware and infused with this notorious sense of status-by-money. These are the leaders of tomorrow. Nigerians are the sort of people that will openly buy their kids a job, a certificate and an admission. A parent will hand over money to his child to pay for cheating in examination. Some parents will change the child's school to 'miracle center' if the present school will not accept to cheat.

Religion for us in Nigeria has become, by-and-large, a thing of mere fashion and in some cases, the opium of the people, as if to prove Karl Marx right. There are more mosques and churches in Nigeria than there are farms, factories, and hospitals, so that one may naively conclude that the society would be a better place seeing the ocean of religious houses. In fact, Nigeria was rated as the second most religious country in the world by the Pew Research Foundation, second only to Pakistan as at 2015, but these are all a facade as there is nothing in our public life that shows that we are a religious people. All those that have and are still destroying the country in one way or the other are either Muslims or Christians, including those who will say they are atheist, animists, or traditional worshippers. The only time religion is active in our public life is when we use it as a rallying point to win elections or get adherents of our religions to high positions. We desecrate the supposed sanctity of the altar and pulpit by standing therein to sanctify and anoint popular thieves for political offices.

When religion has failed, common human morality becomes the resort. But where is the morality, ethics and

values in our public life? We have long lost our sense of honor, valor and heroism, as well as all the values that a society should have that culminate in a great nation. A teacher in a school once related his shock to me when he was passing by a class and over-heard another teacher [who happens to be his friend] asking students a critical question. To help his friend spice up his class, he entered and offered to give a five-hundred-naira gift to whichever student gives the right answer to the question, and to his utter dismay, one JSS3 student replied that five hundred naira is too small, that he should at least raise it to two thousand naira. He was so dumbfounded and demoralized that he could not teach for the rest of the day. But this is Nigeria. These are around twelve to thirteen years old children, so what do we think of their more senior friends? Everything now is money, such that for any little demonstration of human kindness or charity such as showing someone a road direction or address, Nigerians expect money as compensation. This is the 'nursery school' for the corruption.

Indiscipline and lawlessness are recipes for disaster in any sane society, but in Nigeria they are the norm in our society and public life. Our problem of leadership is not at the macroscopic level but at the microscopic level. The way and nonchalant manner in which parents and teachers display lawlessness and indiscipline to the full glare of their children and students is appalling. A disciplined leader cannot emerge from the blues, and leadership is not a magic spell to be cast but rather a culture that is shared and built. The type of leadership talent that is borne out of a single individual's inherent trait is insufficient for the large and diverse challenges of a

giant nation like Nigeria. We need a culture of leadership where ordinary people are raised to become disciplined leaders effortlessly. But what kind of leadership culture are we providing at the microscopic level of the society? What are parents teaching children and what are teachers teaching students through their everyday actions? In every segment of the society, the reason why Nigeria is what it is can be seen lucidly. Parents insult their children's teachers before their children, when the children behave badly and they are reprimanded, the parents fume into the school the next morning threatening all hell, and these same parents ask the children to sit for exit exams from a far lower class, promising them to pay for any assistance they will need. Let's take a closer look at all forms of leadership at the microscopic level of the society today and compare with what happens at the macro level. One can say without any fear of contradiction, that the level of corruption and mismanagement perpetrated by union chairmen, university vice chancellors, school administrators, ministry and agency officials, bank officials, factory managers and business men and women is far worse than what the politicians are doing in high offices. Merely take a look at the highway where we see the common men in action. All it takes for a truck to divert to your lane and send you tumbling on the side of the road and many times into untimely grave is just because he is driving a bigger vehicle that can crush you and yours, so what will this same rascal do if he has the powers of a governor? The answer is where the problem of Nigeria lies.

At the bottom of all these, is our strange and barbaric sense of greed. Greed permeates everything from our thoughts, speeches, to our actions. We want to possess money to the

detriment of the society in which we will spend that money. If people steal fishes from the river, Nigerians will steal the river, if possible, so that they can have all fishes alone to themselves. It is like the proverbial earth-borrower that stockpiles everything of grains in its borrows and spends all its life stockpiling such that it never gets time to eat them because it is always busy stockpiling until the day he ends up in the hunter's trap. It is said that in some instances, up to six basket loads of grains can be recovered from its borrows, but only this time in charred form. In the end, it does not eat them neither does it allow the farmer to benefit from his hard labor. Many of the big-time looters in Nigeria fit this description.

All these and many more are the problems and challenges of Nigeria that has led to the situation we are in at the moment and the threat that faces us in the future. It should be clear to us that our problem is not the particular party or politician in power. For so long as Nigerians remain like this, no political party, politician or leader from anywhere be it Mars or Jupiter, can perform any magic to salvage our situation. The case of Buhari has proven true as an excellent example of this reality. Buhari was seen by the same, by-and-large corrupt, indiscipline, lawless, corner-cutting, unpatriotic and greedy people as the single Messiah or man with the magic wand that will come and automatically and single-handedly turn Nigeria to a kind of London overnight. Now that the mist has cleared and reality has dawned on us that our hopes and aspirations were mere illusions, he is now perhaps most hated and criticized even by the very people who had eulogized him. From the educated to the illiterate, from the rich to the poor, from the urban to the rural, from the old to the young, if anybody

likes Buhari now, we can be sure that it is because he/she is directly, and I re-emphasize – directly – benefiting from him being in power either in the form of money, position, or influence. The simple lesson to be learnt is that the mission and responsibility to fix Nigeria is not a one-man show. It is not Aso Villa that will fix Nigeria, rather, Nigerians are the ones to fix Aso Villa.

SEARCH FOR A VIABLE SOLUTION

Quite a lot of people [both well-meaning and self-seeking] have been concerned about the situation of Nigeria. These concerns from various quarters and individuals have seen diverse suggestions of solutions, from the mild to the very electrifyingly bold. From those calling for constitutional reforms, to restructuring, to those calling for a peaceful split to the very daring ones calling for a bloody revolution. The good thing in all these is that we do not need a professorship in sociology and political science, or an over-achingly in-depth academic thesis to show that they are all mere reactions and not borne out of a realistic insight into the Nigerian predicament and as such, they will not work. You may ask, why? Let us look briefly at the most commonly suggested solutions.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

There has been an increased agitation for constitution reform and in some extreme case for constitution replacement. This agitation has gained momentum that the National Assembly is already working on it and has organized nationwide discussion.

In “Constitution review: What Nigerians really want from National Assembly” in the Businessday NG of June 4, 2021 Dozie Emmanuel stated that “their demands have mainly centered on: electoral reforms, restructuring, state policing, resource control, national security, devolution of power and financial autonomy for local government and state legislature”. In some cases, people ask for “electoral reforms capable of bringing about democratic governance and social change in the country” to “give way to free, fair and credible elections in the country”. But at some extreme the demand is that “Nigerians needed at the moment a new constitution”. <https://businessday.ng/opinion/article/constitution-review-what-nigerians-really-want-from-national-assembly/>.

There is no denying the fact that every constitution makes provision for its amendment. As quoted by Emmanuel in the above article *“specifically, Section 9 of the Constitution empowers the National Assembly to alter the provisions of the constitution and prescribes the manner in which it is to be done. Unfortunately, it does not make a similar provision to provide a mechanism for replacing or re-writing an entirely new constitution.”* It is therefore clear from the constitution that review is a continuous process. However, the call for the replacement of the 1999 constitution by that of 1963 or a completely new one may certainly be unconstitutional.

In “we keep missing the point” in The Cable of July 3, 2021 by Simon Kolawole, made it clear that *“the campaign for restructuring and balkanization has been heightened since President Muhammadu Buhari came to power”*. He also noted that *“true federalism”* is a fallacy that what we have are variants of federalism as no two countries practice the system

same way. A call for a true federalism may therefore not hold much water. <https://www.thecable.ng/we-keep-missing-the-point#.YOxXCZo98y8.link>.

For those giving the impression that a reviewed constitution or may be the replacement will give ample resource control, Kolawole debunked the idea stating that under the *“1963 Constitution mines and minerals, including oilfields, oil mining, geological surveys and natural gas, were all on the Exclusive Legislative List and squarely under the jurisdiction of the federal government”*. He *“also noted that the economic mainstays of the regions were cocoa, groundnuts and palm produce — which were agricultural products, not mineral resources”* and that states are still allowed to repeat the agricultural feats under the 1999 Constitution as it was in that of 1963. One may therefore ask, what is the cry that *“the root cause of the nation’s current problems is the 1999 Constitution foisted on Nigeria by the military”* all about?

Yet the argument that the 1999 constitution was not written by the people as it was foisted on Nigeria by the military and as such it needs to be substituted by the 1963 constitution which was made with the consent of the people or by a brand new constitution is again a futile talk. One may ask, who are the people that will write a new constitution? Will it not be those who will emerge as representatives through existing faulty mechanism and inefficient electoral process? Or with the monster called corruption whose interest will the constitution represent? As quote by Kolawole in the above reference, the Coalition of Northern Groups was reported to have said *“we at the CNG are quite aware of the futility of addressing the fundamentals of our national existence*

through a medium created by a set of representatives that have acquired the reputation of being the worst in the history of our nation in terms of any capacity to generate confidence in achieving credible national goals". So how are we sure the outcome will meet the aspiration of the people?

While I have no objection whatsoever to constitution review, the fact must be told that our constitution may not be to blame but rather the operators. Just as Olisa Agbakoba was reported to have said *"that changing the 1999 Constitution may not guarantee a perfect country, saying that the current constitution, in spite of its imperfections, is not being complied with by political leaders"*. We cannot agree less with Simon Kolawole in *"If Nigeria finally breaks up"* in the Cable of July 10 2021 that *"we are victims of elite manipulation and political mismanagement"*. <https://www.thecable.ng/if-nigeria-finally-breaks-up>.

RESTRUCTURING?

The next suggestion is restructuring. All those calling for restructuring have not laid down their cards on the table in the form of a well-articulated position and blueprint of action for us to see. However, if we are to go by the bits and pieces of what we can pick from the various calls across board, then we can surmise that the call for restructuring is simply and basically centered on more decentralization or more pronounced federalism in the form of devolution of the powers, privileges, and authorities with which the Federal Government "over-controls" the Federation into the hands of the regions or state

governments. But these are all about resource control and state policing. As for the people who call for the restructuring of the country both in the capacity of individuals and socio-political groups, they only do that when the sitting president of the Federation is from another region, for whenever their region is in control of the Federal Government, they call for solidarity and consolidation of the existing status quo. This is nothing but sheer hypocrisy, chauvinism and ethnic jingoism, and a poison to our national struggle rather than a solution. As for the state governors who sponsor these jingoists, they are only self-seeking and greedy. It is obvious because they do not call for restructuring except to have more access to public resources in the name of resource control, and to have more access to the means of wielding public power in the name of state police. Is it not a paradox that the same people who are decrying and protesting the excessive powers of the federal government had gone to court to protest the autonomy given to the state legislature, judiciary and local governments? This is a clear indication that the cries for restructuring are nothing but another political gimmick. But to address the issue exclusive of its proponents, the point must be made that we are not against restructuring, if we believe it is the solution to the Nigerian problem, but in our considered view, it is not. The problem is the people operating whichever structure there is, whether we retain the present structure of or change to another. There is nothing fundamentally wrong with the present structure of the country if and only if the people in authority are patriotic. But so long as we are who we are as a people, all known political structures will not avail us.

SPLIT UP?

On the issue of split up, it is just another naïve call. The problem of Nigeria is neither in our size nor in our composition. No ethnic group or region is fundamentally the problem of Nigeria; because a Nigerian is a Nigerian anywhere. It is not as if the people from one particular region are basically the problem such that if others go away from them, they will have rid themselves of the palaver. Far from that, the politicians and administrators from all regions of the country usually team up and work hands-in-hands to short-change the rest of us. There is practically no injustice, political oppression, social degradation, or economic exploitation that say a Hausa man for example can perpetrate on the Igbo man without the connivance and cooperation of another Igbo man, and the same can be said for other tribes or regions. If the federal government is the problem, then what about the corruption, mismanagement, oppression and underdevelopment observed with state governments today, are these also because of the federal structure? It is doubtful if most of these state governments are not even more corrupt and irresponsible than the federal government today. Actually, with the exception of a few states, it is as if many states do not exist for anything in terms of government impact beyond what they obtain from the federal government. In other words, many of the states are not economically viable and cannot stand on their own. Now are these the same people under whom we are going to be better off when we split into whatever, or when we devolve more powers and resources to them? All the public officials and politicians looting and mismanaging the country

today at the federal level are from one state of the federation or the other. Is there any state in Nigeria, or a region, from where the country has not recorded a bad Nigerian either in the form of an unpatriotic citizen or a self-serving politician? So, what is the point about the split up? If this is the case, it is now time to remind ourselves that when countries break apart, the consequence is a more bitter in-fighting amongst the emerging entities as history has shown. The reason is because, as we have stated above, all regions have their own fair share of the bad eggs, and secondly, the agitation against the center preoccupies the people's attention from minding the many other microscopic deficiencies that will become manifest and perhaps more cancerous than the problem at the center. Splitting up is not the solution to Nigeria's predicaments.

POLITICAL REVOLUTION

And coming to the issue of a bloody political revolution, it will only be – at most – a vicious call to repeat history. The unnecessary blood-letting in a political revolution is not merely the reason why it is not a viable option, but for the fact that it may merely serve – at best – to replace one bad government with another bad and sometimes worse one. Nigerians have been through this before during the military era. Leaving aside the issue of feasibility of a political revolution in Nigeria for now, even if there were to be one, the question is; who are to replace the existing leaders? Are they not going to be the same human beings from the same Nigerian society? What

then will make the difference? With different constitution, different structure, different laws, different political and economic system, with the same people [Nigerians], be sure that Nigeria will still be Nigeria. The wanton destruction that goes with forcefully bringing down a regime is nearly close to a total destruction of the entire country as history has shown that in some cases, not all political revolutions end up as envisaged; many ended in a balkanization of the country such that the people find themselves taken one hundred years backwards.

In the context of Nigeria, the thought of a political revolution should be discarded due to our specific peculiarity. Our ethnic diversity makes it difficult for a successful political revolution. Any attempt at overthrowing the political class will have to start with the government in power, and this will definitely be seen as a coup against a particular region or ethnic group. When is it going to be done? When the Northerners are in power at the centre, will they buy in, and when the Southerners are in power, will they also buy in? This is what happened in January 1966 that led to the bloody civil war in Nigeria. The six army majors “claimed” they were carrying out a revolution [only some Igbos have referred to it as a revolution, otherwise it is generally referred to as a coup], but ended up exterminating all the political and military leaders from the other regions of the federation [top-most were Brigadier Hassan Maimalari, Sir Tafawa Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello from the North, and Chief Akintola, and Brigadier Ademulegun from the South West, Okoti Eboh from the Mid-West], remarkably sparing all notable Igbo leaders under one excuse or the other. Major General Aguiyi Ironsi, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu and Sir Nnamdi Azikiwe from the

East were somehow not touched. While it was claimed that those who were supposed to pull the trigger at Ironsi’s end failed, Azikiwe was rather curiously out of the country at the time of the coup. The rumor was that he had been tipped off! The whole saga was laced with suspicion such that even if it were to be a case of simple coincidence as the Easterners had claimed, the result it produced – with an Easterner in the person of General Ironsi, a kinsman of the ‘revolutionists’ becoming head of state – shattered any iota of space for the benefit of doubt and the conclusion was that it was an ‘Igbo coup’ against officers and top government officials from other regions of the country. This was the general feeling. Thus, six months later there was a counter-coup – referred to this time as ‘Hausa coup’ – and that marked the beginning of the events that ended in the Biafran War with its well-known costs and consequences. The chances that any attempt at a political revolution in Nigeria will end up in a similar way, is 99 percent. We may think that a civil war is not possible now due to the fact that we have civilian governors and different states under one region, but once the ethnic bias and solidarity is kindled, the soldiers and officers from the aggrieved region will know what to do. And a little counter assassination or reprisal attack on the leaders of the perceived initiators of the revolution will plunge the country into another vicious cycle of political instability which will be worse than where we are today.

WHAT THEN
IS THE SOLUTION?

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Teach them the value of hard work and sacrifice and discourage them from crimes which are destroying your image as a good people.” - Nelson Mandela, interview with Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmed 2007.

The solution to Nigeria’s problem is a social revolution. Yes, the people of Nigeria need to change and the Nigerian society consequently need to be reformed so as to engender the needed change in our socio-political and socio-economic life. This is the only way we can save our beloved country. A social revolution is when the people decide collectively and consciously to take pain-staking steps to change the way they approach and live life in order to improve their lots as a people. The ripple and consequential effect of this struggle will be reflected in all aspects of their public life.

We must not make a mistake about this. A social revolution is no doubt a slow and gradual process, it is undoubtedly a sacrificial road to follow, but just like the efforts and steps are far-reaching, deep-rooted, wide-spread and comprehensive, the end results are equally deep-rooted, widespread, far-reaching, and long-lasting, if not permanent. We must stop dreaming of a messiah who will emerge one day to do

the magic for us without any work and sacrifice on our part as a people. We must equally avoid the illusion of quick and instant measures towards the Nigerian problem. The people of Nigeria need a long walk to emancipation, progress, good governance and development. *If we are in a haste then we must start the long walk now* so as to avoid further delay of the positive outcome.

The aspects of our lives that we need to change have already been discussed under the socio-political realities of Nigeria, but we must highlight them again for emphasis. This is what has been done in the concluding chapter of this book.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

“Let me tell you what I think you need to do. You should encourage leaders to emerge who will not confuse public office with sources of making personal wealth. Corrupt people do not make good leaders. Then you have to spend a lot of your resources for education.” - **Nelson Mandela, interview with Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmed 2007.**

WHAT WE MUST CHANGE

1. We must work on our sense of patriotism towards our nation
2. We must work on our level of consciousness and awareness of socio-political matters
3. We must work on mental laziness and indifference that debar us from digging deep and following facts and intellectual details of public life.
4. We must work on our sense of priority that makes us value fun, entertainment, luxury and frivolous pass-time over hard work, deep and strategic thinking, reading, research, and life-long learning.
5. We must work on our moral compass that has gone so bad that we live our lives and take actions that are inimical to the overall well-being of the society.

6. We must work on our craving for materialism and our get-rich-quick syndrome.
7. We must work on our greed that makes us pursue money at all costs and to the detriment of our country.
8. We must work on and change our attitude of haste, indiscipline and impatience in almost everything.
9. We must work on our political awareness and attitude that make us either indifferent or sell our votes for money.
10. We must work on our political orientation that makes us support candidates based on their money, religion and ethnic bias.
11. We must work on our attitude and disposition towards the moral upbringing of our children.
12. We must work on our social consciousness and conscience, our value system, mindset, norms and mores.
13. We must work on our dismal fear and cowardice that make it easy for politicians to coerce us through violence or blackmail.
14. We must work on our penchant to give, take or demand for bribe. The same goes for our addiction to fraud, shortcuts, nepotism, and other sharp practices.
15. We must work on our dismally poor level of creativity and productivity.

THE OBJECTIVES

What we need to do to achieve the required social revolution has been enumerated above, but the list is not in any way exhaustive, for whatever we are found doing currently as a people that is inimical to the progress and wellbeing of our nation must be worked on and changed for the better. However, these are not going to be an easy task for the following reasons;

1. It is not easy for a human being to suddenly change his/her ways of life; mentality, habits and common practices.
2. If the above can be said to be difficult for an individual, then it seems almost an impossible task to call for the entire society to change.
3. People cannot begin to change unless they are mentally convinced of the need to and feel socially secured to act in the right direction, for if there is any iota of fear that they are alone in that regard and that the usual way still remains the norm for others, they will not want to discipline themselves and be at a disadvantage for the next door neighbor to exploit.
4. Social revolution must be far-reaching and wide-spread, and thus requires a highly rigorous, resilient, and mountainous effort to spread the message far and wide.

5. Simply put, this social revolution is tantamount to re-orientation of the whole nation, and even the continent, because our continent is assailed by the same ills. This is a horrendous task as it will require the manner, scope, and level of spirited mass orientation that will reach the poorest of the poor, the most unlettered of the illiterate, the most remotely located of the rural, the oldest of the old, the youngest of the young, the most sophisticated of the rich, the most enlightened of the learned, and the entire body of the Nigerian people and indeed Africans.
6. The gains of a social revolution will not pour in immediately and people are usually impatient to work and sacrifice for what they may not be alive to witness or experience the gains.
7. As with any socio-political mission, a campaign for change starts with a few early vanguards, who will no doubt be subjected to all forms of ridicule, criticism, and even physical attacks. Not many can stand these.

The good news is that as many and daunting as these challenges may seem, they are surmountable. People will change when they are sufficiently convinced, and motivated and so it behooves on the vanguards of this revolution to be resilient and forbearing. The bandwagon effect is also there to our advantage in that once we can work hard enough to gain some degree and measure of momentum and popularity, people will start falling in line because it is now the vogue, and this is called the stage of 'sweeping momentum'. The nature of a revolutionary message is that it meets stiff resistance for a

long time initially and then begins to record a very slow-paced and gradual success. But all of a sudden it hits its moment of popularity and gains the sweeping momentum. Those who start it may not be the ones to see it gain the sweeping momentum and ultimately the intended socio-political transformation in the country, but that is immaterial. What is of paramount concern is that we would have written our names in the annals of history and live forever in the memories of the future generation as their heroes and heroines. We would have lived a fulfilled life by leaving a lasting legacy and a developing great and prosperous nation for our future generations yet unborn.

STEPS TO TAKE

What we set out to achieve has been clearly stated and articulated, and we admit the unfolding of time may alter the specifics of our objectives from time to time, but for now, our line of actions are as follows;

1. Publish and widely circulate this book for people of like minds to be moved towards action.
2. Create synergy of collective and organized actions of these people of like minds from everywhere towards the achievement of this goal. It is desired that every patriotic Nigerian and in fact, African should become a participant and not a spectator.

3. Set up a vanguard as vehicle to pursue all the objectives listed above, and work to galvanize the formation of other off-shoot organizations that may specialize or narrow down on one or two most closely related objectives.
4. The operations of these organizations will be to:
 - i. Organize physical-audience public enlightenment lectures and talks in schools, universities, villages, towns and city centers with such a dexterity that will attract the attention of the men from watching football and women from ceremonies to attending the talks and lectures.
 - ii. Organize open debate and play/drama show clubs in schools and theatres for enlightenment.
 - iii. Publish and distribute enlightenment books and pamphlets (in hard and soft prints).
 - iv. Publish enlightenment articles in all print and electronic media.
 - v. Have great presence in social media space with excellent and sleek messages.
 - vi. Host enlightenment programs in all electronic media at strategic times including virtual presentations.
 - vii. Compensate anybody supporting the revolution with accolades and recognition as those deserving to be entrusted with public offices in the future.
 - viii. Give wide publicity to those who are keying in, or already living by the ethos of the revolution.
 - ix. Have active cells of activity in every ward of the federation.
5. Ensure and insist that every vanguard and every ambassador live by the ethos and champion the message of the revolution by their own ways of life, as leadership is only effective by example.

JOIN US

To have taken the pain to read this book.....

- We believe you are patriotic
- We believe you are rational
- We believe you share our thoughts
- We are organizing ourselves with many like-minds like you into a vanguard to champion the revolution.

Please join us at: www.theblackmanrevolution.com

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yaqeen Abdullah Habeeb was raised in a rural setting and when he went to secondary school his immense academic talents became apparent within a very short spell of time as he was promoted to Class 2 merely after seven (7) weeks in Class 1. He was active in social and academic associations where he held commanding and leadership positions both in secondary and tertiary institutions. He obtained Division One Distinction in his West African Examination and First Class Honour in his first degree. He won Mobil Oil Scholarship after being nominated by his University as the best Economics student and successfully went through a competitive interview with best students from other universities. After his Master of Science degree in Economics he obtained a Doctorate degree in Management Sciences. He also studied Banking and Finance at National Institute of Bank Management, NIBM Pune, India through a scholarship of the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan. He has attended several banking and finance courses in Nigeria and abroad including Harvard Business School.

He lectured in two Nigerian universities before moving to banking where he rose to the top of the professional cadre becoming a Deputy General Manager and acted as Executive Director every time his Director was on leave.

As a lover of education, he offers not less than 30 scholarships annually to indigent, brilliant students in the last twelve years and has contributed immensely to community

development through his NGOs.

He has served his country as Resource Person to the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Committee of the Constitutional Conference and as a Special Assistant to a Federal Minister.

He passionately believes that standing aloof and thinking that we are too clever or intelligent to join politics means we shall be ruled by morons. He therefore supported many people of high integrity to participate in elective politics. His admirers, knowing fully that he has great natural endowment as a leader, with wide experiences prevailed on him to offer his services to bring a new lease of life to the people of his State. He therefore once contested the gubernatorial primaries but lost. He is currently an educationist and also engages in humanitarian services through Non-Governmental Organizations dealing in welfarerism of the under privileged.

