

**RULING ELITES AND THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIAN FOURTH REPUBLIC
(SOME INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS FROM SOUTH KOREA)**

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ABSTRACT

Development, without which life is void, remains most crucial but difficult goal of man and society. One essential condition for its attainment is human intellect represented by enlightened leadership. In Nigeria, it is found that as the grip of sectional domination on national politics wanes, it is being replaced with a rapidly evolving corporatist-conspiracy of the elites. This is evident from the perfidy displayed by new generation of ruling class that is appearing, too soon, willing victims of lust in the muddy water of prevailing demagogic politics. With relevant comparative insights drawn from the leadership-induced Korean developmental experience, re-echoed in recent election of Park Jr., conclusion is drawn that sustainable development may remain an elusive goal if patriotic Nigerians across religion and politically-fostered primordial taxonomies are not resolved to rescue the nation from the revolving class of self-serving ruling elites.

Keywords: Ruling Elites, Developmental Challenges, Democracy, Institutional Sclerosis, Sustainable Development. Nigerian Fourth Republic, South Korea.

INTRODUCTION

Realizing the complications around the world today; the rate at which hope for rapid development of underdeveloped communities is fizzling out; the accelerating pace of socioeconomic and political crises; the ever-widening division and heightened confrontations between the centripetal and centrifugal forces within nations; the threatening spread of war and war-prone technologies, all these in the face of ever-increasing human needs for food, security, peace and comfort, humanity is most critically in need of leaders. This need, which is now more than ever acute and urgent, was decades ago most amply situated by Bennis (1976:1):

It is the paradox of our times that precisely when the trust and credibility of leaders are at their lowest, when the beleaguered survivors in leadership positions feel unable to summon up the vestiges of power left to them; we most need people who can lead.

While, elsewhere across the globe, new generation of positively-oriented leaders are springing up facilitating rapid uplifting of the citizens and sustainable development of their nations, the situation is no doubt critical in sub-Saharan Africa. In this region, the misery of decades of domination by self-serving ruling elites, whose legacies have continued to serve as incubators of increasing systemic disorder and anarchy, has continued to occasion unparalleled mass poverty. It is regrettable that while crises are escalating, calling for attention of selfless leaders in and out of government, diverse forces are emerging in Nigeria, which seems determined to replace the divisive self-serving ethnic politics of the past with corporatist-conspiracy of perfidious self-serving elites.

If Weber's adaptive view of the state remains incontrovertible, the character of leaders, more than anything else, shapes and determines the character of the state and society. Where leaders are genuinely constructive and developmental in their approach to socioeconomic and political organization of the state, society will have legacies of improved living conditions to signpost. It is the character of the ruling class that largely determines the character and quality of stateness. To this extent, with over a decade of return to democracy in Nigerian Fourth Republic, this paper attempts an assessment of the performance of the ruling elite. Among the questions interrogated are: Why has it ever been difficult to break the vicious cycle of leadership-induced underdevelopment characterizing the Nigerian history since independence? What magnitude of success has the actors of the Fourth Republic recorded in reversing this trend? And, what specific challenges still lie ahead of the present actors in arresting the worrisome tide of leadership-developmental disjoint and the consequent frustration of sustainable socioeconomic and political development in Nigeria?

THEORETICAL INSIGHT

Though important, it is a paradox that abundance of economic resources is neither an all-sufficient nor all-conditioning factor for development of nations (Jerome 2004:205-221). Jan-Erik and Ersson (1997), in searching for the determinants of sustainable development, have argued that the traditional economic models of economic growth need to be supplemented or replaced by new ones that take into account the impact of political phenomena, particularly leadership, on the overall rate of change. They argued:

The institutional fabric of the political system reduces the level of affluence as a function of the amount of institutional sclerosis... a political variable [considered to be] of fundamental importance for economic growth.

To these writers, institutional sclerosis is related to modernization. It is considered as that point in time at which enlightened and modern leadership capable of accelerating national processes towards sustainable development is introduced into governance of a given polity. Contextualizing such leadership, Brown (1999:1) sees:

1. Liberating *heroes* and role models who devote themselves to the collective good.
2. Skilled *actors* able to deliver authentic and convincing performances.
3. *Immortalists* and visionaries with high self-esteem, whose organizations take on their personalities.
4. *Power brokers* who accomplish goals by mobilizing others to act on their behalf.
5. *Ambassadors and diplomats* who use their interpersonal skills to develop valuable networks of external supporters.
6. *Willing victim*, content to make a personal sacrifice for the sake of a cause in which they believe.

In what could be described as magic theory of leadership, Cleverly (1971) stated management, and we might add, leadership, is about magic. Leaders, in the ideal sense of the word, are:

credited with arcane knowledge and skills not possessed by lay people, which give them special powers. They are guardians who exorcize evil and deploy powerful medicines (in the form of programmatic change, mergers and acquisitions, and new equipment). They engage in ritual planning and strategic exercises using all forms of bizarre assumptions, and foretell the future using ‘sophisticated’ forecasting methods available only to chosen few.

Leaders, leads only those who accept to be led, while rulers, rules people irrespective of acceptance or expression of contrary choice. Leaders build nations; opportunist demagogues destroy it, water cannot rise above its level, a nation cannot develop beyond the ideological orientation and preoccupation of its leaders. The quality of a nation’s leadership and the values they attach to life, bearing in mind the pervasive influence of prevailing social forces within a nation, determines the quality and quantum of a nation’s developmental success or failure. It is leadership, and the type of energy and backing it receives from the societal forces that determine whether a nation succeeds, or fails outstandingly.

From the analysis by Leipziger and Thomas (1993:5), the success stories of South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and others such as Japan, Malaysia and China, the fastest industrializing nations after the World War II, are credited to visionary leadership (Bush 2002). These patriotic leaders and other nation-building agencies downplayed self-interest and divisive tendencies of “social forces” (Mamdami 1988). They harmoniously deployed and mobilized every facets of the society towards national goals and development as against self-constructed and self-serving primordial motives and agenda that has been the preoccupation of leaders in sub-Saharan Africa. Commenting on conditions necessary for accelerated sustainable development of underdeveloped societies, Abubakar (2004:154-155) noted the importance of positive synergy between leadership, state and development, stating that:

Leadership ... is an essential element in the process of nation building ... The nature, character and quality of ... leadership greatly affects not only the level of national cohesion and development at the domestic level, but also the image and influence of the country in international relations ...

He concluded that:

The tragedy of most postcolonial African states, however, is that they lack visionary political leaders who will transcend personalist and primordial interest to transform the state into a viable vehicle that could address basic needs of the citizenry.

The manifestation of poor state leadership and its systemic incapacitation, suggests the reason most African states encounter problem of “co-ordination dilemma” (Weignast 1997) leading to pronounced disarticulation in socioeconomic planning and non-actualization of sustainable development. As if referring specifically to the less-developed countries across Africa, Rosenau (2000:223) exclaimed:

Most conspicuously, there is all too little effective governance capable of ameliorating, if not resolving, these problems...Perhaps, even more troubling, our generation [of leaders] lacks the orientation necessary to sound assessments of how the authority of governance can be brought to bear on the challenges posed by the prevailing disarray.

The ineffectiveness of governance and failure of experiencing sustainable development in the sub-Saharan African region results from no other than the combined effect of poor leadership and the resultant weak capacity of the state and its institutions. Examining the synergy between state capacity and development, Gonzalez and King (2004:193-210) demonstrated the effect of weak state on development of all-inclusive democracy and all-benefiting socioeconomic development (see also Akkerman, Hager and Grin 2004:82-95). No doubt, Fukuyama (2004:17-31) is well placed that effective and strong state, made possible only through rationally driven leadership, is a prerequisite for development to enable effective enforcement of laws, policies and programmes as well as efficient regulation of economic activities and forces. As against the exercise of unbridled coercive powers by most African leaders, past and present, it needs be borne in mind that the strength of a state is most pictured from the quality and performance of leadership reflected in the well-being and not living-disarray of the populace as the modal factor of “national density” (Ferrer 2006). Thus, there is a general causal

relationship between socioeconomic development and political development (Mrydal 1968:1). This is more so when the phenomenon under investigation- the quality of leadership is considered as a very important index of political capacity and national development.

Development is a multidimensional phenomenon and the relationship between politics and economy intrinsically dialectical. To avoid a one-tailed argument, there is the need to make a concession that the challenges of development faced by states whether developed, developing or underdeveloped, is not exclusively a function of political variable, economic consideration also have its place. Harris (1980:256-258) once affirmed that in developing the concept of the state, it has first to be recognized that the state is not only a political body but also has a significant economic aspect. Its branches are themselves economic agents enmeshed in market forces and its laws. On this note, Stolper (1963:3-4) have opined you cannot make policy without politics. But, rather than downplay the importance of leadership as a dominant political variable however, the above multi-dimensional view only further justifies the need for a broadly enlightened leadership if attainment of sustainable socioeconomic and political development remains the goal of nations. Ultimately, from Nigerian experience, economic development is a function of political decision just as the fact that economic aspects of political decisions and execution have gained even greater importance than in the past places a burden upon political leadership to be more broadly versed. Contemporaneously, as the scope and complexity of governance grow, the deficiencies associated with “role-capture” (Brown 1999), or incompetent and self-centered leadership are becoming more pronounced. Leaders are expected to be deep in knowledge and broad in experience, with expert assistance if needed (Adedeji 1969 and Tomori 1985:16-17) to be relevant in facing the challenges of the present age. For survival in this modern era, state managers or the political executives have a duty to use the resources, which are diverse and enormous, placed at their disposal in the most efficient and economical manner (Oshisami 1991:189) and only for the collective good as against the politics of personal aggrandizement that has been the history of Nigeria.

RULERS AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

It is only through leadership integrity and performance track, that ailing nations can move towards sustainable development. Compared to Nigeria, nations with comparatively less natural endowment have achieved all round sustainable socioeconomic and political development (Streeten, 1969, Chau, 1993, Lin et al, 1994, Zhang 1996, Xu 1999, Mody 1999 and KOIS 2003). But, it is doubtful giving some recent incidents whether some of the ruling elites in both public and private sectors, in and out of government in Nigeria, despite hard lessons of the past, are genuinely committed to the emergence of a new and positive culture of leading. The problems of underdevelopment in less-developed region generally, and Nigeria in particular, often stem from misdeeds of ruling class operating such states and their organs (Jean-Dominique and Jacques 1993:17). To Pickett and Singer (1990:14-22), the woes of those nations are traceable to antics of the ruling class who engaged in distorted prices, excessive and debt-piling imports, discouragement of agriculture, usage of exploited resources to finance large and unproductive public investment, administrative control that was enmeshed in reckless rent-seeking and widespread corruption. Rather than propel nations towards sustainable development, these, according to Anstee (1990:196-197) have created a bleak future for African countries. Thus, it is clear that government and the ruling elites uses their power and

authority to establish and maintain formal and informal framework of institutions to regulate social and economic conditions (Brautigam 1991:1).. Brautigam stated:

Government interaction with its citizen, than any other factors, determines many of the preconditions of a thriving or declining domestic economy (see Anyanwu 1997:19, Landell-Mills and Seradeldin 1991:303-324 and Martin 1991:325-352).

Ihunna (2005) in his examination of the pejoratively labeled Africa's 'inglorious past' comparatively sees the presently manifesting politics of deceit, dominated by 'negative frills' and effervescent self-seeking leadership as the chief source of societal disillusionment and, rather than being facilitators, as obstacle to individual and collective progress. The result of monumental leadership failure is no other but debilitating evidences of poverty on the faces of masses and increasing systemic upheavals across the continent.

Castell (2000) referring to the UNDP 1996 'human development report' concluded that poverty, which is very prevalent in Nigeria and most of Africa, is a function of public policies, a crucial instrument of governance only at the disposition of leaders. In recognition of the utilitarian value of political leadership, Olopoenia (1998) incontrovertibly affirmed that development is not by economics or material wherewithal alone, but must encompass progressive political development in which everybody has an effective participatory role in processes and policies (political, social, and economic) that determines and shapes his life. It is daily getting clearer in Nigeria that beyond election, politics of policies is an exclusive preserve of leaders once elected. And, it is mostly first determined by their selfish goals over and above public choice and convenience. The success or failure of development efforts, to Olopoenia, depends on the type of policies and character of their implementation (see also Yanagihara and Sambommatsu 1997 and Belassa 1980). The led in Nigeria, historically, have little space for relevance in politics and policies of development. Genuine strive towards sustainable development requires ruling elites been as rational as possible in determining what they choose to do and/or not to do. However, in poorly governed African states, the reverse has been the case, as seeming perfectly rational rulers do not always bring that analytical rationality to play on their policy formation because of their inclined preoccupation with parochial and self-seeking motives (Onyeoziri 1989:41).

The capitulation and general deterioration of the Nigerian political economy, occasioned by the combined effects of rapid institutional decay, leadership's loss of direction and financial impropriety (Utomi 2000:159-164) resulted into aggressive and wanton corruption that was leading Nigeria to a state of self-strangulation as at the close of the twentieth century (National Planning Commission 2004). Nigeria was indeed in a precarious situation before the inception of the new democratic regime on May 29, 1999. Considering much of the effort that has been devoted to economic and developmental planning in Nigeria, barring the problems associated with formulation and implementation of grandiose programmes (Paauw 1965), Nigeria ought to have fared better. In contrast to what obtained in South Korea, Malaysia and Taiwan, the greatest obstacle militating against sustainable development in Nigeria in the past was traceable to the nature of the Nigerian state, the underpinning divisive philosophy of her politics and the wasteful inclination of the ruling elites. Never in history, before the eighties, has deception for personal goals and enrichment becomes a clear strategy of governance. Careful analysis of

Nigerian developmental problems from mid-eighties has led to the conclusion that it will be difficult for Nigeria to achieve development (Inang ed. 1985). Two reasons were advanced to explain the development misery of the nation. One, that the military leadership, which has occupied the seat of power in the country, is the least trained for stewardship responsibilities for managing a nation's economic system, and two, that the poor political leadership of past governments has caused the country's economy to nose-dive to unimaginable depth of poverty, corruption and fraud.

The reality today, with increased oil revenue is that deceit has become a clear art of governance. It is embarrassing that three decades after the submission, the nation is still very much under the unrelenting siege of not only long-established corrupt and desperate leaders that are not willing to let go their long established strangulation of the nation's economy and development, but a class of newly evolving self-building power brokers within and beyond the public spheres. The hopelessness of the nation ever getting free from this leadership-imposed strangulation, has created pessimism in the mind of average Nigerians about the possibility of fast recovery and thus reduced the impetus by Nigerians to embrace hard work and productive life as authentic means to wealth creation and self-actualization. Growing number of Nigerians of all classes are therefore devising and resorting to quicker means to wealth through banquet of corruption, primitive accumulation, kidnapping and money rituals (Agbaje 2007 and 2011) that defies all logic and reason. No doubt, in almost all known parameters of national density, the Nigerian leadership experience has been a disaster.

The effect of bad leadership has been most conspicuously felt on development programming. Due to pervasive corruption and primitive accumulation by past ruling elites, development planning and execution in Nigeria have suffered from poverty of ideas in conception and dearth of goodwill in delivery. Conspiratorial inclination arising from leadership preoccupation with self-seeking corrupt agendas, have led to assemblage of disarticulated policies that frustrated many of the programmes intended to usher in sustainable development. Programmes such as, Operation Feed the Nation of the mid-seventies, Green Revolution and Austerity Measures of late seventies and early eighties, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), First and Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Markets (F/SFEM), Financial Sector Deregulations, Rural Development Programme of mid-eighties to early nineties, and many other similar development policies, never yielded desired developmental fruits for Nigeria and Nigerians. The cumulative effect of misconception and mismanagement of these programmes, equivalent of which have resulted in sustainable development in other climes with better leadership, have mostly turned out the disasters needed to destroy the fragile life that was left in both formal and informal sectors of the Nigerian economy by the last two decades of twentieth century.

According to Anyanwu, Oyefusi, Oaikhenan and Dimowo (1997) industrial production in Nigeria started a steady decline in production from 1985 and recorded the negative growth of -2.4 percent with the exception of 1990 and 1991 when it recorded 38.51 and 8.54 percent growth respectively. Ever since late eighties to late nineties, a period that corresponds with the careless implementation of major macroeconomic programmes in Nigeria, increasing decline has been the noticeable feature of Nigerian industrial and financial sector. Therefore, unlike the positive results obtained in other interventionist states and regions of the world, the Nigerian experience, in particular, due to mismanagement, has been a complete negation of the Pareto principle of sustainable development as a move from condition A (**one development programme**) to condition

B (**another programme**) has made Nigerians, except the promoters, worse-off without any hope of ever recovering. It is an empirical fact that avoidance of certain negative tendencies on the part of the leadership and managers of the economy could have resulted into positive outcomes for most programmes. But, rather than heed necessary warnings (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) 1989), from the eighties,, the managers of the Nigerian government and economy threw caution to the wind, distorted the well-advised ideals, and starved the core elements of development (industries, research centers, and higher institution of learning) while from one regime to another making jumbo allocation to corruption-prone institutional appendages that serves as conduit pipes to loot the resources of the nation. Doing a prognostic analysis of 1962-68 development plans in Nigeria, Stolper (1962) lamented that:

Having a plan and executing it are unfortunately different. The execution raises three problems ...first, manpower or generally executive capacity, second, limitations arising out of foreign assistance ... [and] third, under-spending ... in the directly productive sectors and in highly productive projects.

To Stolper, where these are poorly mixed, the rate of growth will of course be negatively affected. There is no doubt that such has been the Nigerian experience up to the inception of the Fourth Republic. While many unproductive projects have been gulping scarce national resources, critical sectors of the economy such as steel, energy, education, health, transport, and until recently information-communication-technology (ICT) have either been grossly starved of needed funds or have the funds allocated corruptly misappropriated (Okonjo-Iweala 2005). Due to haphazard implementation of all pre-SAP, SAP and post-SAP programmes, the Nigerian striving industrial and manufacturing sector never had a chance of surviving beyond the late eighties. Before the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999 therefore, the industrial sector of the Nigerian economy and its hitherto bursting industrial estates Ikeja, Apapa, Iganmu, Ilupeju, Isolo, Agbara all in Lagos, as they also existed elsewhere in Nigeria of the pre-SAP era) have collapsed completely.

To show that analysts have for long been worried about what could turn out to be the fate of the then independent-bonded African nations, Rostow (1968) had submitted that the task confronting the leaders of non-Western states is immense and beyond anything familiar to the West in normal times. To him:

In period of rapid cultural change, they must...play ‘to two galleries at the same time, legitimizing their actions in the eye of both the traditionalist and the modernist segment of the population. They must try to satisfy the impatient clamour for economic development with the help of administrators lacking in training and experience (see also Cairncross 1966).

Unfortunately for the less-developed countries that at present most critically aspire for sustainable development, if not totally lacking the crop of committed, competent and nationalistic leadership to pave the way for this much needed development, the bandwagon effect of past poor leadership posed serious limitation to genuine aspirations and efforts.

Expectedly, at a time when other well-governed and better-managed nations of the world with comparatively less potentials are making outstanding progress, uncritical and self-serving management of series of self-seeking and poorly conceived development programmes was all that were needed to lock-up Nigeria in acute underdevelopment at the close of the twentieth century. In development management, with only a few exceptions, the Nigerian leadership history up to the inception of the Fourth Republic has, no doubt, been perforated by clear evidences of corrupt collaboration, unjust cover-up and pronounced leadership bankruptcy that is totally incapable of acting as vanguard of national development.

Considering the rising risks associated with leadership failure, there is now, more than ever, the growing need for the ruling elites to recognize changing dynamism and complexities of modern global economy and developmental challenges with a view to appreciating the commitment to making creative planning and adjustments. It is an axiom to submit that the externalities of development for hyper-late developing countries have become more challenging than the late-late epoch of South Korea, China, Malaysia, Brazil, Argentina etc. Hence, according to Adamolekun (2002) the success of the public administration system in coping with the challenges ahead, both domestic and global, depend on a combination of committed and visionary leadership, competent and highly motivated public service, and prudent economic policies. The next section examines the critical condition of the nation in this current democratic fourth republic,

WORSENING LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE IN NIGERIA DESPITE INCREASING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

Expressing serious worry at about the time of ushering in the Nigerian Fourth Republic, Toyo (1997) revealed that Nigerian economic policy making since 1960 has been in part massive hypocrisy (and deception), and part a leap in the dark that “has basically served parasitism and borne in a vehicle of misguided theories and prescriptions”. This propels the expectation that if sustainable development remains the central focus of the nation, the situation should change for better in the fourth republic. After a decade in the new dispensation, there seem no clear indications that there exists a consensus among the bulk of Nigerian so-called ruling class to suggest that they are seriously interested in the emergence of leadership culture that will completely break away from past legacy of failure. Instead, as it appears, apologists across the nations, not necessarily serving the interest of Nigerians in the North, South, East and West, as they have never truly did, are bent on recycling either themselves or their benefactors. Leadership, the pillar upon which the attainment of sustainable leadership in Nigeria depends is trivialized. The Psalmist chapter 11 verse 3 says: If the foundation were destroyed, what will the righteous do? No doubt, the destruction of Nigeria’s developmental foundation arising from mediocrity, overly corrupt and unyielding nature of the nation’s leadership class is one major factor that has kept and ever wishing to keep the nation underdeveloped while her equals or those of even lesser potentials are at the verge of joining or are already member of the league developed nations.

While the immediate post-independence Nigeria has more endowment of natural resources with which rapid sustainable development could have been achieved, Korea was comparatively most under-resourced with a well-pronounced territorial limitations and climatic hindrances. Despite the protracted problems of the infant Korean nation then, however, it took the enlightened and nationalistic class of ruling elites that assumed office shortly after independence and inter-Korean war,

prudently taking absolute advantage of both external assistance and internal opportunities to propel the much less resourced nation towards rapid development. To ensure development, the Korean government first embarked on discernible economic programme to improve, first, the living standard of the populace as a way of enlisting the much needed popular support. Thereafter, the government refocused its economy towards export promotion. Although, this was initially greeted with lukewarm attitude from the bulk of the populace as conservatives argued against excessive reliance on foreign capital which as at that time, in 1962, constitute about 83% of total Korean investment (see KOIS 2003), and which they insisted could again endangered the much needed national independence. However, through dogged determination and reinvigoration of the entire system, by the developmentally envisioned leadership, as at the end of the sixties, the nation was able to significantly raise its export and was better placed to secure more credible external assistance which unlike Nigeria (Okonjo-Iweala 2005) was prudently deployed towards rapid industrialization anchored on massive human capital and technological development (KOIS 2003).

As a leading example of self-defined pragmatic structural adjustment, the first five-year Korean development programme launched in 1962, officially adopted outward-driven growth strategy of export promotion as a departure from earlier import-substitution -inward-looking strategy. It should however be stressed that much of the success stories of Korean's efforts at development was borne out of selective combination and committed pursuit of certain variables of both internal and external adjustment measures. Unlike what still obtain in Nigeria, such measures include drastic reduction of foreign expenditure –e.g. restriction of foreign travels by government officials and citizens; mobilization of domestic savings to finance industrial organizations on performance merit of each beneficiary. Pragmatically, on continuous basis, the leadership kept readapting the development programmes to the rapidly unfolding conditions in the international system. Through the activities and control of National Policy Fund, a Korean equivalent of the dysfunctional Nigerian Industrial Fund, between 1972 and 1980, an average of 47.7 percent of domestic credit was disbursed as industrial policy loans. In this same period, as a sign of commitment to sustainable national development, unlike the historical and recent experiences in Nigeria, the Korean financial sector was prudently managed. Towards encouraging industrialization, the gap in the interest rates between policy lending and general bank loans was said to exceed 5 percent. But, these funds were prudently mobilized and channeled to intended industrial development. As against the Nigerian experience, where steel and petrochemical development have been truncated for decades due to mismanagement of resources, Fukagawa (1997) recorded that over 70 percent of the National Industrial Fund (NIF) was allocated to the heavy machinery and chemical project noting that:

The government was relatively generous about the *Chaebol* when it comes to how they actually used the fund, but at least carefully managed the investment projects themselves through industrial policies and strict exchange controls, so that these funds did not fly into unproductive industries or to overseas.

Unlike the recent experience in Nigeria, in pursuit of rapid and sustainable development, fiscal policy was kept consistently conservative in nature. So, while there was relative leeway in fiscal affairs, the destruction of the financial market was prevented.

Globally, if there is any nation that is pragmatic in its approach towards and response to external shocks and influences, South Korea (Sae 1990) is an outstanding example worthy of emulation by nations striving to return to the path of sustainable development. Just as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) marks the 50th year of existence, South Korea marks her fifteen anniversary with a commendation from the global body's Secretary-General that South Korea is "one of the most dynamic OECD economies" (Gurria 2011). Between early '60s and '90s, despite the immediate past experience of aggravated multiple colonial hardship as well as very devastating inter-Korean war, South Korean state and leadership have displayed unparalleled love and exceedingly great dose of economic nationalism that catapulted a hitherto one of the world's least developed nations to become eleventh prosperous and most developed economies. Koreans' unparalleled economic nationalism, to Pickel (2002), resulted from the nation's resolve to combat underdevelopment as a safety-valve for securing national sovereignty and wading-off possible repeat of agonizing experience of past colonial invasions. Consequently, contrary to Nigerian history where education and technological development have been relegated to the back seat of national agenda, for Koreans, the pursuit of educational cum technological advancement as well as constant technological readaptation with increasing sophistication were hallmarks of industrial development.

According to Kim and Leipziger (1993):

The overriding characteristic of Korea's economy is not only its rapid shift from agriculture (37 percent of GDP in 1962 to 8 percent in 1991) to manufacturing, just as striking were the dynamism and flexibility of manufacturing itself.

Citing an example of such positive and rapid industrial diversification and higher technological readaptation, these authors wrote:

In 1971, the Handok Company was a wig manufacturer, with wigs accounting for 95 percent of sales. By 1976, Handok had diversified extensively, to the point where wigs were only 16 percent of sales. Paper products made up 51 percent of output complemented by tuna (22 percent) and watches (9 percent). The industrial transformation was completed by 1981, when watches accounted for 85 percent. By 1985, liquid crystal display manufacturing including monitors and dashboard items, were beginning to emerge as new sales items (10 percent of sales) and the bulk of revenue came from computers and electronics (41 percent) and watches (35 percent).

Handok was an example of industrial flexibility in a medium-sized firm employing about 3,500 people and generating sales of about 64 billion won in 1984 (Kim and Leipziger 1993). For Nigeria, the reverse has been the case. Development assistance and aid were secured for improvement of socioeconomic infrastructures as a means to diversifying the economy. Regrettably, such funds, rather than been used to assist the technologically endowed, (which evidences are all over Nigeria, particular the East as observed in Aba of the eighties) were continually misappropriated on questionable projects and kleptocratic tendencies of some government officials and unpatriotic ruling elites (Editorial, Tell, 2005).

Another impressive developmental experience of South Korea was the investment towards a self-reliant military. Apart from this serving as the motivation for Korean aggressive pursuit of chemical and heavy industry (HCI) development, the project later turned out to be “decisive both in the foreign technology assimilation process and in securing the competitiveness of other industries” (Kim 2000). It is on record that within a decade of the adoption of HCI strategy, this drive produced very impressive results enabling average annual GNP growth rate of close to 11% while the total share of HCI in export rose from slightly above 21% in 1972 to close to 38% in 1978. Also, through resourceful, informed and foresighted leadership, backed by highly professionalized bureaucracy, and as a sign of seamless integrative national development planning, some of the challenges posed by this growth such as: (a) inflation rate, (b) over-investment in HCI and (c) under-investment in light industries were pragmatically addressed in the immediate succeeding development plan- the fourth (1977-81) and fifth (1982 –1986). Contrary to Nigeria where, due to self-seeking preoccupation of the ruling elites, there is hardly any linkage between successive regimes’ developmental agenda, in Korea, the beauty of integrative approach to planning became manifest. Largely, systemic dysfunction and policy summersault accounts for the dismal failure of efforts at accelerated development of steel, oil and military industry in Nigeria despite great potentials. Rather than pursue national development, Nigerian leaders since independence with a very few exception have at best been pursuing self-serving agenda that has not benefited Nigerian masses across ethnic divides but their cronies. The task of sustainable national development was well discharged in Korea because the leadership placed itself above particularist pressures as government ceaselessly adopted pragmatic and patriotic approach in the management of state resources and affairs as demanded by realistic domestic and more importantly changing international circumstances. Today, South Korea has attained development. The central concern of the nation and her new leadership is making life more abundant for all by increasing the already comparatively high living standard and seeing to more equitable distribution of wealth to the comfort of all Koreans.

Irrespective of the nature of the state and region of operation, whether or not a nation will develop depends on the orientation and the values its leaders have and share about development and the extent of national consensus about the imperatives of getting developed. Malaysia is another classic example of a nation’s determination to succeed despite all odds. No doubt, positive synergic collaboration between leaders and the society (Mimiko 2005) is crucial to the attainment of sustainable development. Regrettably, this has been lacking in Nigeria. It is also a fact that the pronounced cases of acute disensus in heterogeneous Nigeria have contributed to repeated truncation of novel developmental moves as societal differences and leadership disputation, arising from unmitigated social stratification constrains nation-building agendas. It is equally true that this division further serves to exacerbate the conditions for state elites becoming more factionalized mostly along ethnic lines with each preoccupied with ethnic interest as the surest path or means to advancing their personal or selfish interests to the detriment of national agenda for development (Anthony 2002).

For, Nigeria, it cannot also be disputed that the resulting norm less struggle for the control of state power and resources by self-serving ethnic lords masquerading as ruling elites bred politics of division. Chronic inter-communal bitterness and unimaginable civil and security disorder that impedes national development in the past got heightened before and after the 2011 general election. That this envy, bitterness and disunity is capable of robbing the nation of opportunity to ensure

leadership consensus capable of mutually promoting the well-being of all and sundry, across North, South, East and West towards national development is an understatement. The three ‘ds’ of failure- ‘disensus’, ‘decay’ and ‘disappointment’ that has been the hallmark of the nation since independence seem threatening to further frustrate the rising hope of Nigeria ever getting developed thereby causing despair and increased desperation among the citizenry. Widespread socioeconomic and political corruption across military and civilian regime leadership have led to the nation becoming a crippled giant and a pariah among the comity of nations as at the close of the nineties. As things stands now, no other sector of the Nigerian nation shares the blame for the woes of the country more than its ruling class since it is within their power that the executive control of the government lies (Laxmikanth 2009:213-214). It is an understatement to affirm that quite a number of them have simply turned out undisputed transformers of national fortunes to national misfortunes (see Editorial www.compassnewspaper.com/.../index.php?...seizure...efcc...; Guardian, December 22, 2009:1, Guardian, September 1, 2009:1, Guardian, May 12, 2009:1, Punch, December 22, 2009:1-15, Punch, December 22, 2009:15, Punch, October 14, 2009:1, Punch, September 23, 2009:1-2, Sunday Tribune, December 27, 2009:6, This Day, December 30, 2003, Vanguard, February 26, 2004).

The fact that no developmental policy or programme has ever been successfully implemented in Nigeria before now points to the unpardonable extent of historical leadership bankruptcy. Leadership failure has been the single most important factor accounting for the unexpected underdevelopment of the country and a big source of worry for the sustenance of national unity and democratic rule. It is agonizing that, for selfish reasons, there still exist some self-proclaimed leaders that yet appear not in the least burdened by the growing threat to national security and development. All they care is how to maintain their network for unending sustenance of their primitive advantages. To such leaders, the recurring infiltration of state apparatuses by forces of destabilization which has inevitably turned the Nigerian political scene to become increasingly dangerous is not seen as unnecessary distraction to development. From all indications, their main worry is how to maintain their hold on the system whether or not it gets developed.

According to Mimiko (1999), in South Korea, the collective moral commitment of leaders to national development and security was never in doubt. It was stated that:

...the moral integrity of the leadership is taken for granted, in which the mass of the people consider themselves as grass that ‘must bend when the wind (i.e. superiors including government or authority of any kind) blows over it’, in which they joyfully accept to be led by ‘strong’ government, begging only to follow such a lead, in which individual’s place and relevance is conceived in terms of his membership of a collective; and in which people prefer harmony to an adversarial relationship, it becomes very easy for a dictatorial government that nevertheless has a clear vision of economic development to put the entire citizenry to work as one...

More than any other factor of development, and in negation of the neoclassicists epistle of state eclipse, the state, through nationalistic commitment of its leaders has been the single most important coordinator, facilitator and catalyst of accelerated,

historically unparalleled and world acclaimed all-round development in South Korea. Conversely, the state and its ruling elites has been the cause of acute underdevelopment and all-round poverty in Nigeria. It should be borne in mind that with focused and good leadership, the South Korea and Malaysian stories could become the history of any nation that genuinely aspire towards development; as every society is endowed with values and social norms that are capable of bailing humanity out of socioeconomic and political oblivion if so appreciated and explored. Nigeria is not without such values and leadership materials; the problem is that they have been buried in the rubbles of leadership indiscretion and national developmental failures.

From both theoretical and empirical distillations, as discussed below, a number of irreducible conditions are necessary if leadership in Nigeria is truly to be attuned to sustainable national development.

Self-preparation and personal competence: There is the need for personal competence accruing from relevant knowledge of leadership challenges and what it takes. Thus, leadership is a product of deliberate training, self-discipline and self-development. President Abraham Lincoln and Obama of United States, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Nigerian Ahmadu Bello, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo are classic examples of such self-instructed individuals that could be placed in this picture. Except, individuals possess these qualities, waiting for an opportunity to be tapped, unprepared and guerilla type of leaders never do well. This explains why most military regime leaders in Africa generally, and Nigeria in particular, never made any good use of virtually all the opportunities they ever had to turn around the tide of their respective nations.

Case-specific leadership orientation: Realizing that no two nations or societies in the global system portray absolutely similar challenges, apart from the general knowledge, which must be wide and versatile, there is always the need for case-specific leadership orientation. Leaders confronts environment-related challenges and must therefore be versed in the local content dimensions of such as this will help in devising the most appropriate institutional and processual framework for addressing the challenges. Only leaders that are genuinely close enough to the people and having sufficient local content solution can make a difference. Not going too far from home, as a Nigerian example, some state governors such as Fashola of Lagos, Aregbesola of Osun, Okorocha of Imo, Yakowa of Kaduna, Mimiko of Ondo, Obi of Anambra comes close to this mark.

Good and incisive economic knowledge: There is the need, also, to appreciate the symbiotic relationship between politics and economy. Leaders who are political orators lacking in incisive economic abstractions are not likely to move the developmental voyage of a nation in the right direction. You cannot separate economy from politics as one cannot separate good standard of living from national peace and stability. Political gladiators that neglect the economic salvation of the followers risk the danger of ship wreck. The era of just wanting or holding on to power for power sake as obtained in the past is gone. Power must be applied towards achievement of concrete developmental goals that benefits the populace; otherwise, leadership and governance becomes increasingly discredited with consequent poverty-induced destabilization of the state system with its attendant security challenges.

Understanding of leadership as hub of development: Just as the Western Nigerian Government experience under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the need exists for leaders to see themselves as the developmental hub of their respective societies and that their failure to pull the society in the right direction, through concrete developmental achievements, not only discredits their personal character as leaders but also ruins the chance of national development. This failure further increases the risk of public impatience, and impels loss of democratic support and systemic sustenance. Contrary to the ethnocentric and primordial sentiments which some people, due to ignorance, still upholds, true leaders have no tribe or colour, their image and personality is best revealed by the track of their performance and achievements. Only leaders with such promises can come near meeting the mark of modern developmental leadership.

Appreciation of global opportunities and limitations: As we found in Korean General Park, leaders also should appreciate that the global system, though averse to collapse of nations, have limitations as to what can be done for people that are not prepared to save themselves. No nation, whether developed, developing or underdeveloped, looks for international burden but international partnership. The sustenance of such partnership is first and foremost anchored on the core national interest of the respective partnering nations. There is no more free lunch in the international market; relations among nations are never built on something for nothing. For any developing nations to continue to enjoy the assistance of other nations in the task of development, leaders of needy nations must be seen to be above board and genuinely committed to the task of ensuring all round socioeconomic and political development of their respective nations.

Whether or not a nation has really come of age in exhibiting these positive indices of institutional sclerosis, can be ascertained by the extent to which the choice of leadership is, instead of ethnocentric and primordial sentiments, based on merit and envisioned ability. It requires some personal integrity of individual office seekers to galvanize both human and material resources of a nation to promote rapid national development in a completely detribalized and selfless manner. It is such leadership that can succeed in mitigating the divisive tendencies that is very endemic in most African nations. Just as Plato's allegorical cave teaches, the generality of the nations in the underdeveloped regions earnestly awaits the emergence of philosophic knowledge-driven leadership that will bail their societies out of the dungeon of ignorance and backwardness.

RULING ELITES AND THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIAN FOURTH DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Lipset and Bollen (1959) have emphasized that there is a close association between the introduction of democracy and socioeconomic development. No doubt, one needs to add that this relationship is reciprocal and could be negative or positive depending on the circumstances and refractions arising from other intervening variables, such as type of leadership, their philosophy of development and the immediate impact such political mix of leadership and development makes on the bulk of the populace. To further illustrate the complexities surrounding African or Nigerian situation, Bhagwati (1966) when discussing the relationship between democracy and development have noted that:

This is the dilemma of most democratic governments. While majority of the electorate certainly want rapid economic progress, few of them are willing to concede that the government's measures to achieve it are either necessary or desirable. It is common practice for example, for people to criticize taxation while becoming indignant about the poverty, which that taxation is aimed at eliminating. It is not surprising that most democratic government, even when enlightened and willing to initiate and encourage economic progress, feel it necessary to go about their business with caution, and often to retreat from sound policies...

If democracies with resourceful leadership have problem convincing their citizens on the need to follow austere path to development, there is no doubt that a country where leaders have historically been adjudged as wasteful will have greater challenges convincing the populace they have so recklessly impoverished. Nevertheless, in Nigeria of course, the experience across few states of the federation, particularly Lagos, Imo, Anambra, Rivers, and of recent Ondo, Osun and a few others in this Fourth Republic has been indicative of the importance of visionary and selfless leadership in mobilizing the society for sustainable development.

Whichever way it goes however, it is the position of this paper that except the supposed democrats of the ongoing Nigerian Fourth Republic, through purposeful leadership, promotes sustainable socioeconomic development of the people (Appadurai 1968), chances are that avoidable systemic instability may not be easily wished away. Truly, there are certain structures and institutions that cannot be promotive of mutually reinforcing positive synergy between state, economy and development; decadent leadership and wasteful democratic regimes, the much of what has been prevalent even in Nigerian's Fourth Republic are clear signposts of such. Demonstrating that an unsettling politico-economic mix may trigger underdevelopment that may further constrained state capacity to ensure social order, Grindle (1996) citing Latin America and Africa experience asserted:

Economic and political crises had a destabilizing effect on existing state-economy and state-society relations ...and in many ways, the capacity of states to encourage economic development and maintain social stability was severely undermined.

In all these, the place of political leadership or the ruling elites was not misplaced as it was canvassed:

Nevertheless, the influence of specific political leaders with particular economic and political goals looms large in the explanation of crisis and change (see also Utomi 2000).

In this last section of the paper, we are back to the basic question: how much of these modern transformative developmental values can one identify in the day to day disposition of average ruling elite of all shades and characters, even of the Fourth Republic?

To answer this question, an attempt is made to highlight areas against which a prognostic speculation can be attempted on the readiness of the operators of the Fourth Republic to usher in desirable leadership capable of making a change in the development misfortune of the country. Firstly, on assumption of office in 1999, one recalls the apparent commitment of the regime to institutionalization of credible political system through the entrenchment of credible electoral processes. Secondly, the seeming readiness to revamp public service and institutions was equally taken for granted; thirdly, a convincing promise to combat corruption to a standstill. And finally, the eagerness of state operators to ensure engagement with the private sectors in moving the economy and development of the nation forward as soon as possible was speculated. With over a decade of democratic dispensation however, on all the above parameters, there has not been too noticeable advancement as the system is still characterized by pervasive corrupt distortions as could be viewed hereunder.

- From the onset in 1999 up to the Ekiti Governorship election re-run in 2009, the electoral process as the legitimate means for choosing and determining who leads is still characterized by massive fraud and deliberate official manipulations and distortions. However, the 2011 general election seemed a clear departure from this and it appears the new leadership is willing and determined to make or allow a positive change in the electoral process.
- Before now, there is the apparent inability of the regime holders to manage the political system objectively. This, as one can observe, is largely due to wrong political alignment of some finest individuals cohabiting with some unworthy political associates- sort of strange bed fellows cohabiting within the same political structure that has become a cog in the wheel of change and progress.
- Futile efforts at making serious impact in the area of corruption control has created an atmosphere of brazen, unparalleled and unchecked official corruption running into billions of Naira been stolen by individual or group of public officials both elective and appointive.
- The pervasive and progress-inhibiting politics of ‘win and chop’ that is allowing the less than 0.01% ruling elites to corner to themselves resources large enough to turn around the Nigerian economy is a source of worry for all well meaning Nigerians. The result has been that very many Nigerian political leaders see themselves as world class citizens, shopping and investing around the globe while leaving the Nigeria economy with the unceasing but difficult appeals for foreign assistance and investment. At a time, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria stood on the floor of the parliament to condemn a situation whereby 25 percent of the nation’s available investible fund is spent by a section of the Nigerian ruling elites to the detriment of developmental needs and goals of the elitist-crippled nation.
- The absence of requisite broad-based political platform to generate necessary development goals and means, capable of winning national appeals, due to the selfishly factionalized and epileptic organization of major political groups or parties across the country remains a source of national disillusionment.
- Another source of worry is the manifest lack of systemic arrangement or process for leadership recruitment and succession resulting into attempt by political patrons and jobbers to circumvent constitutional arrangement and thus creating severe constitutional crises. This is often compounded by attempts to impose party or extreme sectional preferences over and above the Nigerian constitution and the masses.

- The seeming indecision of Nigerians across ethnic, religious and political divides as to what should be the guiding principles of determining national priority in relation to leadership recruitment is equally less deserving. Party loyalty, which, for many Nigerians is ‘pocket-loyalty’ has impaired the reasoning of many and dulled their rationality on what modalities should be used to judge people seeking election into public offices. Many are still confused as to whether the condition for voting a particular candidate or party should be how much money is given to them at the eve of election or what the intending candidates could do if elected. Many are still divided along religious and ethnic lines. To pull the country towards development, Nigeria deserves, in the continuation of this Fourth Republic, a leader that will stand above all these negative sentiments and judged only by performance track or historical antecedent.
- The continued policy summersault as a result of lack of nationally agreed developmental ideology and paradigm to guide those in government has led to the abandonment of two successive developmental agenda within the first decade of this democratic dispensation. It is painful that leadership under the same political platform could not find common ground in their definition of developmental goals. This led to successive abandonment of NEEDS in favour of Seven-Point Agenda. Who is sure of the fate that will befall ‘Transformation Agenda and its core value and focus’ after Jonathan? This points to no other but the absence of nationally defined and agreed development goals.

In conclusion, following brief introduction, the theoretical insight provides the barometer by which one can judge the developmental credential of the Nigerian ruling elites up to the Fourth Republic in comparison with what obtains in other fast developing regions. Manifest in the fourth section is the fact that up to the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, developmental indifference of the ruling elites remains the modal factor of underdevelopment in Nigeria. And, it is worrisome that up to the eve of the recently concluded 2011 general election, no one is sure of what direction Nigeria is facing in relation to the urgent task of raising leadership that is willing and capable of promoting all-embracing rapid national development. Prior to the conduct of the 2011 general election, and despite the monumental success of the election, which is a crucial element of good governance, the inhibiting factors are still many. From empirical realities, the emphasis is still needlessly divided between constitutional provisions and self-serving ethnic colouration; national appeals against zoning divides; track records, intelligence, credibility and individual office seeker’s potentials for meeting complex contemporary developmental challenges against experience apologists and unwillingness of the past occupants to let go the exalted public offices. It is only hoped that the experience of the recent credible elections and emergence of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, will through performance track provide clear indication as to what should be, from now on, the yardsticks for determining choice of national leadership in Nigeria. For Nigerians and analysts, there is a problem and this has to do with whether many of the above shortcomings, even in the ongoing Fourth Republic, should be seen as part of the remaining challenges to be addressed in the march towards development. If that is the case, all hopes may not be lost. Otherwise, the continued inability of the ruling elites to harmoniously resolve to tackle myriads of problems still confronting Nigeria could also be seen as part of, and a repeat of the usual track to failure as witnessed across all the regimes before the present dispensation. Whether or not Nigeria history will record a positive change and retrace her steps towards sustainable development can be speculated

through what the present circumstantial leadership chooses to do or not to do; as well as the path it takes or refuses to take, inevitably towing the Nigerian masses along.

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