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HOW SOCIAL INEQUALITY BEGETS
SOCIAL INSTABILITY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

In the north of Nigeria, the traditional hegemony has built an enduring multifaceted system of oppression that the local politicians maintain and benefit from. In this context, social exclusion and institutional stratification corelate to each other in describing a system of hegemony that is especially designed to deprive millions of people the basic needs in life, conditioning a large army of youths to a hapless and hopeless social underclass. Social instability herein vividly depicts break down of social order, separatist movements in all the three main regions of the country, terrorism, extrajudicial killings, human kidnapping for ransoms, broad day atrocities, most of which are all too familiar even to the outside world. Additionally, the conditions of living in northern Nigeria, best described as grotesque poverty and inequality has attracted a lot of research work in different fields of social sciences both within and outside the country. It has been observed that the theories and explanations proffered on the issue have not provided any significant solution, therefore there is a need for interdisciplinary approach. To achieve this objective, the authors have taken the perspectives of economic sociology for a critical and analytical approach by employing novel tools to detect asymmetries of systems of social institutions and their concrete relationship with a range of social outcomes. Thus, it has become possible to detect those asymmetries and the concrete ways they influence the extant institutions. Further still, this work explores the inequality problems by making a careful appraisal of the intrinsic relationships inherent of structures and agents, their contributions to social instabilities in the north of the country. The authors used combined methods of primary observation and secondary data to allow a cursory look into how social inequality underlies social instability now too ubiquitous in northern Nigeria.

Key words: poverty, social inequality, instability, northern Nigeria.

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Қалай әлеуметтік теңсіздік солтүстік Нигериядағы
әлеуметтік тұрақсыздықты тудырады

Солтүстік Нигерияда дәстүрлі гегемония жергілікті саясаткерлер қолдайтын және ұтатын тұрақты, көпжақты езгі жүйесін құрды. Бұл тұрғыда әлеуметтік оқшаулау мен институционалды стратификация миллиондаған адамдарды негізгі өмірлік қажеттіліктерден айыру үшін арнайы жасақталған гегемония жүйесін сипаттауда бір-бірімен корреляция жасайды, жастардың үлкен армиясын қайғы-қасірет пен үмітсіз әлеуметтік төменгі сыныпқа айналдырады. Елдің солтүстігіндегі әлеуметтік тұрақсыздық – бұл қоғамдық тәртіпті бұзу, елдің барлық үш аймағындағы сепаратистік қозғалыстар, терроризм, сотсыз өлім жазасы, төлем үшін адам ұрлау, жаппай қатыгездік, бұлардың көпшілігі сыртқы әлемге де белгілі. Сонымен қатар, Нигерияның солтүстігіндегі гротескілік кедейлік пен теңсіздік деп сипатталған өмір сүру жағдайлары әлеуметтік ғылымдардың әртүрлі салаларында ішкі және халықаралық деңгейде көптеген зерттеулер жүргізді. Осы мәселе бойынша ұсынылған теориялар мен түсініктемелер ешқандай маңызды шешімдерге әкелмегені байқалды, сондықтан пәнаралық тәсіл қажет. Осы мақсатқа жету үшін автор әлеуметтік институттар жүйелерінің асимметриясын және олардың бірқатар әлеуметтік нәтижелермен спецификалық байланысын ашудың жаңа құралдарын қолданып, сыни және аналитикалық көзқарас үшін экономикалық әлеуметтанудың перспективаларын қабылдады. Осылайша, осы асимметрияларды және олардың қолданыстағы институттарға әсер етуінің нақты тәсілдерін анықтауға мүмкіндік туды. Сонымен қатар, бұл мақалада құрылымдар мен агенттерге тән ішкі қатынастарды, олардың елдің солтүстігіндегі әлеуметтік тұрақсыздыққа қосқан үлесін мұқият бағалау арқылы теңсіздік мәселелері қарастырылған. Автор қазіргі кезде Нигерияның солтүстігінде кең таралған әлеуметтік тұрақсыздықтың негізінде әлеуметтік

теңсіздіктің жатқанын оңай қарау үшін алғашқы бақылау мен екінші ретті деректер әдістерін қолданды.

Түйін сөздер: кедейлік, әлеуметтік теңсіздік, тұрақсыздық, Нигерияның солтүстігі.

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Как социальное неравенство может быть причиной социальной нестабильности в Северной Нигерии

На севере Нигерии традиционная гегемония выстроила устойчивую многогранную систему угнетения, которую местные политики поддерживают и извлекают из нее выгоду. В этом контексте социальная изоляция и институциональная стратификация коррелируют друг с другом в описании системы гегемонии, которая специально предназначена для того, чтобы лишить миллионы людей основных жизненных потребностей, превращая большую армию молодежи в несчастный и безнадежный социальный низший класс. Социальная нестабильность на севере страны представляет собой разрушение общественного порядка, сепаратистские движения во всех трех основных регионах страны, терроризм, внесудебные казни, похищение людей с целью получения выкупа, массовые зверства, большинство из которых очень хорошо известны даже внешнему миру. Кроме того, условия жизни на севере Нигерии, лучше всего описываемые как гротескная бедность и неравенство, привлекли уже множество исследований в различных областях социальных наук как внутри страны, так и за ее пределами. Было замечено, что теории и объяснения, предложенные по этому вопросу, не привели к каким-либо существенным решениям, поэтому существует потребность в междисциплинарном подходе. Для достижения этой цели автор принял перспективы экономической социологии для критического и аналитического подхода, используя новые инструменты для обнаружения асимметрии систем социальных институтов и их конкретной взаимосвязи с рядом социальных результатов. Таким образом, стало возможным обнаруживать эти асимметрии и конкретные способы их влияния на существующие институты. Кроме того, в этой работе исследуются проблемы неравенства путем тщательной оценки внутренних отношений, присущих структурам и агентам, их вклада в социальную нестабильность на севере страны. Автор использовал комбинированные методы первичного наблюдения и вторичных данных, чтобы можно было легко взглянуть на то, как социальное неравенство лежит в основе социальной нестабильности, которая сейчас широко распространена в Северной Нигерии.

Ключевые слова: бедность, социальная неравенство, нестабильности, север Нигерии.

Introduction

A stark social reality is starring the North of Nigeria, whereas there seems to be no specific solutions in sight to confront enduring socio-economic challenges. Upon securing what seems de facto *nominal* independence after decades of colonial dominion, the young African states soon confronted the realities of running societies with complex political, economic and socio-cultural as well as administrative systems, for which they were ill-prepared. Nigeria has been struggling with the task of nation-building since its independence in 1960 (Okorie, 2016). The new country, it was also alleged – inherited inexperienced leaders who lacked national consciousness and constituency and were more tuned to the subverted indigenous ethos of government and culture. By 1960 most of those who took over the reins of power from Britain had a very short experience in democratic governance while those in the North had also only a modicum of western education. (ibid)

Of the many challenges the young Nigerian state faced – and continues to face to date – was the search for the principles by which to consolidate and cohere the society. Not surprising, at the declaration of independence from the Great Britain in 1960, the young country recorded an estimated 45.2 million people, with three main regions namely the Yoruba dominant in the West, the Igbo in the east and the Hausa-Fulani in the vast north (Wikipedia). These three regions are also home to no fewer than 250 ethnic groups with distinct languages, diverse cultures, and political interests. Lacking the political and economic wisdom to cohere the society, local politicians resorted to patronizing the traditional leaders for society consolidation. This patronage has consequentially empowered the traditional leaders to assume supreme power over the legitimately elected politicians, even though they (traditional leaders) remain an informal institution not accorded any constitutional supremacy. This marked the beginning of a patron-client political system that will

have lasting consequences for the country's political life.

The illegitimacy and indeed the moral and ethical bankruptcy, of the multiple and overlapping networks of customary and modern governance have created vast space of alienation and social exclusion in a world where the armies of impoverished youth were neither citizens nor subjects, a social landscape for the politics of resentment to fester (McGovern 2012; Chaveau and Richards 2008). Rural and urban, federal and local, religious and secular, customary and modern, the crises of authority were all instrumental in the processes that created a rural and urban underclass, alienated and excluded from the worlds of legitimate authority, and from the market order. These floating populations – the lumpen proletariat, Quranic students and land-poor peasants in the northern parts of the country, the unemployed youth in the south east detached from the old gerontocracy order, unable to pursue their measures of personal advancement through marriage, patronage, and work. Existentially, young men, unanchored from social, civic and political structures, occupied a social space of massively constricted possibility, in a world where economic recession and the dreadful logic of provisioning and self-interest deprived millions of the basic needs in life, conditioned to a hapless and hopeless social underclass. Thus, the youth in these regions was, by default, nothing much of an extended social category as a permanent way of life (Watts, 2017).

The logic of indigeneity and indeed, the legitimacy of community forms of rule encoded within the constitution, in effect institutionalized a parallel system of governance represented by chieftaincy in the south and emirate rule in the north. In this multi-ethnic political drama, indigenes looked to customary, or traditional institutions as a source of legitimacy and authority, and nowhere more so than around question of access to and control over land (ibid). The patronage political tradition has inevitably cumulated in institutional corruption and lack of credibility for the holders of public offices. Institutional corruption here means contracts undone, breach of trusts or pervasive dishonesty, damaged investment environment, failing infrastructures and massive economic loss, youth marginalization and an inescapable break down in social order. The centripetal tendentious patronage of the traditional hegemony by the legitimate community rulers has proved counterproductive by the centrifugal tendentious institutional failure and existential predicament now starring the nation.

While all this provided the context for the first steps towards the construction of early versions of patron-client relations along ethnic, regional and party lines, the resources with which to fund the supporting networks came in greater abundance in the post-civil war period of oil boom when Nigeria became awash in petrol-naira, thanks largely to 'the two great oil price shocks of 1973 and 1979' that ensured that 'staggering new revenues poured into' the country. This massive oil rents helped the politicians fed their patrons upon whom they depend for political nominations and success at elections, much to the chagrin of the unsuspecting voters.

The goal of this paper is not to reproduce the arguments and theories on the theme, but merely to point to the linkage between institutional stratification and existential predicament and the way in which information from each can, perhaps help throw light on our interpretation of the other. Historically, the authorities of African feudal lords have never been catalysts for progress, safe only for promoting debilitating internecine wars, pillaging communities and slave raiding. Sadly, we see the reminiscence of this hapless past in contemporary Africa. Once again 62% of Africans are living precariously and are susceptible to slavery, (GSI, 2018). Africans are being shipped across the Atlantic in the most inhuman conditions to places where they are treated with hostility and indignation, slaving away only to remit money home to impoverished relatives. A clear indication that the African economy lacks the capacity to absorb its able bodied, employable youths.

Table 1 – Estimated vulnerability to modern slavery. Source: Global Slavery Index 2018

Country	lacking basic needs	inequality	Dis-enfranchised groups
Nigeria	41.3	50.2	47.1

But if, as has been the case after the end of colonization all over Africa that economic production is much below that capacity to absorb the ever-growing army of youths that form the bulk of the African population, it would appear logical to devise doable social development initiatives to garner the underused capacity of the continent's economy to address society's challenges. Mass job-creating initiatives such as building Community Parks, constructing bridges and access roads; river channelization are

all doable community development projects. Plantations on partnership or contract bases are capable of transforming subsistent peasant farming into modern extensive farming that will, in turn, lead to efficiency in food storage and distribution. Initiatives to build new towns, infrastructures and a raft of others, executed exclusively with the local labour forces would all have the additional advantage of triggering the private sector investment and job creation that would help overcome lack of economic capacity.

These never happened when Africans were being massively shipped to slave on plantations in the Americas, it never happened when Africans laboured on plantations under colonization. And although food production in Nigeria, at best, continues to be at the subsistence level, yet all the legacy of colonial systematized mass agricultural production, functioning urban infrastructures have all become derelict followed by barbaric plundering of the assets. In Nigeria, none of the attempts to restore the systems has yielded any significant result.

The goals and objectives

The central objective of this paper, therefore, is to detect the asymmetries of systems that effect social inequality and the attendant wake of instability in the society. The hypothesis for this article is to proof the correlations between age-long inequality and instability in the north of Nigeria that social instability results from difficulties being felt by people and communities within a system and space where distribution is inequitably constructed through hegemony (Mehretu et al. 2000). Systemic or hegemonic marginality differs from market-induced marginality because it defies market reforms as a corrective measure. Mainly because it stems from a conscious plan by an existing hegemony to perpetuate its political control, social exclusion and economic exploitation (Mingione, 1996). The history of hegemonic marginality is considered specific to each community relative to the historical configuration of power within it. Vivid instances of these would include the inequity and oppression suffered under apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia, ethnically targeted exclusionary practices in countries like Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Sudan, and policies that (in)advertently marginalize ethnic and religious groups leading to horizontal inequalities (Stewart, 2009) in countries like Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire where autochthony confers and denies rights. In many African countries, it remains at the center of agitations for secession and ethnic militancy. However, the susceptibility of ethnic minorities to hegemonic marginality is peculiar not to Africa.

The ordering of power wrought in part by the capture of oil rents in Nigeria becomes a counterpoint to the states in Southeast Asia, where growth and development trajectories after the World War II were shaped by the rise of what he calls durable 'Authoritarian Leviathans'. These regimes arose because contentious class-based political contests were seen by the powerful classes as endemic and unmanageable – meaning, they saw their security and class positions as threatened by urban insurrection, radical redistributive demands, and communal tensions. These threats, in short, sustained state centered coalitions and 'protection pacts' that facilitated state-building – in the first instance through the state's coercive apparatuses, but more generally through building durable state institutions. But nothing similar to this existed in late-colonial Nigeria and the threat of unmanageable conflict (the Biafran War) was undercut by the simultaneous emergence of oil as the determinant of state revenues and political stability. What emerged as an aftermath was not a protection pact but an ordering of power through a 'provisioning pact', a resource-dependent patrimonial system resting on oil rents (Watts, 2017).

Scientific research methodology

For this volume, a desk research on the fundamental concepts namely: 'social exclusion', 'institutional stratification' 'social instability' was carried out. This was helpful for reviewing and analyzing both national and international scientific work on the northern Nigerian enduring poverty. Further still, as a research method, a review and analysis of scientific articles on the impact and the characteristics of the was applied. The reports of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Index Nigeria Country Briefing published in 2017. Source: (OPHI, 2017); data from the National Bureau of Statistics were among the secondary analysis.

This study is descriptive and takes its base on the indicators of empirical studies by the author. The study mainly focuses on the scope of the institutional stratification, with particular reference to the effects on the everyday life of millions of people in the region.

For a better grasp of this discourse, it is imperative to shed light on the meaning of the fundamental concepts of this paper. These are: 'social exclusion', 'social inequality', 'social instability'.

The alternative views, presented by different authors on this subject raise many questions, but can-

not be dismissed lightly because they are all based on a detailed analysis of the prevailing situations in that region of the country. Unfortunately, they have all proffered solutions that lack the required vigor, considering the scale of the problems. Paradoxically, it would also appear that the distinction between separate forms of social institutions in the southern and northern parts of the country has been responsible for a certain reversal of the progression contrast between the prosperity of the former and the deepening poverty of the latter. There is a need for interdisciplinary analysis.

Results and discussions

All of this comes with two main lessons from the intense and exciting time expended studying it. The first was a great astonishment that permanently changed the way social reproduction is perceived, and does so permanently and quite deeply. It includes the overwhelming damages that are often done through ill-advised and disreputable political choices by those who exercise the power of government. Any group of human beings can, and very probably will, learn to misperceive and misvalue a way of life to which they have grown accustomed and which happens to offer them many agreeable privileges.

Up until the mid-1960s, Nigeria was still remarkably happy and quite a prosperous society by the standards of Sub-Saharan Africa. But it was severely damaged already by its leaders' ineptness, lack of visions and profligacy; and in the six years after gaining independence, everyday life for the immense majority of the huge population was devastated by the predatory cynicism of second and altogether more devastating military regimes leading to the outbreak of the Biafra War. It was instructive to see how vulnerable the life chances of a whole population can be to the handling of its trade flows with the world economy, and much easier to take in and comprehend these in the case of a large and diverse society but with a simpler and more exposed economy like Nigeria.

Since the mid-1960s Nigeria's political and economic fate has fluctuated considerably, both under protracted civilian rule and in the intervals of military governments acquired through ethnic power struggle and neglect of the rule of law. But by the start-1970s the country was already so deeply wounded by the civil war, both as an economy and society or assemblage of societies, that full recovery or dynamic economic development were clearly beyond it. By February 1976, you could say, Nigeria had a brilliant future firmly behind it. Because it continued to suffer a series of severe damages from profligacy, flamboyant but deeply flawed subsequent leaders. No one can calculate the economic loss of having uninspiring leaders.

Another grim lesson learnt from these years, accordingly, was the discovery of limited capacity of representative democracy either to guarantee its own survival in many settings or to reverse structural economic disadvantage or historically cumulative political damage. These were not the lessons in the comparative advantage of any competing brand of openly autocratic rule anywhere found. They were lessons that certainly showed in a most unwelcome manner, why terminating colonial rule fell so far short of establishing effective political autonomy. I learnt the last lesson too, equally clearly if far slower, from a briefer passage of consecutive study of the history of twentieth-century revolutions, and about what revolutions are, why they occur, why they have the consequences which they have, and what they mean. As sources of instruction, the relatively peaceful and consensual decolonization of Nigeria with its sad aftermath, and the great revolutionary bloodbaths of the twentieth century – in Russia, China, Chile, Mexico, Vietnam, Algeria, or Iran – were in many ways complementary (Dunn, 2006). I found it profoundly disconcerting to be forced to realize how comprehensively the lives of almost everyone in the society can be at the mercy of the competence and scruple of their somewhat adventitious rulers.

The most important achievement of this paper is that by making critical appraisals of the systems and cultures prevalent in the north, it has been possible to detect the relationships between agents and structures, the system of social exclusions, the secret agenda being used by the hegemony to keep citizens in the dark and thus deny them the skillset necessary for a normal living. How the awareness of this deprivation is gradually leading to resistance from the youths. Whereas, in the prevailing situations, the most potent levers needed to lift up the society to a higher standard of living are incomes of the population (groups, households and individuals) and their social welfare, their access to material goods and services, living conditions, and recreation. Lifting the population out of poverty is integral to social progress of any given society, and is considered a continuous process, pursuant to legislations and government policies. Thus, social progress is conventionally considered a-two stage task. In the first stage, the task is to lift up the bottom-rung population in absolute poverty (involuntary poverty) to the level of relative poverty, or a befitting standard of

living, while the task in the second stage involves elimination of absolute poverty at all fronts. Unfortunately, steps in these directions are perceived as threats and are systematically precluded in northern Nigeria (Dobrenkov et al. 2010).

Reversion to the old ways of life leading to the eminence of the Weberian traditional authority has taken the form of serfdom and feudalism underscored by absolute poverty and hopelessness particularly in the northern parts of Nigeria today. As stated by ex-president Goodluck Jonathan in 'My Transition Hours: 'A situation where 52.4% of males in the northeastern region of Nigeria have no formal Western education. The figure is even worse when you take into account the states mostly affected by the insurgency. 83.3% of the male population in Yobe state has no formal Western education. In Borno state, it is 63.6%. Bearing this in mind is it a coincidence that the Boko Haram insurgency is strongest in these two states? – (Goodluck, 2015).

In the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Index Nigeria Country Briefing (OPHI, 2017) the poverty map of Nigeria's states runs as follows:

Table 2 – Oxford Poverty and Human Development Index Nigeria Country Briefing

Zamfara	Jigawa-	Bauchi	Sokoto-	Kebbi	Katsina	Gombe	Taraba	*Bayelsa	*Osun
92%	88%	87%	87%	86%	82.2%	77%	78%	29%	11%

* states in the south.

Arguably, there are development disparities throughout Nigeria as can be seen in the last two southern states. Poverty in Nigeria according to Elombah (2011) increased from 27% in 1980 to 66% in 1996, in 1999 it increased to 70%, by 2011 it was estimated that more than 85% of Nigerians live in poverty. Additionally, a research carried out by an NGO called NAPED showed figures on the incidence of poverty in the six geopolitical zones in the country including:

Table 3 – Incidence of poverty in the Nigeria six geopolitical zones. (NAPED, 2013)

North-East	North-West	North-Central	South-South	South-West	South-East
78%	74%	70%	30%	28%	23%

the percentage of people who are poor and live on less than five dollars a day. It can be vividly seen from the above table that, the northern part of the country has the largest percentage of poverty rate, this has long become a source of concern and fierce debates in the country.

Table 4 – Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria. National Bureau of Statistics Report (NBS, 2020)

State	Poverty headcount rate	Poverty gap index	Squared poverty gap index (Severity)
NIGERIA	40.09	12.85	5.63
Urban	18.04	4.47	1.68
Rural	52.10	17.42	7.78
Abia	30.67	7.15	2.59
Adamawa**	75.41	27.64	13.21
Akwa Ibom	26.82	7.25	2.74
Anambra	14.78	3.24	1.06

State	Poverty headcount rate	Poverty gap index	Squared poverty gap index (Severity)
Bauchi**	61.53	20.50	9.07
Bayelsa	22.61	5.25	1.89
Benue	32.90	8.43	3.05
Borno			
Cross River	36.29	9.66	3.60
Delta	6.02	0.94	0.21
Ebonyi**	79.76	34.09	17.05
Edo	11.99	2.90	1.01
Ekiti	28.04	6.16	2.00
Enugu	58.13	16.00	6.34
Gombe**	62.31	20.03	8.97
Imo	28.86	6.89	2.35
Jigawa**	87.02	38.73	20.53
Kaduna**	43.48	15.51	6.74
Kano**	55.08	15.24	5.68
Katsina**	56.42	16.18	6.50
Kebbi**	50.17	15.14	6.19
Kogi	28.51	6.19	2.01
Kwara	20.35	4.45	1.50
Lagos	4.50	0.67	0.18
Nasarawa**	57.30	16.87	6.62
Niger**	66.11	21.68	9.12
Ogun	9.32	1.63	0.44
Ondo	12.52	2.28	0.58
Osun	8.52	1.43	0.44
Oyo	9.83	1.85	0.52
Plateau**	55.05	17.80	7.61
Rivers	23.91	5.46	1.73
Sokoto**	87.73	38.82	20.34
Taraba**	87.72	42.38	24.44
Yobe**	72.34	26.48	12.84
Zamfara**	73.98	24.95	10.41
FCT	38.66	9.77	3.80

* The estimates exclude Borno State. **northern states

From the table above, the disparity between north and south states is startling, makes one wonder what form of self-rule makes this possible. The survey could not cover Borno state for lack of security. Borno state is the seat of the dreadful Boko Haram insurgents. Since Yobe is the most adjacent to Borno state, it is safe to assume that poverty level in the state could be as high as 92%. Yobe and Borno states are also the states where Boko Haram is forcefully campaigning against Western Education. Meanwhile the ruling elite and the Muslim clerics all studied at various Christian Missionary schools established during the colonial era, they attended universities based on Western education system,

speak English and work in the public offices, yet they brazenly support movements against education for all, thereby perpetrating institutional deprivation, sowing the seeds of absolute poverty.

Absolute poverty, an aftermath of social and economic deprivation, has been described as the state of one who lacks a certain amount of material possessions or money. Absolute poverty or destitution refers to the one who lacks basic human needs, which commonly includes clean and fresh water, nutrition, health care, education, clothing, and shelter. About 1.7 billion people are estimated to live in absolute poverty in the world today. Relative poverty refers to lacking a usual or socially acceptable level of resources or income as compared with others within a society or a country (Wikipedia 2012). The United Nations defines poverty as: 'A denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity'. It means a lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed or clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness, and exclusion of individuals, households, and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation (United Nations, 2011).

The above definition from the United Nations agrees with Kankwenda's words as quoted by Alimeka, which looked at poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon that is both a state and process. "Poverty is … a state of deprivation or denial of the basic choices and opportunities needed to enjoy a decent steward of living; to live a long, healthy constructive life and to participate in the cultural life of the community". (Kankwenda, 2002:64).

The above also bears a striking resemblance to the characterization of the phenomenon of poverty by the World Bank and the Copenhagen Declaration of 1995. According to World Bank: Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life (World Bank, 2012, 3). Absolute poverty means a conditional access to a minimum permissible set of goods and services necessary for the biological needs, or the subsistent living of a person.

As if this was not enough, Talk (2012) estimated as many as 10million child beggars in northern Nigeria with other 15-20 million unschooled and unemployable adult beggars. In northern Nigeria, modern-day slavery is a way of life for millions of people. The sight of middle-aged and older people seen reclining tiredly on mats spread in streets corner and are beggars with no discrimination to gender is ubiquitous everywhere in northern Nigeria. A 2013 survey indicated that the population of waifs and strays in the streets of northern cities stood at a staggering 12.4 million. The Quranic education – almajiri system, predominantly found in the north of Nigeria – has produced child beggars in multitude. This does not include adult beggars throughout the northern states. The Almajiri are children generally denied of parental care and they form the majority of the beggar population (Onoyase, 2013).

In this predicament of mass pauperization, it is difficult to estimate how many people are still being held under slavery in the elite homes across the northern region. One such revelation, asserted by the Emir of Kano – Sanusi Lamido – in an interview with the Financial Times Correspondent in March of 2018 is indisputable:

FTC: "It looks empty (the palace) who else lives here?"

SL: "You would be surprised. You've got some princesses, grandfather's sisters, my cousins, my father's sisters, my nieces. Then we've got the wives and the concubines of previous emirs who chose to stay here. And you've got the help and their families. Historically, you had slaves in the palace, and they're now basically part of the families.

So they're there. They literally call themselves the slaves of kings. They use that word, but you don't buy or sell or own them".

FTC: "Isn't this all a bit …medieval?"

SL: "It's important for us to retain our history, to retain your roots…" (FT, 2018).

As J.S. Mills puts it, 'a state which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes, will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished' (Mills, 1859). It is too horrendous that many African leaders relish in keeping slaves for slavery work in their households. Unfortunately for the youths in the north of Nigeria, the traditional hegemony seemed to have successfully meshed Islam with traditional African feudalism, using the former to justify the latter to their unsuspecting subjects. Any social order so crafted as to suppress a great part of its men, with the sole aim of alienating them from their constitutional rights will soon realize that with disaffected men no significant progress

is achievable. This is especially true for the north of the country today. Sociologists and anthropologists believe that people who have traditional views on life also tend to be more inclined to resist changes, even when the benefits of such changes are too obvious. For the north of Nigeria, any changes in the status quo – particularly those not originated from the traditional leaders – are perceived as deviance and disobedience to the authority, and potential threats to life. Unsurprisingly, elsewhere reversion to the traditional ways of life and preferences for the one-man hegemony has resulted in nothing but poverty and misery for most Africans.

Thus, leaders of the region feel complacent and secure in their domain and so are averse to pursuing creative and constructive agenda leading to progressive changes however the backward their region is. Leaders of northern Nigeria have tacitly pursued programmes that make western secular education a privilege for the few, not least, engineering and technology have been systematically neglected for a very long time, public schools are poorly funded and derelict, while teachers are raptly allowed to waste away. Not surprisingly, the youths in the north have no confidence in the leadership and generally, there is no trust among the mass of the population.

In Nigeria, at the heart of the insurgencies that make the society seems no longer ease as things continue to fall apart is a frontier space populated by a generation of young men (of wildly different cultural identities and political outlooks) expelled from, and deeply suspicious of, institutions of authority that they perceive to lack credibility, functional adequacy, and legitimacy. They are apparently caught between the crumbling social and political orders of gerontocratic customary rule – by twilight institutions – and the inevitable disorder of failing forms of secular post-colonial state authority. Construed thus, the crisis of youth can therefore be expressed in a multiplicity of forms: a crisis of identity, of rights, of institutional deprivation, of social exclusion, of masculinity, of the spirit, of employment and so on. (Watts, 2017).

A view for future research

Although it is remarkable that the country has resisted the strong waves of social dissent and threats of secession for decades, further research needs to be done into how the country has continued to weather the storm of potential disintegration. What then can be done to avert the existential predicament that is taking the form of an imminent total disintegration of the country? This profound problem will require no less profound solution. Two such solutions are in question: one is social and the other is economical. There is an urgent need to dismantle the system of institutional deprivation that the traditional hegemony built, that politicians maintain and benefit from. It is against this backdrop of precarious everyday life that the author proposes the need for a far-reaching economic reform that would give impetus to social reforms, benefit everyone from the very richest to the poorest; a reform that is capable of ending poverty at all fronts and give the impetus for sustainable economic development. This income based economic proposal would improve all citizens' lives materially, and the poorer one is now the greater one's relative benefit would be. In the current circumstances, the country needs a revolutionary yet non-radical economic reform achievable via a new fiscal reform: Central Bank Sovereignty (CBS) (Adeleke, 2019) a conceptual and not mathematical; a monetary system whereby the right to create money is vested in the Central Bank that will provide money for the government, businesses, and individuals, hence Central Bank Sovereign Currency.

While the author believes unequivocally that the system would be capable of ending poverty without using debts to fund government spending, nonetheless, the system calls for further research into the mechanism and adaptation. In the system under question, government would receive as much money as it ever needed, money would be sufficient but not excessive. This would also mean an end to that crude system of taxation (all taxes, personal or business: (income, property, sales, payroll, etc.) and welfare programmes, more importantly, we would achieve 100 percent employment, a stable sustainable economic growth. Under this proposed system supply of money and our economic output would be determined by our demography only. Thus, it would be possible to achieve a stable and sustainable economic growth with minimum impact on the environment, as our economic output would be determined by our demography only. We would be able to ameliorate the environment and prevent further degradation. All of these would be achieved, without redistributing anything, and without any further regulations.

Conclusion

Between agents and structures in the north of Nigeria, there are conceptual conflicts of interest, while the former is being constrained, the latter is unruffled and indifferent towards the plight of the

society and with impunity. This volume has discussed the causes and effects of social exclusion and inequality being perpetrated by means of keeping generations of youths in the north of Nigeria in the dark; it further reveals the set of institutions and structures of undisclosed agenda through which social stratification and inequality are perpetrated. In this context, it is horrendous that many African leaders relish in keeping people as slaves for slavery work in their households, or denying millions of youths the basic constitutional rights of access to western education that should provide them with the right skill set to make them employable. Unfortunately for the youths in the north of Nigeria, the traditional hegemony seemed to have successfully blended Islam with traditional African feudalism, to keep their unsuspecting, gullible subjects in the dark. Any social order so crafted as to suppress a great part of its men, with the sole aim of alienating them from their constitutional rights will soon realize that with disaffected men no significant progress is achievable. This is especially true for the north of the country today.

It is just natural that people who have traditional views on life also tend to be more averse to changes, even when the benefits of such changes are too obvious. For the north of Nigeria, any changes in the status quo – particularly those not originated from the traditional leaders – are perceived as deviance and disobedience to the authority, and potential threats to life. Thus, leaders of the region feel complacent and secure in their domain and so are averse to pursuing creative and constructive agenda that would lead to progressive changes however the backward their region is. Leaders of northern Nigeria have tacitly pursued programs that make western secular education a privilege for the few, not least, engineering and technology have been systematically neglected for a very long time, public schools are poorly funded and derelict, while teachers are raptly allowed to waste away. Unsurprisingly, elsewhere reversion to the traditional old ways of life and preferences for the one-man hegemony has resulted in nothing but poverty and misery for most Africans.

The findings in this volume should have policy implications for the leaders of the northern Nigeria, as the way of life the hegemony ultimately succeeded in establishing is an facing an unprecedented challenge. Today, we are moving already toward the experience of an acute event, we are experiencing, with growing doubt and fear, the results of accumulating stresses.

At bottom, the problem is that the foundation of that region, the society, the inequity way of life is coming apart. If policy makers fail to solve that problem, collapse is inevitable, the whole country appears to be in very real danger of collapsing. Institutionalized stratification, social exclusion, absolute poverty and inequity have long reached an inflection point for the whole of the north, to the extent that it has become imperative to dismantle the system of traditional hegemony that politicians maintain and benefit from. We are at a point at which the disruptive social media and the internet both have the capacity to make social inequality so intolerable as to garner supports for radical movements to change it.

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