



POLITICAL ECONOMY OF POST COLONIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN NIGERIA TO 2022/23: SYMPTOMATICS AND THE REAL PROBLEMATIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study reviewed the fairly large literature on Nigeria's development planning, post independence, to 2022/23 beyond their groupings and conventional cum 'new' development paradigms with a view to locating the real problematic of the dismal development outcomes transcending the numerous plans and governments over the years while separating the problematic from the symptomatic. Using the analytical method of political economy, the study sought to find the most strategic causative factor of planning failures the remedy of which will progressively eliminate the symptoms usually confused for the causes. It was found that the most important strategic institution needed for good governance to deliver sustainable development is the constitution; made, enacted and given to themselves by the people especially in a diverse and heterogeneous polity like Nigeria as had been espoused in the 'grundnorm legitimacy' hypothesis suggested by the author. Consequently, the first order condition for sustainable development is the institution of an autochthonous and legitimate constitution, not a unitary Decree masquerading as the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) 1999 as amended, and it is high time positive economists started taking normative prescriptions seriously and inter disciplinarily assist to establish positive 'non economic' foundations for economics positivism to thrive and power the delivery of sustainable development to the people.

Key words: development, man-centred, planning, autochthonous, legitimate, grundnorm, constitution.

Introduction

The rationale for economic planning, especially in less developed countries (LDCs) since the end of colonial rule has been idealised as being the roadmap for a coordinated and internally consistent economic expansion of all sectors in a manner to ensure equity, social justice and improvement of the welfare of the majority of the citizens over time as reflected in improving Human Development Indices (HDI 1990), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs 2015) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2030). It is curious that the orthodox model as relied upon by the Bretton -woods Institutions and the heterodox or Marxian theories of development have largely been found inadequate to deliver desirable developmental outcomes, if at all, or sustainably thereafter. This has led some scholars like Okowa (1996) to question the conception of development from the two broad paradigms.

Essentially, Okowa posits that both of the opposing approaches centre on the symptoms rather than on the real problems of underdevelopment insisting that the centre of development should be man in his harsh environment which he must tame by understanding the laws of nature(science), fabrication of tools to manipulate his natural environment productively(technology) and first and foremost, the belief that it is possible to understand natural principles(scientific consciousness) since society is governed by interactional



relationships composed of infra-social consciousness, social consciousness and institutional technology (pp.18 – 19). In general, “a society is underdeveloped to the extent, in relation to other societies, to which its people lack scientific consciousness, scientific knowledge and technology on the one hand and infra-social consciousness, social consciousness and institutional technology on the other” (p.18). Ultimately, he insists that “underdevelopment and development must be seen in terms of the degree to which societies are able to devise tools, materially and institutionally, with which to productively manipulate their environments” (p.19).

Okowa’s theory is very appealing because it makes a whole lot of sense when the scientific know how, institutional and environmentally manipulative capacities of the developed, developing and underdeveloped societies are compared and contrasted. However, it falls short of revealing exactly what underdeveloped societies, especially the heterogeneous post colonial countries like Nigeria must do as the grand strategy for other issues and factors to start falling in place in the march towards sustainable development.

Literature on post colonial economic development planning in Nigeria can be said to have started with the 1962-68 plan itself and Stolper (1966) who authored it where he prescribed that given the paucity of data, development must be a process of “optimising as one goes along” and that “the only valid investment criterion is economic profitability ... other investment criteria are either invalid, non operational or implicit in economic profitability” (pp. 4-5) among others, of which political meddlesomeness is not one of them, but underscored the enormous challenges of the First National Development Plan (FNDP) which was done with little or no statistical base. Between then and the present day are a plethora of variegated literature, a significant one of which is Dean (1971 and 1972) in which he submitted that “the political structure of the country at the start of the plan period was unstable and discouraged the development of a thoroughly national economic policy. Federal political institutions were often mainly arenas for compromise among the three major political parties, each of which had a power base in one of the three regions – Eastern, Northern and Western”.

In exploring the “fairly strong” literature on economic development planning in Nigeria, Iwuagwu (2020) identified three major groups or divisions: the first group of scholars concentrated on its history like Amah, 2014; Iheanacho, 2008; Bashiru, et al, 2006; the second group focused on specific plans like Emeh, 2011; Waziri and Bala, 2014; Ayodele, et al, 2013; Nwagbara, 2011 and Ukah, 2007; the third group focused on the perceived reasons for the failure of the plans like Sanusi, 2012 and Ojo, 2012. Iwuagwu opined that the problem is “Nigeria’s lingering nationhood challenge, cantankerous nature of politics among the different regions and ethnic nationalities that have made the realization of a common development agenda impossible”. As a solution, he posits that “Nigeria may not be able to attain sustainable development until she starts planning for the long term and to ensure that its plans are protected with relevant legislations even as appropriate institutions are established to supervise implementation”. Plausible as it may appear, this recommendation falls short on practicable institutional dynamics required to give fillip to desirable economic development outcomes. New Institutional Economics (NIE) has successfully established the nexus between strong institutions, good governance and economic development. North (1993) who aimed at a general theory of the interaction between the polity and the economy through ‘institutions’ or “rules of the game” or the formal legal rules and informal social norms which embody institutionalism in economics.



This paper, by the use of analytic political economy method, therefore, combines the three approaches noted by Iwuagwu (2020) above to critique economic development planning in Nigeria holistically in the contexts of Okowa (1996) and North (1993). In addition, attempt will be made to proffer the specific institutional strategy required to address the real essence of development rather than the symptoms of underdevelopment as highlighted by Okowa.

To achieve these objectives, the rest of the paper is divided into the following sections; 2. Total Plan distortions (1962 – 1985); 3. Partial Plan distortions; 4. Urban bias; 5. Sectoral Prioritisation; 6. Non economic factors; 7. 1986 – 2022/23; 8. Synthesis - differentiating between the problematic and the symptomatics; 9. Conclusion and Recommendation.

Total Plan Distortions:

Total plan distortion refers to the divergence between planned expenditures and actual expenditures as highlighted in table 2.1 below;

PLANS	OR. ALLOCTN	REV ALLOCT	ACT ALLCTN	ACH RATIO
1962 – 1968	N1.351B	N.A.	N1.073B	79%
1970 – 1974	N2.051B	N6.70B	N4.474B	67%
1975 – 1980	N32.857B	N42.561B	N29.434B	69%
1981 – 1985	N70.276B	N42.20B	N17.334B	41%

Source: Okowa (1996), Pp. 53 – 73.

The budget achievement ratio column shows the extent of negative total plan distortions from 79% in the first(1NDP) through 67% in the second(2NDP) and 69% in the third(#NDP) to only 41% in the fourth(4NDP) plan with the negative variances of -21%,-33%, -31% and -59% respectively holding inflation rate constant. The gap in the first plan is attributable to the fact that 50% of the total planned capital expenditure was to come from external sources but only 25% was realized (2NDP,P65).

Partial Plan Distortions:

This has to do with the tendency towards bureaucratic maximization in part crowding out economic sector allocations and implementation in favour of administration and social services as shown in table 3.1 below;

	SECTORAL GROUPINGS	PLANNED %AGE ALLOCATION	ACTUAL %AGE ALLOCATION	%AGE DISTORTION
1962-68	Economic	67.8	58.4	-9.4
	Social	24.4	19.8	-4.6
	Administration	7.8	21.9	+14.0
	Total	100	100	0.00
1970-74	Economic	53.1	49.1	-4.0
	Social	26.6	27.5	+0.9
	Admin	20.3	23.4	+3.1
	Total	100	100	0.00
1975-80	Economic	63.7	57.7	-6.0
	Social	22.8	25.0	+2.2
	Admin	13.4	17.3	+3.9
	Total	100	100	0.00



1981-85	Economic	67.9	60.9	-7.0
	Social	11.3	12.5	+1.2
	Environment	10.1	5.0	-5.1
	Admin	10.6	21.5	+10.9
	Total	100	100	0.00

Source: Okowa (1996), pp. 53 – 73.

Distortions can be better appreciated when we understand that negative distortions or distortive under spending in priority economic sector groups is not favourable to the economy just like positive distortions or distortive overspending on less priority administration sectoral groups are not favourable to the economy but the reverse, distortive overspending or distortive under spending are favourable to the economy.

The 1NDP shows distortive under spending in the economic and social sectors of 9.4% and 4.6% respectively and distortive overspending of 14.1% in the administration sector. This may be because defense was part of administration during the civil war years of 1967 to 1969. In the 2NDP, distortive under spending in the priority sectors of the economy reduced to 4% and the social sector recorded over spending of 0.9%. The administration sector recorded distortive overspending of 3.1% despite the hike in its allocation from 7.8% in the first plan to 20.3% in the second. The 3NDP increased distortive under allocation to the economic sector from 4% to 6% but still better than the earlier 9.4% even as the social sector had over allocation of 2.2% while administration, as usual, had over allocation of 3.9%. In the 4NDP, economic sector group had under allocation of 7% and administration, over allocation of 1.2% as the environment sector hived off the social sector had under allocation of 5%.

In summary, it is evident that the economic group of sectors with the highest priority had consistently lost relative resource allocation to other lower priority sectors in actual against planned expenditures. Explanations for this state of affairs include: the dearth of feasibility studies and that the demand on scarce technical manpower to prepare them elongated project implementation time lag; that economic sector projects required high degree of foreign inputs – foreign exchange, importation of capital equipment, engagement of technical skills, etc – and these added to execution lag; political considerations in project location as in the Ajaokuta steel complex; delay in implementation; shortfalls in resource availability as noted in the 1NDP above and nature and distribution of pressure groups in power as in military on defense and civilians on administration. Okowa believes that the extent of plan distortion, even when the dimension of execution of non plan projects like FESTAC 77 is factored in, was not very high (p.91) but acknowledged it would seem controversial when Nigerians generally believe otherwise. I differ with Okowa because what the numbers reveal is much less than what they do not or rather what the numbers hide. The true test of plan implementation must be located on the welfare of the generality of the citizens and its sustainability over time. Okowa equally believes that plan implementation during military regimes recorded less distortions than during the civilian era of the first and second republics because ‘the military are more disciplined than civilians’. That is also debatable.

Urban Bias:

To Lipman (1977), two criteria – efficiency and equity – under guard his discussion of urban bias but Okowa extends the criteria to include the objectives of development planning in Nigeria which are enhanced economic growth, reduction of economic dependence over time, reduction of economic inequality over time, reduction of unemployment over time and maintenance of price stability. Urban bias simply means that public policy is skewed in favour



of urban areas and against the rural areas which harbour a greater majority of the country's population. The development plans, without exception, exhibited favouritism against the rural sector because of market induced urban bias which actually requires countervailing 'rural bias' in public policy to ensure that Lipman's equity and efficiency objectives in resource allocation are achieved. The table 4.1 below reveals the extent of the bias;

DEV PLANS	RURAL SECTOR	RURAL-URBAN	URBAN	TOTAL
1962-68	4.9%	3.4%	91.7%	100%
1970-74	8%	12.5%	79.5%	100%
1975-80	4.6%	37.3	58.1%	100
1981-85	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: Okowa(1996)pp. 111-114.

What emerges from the table above is that in the 1NDP when rural dwellers accounted for 75% of the population, they were allocated 4.9% of public sector spending; urban dwellers, on per capita average, received 58.5 times more resources than rural dwellers. In the 2NDP, only 8% expenditure benefited the rural areas inhabited by 70% of the population or 23 times less than the urban areas. By 1980, about 61% of the population resided in the rural areas and with only 4.6% allocation, urban per capita allocation was 20 times more than per capita rural spending. The figures for the 4NDP are not available.

Strategic Sector Priorities:

In the sectoral projection model of development planning, Hirschmann(in Diejamaoh, 1965) posited that '... in order to maximize the productivity of investments, they should be made in projects which possess the greatest income generating power and the greatest backward and forward linkage effects' This dovetails to the concept of 'development economic power blocs' meaning 'those economic activities or sectors of the economy with high backward and or forward linkage effects' (Igbokwe, 1984). From Diejamaoh(p.38), we know that intermediate manufactures(iron, steel, paper products, coal products, chemicals, textiles, rubber products) have high backward and forward linkage effects; final manufactures(grain mill products, leather products, non metallic minerals, transport equipment, processed food, ships, etc.) have high backward linkage effects but low forward linkage effects. Again, primary production (metal mining, petroleum and natural gas, coal mining, agriculture and forestry, electric power, non metallic minerals, etc) have low backward but high forward linkage effects. In view of the above, analysis of the expenditure pattern of the plans show that transportation always had the greatest absolute and relative single sector allocation of 22.6%, 23.1% and 23.2% respectively except for the 14.5% in the fourth plan as shown in the 5.1 table below;

SECTOR/PLAN	1962-68	1970-74	1975-80	1981-85
Transport	22.6%	23.1%	23.2%	14.5%
Admin/Security	19.3%	21.3%	17.3%	21.5%
Commerce/Industry	8.9%	6.5%	10.4%	13.7%
Agriculture	9.8%	9.7%	7.1%	18.2%

Source: Okowa(1996, pp. 85-92).

Since Nigeria produces nothing in transportation sector, associated backward linkage effects elude her but transport services thus provided have very low linkage effects (Diejamaoh, p.39). Administration has practically no linkage effect but received lavish expenditures of 21.9%, 23.4%, 17.3% and 21.5% respectively whereas the productive sectors with high forward and backward linkage effects were neglected. For instance, industry and commerce never had up to 10% allocation until the fourth plan's 13.7%. The neglect of agriculture with very high



linkage effects stares Nigeria in the face beyond the dismal allocations of 9.8%, 9.7%, 7.1% respectively which only came up to 18.2% in the fourth plan. Industry's use of imported inputs not only externalised the backward linkage effects, cash crops agricultural underproduction externalized the forward linkage effects such that Nigeria now imports some of the cash crops like palm produce which she used to export.

Non Economic Factors:

'Political instability has been a significant factor which rendered the 1NDP a 'dead letter' in 1966 with a military take over and escalating turmoil in the country culminating in the civil war of 1967-1970'(Killick,1981) and the overthrow of Gowon's regime in 1975 led to the revision of the 3NDP(Nnoli,1978) while other coups of 1983 and 1985 also impacted plan implementation.

Ethnic or primordial factors play a devastating role in the development aspirations of Nigeria eg the Northernisation of the civil service in the 1960s precluded the relatively more educated Southerners from taking up responsible positions for fear of being dominated (Nnoli, p.197) while the inclusion of 'federal character' in the 1979 Constitution 'created an excuse for the enthronement of mediocrity and clan consciousness'(Onochie,1984). Consequently, the construction of the total output of Kainji Dam would have cost only 20% with natural gas in Warri but the Northerners preferred it up north at the colossal 10% of the federal expenditure in the 1NDP(Nnoli, p.199) while the Steel Mill which was to be sited in Onitsha in the early 1960s was deliberately delayed until 1975 when Murtala Mohammed diverted it to Ajaokuta (Igbokwe, p.63). Political villainy manifests as emphasis on distribution of national cake as opposed to production of national wealth, corruption through authoritative misallocation of available resources or 'egocentric squandermania of the ruling oligarchs' (Obi,1983). Lewis (1969) identified lack of consultation thus: 'most development plans are put aside soon after they are made; they rest on the shelf, not consulted even by the officials who have made them'. Ofoeze(2000), writing on "The politics of Economic development planning in Nigeria" insists that : 'the principal cause of the failure of these national development plans ... is primarily because of extreme politicization'(p.19) ... 'the way and manner in which all the past national development plans in the country allocated the society's valuable resources was such that all the important projects were cited in certain geo ethnic areas at the expense of others'...(p.21)... 'Indeed, of the entire projects and spending under the 2NDP, over 88% was located within the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba geo ethnic areas... similarly, the 3NDP also took the same pattern'(p.23) and from Duddley(1982) on the 1NDP, ... 'apart from the meager spending of N29.2 million on coastal waterways, N4.6 million on Lagos Affairs, N4.6 million on information, N60 million on communications in the South, the bulk of federal spending such as the N136.2 million on Kainji Dam, the N56.4 million for defense, the major proportion of the N78.4 million on health and education, and the bulk of the N70.6 million on roads were spent in the northern geo ethnic areas'.

Planning from 1986 to 2022/23:

The Ibadan Conference of 1984 kick started the preparation of the N88.6 billion Fifth National Development Plan(1986-1988) with the usual objectives of economic diversification, revitalization of agriculture, domestic production of locally used raw materials, and employment generation(Eyiuche,2000). Planning priorities were reorganized with the Babangida coup of 1985 and the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme(SAP) in 1986 with its IMF conditionalities of economic liberalization, privatization and commercialization of public enterprises. Due to volatility in the international price of oil on



which the implementation of previous plans depended, the ‘unrealistic’ medium term planning gave way, in 1986, to the three tier planning system in the perspective plan period 1990 – 2009 out of which the first national rolling plan(1990-1992) was launched in 1990. The sixth,(1999-2001), was conceived to dovetail into the Vision 1997-2010 perspective Plan launched in 1996 to achieve ‘a united, industrious, caring and God fearing democratic society, committed to making the basics of life affordable for everyone and creating Africa’s leading economy’(Iwuagwu, 2020), then to Vision 2020 but by 2017, it was complemented by the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan(ERGP 2017-2020) which was heavily criticized by Bill Gates, in 2018, who told the National Economic Council at Abuja that ‘The Nigerian government’s Economic Recovery and Growth Plan identifies investing in our people as one of three strategic imperatives, but the execution priorities don’t fully reflect people’s needs - prioritising physical capital over human capital’ insisting that without human capital development, there will be ‘a sharp limit on how much the country can grow’ concluding that ‘much of Nigeria still looks like a low income country. Nigeria is one of the most dangerous places in the world to give birth’, ‘with the fourth worst maternal mortality rate in the world , ahead of only Sierra Leone, Central African Republic and Chad. One in three Nigerian children is chronically malnourished’(www.channelstv.com, retrieved on 10/05/2023)

Currently, the Nigerian national Development Plan (NNDP 2021-2025), a medium term framework introduced in 2019 has replaced Vision 2020 and the ERGP 2017 as a bridge for the long term plan Nigeria Agenda 2050 envisioned ‘to make Nigeria a country that has unlocked its potential in all sectors of the economy for sustainable, holistic and inclusive national development’ anchored on six broad objectives of economic diversification, investment in infrastructure, security and good governance, educated and healthy population, poverty alleviation and socioeconomic development across the states (Price Water Coopers, pwc, @<https://www.pwcnigeria.typepad.com> retrieved on 26/03/2023). The Punch editorial of 28/04/2023(<https://punchng.com>) labeled the Buhari years 2015-2023 an era of gross economic fiasco in view of the following;1. Naira exchange rate per USD was N460.97 in March 2023 as against N197.80 in June 2015 but N747.00 in the parallel market; 2. Inflation rate was 22.04% in March 2023; 3. Poverty capital of the world in 2018 with 87 million extremely poor rising to over 133 million in 2022 according to the National Bureau of Statistics(NBS);4. National debt was N12.12 trillion in June 2015 but climbed to 44.7 trillion by December 2022 or debt to GDP ratio of from 13.1% to 34.7% and debt service to revenue ratio of 96%; 5. Unemployment rate was 33.3% and youth unemployment rate up to 42.5%; 6. Electric energy generation was left at 5,000 megawatts while Egypt almost tripled output to 60,000 megawatts between 2014 and 2019; 7. Farmers are tormented by Fulani herdsmen who spurn ranching, the global best practice, as well as the menace of bandits and terrorists; 8. On balance therefore, his tenure is an economic fiasco, leaving behind high poverty, unemployment, inflation and business fatality rates. He has no excuse, he simply lacks the leadership, cognitive and administrative capacity to successfully pilot a modern economyFor economically traumatized Nigerians and the business community, Buhari will not be missed’.

The above scenario can be contrasted with the achievements of the 1NDP notwithstanding the numerous challenges it faced:1. GDP grew by 5.3% in real terms between 1961/62 and 1965/66 above the plan’s minimum goal of 4% per annum; 2. Real GDP per capita increased at between 2% and 3% per year;3. Food production did not stagnate or fall during the first four years of the plan period;4. Capital formation increased at over 9% per year owing largely to private foreign investment mostly in the oil sector as public sector gross fixed capital formation failed to reach one sixth of the plan target;5. Balance of payments position was satisfactory; 6. Price



inflation rose marginally from 100 in 1960 to 118 in 1962/63 and rose no further than 130 in 1966/67; 7. Projects completed included Kainji Dam, Niger bridge, Second Lagos mainland bridge and Port Harcourt oil refinery and 8. Six out of nine other quantitative targets were achieved(Dean, pp. 203-230).

Synthesis - Differentiating Between the Problematic and the Symptomatics:

The questions that arise from the foregoing are what can account largely for the serial failures of development planning in Nigeria over the years and several regimes and what can the strategic remedy be?

Eyiuche(2000,p.228) is of the opinion that ‘for economic planning efforts to be effective and successful, they must not only be for the people but also they must be by the people themselves. Consequently, engendering national consensus on national goals and priorities in the process of socio economic and political transformation and development constitutes one of the critical ingredients of any plan’. But how can this be achieved?

To Iwuagwu(2020), the problem with planning is ‘Nigeria’s lingering nationhood challenge, cantankerous nature of politics among the different regions and ethnic nationalities that have made the realization of a common development agenda impossible’. And I ask, how can the challenge be overcome?

At its most fundamental level, Okowa’s ‘man centred’ conception of development as seen in terms of the degree to which societies are able to devise tools, materially and institutionally, with which to productively manipulate their environment is based on science(ability to understand the laws of nature), technology(ability to use scientific laws to create instruments with which to explore and exploit the environment) and evolution of institutions to guide and regulate sociopolitical and economic relations among the people .

Eze(2022) has highlighted the positive nexus between strong institutions, not strong men, good governance and economic development pointing to the legitimate grundnorm as the most important strategic institution from which good governance and sustainable development can flow. In the ‘grundnorm legitimacy hypothesis’, Eze argues that for a heterogenous, diverse, secular and liberal democracy like Nigeria to develop sustainably, her constitution should be autochthonous and highly legitimate thus addressing Eyiuche’s concerns; not a unitary imposition like the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions thus addressing Iwuagwu’s challenge of nationhood and also strong as in the ‘institutional technology’ aspect of Okowa’s man centred theory of development. Relying on Okowa’s theory which bodes well with the human development indices, millennium development goals and sustainable development goals, weak institutional framework is suggested as the missing link for effective planning and execution in Nigeria and the most strategic of which is the absence of an autochthonous and legitimate constitution to drive good governance and development. Furthermore, a legitimate constitution will establish other sub institutions of good governance that will, among other things, promote science, technology and security of lives and property of citizens as pathways to peace and sustainable development by addressing the challenges of development planning and execution listed above holistically.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

In view of the foregoing, the study reveals that non economic, especially political, factors have been bedeviling the country’s economic development planning outcomes mainly due to weak



institutional foundations the most strategic basis of which is the militarily imposed unitary constitution. When contrasted, it would appear that ‘development’ outcomes in the period 1960 – 1968 and 1970 – 2022/23 diverged in favour of the former which was powered by a fairly true political and fiscal federalism as against the later which was bedeviled by ‘unitary federalism’ either as Military Decrees or unitary constitutions of 1979 and 1999 which suggests that unitarism does not bode well for development especially in a multi ethnic and multi religiously heterogeneous polity like Nigeria.

Consequently, the study recommends the convocation of a broad based national constitutional conference that will enable the people make, enact and give to themselves a legitimate constitutional framework to power good governance sub institutions for the delivery of sustainable growth and development outcomes.

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