POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND NIGERIA'S ECONOMY SINCE 1999

Ihuoma E. Obienusi and Chinyere P. Chikwendu*

Abstract

The influence of politics and consequently, political leaders on the economy cannot be overemphasised. The power they wield over their nations creates room for influences on the economic institutions and which could make or mar economic growth. Political leadership has always played a fundamental role in Nigeria's economy, in relation to growth and development. The Nigerian economy which is largely oil-based, have remained in dire straits over the years, because of poor leadership, corruption, as well as poor monetary and fiscal policies. This paper aims to establish the nexus between political leadership and the Nigerian economy. It examines the role of various administrations towards economic development in Nigeria between 1999 and 2019. The study adopts the qualitative and quantitative methods of research in analysing data. The primary and secondary sources of data were used to buttress the arguments of the authors. The study observes that Nigeria has the human and material resources which could make any economy great, but the desiderata has been the quality of leadership since 1999. Incompetent, corrupt and selfish political leaders, who are more concerned with looting the nation's treasury than its growth, continue to be uncommitted to economic development.

---

*Ihuoma E. Obienusi, PhD.
Department of History and International Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; ie.obienusi@unizik.edu.ng.

**Chinyere P. Chikwendu
Department of History and International Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; cp.chikwendu@unizik.edu.ng.

There is optimism that with the emergence of a competent leader, willing to put the country's vast human and material resources into productive use, and aim at improving the economic climate of investment, innovative minded entrepreneurs would be propelled push the agenda of economic development.

Keywords: Political leadership, Nigeria's economy, development, corruption, incompetence

Introduction

Nigeria is rich in terms of human and material resources. It is the cynosure of other nations, especially her neighbours. It accounts for about half of West Africa's population with approximately 202 million people and one of the largest population of youth in the world (World Bank, 2020). With abundance of natural resources, it is Africa's biggest oil exporter, and has the largest natural gas reserves on the continent. The area known as Nigeria today was colonised by the Britain in the early 20th century. The British merged the Northern and Southern parts of the country into a single territory in 1914 known today as Nigeria. On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained its independence from the British rule (Olav, 1970). Since the late1960s, the economy has been based primarily oil. A series of world oil price increase from 1973, led to rapid economic growth in areas such as transportation, construction, manufacturing, amongst others. This led to a great influx of rural dwellers into the urban centres, which in turn stagnated agricultural production to the extent that such cash crops as palm oil, groundnuts, among others, were no longer significant export commodities. In fact, from the mid-1970s, Nigeria was forced to import basic commodities such as rice to sustain her growing population. This norm worked as revenues from petroleum remained constant. Since the late 1970s, the agricultural sector has been in continuing crisis and the different administrative government have struggled to maintain the level of import commodities. This is owing to the fluctuating world oil market and Nigeria's rapid growing population

The 1970s witnessed deliberate government policies to reduce foreign participation in the economy, such as the indigenization decrees of 1972 and 1977. The implementation of these decrees led to substantial transfer of investments from foreigners to government and a few wealthy Nigerians. The rationale for doing this which according to the government was to reduce the high repatriation of profit by foreigners, turned out to be a serious disincentive to economic growth. The investments acquired from the foreigners by government were mismanaged to enrich a few officials, while the generality of the people for whom the investments were held in trust continued to suffer deprivation and sharp deterioration in the standard of living (Edo and Ekelegbe, 2014).The inefficiency of government policies soon became a major bottleneck to the growth and development of the economy. This led to a long period of economic stagnation, which generated intense pressure about undertaking economic reforms for the purpose of encouraging growth and development. The initial response of government to the economic stagnation was to put in place a number of stabilization measures as reflected in the Economic Stabilization Act of 1982. Most of these measures were however ineffective and counterproductive to the extent that the growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP) turned negative and capacity utilization in industries declined drastically (Edo and Ekelegbe, 2014:2).

With the transition to democratic system of governance in 1999, expectations were high; many believed that the government would provide democratic dividends, including improved economy amongst others. This expectation turned out to be a tall hope as there is remained unemployment, increased level of poverty, corruption and injustice and inequalities, thereby creating disunity among the divergent ethnic nationalities. The reprise of democracy since

1999 has not brought with it leaders with the visions and policies to drive the economy and create employment for the growing population (Dike, 2018:1). There has thus been a teeming population, growing without commensurate economic growth rate and development to sustain it (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012b). For what it is worth, a developed economy is manifested in the improved life of the citizenry. This can be analysed through the reduction of poverty, non-employment rate, provisions of basic amenities like water, shelter, well equipped healthcare services, high quality education system that in turn produce well informed/innovative entrepreneurs who are human agencies needed to drive the economy to its peak, amongst others.

To achieve such feat, developed countries of the world such as Britain, U.S.A, Germany, etcetera, have through political leadership, effectively managed the available resources endowed on them by providence to reduce the sufferings and pains of citizens (Ekene and Ugwunwanyi, 2016:105). However, the case remains different in Nigeria. This study examines this challenge in a historical perspective. The study is organised in six sections. Following this introduction is the second section which discuss the determinants and character of Nigeria's political leadership. The third section examines the Nigerian economy. The fourth section burrows into the nexus between political leadership and the economy. The penultimate section considers the impact of Nigeria's political leadership on the economy since 1999. The study was concluded in the sixth section.

Determinants and Character of Nigeria's Political Leadership

In Nigeria, various factors determine the emergence of political leaders. The most dominant of these factors are the 'godfather influence', and ethnic affiliations/alliance. Historically, the godfather concept became popular in the 1960s Nigerian political movement and early postindependence leaders became godfathers (Mamah, 2004). This situation commenced during the First Republic when the leading nationalists of the country (Zik, Awo, Tafawa Balewa, etc.) prejudiced and controlled political activities in Nigeria. In Nigeria, political zones have political figures who champion the group or self interest in the struggle for power in the country. Victory or failure of a political party/candidate depends on the influence of these political figures that are known as godfathers. The godfather's influences could come in various forms; either through his financial support or through his links with the necessary political authorities. The 1999 civil rule followed suit in this tradition with writers like Ali, Bukar and Babagana, (2019:61) positing that the godfather phenomenon reached its peak during this period, being that it took into account, spiteful destruction of lives and property that accompanied the fierce aggression between a godfather (Chis Uba) and his godson, Gov. Chris Ngige. The politics of godfatherism has had a negative impact on the political culture of Nigeria and the Nigerian economy. Political leaders are more often than not sponsored by these godfathers in return for their loyalty/allegiance. Thus, given the circumstances by which they emerge, they're forced to run the nation's economy in favour of their sponsors through awarding of 'juicy' contracts or other means deemed necessary for recovery, all, at the detriment of the nation's coffers.

The majority ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani of the North, the Yoruba of the Southwest, and the Igbo of the Southeast of which their numerical and hegemonic strength within the nation gave Nigeria its trifocal ethnic structure. Each of these three major ethnic groups, thus, constitutes a pole in the struggle for political and economic resources of the nation (Mustapha, 2007), and has remained dominant in the polity of leadership in the country. Political parties served as the most common root for political leaders, cut across ethnic lines to emerge. Azeez (2009) argues that the emergence of political parties was trifocal in nature such that the party formation was based along three major ethnic groups, with three major ethnic leaders piloting the political activities to strengthening their respective regions. Alliances and coalitions is one of the characteristics features of politics in most multi-ethnic nations of the world; it is an ideational value that project 'ethnic brotherhood' in the Nigerian polity, birth competition and rivalry for the control of governmental power, and the economy that comes with. This has constantly undermined the emergence of political parties/leaders with national outlook (Adegbami & Uche, 2015). The resultant effect of this is that you find leaders whose outmost goal or priority is to assemble the commonwealth of the nation for themselves and ethnic affiliations.

Apart from the foregoing, political leaders in Nigeria do not take seriously their duties. They often exhibit a sense of what Ezeogidi (2019) tags 'executive lawlessness' which have always affected the progress of the country in a negative way. Some believe that the major cause of corruption in Nigeria's leadership is lack of patriotism. Numerous evidence show that leaders who find themselves in position to manage public fund for social, economic, and political development, often siphon and garner these funds for personal aggrandisement and that of his kith and kin because love for the country is practically non-existent. The quest for wealth, possessions and power by these leaders, at the peril of the citizenry, has rendered them insensitive to the yearnings of the people and deaf ears to their cries of desperations. The result is the consistent poor service delivery on policies and programme aimed at development.

The Nigerian Economy in Perspective

The Nigerian Economy can be divided into three sectors – primary sector(Agriculture, forestry and fishing), the secondary sector(industry, which includes manufacturing and processing or transforming goods), and the tertiary sector which has to do with services, that is, provision of services or information to individuals such as in the banking sector, tourism or IT. In the last decade for instance, these sectors have contributed towards the grand domestic product in Nigeria. The table below shows the percentage each of these sectors has contributed from 2009-2019.

Table 1: Distribution of gross domestic product across economic sectors from 2009 -2019

Year	Agriculture	Industry	Services
2019	21.91%	27.38%	49.73%
2018	21.2%	25.73%	52.02%
2017	20.85%	22.32%	55.8%
2016	20.98%	18.17%	59.79%
2015	20.63%	20.16%	58.12%
2014	19.99%	24.64%	54.15%
2013	20.76%	25.74%	52.37%
2012	21.86%	27.07%	50.19%
2011	22.23%	28.28%	49.24%
2010	23.89%	25.32%	50.79%
2009	26.75%	21.24%	50.98%

Source: <www.statista.com/statistics/382311/nigeria-gdp-distribution-across-economic-sectors>

In the early 21st century, the Federal Government of Nigeria stated the major sectors of the economy to include, agriculture, industry, construction, trade, and services. The agricultural sector includes crop production, livestock, forestry, and fishing. This sector has the highest potential for achieving a broad-based and diversified economy, but its performance has been unimpressive over the years (Obadan and Edo, 2004) and has continued to show deplorable status. For instance, its output of cash crops such as cocoa, cotton, rubber, groundnuts, and palm produce dwindled consistently over the last two decades, while production of livestock also fell. There was a rapid decline in foodstuff production to the extent that Nigeria became a net importer of food in the past decade. There is dominance of light consumer goods production, low value-added production due to high import dependence for inputs, and the dominance of sub-standard goods that cannot compete internationally. Nigeria is endowed with favourable climate and environmental benefits needed for diverse agricultural explorations. For instance, her water resources are quite enormous, and estimated to be 267.3 billion cubic meters of surface water and 52 billion cubic meter of underground water per annum. With proper harnessing, the quantity can satisfy all the agricultural, energy and other water needs of the economy. Although some parts of her physical environment which is crucial for economic growth is plagued by numerous problems such as, erosion, uncontrolled logging and tree felling, damage to marine and wild life, gas flaring, urban decay, air and water pollution, ozone layer depletion, poor waste management and crude land use practices; these issues could be surmountable with the emergence of meaningful leadership (Edo and Ekelegbe, 2014).

The Industrial sector includes crude petroleum and natural gas, solid materials, and manufacturing. The infrastructure base of the Nigerian economy has remained weak over the past decades and is further characterized by uneven distribution, unreliability and decay, arising from several years of neglect. Manufacturing, on the other hand, has been characterized by low capacity utilization that averaged

30 percent in the last decade, low and declining contribution to national output, declining and negative real growth rate. In the mining and quarrying subsector, economic potentials have not been fully harnessed. With heavy dependence on crude petroleum, mining sites were abandoned. Thus, the tremendous potentials of the mining and quarrying sub-sector are mainly attributed to petroleum resources. Science and technology has yet to play its expected role in accelerating economic growth of Nigeria. It has failed to design and develop appropriate facilities that could enhance growth thus compelling the country to depend on high-cost foreign technologies. The failure may be attributed to poor linkage of research institutions to end-users in the industry, inability of research institutions to commercialize inventions, as well as inadequate funding of these institutions(Edo and Ekelegbe, 2014)..

The service sector include, transport, information and communication, utilities, accommodation and food services, finance and insurance, real estate, professional scientific and technical services, public administration, education, human health and social services, arts/entertainment and recreation and other services. This area through the years has yielded tremendously towards economic advancement in Nigeria judging from the table above. The financial sector in Nigeria, most especially witnessed visible growth in the last two decades, especially in the number of banks and other financial institutions following the liberalization policy that has been in existence since 1986 (Edo and Ekelegbe, 2014). In fact, suffice to say that the banking sector contributed majorly to the growth in revenue accrued in services domestically, judging from Table 1, above. The regulatory system of the sector was however weak and the money market characterized by banks with low capital base and operational inefficiency. They were more active in granting short-term loans/overdrafts as well as trading in foreign exchange, with marginal effects on the real sector of the economy. Micro-credit was left largely to the unorganized informal financial sector of the economy. The capital market, on the other hand, was characterized by poor infrastructure, high cost of transaction, low capitalization, long delays in settlements, and poor investment attitude of buy-and-hold. The insurance firms were poorly capitalized and found it difficult to manage risks, and thus had negligible impact on activities in the capital market. The financial system as a whole was unable to attract substantial foreign investment and venture capital needed to facilitate economic growth and development (Edo and Ekelegbe, 2014). The tourism unit of the service sector on the other hand has not been effectively maximised despite its strong potentials for enhancing employment and revenue for the country. Employment and revenue from tourism have remained low and insignificant, while foreign exchange earnings have been virtually nonexistent. The factors responsible for this performance include poor and inadequate infrastructure, political instability, social insecurity, and failure of government to create enabling environment for private sector participation in the industry. In social services, mostly the health care system and Education outfits didn't yield much towards economic growth. The health care system in Nigeria over the years deteriorated to such an extent that experienced Nigerian health experts migrated to other countries in search of better conditions of service. Consequently there was high infant and maternal mortality, as well as the prevalence of diseases in epidemic proportions. The education system also experienced deep crisis for several years and fell into a deplorable condition in the last two decades. Adult literacy rate was relatively poor at 57 percent in 1999, and only 50 percent of school age children were actually in school, with between 10 percent and 30 percent of actual enrolment recorded in some states. The rate of school drop-out has been increasing over the years, while the quality of education has fallen significantly at all levels, especially at the tertiary level that witnessed phenomenal brain-drain to other parts of the world (Edo and Ekelegbe, 2014). All these resulted in the down turn of revenues that would have accrued from the aforementioned outfits in Nigeria within the period under review.

In the trade and distribution sector, activities are characterized by interregional trade barriers, bureaucracy in the implementation of trade incentives such as export rebate, long delays in business registration, non-implementation of the ECOWAS treaty on free trade, and long processes of clearing goods at the ports. On imports, raw materials and capital goods dominate Nigeria's imports, even as the economy is described to be largely import-dependent. This tends to explain why imports have fluctuated over the years mostly in the upward direction. Total imports have fluctuated and rose astronomically within the period under review. This owes largely to trade liberalization (Edo and Ekelegbe, 2014). In fact as at June, 2020, the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria (2020) pointed that Nigeria imports rose to 1590021.69 in naira from 1325501.38 NGN millions in May of 2020. On export goods, oil and natural gas has been dominant, accounting for over 91 percent of total exports according to Trading Economics. Nigeria exports fluctuated through the years, from 1999-2018 reaching its peak so far in 2011 when it recorded a wooping102, 438 million US dollars (Facts on Nigeria export goods and services, 2020). Despite the fluctuations, it ended at 69,926 million US dollars in 2019 (Nigeria Exports, 2019). Fluctuations in growth of the economy drawing analysis from the Grand Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria from 1999-2019 buttress the level of incompetence and cluelessness of the different leadership that has graced the country's seat of power. The gross domestic product GDP measures of national income and output for a given country's economy. It is equal to the total expenditures for all final good and services produced within the country in a stipulated period of time. See table 2 below.

Table 2: Historical Data of Nigeria's GDP, 1999-2019

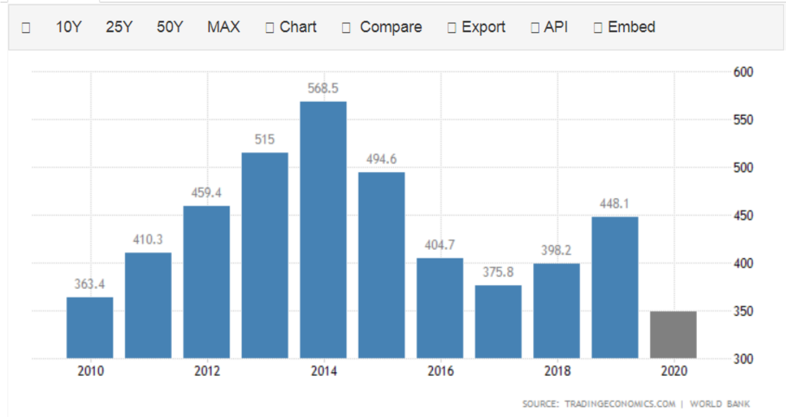
Year	GDP	Per Capita	Growth
2019	$448.12B	$2,230	2.21%
2018	$398.16B	$2,033	1.92%
2017	$375.75B	$1,969	0.81%
2016	$404.65B	$2,176	-1.62%
2015	$494.58B	$2,730	2.65%
2014	$568.50B	$3,223	6.31%
2013	$514.97B	$2,998	6.67%

Year	GDP	Per Capita	Growth
2012	$459.38B	$2,747	4.23%
2011	$410.33B	$2,520	5.31%
2010	$363.36B	$2,292	8.01%
2009	$291.88B	$1,891	8.04%
2008	$337.04B	$2,243	6.76%
2007	$275.63B	$1,883	6.59%
2006	$236.10B	$1,656	6.06%

Year	GDP	Per Capita	Growth
2005	$176.13B	$1,268	6.44%
2004	$136.39B	$1,008	9.25%
2003	$104.91B	$795	7.35%
2002	$95.39B	$742	15.33%
2001	$74.03B	$590	5.92%
2000	$69.45B	$568	5.02%
1999	$59.37B	$498	0.58%

Source: <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/NGA/nigeria/gdp-gross-domestic-product>

Figure 1: Nigeria's GDP in the last decade



Source: www.tradingeconomics.com

Data from National Bureau of statistics show that GDP in 2019 grew by 2.27%, a percentage considered rather too slow and unimpressive having suffered a recession since 2016. The government's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan(EGRP) which was launched after the 2016 recession, was anchored on aggressive growth from 2017-2020, to turn the economic slump around. However, recent data have shown that Nigeria's economy fell short of the EGRP projected GDP growth rate of 4.5% in 2019(Kazeem, 2020). By the second quarter of 2020, the Nigerian economy plunged into the worst recession in four decades since the 1980s(World Bank Nigeria Development Update, 2020). This marks the second recession in the country in four years (2016-2020), amid still-subdued oil prices and lingering effects of the restrictions implemented across the country in the early second quarter in response to COVID-19. The oil sector according to statistical data declined 13.9%, following a 6.6% slump in the second quarter amid lower crude oil production (1.67 million barrels per day, down from 1.81 mbps in Q2 and 2.04 mbps a year ago). At the same time, the non-oil sector shrank 2.5%, less than 6.1% in the second quarter amid softer declines in transportation & storage (-43% vs -49%); accommodation & food service (-22.6% vs -40.2%); trade (-12.1% vs -17%) and manufacturing (-1.5% vs -8.8%). Meanwhile, the information & communication sectors have shown notable growth (14.6% vs 16.5%). On a quarterly basis, the GDP grew 12.1%, the most since at least the Q2 of 2010, recovering sharply from a 5% contraction in the previous quarter (National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria, 2020).

Political Leadership and Economy: The Nexus

Political leadership influences the economy, as much as economics influences the economy. The wealth of nation of course, cannot be created or managed in the absence of an efficient government and a well-defined body of political administration. Many economic issues are inherently political, because they lend themselves to different opinions/ideologies of the various political leaders in the country. That is to say that the implementation of economic policies is dependent on the political leadership in existence.

It has been rightly argued that economic development requires a great level of mobilisation of a country’s human and financial resources and their deployment in productive activities. Mobilisations are done by political leaders who understand the need for economic growth. Political leaders through the formulation and implementation of policies and programs, influence the certain economic outcomes. Thus the quality of political leadership in Nigeria, determines the outcome of the economy. The poor quality of leadership in Nigeria since 1999, continue to foster the rapid deteriorating state of the Nigerian economy. Although a wave of reformative programmes have been employed, the country however still lacks leadership with the political will and commitment to implement effective policies to transform the economy positively.

Impact of Nigeria's Political Leadership on the Economy since 1999

Since the restoration of democracy in May 1999, political leaders have had to grapple with numerous socio-economic problems and the attendant social malaise in a volatile uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment. The Nigerian economy is basically consumptive in nature and overly reliant on imports. It has a weak industrial base and financial institutions. About 80% of the country's income comes from oil and a meagre 20% from other sources (Nigeria: http://infoplease.com 2010). Before the discovery of oil, Nigeria was an agrarian economy which promoted free enterprise. The regions retained half of their locally derived revenues, which were based on exports of cash crops.

Since the discovery of oil, Nigeria can be said to be suffering from Investopedia (2019) termed the "Dutch Disease" which is an economic term for the negative consequences that can arise from a spike in the value of a nation's currency. It is primarily associated with the new discovery or exploitation of a valuable natural resource and the unexpected repercussions that such a discovery can have on the overall economy of a nation. Its repercussions could include a decrease in price competitiveness, as the country's manufactured goods are over-priced in global market. Second, there is an increase in imports because of the increase in income to the government (too much wealth managed unwisely) (Investopedia, 2019). The Dutch Disease pushes out local manufacturing and negatively affects the social contract, because the government no longer relies on local revenues, such as taxes, but on foreign revenue.

The large income boost from oil exports increased the exchange rate of Nigeria's currency, the naira, in the world market. This also affected the price of the other export commodities, like cocoa, which became over-priced in the global market. Consequently, Nigeria's exports became un-attractive in the world market leading to the eventual collapse of those privately owned cottage industries (Kaufmann et al, 2010). The closure of these firms led to unemployment for a large number of people (Okpara, 2016). Also, the owners of these firms had to divert their businesses to servicing oil projects, thereby making the economy overly reliant on oil. This has created a situation where any turbulence in global oil prices has very serious impacts on the economy given that oil revenue accounts for 80% of the country's income (nationsencyclopedia). From figure 1, the Nigeria Gross Domestic Product GDP remained low, representing about 0.37 percent of the world economy in recent times. The unemployment rate provided by the government's National Bureau of Statistics is more than 20%. Again, about 60% of the population lives in absolute poverty- measured by the number who can afford only the bare essentials of shelter, food and clothing.

Another impact of poor leadership on the economy is that of low productivity arising from Nigeria's poor power supply infrastructure which has affected industrial production. The power corporations have not been able to meet local demand due to aging infrastructure and limited generation capacity. Due to the low supply of power in the country, manufacturers rely highly on generators to augment the local supply. This has made the cost of production very high and unattractive to foreign firms that may want to invest in the country. Consequently, the industrial sector accounts for only 5% of the country's GDP (Perry, 2010). In 2016 the country's economy plunged into recession owning to poor management of the nation's resources. A review of the GDP of the country, two years before this period, mirrors the level of incompetence of leaders at the time, who rather that observe the earlier signs and employ effective measures to cushion the effects of the downward turn in the economy (which could have been avoided in the first place), chose to continue in the tradition of luxury living and ‘looting as usual’. Table 3 below highlights

	Annual			Quarterly			
Activity Sector	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**Q1 2016**	**Q2 2016**	**Q3 2016**	**Q4 2016**
Total GDP	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Agriculture	22.9	23.1	24.4	20.5	22.5	28.7	25.5
Industry	24.9	23.7	22.0	24.3	22.6	21.1	20.3
Oil & gas	10.4	9.6	8.4	10.3	8.3	8.2	7.2
Manufacturing	10.0	9.5	9.3	9.5	9.4	9.2	9.0
Construction	3.8	3.9	3.7	4.1	4.3	3.1	3.4
Services	52.2	53.2	53.6	55.2	54.8	50.2	54.2
Trade (wholesale & retail)	16.6	16.9	17.2	18.2	17.6	16.4	16.7
Accommodation &food services	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.7	0.9	1.0
Information & communication	10.8	11.2	11.6	12.0	12.7	10.1	11.6
Arts, entertainment& recreation	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Finance & insurance	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9
Real estate	7.7	7.6	7.2	6.5	7.6	7.2	7.6
Public administration	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.4
Oil GDP	**10.4**	**9.6**	**8.4**	**10.3**	**8.3**	**8.2**	**7.2**
Non-oil GDP	**89.6**	**90.4**	**91.6**	**89.7**	**91.7**	**91.8**	**92.8**

Source: National Bureau of Statistics

the quarterly report of the depleted economy in 2016 to buttress the foregoing.

Table 3: Sector and selected sub-sector shares in Nigeria’s GDP, 2014-2016

Having barely recovered from the recession of 2016, the Nigerian economy has since the second quarter of 2020 slid into the second recession in the space of four years. The bellow table again shows the quarterly GDP two years before this time - 2018-2020.

Table 4: Quarterly GDP growth rate, two years before 2020 recession

Year	**Quarter 1**	**Quarter 2**	**Quarter 3**	**Quarter 4**
2018	1.89%	1.50%	1.81%	2.38%
2019	2.10%	2.12%	2.28%	2.55%
2020	1.87%	-6.10%		

Source: Nigerian GDP Report, NBS, 2020

The 2nd Quarter 2020 (Q2 2020) shows that the Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) decreased by -6.10% (year-on-year) in real terms, and aggregate GDP stood at N34, 023,197.60 million in nominal terms. The Q2 2020 growth rate of -6.10% indicates a drop of -8.22% points, and on quarter-on-quarter basis, a fall of -7.97% points when compared to the first quarter of 2020 (1.87%). Overall, the nominal growth rate was -16.81% points lower than recorded in the second quarter of 2019, and -14.81% points lower than recorded in the first quarter of 2020(Nairametrics,2020). The tax revenue economic source of the country has not been adequately maximized by political leaders. Revenue collection in the country presently is still very low, with about 10% coming from the agro sector and 90% derivable from the federal agencies under the as you earn scheme (Agabi, 2011). This low income rate is due to non-establishment of adequate monitoring mechanism by political leaders, to plug the existing loopholes in the system, most especially, the tax-defaulters. In recent times, the country has been able to harness only 20% of her agro produce from farms due to the poor state of roads and non-existent storage facilities to preserve crops. Consequently, Nigeria resorts to the importation of food even though the country has the capacity to be self-sufficient and even export food to other countries. Thus, the country incurs huge losses of income that could have been utilized for further development.

The poor investment climate and low industrial development are the main reason for the high unemployment rate in the country which currently stands at 19.7% (Lewis 2011). A large percentage of the unemployed are youths of age 18 to 30 years, most of whom are university graduates desiring to earn a decent living, but have not had the opportunity of having jobs. This is the main cause of youth restiveness and the attendant social problems in the country (Bach, 2006).

Conclusion

In recent times, there has been increasing pressure to increase economic investment in virtually all sectors of the economy, most especially in the infrastructural unit. As earlier established in the paper, Nigerian political leadership from 1999 to the third quarter of 2020 played vital role in the economic depletion of the nation. The paper contends that the character of these leaders, dominated by lack of patriotic spirit, insensitivity and greed amongst others are major causal factors. Statistical data show the astronomical fluctuations in the country's GDP through the years, birthing two recessions in the space of 4years – in 2016 and in the second quarter of 2020. This goes a long way to buttress the level of incompetence and cluelessness of leaders in handling the Nigerian economy. Value system determines the level of progress in any society, thus political leaders should endeavour to jettison extolling the wealth of the nation and embrace a value system which places high value on integrity, service delivery, competence, patriotism sensitivity to the cries and desperation of the common man, and honesty.

Well-equipped anti-theft agencies that will be saddled with the responsibility of recovering looted funds with stern measure such as public execution/death of looters. This will go a long way to prevent prospective public officials from nursing any corrupt intent. This agency must also possess a court peculiar to its mission to address all issues pertaining to corrupt political leaders. Extensive investment in infrastructure to drive development needed in other sectors of the economy such as transport, power generating sector, agriculture, among others. There should be reformative policies, and establishment of efficient institutions aimed at strengthening tax unit. It is evident that heavy reliance on oil can no longer sustain the nation, therefore there is need to strengthen other sectors as this will go a long way to cushion the effect of fluctuating oil prices. There is critical need to reduce the cost of governance to sustain the nation's economy.

References

Adegbami, A. and Uche, C.I.N., (2015). Ethnicity and ethnic politics: An impediment to political development in Nigeria. *Public administration research, Vol. 4(1),* 59-67.

Agabi, C. (2011). Nigeria: Tax collection is low in the country- FIRS, linked from daily trust publication, <http://allafirca.com/stories/201106280332.html> Retrieved 26/9/2020.

Ali, M.A., Bukar, H.M. and Babagana, A. (2019). Deteminants and impacts of politics of godfatherism and regionalism in yobe state. *Journal of liberty and international affairs, Vol. 5(1),* 59-74

Azeez, A. (2009). Ethnicity, party politics and democracy in Nigeria: Peoples democratic party (pdp) as agent of consolidation?, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0972639X.2009.11886588> Retrieved 28/11/2020.

Bach, D. C. (2006). Inching towards a country without a state: Prebendalism violence and state betrayal in Nigeria, in Clapham, C. and Herbst, J. (eds). *Big African states*. Wits University Press, Johannesburg.

Britannica. Nigeria: Economy. <https://www.britannica.com/place/nigeria/economy> Retrieved 29/11/2020.

Chikwendu, C.R., and Obienusi, I.E., (2020). Political leadership and national integration in Nigeria: A comparative study of the 1979 federal character principle and contemporary politics. *Nigerian journal of African studies, vol 2(1),* 48-58.

Dike, V.E. (2018). Leadership and the Nigerian economy, Sage open, 1-10 <Https://doi.com/10.1177/2158244014523792> Retrieved 27/11/2020

Ekene, C. and Ugwunwanyi, A., (2016). Leadership and economic development in a developing economy: A critical look at the Nigeria's experience. *International journal of business and management review, Vol. 4(6), 105-114.*

Ezeogidi, C. (2019). Historical survey of patriotism in Nigeria leadership *SSRN Electronic Journal*, Doi: 10.2139/ssrn.3563267 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335681918> Retrieved 26/11/2020.

Indexmundi. (2020). Facts on nigreria export goods and services <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/nigeria/exports-of-goods-and-services> Retrieved 30/11/2020

Investopedia,(2019).Dutch disease. <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/dutchdisease.asp> Retrieved 20/9/2020.

Kaufmann, K. and Mastruzzi (2010). *The worldwide governance indicators: Methodology and analytical issues*. Brooking institution, the international Bank for Reconstruction and Development/world Bank.

Kazeem, Y. (2020). Nigeria's economy is marking a comeback – but it is not happening fast enough. <https://qz.com/africa/1807355/nigerias-economy-has-best-quarterly-growth-since-recession/> Retrieved 1/12/2020.

Knoema. (2019). Nigeria Exports. <https://knoema.com/atlas/Nigeria/Exports> Retrieved 30/11/2020

Lewis, P. M. (2011). *Nigeria – Assessing Risks to stability*. Centre for Strategies and international studies, Nigeria.

Macrotrends. Nigeria's GDP. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/NGA/nigeria/gdp-gross-domestic-product> Retrieved 27/11/2020.

Mamah, E., (2004). First generation politician started godfatherism. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/articles> Retrieved 26/11/2020

Mustapha, A.R. (2007). *Ethnic structure, inequality and governance of the public sector in nigeria.* UNRISD, Switzerland.

Nairametrics, (2020). Nigeria macroeconomic dashboard for q3 2020 <https://nairametrics.com/2020/10/16/nigeria-macro-economic-dashboard-for-q3-2020-commercio-partners/> Retrieved 30/11/2020

National Bureau of Statistics. (2012b, September). Economic outlook-revised economic outlook for 2012-2015. Abuja, Nigeria: Author.

National Bureau of Statistics. (2016), Economic Growth in Nigeria, IMF, Abuja, Nigeria, Author.

National Bureau of Statistics. (2020). Nigeria imports, Author

Nations encyclopedia (2019) Nigeria Gross Domestic product 2018. Author.

Nationsencyclopedia. Nigeria: Industry, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Nigeria-INDUSTRY.html> Retrieved 19/9/2020.

Njoku, O.N. (2014). *Economic history of Nigeria, 19th-21st centuries.* Great ap express publishers ltd, Nsukka, Nigeria.

Obadan, M.I and Edo, S.E. (2004). Overall economic direction, strategy and performance, in Edo, S. and Ekelegbe, A. (2014). *The Nigerian economy: Reforms, emerging trends and prospects.* Ambik press ltd, Edo

Okpare, O. (2016). 3,000 sacked as multinational oil companies pull out. <http://punchng.com/3000-sacked-multinational-oil-companies-pull> Retrieved 27/11/2020.

Olav, S. (1970). *Nigeria: An introduction to the politics, economy and social setting of modern Nigeria*. The Scandinavian institute of African Studies. Uppsala.

Onfoplease, (2010), Nigeria: History, geography, government and culture, <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107847.html> Retrieved 20/9/2020.

Perry, A. (2010). UmaruYar'Adua. Time magazine world publication, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1989135,oo.html> Retrieved 20/9/2020.

Smith, A., (1970). *The wealth of nations*, A.S. Skinner, Penguin Books, London.

Statista (2020). Nigeria gdp distribution across economic sectors, <www.statista.com/statistics/382311/nigeria-gdp-distribution-across-economic-sectors> Retrieved 1/12/2020

Tradingeconomics. .Nigeria's GDP. <www.tradingeconomics.com> Retrived 30/11/2020.

World Bank, (2020). Nigeria in times of covid-19: laying foundations for a strong recovery. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetails/695491593024516552/nigeria-in-times-of-covid-19-laying-foundations-for-a-strong-recovery> Retrieved 1/12/2020.