

Political Obligation Theory: The Practicality in Nigerianhistorical Perspective

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ABSTRACT: The theory of political obligation is working differently in Nigeria. Governments in Nigeria since independence do not have the good life of Nigerian citizens in view. This paper examines the practicality of political obligation theory in relation to Nigeriannation. It aimsto do a presentationof the reasons why Nigerian citizens obey the government in Nigeria since these years ago. Nigerian citizens obey the state even when they stand to gain nothing by doing so. Nigerian citizens are coerced to obey the state for fear of punishment which disobedience to law involves. The paper observed that presence of incessant ethnic cleansing, insurgency, militancy, kidnapping, arm robbery, sacking of villages through armed attacks, terrorism, extra judicial killings by the police, assassinations and embezzlementof public fund are signs of loss of legitimacy. Individuals, associations, ethnic militia groups, including the street boys and girls dare the government and indirectlyshow justification to withdraw obedience through the unlawful actions. Most individual Nigerian citizens submit to authority of governance not on condition that it governed wisely and justly, but for reasons of patrimonialism, machine politics, political corruption and fear of fierce punishment by bad political leadership. The paper concludes that with available characteristics of underdevelopment Nigerian government breaks conditions of covenant for governance and so had lost its right to authority though not expressed openly. That ifpolitical leaders in Nigeria avoid selfish interests and rule for the common good the citizens will obey the state willingly.

Date of Submission: 12-03-2020

Date of Acceptance: 27-03-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

According to J. J. Rousseau (1712-1778), the state came into being as a result of an agreement or contract by which the individual citizens agreed to submit to its authority on condition that it governed wisely and justly, with the good life of its citizens in view. His position was the conclusion that since government authority was based on an agreement, a government which broke the conditions of the covenant had lost its right to authority, and so its citizens were justified to overthrow it. Thepolitical obligation theorists posit that men obey the state because they stand to gain by doing so. Some say also that fear of punishment by the state discourages disobedience to law and authority.

Close observation on the functions of government shows that government of states does not only maintain peace and order, it also promotes the economic, political and social development of the state. It is agreed that man did not only depend on group relationship but that the good life of man can be attained only through the state (Appadorai, 2004).Government in democratic societies performs defined responsibilities such as the duty of government to makes laws. In Nigeria under the 1999 constitution, it is the National Assembly and the State Houses of Assembly that are empowered to enact laws at the federal and state levels. The government is also responsible for the maintenance of law and order through the police and other law enforcement and security agencies.The government through its ministries, public enterprises and other agencies provides social and welfare services and amenities that are beneficial to the citizens (Constitution, 2003). In order to protect the ‘common man’ in the society, the government is solely responsible for the administration of justice. This implies impartial application of the laws which govern the citizenry without fear or favour through the regular courts. Such courts in Nigeria include the customary courts, magistrate courts, Federal and State High Courts, Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court(Olaniyan, 1978).

The government should help to defend the citizens against external aggression. This is done by the armed and other paramilitary organizations, such as the Army, Navy and Air force. It is the duty of the government to conduct friendly and external relations with other countries on behalf of the citizens. In Nigeria, several government departments are in-charge of this vital function. These include the Presidency, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Finance and other security agencies. The government also should help to protect the lives and property of the citizens through the law enforcement and security agencies. It is the responsibility

of the government and its agencies to ensure that majority of the citizens are gainfully employed. That is why the government establishes public enterprises and other industries to provide jobs for the citizens. Government also engages in business activities in order to provide those goods and services that would enhance the welfare of the citizens.

The theory of political obligation raises the question, "Why do men obey the Government?" The response that comes to mind easily is that men obey the state because they stand to gain by doing so. The citizens obey the state because they hope to be provided with those conditions of social life which they deserve. So, when it becomes evident that the state is not living up to expectations, the citizens can withdraw their obedience. However, the right to resist the state may be limited by certain conditions. First, the individual must not resist the government if the state is in the process of implementing its function. Second, the individual must be sure that the change he desired is achievable. Third, citizens must adopt constitutional methods of agitation before resorting to resistance. Laski (2008) emphasized that the state is obeyed due to complex facts about human nature. This nature he explains is a mixture of impulse, reason and the satisfaction of man's primary wants such as food, drink, sex, clothing and shelter that involve the necessity of a government. It is observed that there is need for a customary standard by which the government agrees to differentiate right from wrong. The government therefore, is obeyed because some see it as a moral duty to obey. Some also obey the state, because of fear of punishment by the government. This is true taking into cognizance that the government as an agency of the state is vested with coercive power in order to compel obedience to its laws for the preservation of order and for the common good of the community. In carrying out its functions, government must find a balance between its own authority and the individual liberty of the citizens.

FACTORS INFLUENCING POLITICAL OBLIGATION THEORY IN NIGERIA

There is intractable, incessant insurgency, arm robbery, incarceration of political prisoners, ethnic cleansing, militancy, kidnapping, sacking of villages through armed attacks, terrorism, extra judicial killings by the police, assassinations and embezzlement in Nigeria. This is why individuals, associations including the street boys and girls dare the government and take the laws into their hands. The Nigerian state therefore resorts to the use of coercive power to forcefully draw obedience and not for the good of all in the country. The leaders in Nigeria use coercive power also to compel obedience for satisfaction of their selfish interests. There are reasons which accounts for why groups, individuals and associations resist obedience to authority of government. These reasons include:

1. Inept and Corrupt Leadership

The citizens of the state may express the flagrant sluggishness to obey the authority of the state if the leadership of the state is inept and corrupt. The 2019 corruption index report on Nigeria by Transparency International (TI) is a support of Peoples Democratic Party's PDP stand that corruption has worsened under President Muhammadu Buhari and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). This according to the opposition party PDP observation is a national embarrassment especially under an administration of the same Buhari leader who wears the medal as African Union (AU), Anti-Corruption Champion and whose government boasts of zero tolerance for corruption in Nigeria. Kola Ologbondiyan said if Nigeria in 2020 ranks as fourth most corrupt country in West Africa and one of the leading most corrupt countries in the world, then President Buhari has shown maladministration and has manhandled the Nigerian economy since he assumed power in 2015. He observed that the TI report, which shows Nigeria dropping to 26 from the disapproving 27 points which Nigeria maintained since 2017, has further exposed the Buhari administration and the APC ruling party as a team of corrupt leaders.

According to Nwankwo (1999), the attitudinal condition and habit of thievery and looting is yet to disappear or is not exiting from the Nigerian national life. This manifested glaringly in the National Assembly in 2002-2003, under President Obasanjo against the Freedom of information Bill which never see the light of the day (Constitution, 2003). It was shown that all efforts to shield corrupt officers of government were pursued with all vigor under Obasanjo's watch as head of state. The exposed N2.8 billion scandal in 1976 without ease put excess pressure on the regime and this made Brigadier Obasanjo to quickly promulgate Decree No. 11 of 1976 (Public Officer's Protection against False Accusation). This approach provided public officers with immunity to swindle the economy of the nation without let. General Mohammed Buhari modified this same decree to be Decree No. 4 of 1984 when he became Military Head of State. Nwankwo observed that the Shehu Shagari regime which inherited \$2.3 billion in external reserves with the \$2.8 billion scandal oil money could only be swiftly swept under the carpet because of the deep interests and the caliber of people involved in the scandal (Nwankwo, 1999). The thievery continued unchecked because of deeds by government officials including officers of Bank of credit and commerce international (BCCI) who elaborately helped to cripple the economy of Nigeria (Financial statistics, 1984/85). The political fraud machine of the ruling national party of Nigeria (NPN) in 1983 under the headship of Chief M.N Ugochukwu was notorious in the raking of the state

treasury. However the Awoniyi Judicial commission of inquiry into contract awards set up in Niger State confirmed the heightened and intensified looting in Nigeria (Nwankwo, 1999).

The financial mismanagement traced historically, to increase Nigeria's debt burden via corruption started with the prodigality of General Gowon which stood at \$1.6 billion. During Obasanjo Military interregnum in 1978, national debt increased to \$3.3 billion and in 1979 at the time of power transfer to the civilians, the debt jumped to \$6.8 billion. The Buhari style of rulership seen by the masses to have eased off the civilians psychologically did not console Nigerians in any form different from the looting pattern of the previous regimes. The Buhari regime in the attempt to instill patriotism and nationalism was dictatorial and toyed with governance while open looting of the treasury continued. The anti-corruption posture of Generals Buhari and Idiagbon with the conduct of some state officials brought no transformation even as the then Minister of Petroleum, Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji lost his personal \$500,000 pounds enroute to Vienna, Austria for an OPEC Summit in Switzerland under very strange circumstances (Nwankwo: 1999, p. 52).

According to Ukaego, Babangida's regime did not only democratize corruption but also refined it. This refinement extended to the point where every beneficiary worked with eagerness to frustrate efforts at removing Babangida from office and also frustrated a genuine democratic transition to civil rule in June 12, 1993 (Eleonu, 2003). The democratization and re-engineering of corruption by Nigerian political leaders produced mind-boggling contradictions in the Nigerian political system. Since the N2.8 billion was missing from the treasury of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation NNPC none has been held accountable till date. Obviously this makes Nigerian leadership a liability to the people and economy of Nigeria. Babangida during his rule created emergency millionaires and money bags who perfected the trickery of financial fraud, drug trafficking and money laundry which collectively put the economy on its knees (Ukaego, 1994). Noted is the fact that the Nigerian economy has remained in crisis since 1960 due to the failure of the country's political leadership to mobilize the resources of the nation. Proper mobilization should have seriously reduced the adverse influences of glaring shortcomings of poverty, hardship which are hindering the national economy and crating doubt to trust the government..

Nigerian political leaders are products of the colonial political system that birthed political parties whose campaigns and programmes lacked vision, intelligence, and commitment to development and were patently insensitive to the populace. The parties themselves were infested, even at the executive levels with criminal elements and deviants constituting the worst possible kind of regrettable personalities (Okongwu, 1986 p.444). Accordingly Mazrui (1986) observed that the Nigerian condition represents the type of Africa's chain of paradoxes ruled by crazy characters which was produced by the ruined political elevated thieves. It becomes pertinent therefore as Nwankwo put it that the survival of the country's economy is dependent on the quality of leadership as it has become a matter of urgency to put in place measures that would make it impossible for dictatorship and corruption to thrive in Nigeria under whatever guise (Nwankwo, 1999 p. 271). The reality is that lack of quality leadership has traumatized the Nigerian nation which in turn has impacted negatively on all sectors of national life. Accountability and transparency in all facets of national life not only translates to vibrant and practicable state policies but it also goes a great extent to assist in re-discovering national strength and focus with the citizens being carried along. But the question is can Nigeria rediscover itself through quality leadership when the followers are pauperized and alienated?

2. Political Corruption and Machine Politics

Political corruption is unsanctioned, unscheduled, illegal acquisition and use of public property by public officials for their own private selfish interest. When the end that is served in a service is immediate, there is corruption in an extreme sense of it. Political corruption is different from non-political corruption such as embezzlement. Political corruption involves two people, one of them an official and there is some material benefit to at least one or the two of them. Non political corruption involves only one person. There is usually an abstract reward as a psychological satisfaction, support, electoral fraud for acquiring political position and power. In Nigeria we are talking about the experience of pervasion of political processes for material gains. There is bribery and rapt nepotism in Nigeria which also involve pervasion of procedures and legal processes. Levine had two analytical distinctions which are the core process and the extended process of corruption. In the core process the individual office holder converts his position into political good. His political resources include his position and role of the office converted into good due to the economic and insecurity circumstances.

The extended process operates in a larger society. This in Nigeria is where there is an angle emerging from fear of minority dominations and particularistic ties which has become the only means of meaningful association and only means of social change. It is noticed that there are much cries for more laws and crave for more satisfaction. This however is observed that the more the laws, the more the opportunities for corruption to thrive. The explanation here is that there is exploitation of the majority by those who are opportune to have positions. Again it is noticed that there is uneven distribution of resources as the poor majority are alienated. In

Nigeria political machines tend to thrive heavily for it is where the majority of the masses are poor and the elite class is few. Because the majority of the masses are poor, poverty which shortens a mind's horizon and maximizes effectiveness of short run material inducement from the masters then prevail.

The political parties and politicians in Nigeria are machines which distribute material goods just to acquire and retain political power. It is seen that corruption is economically wasteful, politically destabilizing and mentally destructive of government capacity in economic development involving capital outflow which also means economic waste. Economic waste leads to investment distortions because investments are channeled into unprofitable areas because of corruption. It also leads to waste of skill because a whole lot of manpower is wasted in investigating corruption. There is aid foregone or lost because corruption discourages foreign investments and aids. This benefit may go through a series of conversion network within the formal political systems and result to serious economic waste.

In Nigerian basic history, it is only Murtala regime that demonstrated the willingness to break away from the irrationality of an obsolete international economic order to survive (Kalu, 1986, p 57). As it were however, the death of Murtala Mohammed returned the country to business as usual. His successor, Olusegun Obasanjo was alleged to have been engrossed in shady deals as exposed by Sidi Alli in Murtala Mohammed: A betrayed revolutionary. The author showed that before Murtala's death, he had disagreed with Obasanjo due to the role of Obasanjo in a N45, 216,000 contracts to build the Lagos International Trade Fair Complex. The Auditor-General of Nigeria at the time queried the Federal Ministry of Works over contract (No. 13/1731). The contract was signed in April 1974 between the Federal Government and Energoprojekt Engineering Company of Yugoslavia with appropriate contract procedures. It was exposed three weeks after the death of Murtala that the Obasanjo regime reviewed the contract upwards by N95, 820,000 and again shortly after hereviewed it to N115, 257,893. A show of shame was also displayed in the N2.8 billion missing from the fund of the NNPC and nobody has been held accountable as at 2020. This means that the leadership has become an instrument or machine and liability to the economy of the country ever.

According to Nwankwo, the Nigerian economy died with no possibility of recovery. He said this will possibly remain so because machine politics has been in place helping the dishing out financial and material benefits to their collaborators. He cited General Abubakar who was unable to prosecute President Abacha and President Babangida and their numerous collaborators and military apologists. He stated that corruption underscores the dilemma of a man torn between loyalty to his country and loyalty to a cabal which nurtured him to prominence and power (Nwankwo, 1999, p.211). Prosecution of economic criminals and offenders of the Nigerian state remains the best antidote to corruption and corrupt practices in Nigeria. This it was believed was the overwhelming expectation of the generality of Nigerians after the death of the General Sani Abacha. Instead there were cosmetic attempts to probe the Abacha and Babangida which failed to produce sufficient dividends except some face-saving refunds to the state made by some of the principal collaborators such as Chief Michael Ani, a former finance Minister who refunded (N1.53 billion) and \$3.0 million he stole from the \$2.5 billion Ajaokuta Steel debt buy back scam. The Abacha family refunded initially N65.96 billion while Abacha's Minister of Mines and Power implicated in the \$2.5 billion Ajaokuta Steel Rolling Mill scam promised to refund N5 million. In the crazy mess it was soon opened up that the Abubakar regime shared the recovered loot. The Economist revealed that the stolen money has been distributed to members of the PRC (Provisional Ruling Council) as their final pay off before leaving office (The Economist, 1999). Notorious Nigerians political machines with the active connivance of Johnson Matthew Bank in London siphoned over N6 billion from Nigeria through fictitious imports (Nwankwo, 1999 p 46).

Insensitive Political Leadership

Insensitive political leadership has given cause to question the morality to obeying governments in Nigeria. The discovery of oil and its consequent exportation including the returns it made to the national coffers not only magnified and expanded the appetite for thievery but created a new insensitive kleptocratic class of uniformed men who as vipers have dug deep their fangs into their Nigerian prey (Agara: 1987). Historically some who were presented as Nigerian freedom fighters, regional leaders, and who appeared as Nigerian nationalists were not sensitive after all to the cries and needs of the suffering Nigerians even long before independence. This is why it is said that the "corruption conundrum" in Nigeria did not start with the oil boom in Nigeria in the 1990s and did not also begin with the military. Corruption was noticed into Nigerian public consciousness when in the 1950s the country's first panel of inquiry was set up to investigate the African Continental Bank ACB-Nnamdi-Azikiwe matter. The panel was headed by Justice Stafford Forster Sutton instituted on July 24, 1956. The panel subsequently indicted Dr. Azikiwe in the submitted report of January 16, 1957 to the effect that the former colonial governor-general Dr. Azikiwe found guilty should, transfer all his rights and interests in the African Continental Bank ACB to the Eastern Nigerian Government which will hence own the African Continental Bank (Ukaogo, 2000, p 15).

Insensitive political leadership to the needs of the Nigerian people was also manifest when the gale of corruption in the Western region of Nigeria also held Chief Obafemi Awolowo liable. He was sued in the Court of accountability in 1962 by Ayo Rossini, Chief E. O. Okunowo and Abiodun Akerele on allegation of corruption. The Federal Parliament in Lagos also set up a commission of inquiry to investigate the activities of some statutory corporations in Western Nigeria (Nwankwo, 2000). The three men alleged that three corporations has been used in various ways to divert public money into unauthorized projects. On June 13, 1962 a commission headed by Justice G. Coker was empowered to investigate the allegations and on December 31, 1962, a report showing evidence of reckless and atrocious and criminal mismanagement and diversion of public funds was produced. The panel stated that they were satisfied that Chief Awolowo knows much about the diversion of large sums of money into the coffers of the Action Group (Ukaogo, 2000, p. 49, Nwankwo, 1999, p. 23). It is reflected that in the case of Chief Awolowo as a political machine surrendered his rights as the Western Regional Government acquired all properties owned by National Investment and Property Company (Nwankwo: 1999, p. 23). This cankerworm continued into the Mid-Western region in 1967 when 15 public officers including the Premier, Chief Dennis Osadebe was put on trial and convicted.

Insensitive leadership was expressed in the failure of the political leaders to mobilize Nigerian oil wealth which ought to transform Nigeria into a modern industrialized state. This rather became a curse to the people (Okonta & Douglas 2000). The combination of most signs of backwardness in Nigeria does not merely signpost a Nigerian economy in chains and ruins. It greatly reveals that Nigeria is gripped in a major economic crisis caused by insensitive political leadership resulting in the inability to gain control of her major national revenue earner, the oil which is now serving the interests of consumer nations (Nwankwo, 1982, p2). Failing to gain control of Nigerian oil sector makes the Nigerian political leaders insensitive and the Nigerian state without let has surrendered her economy to the whims of the capricious, exploitative international order by the leaders. Due to insensitive, poor, inept political leadership in Nigeria the nation has been practically under the hegemonic control of the Bretton wood Institutions (Ihonvbere, 1994). The role of these institutions is a consolidation of the chronic underdevelopment of the Nigerian state.

Nigeria today is plagued by indebtedness principally designed by these bodies as their prescriptions for recovery but which merely deepens the crisis of poverty and want and presents Nigeria as a laughing stock in the international arena. The prescriptions have failed woefully to address the contentious issue of Nigeria's indebtedness and have deepened the contradictions, conflicts and crisis in Nigerian society. The insensitivity of Nigerian political leaders shows in their inability to decipher that the IMF prescriptions are inappropriate for Third World economies including Nigeria. The severe suffering imposed on a developing society such as Nigeria by its insensitive political leadership is endured without any real prospect of a favorable economic result and without an adequate foundation of social welfare provision to minimize the hardships experienced by the country (Manley, 1980). The insensitivity of Nigerian political leaders is also shown in their inability to see the very low poor mentality where Nigeria rejected a \$2 billion dollar IMF loan in December 1985 but took a \$4.28 billion dollar World Bank loan in 1986 under a Structural adjustment program which finally completely ruined Nigerian economy (Akinjide, 1986). The policy of divesting from government owned companies and handing over the sensitive Nigerian economy to the ruling class and also to their agents in the Euro-American capitals through privatization program is a sign of insensitivity of Nigerian political leaders. The thievery instinct of the ruling class which is one character of insensitivity of Nigerian leaders has put the collaborators in good stead locally and internationally to defraud Nigeria. In the demands of privatization, globalism has triumphed at heightened cost to the Nigerian economy.

One noted height of insensitivity of Nigerian political leaders to Nigerians was observed between 1999 to 2003 when the Obasanjo regime reviewed the prices of petroleum products upwards for over 4 times. The resultant effect remains that the citizenry has become pauperized without being waged. For instance in the year 2000, Nigeria Labour Congress NLC, the umbrella body of over 29 affiliate labour unions raised alarm on the negative impact of globalization in Nigeria such as the destruction of over 500,000 jobs (Punch Newspaper: March 22, 2000). The Nigeria Labour Congress also cried about the continued rise of the country's external debt of over \$30 billion dollars which further strengthened the IMF and the World Bank including other financial institutions and agencies of the metropole over Nigeria. The economy has suffered harm with the increased army of unemployed youth, peasants, petty traders and artisans who would have joyfully obeyed the ruling authority with legitimacy. Again the Maritime workers in 2001 out of insensitivity of Nigerian political leaders equally raised alarm of the imminent loss of 9,000 jobs out of the existing 12,000 in the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) billed to be privatized by the government- empowered Bureau of Public Enterprises under the headship of E. Rufai now Governor of Kaduna State. The Maritime workers union expected the Nigerian leaders to be sensitive to the needs of Nigerian masses alerted the nation of the imminent loss of N35 billion which the NPA generates annually to the new owners (Vanguard Newspaper, July 17, 2001). In 2003, the government twice in two months increased the pump price of petroleum products and created artificial scarcity of the products and sparking off threats of nationwide strike by the labour unions

3. Patrimonial system

This describes a political domination legitimized not by coercion but by granting of fief and benefice through exchange of goods. The politicians give fiefs, benefices and then receive loyalty from the people thereby creating a Parent-Client relation. Bureaucracy in this case is not based on rational-legal codified rules in ideal bureaucracy. There should be impersonal rules, hierarchy based on superior inferior relations. In this society of patrimonial system there is usually appropriation of office where there exist infringement of government authority and economic rights so treated as public rights. Politics takes the form of intra elite struggle that tend to seek the influence of the ruler. The ruler (Chief Patron) maintains the divide and rule. It also follows that there is a tendency to create personal rulership based on material incentives and rewards rather than based on personal merits and achievement and charisma.

A patrimonial society inhibits productivity created through oriented capitalism. Patrimonial society lacks objectivity, continuity, trustworthiness, rational, predictable, and functioning of legal and administrative agencies. In Nigeria both patrimonialism and capitalism are in conflict because both are practiced together and patron client values are rather emphasized. Patrimonialism in a heterogeneous culture like Nigeria increases a tendency to go into extreme patrimonialism or extreme ethnicity because patrimonialism gains upper hand than legal- rational system. A patrimonial society is usually extremely poor and the clients rest on their patrons for material benefits instead of enjoying the protection of government.

4. Minority Issues

It is accepted that the solution to minority issues in Nigeria would be found in the practice of a federalism that guarantees in concrete terms, the democratic ethos of equality, social justice, and equal access to wealth, the sanctity of life and the enthronement of fundamental human rights. While Nigeria operated on a 3 regional basis till the period of independence, minority groups had clamored for the creation of one region of their own. This reason resulted to the setting up of Sir Henry Willink Commission in 1957. The commission was to look into the fears of the minority particularly those of the Mid- Western, Middle Belt of the Northern region, River Niger Delta of the Eastern region and others. Eventually the Mid-West region was created in August 1963. In his comments, Okoko in the National Concord (1992) categorically stated that, Nigerian federalism has grown so insensitive to the political and socio-economic rights of the minorities so much that all the political calculations therein are based on the need to sustain the tripod hegemony of the three dominating ethnic groups. Nigerian federalism has lost its soul; it is a federalism that appropriates the wealth of the minorities without let.

In a true federation each ethnic group no matter how small, is entitled to the same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large. In a wide range of federal states the component units possess freedom in the acquisition of claims over resources and for putting such resources to particular ends adjudged by themselves as such ends need not be in conflict with the overall goals of the whole state. To restore the true essence of federalism, size and population should not serve as criteria so fundamental in the structure of a federation and to provide for the much unity in diversity in Nigeria, each component unit should be substantially autonomous in matters of resources, claims and control of institutions of governance. It is further contended that the solution to minority issues in Nigeria would be found in the practice of a federalism that guarantees in concrete terms, the democratic ethos of equality, social justice, and equal access to wealth, the sanctity of life and the enthronement of fundamental human rights. To restore the true essence of federalism, size and population should not serve as criteria so fundamental in the structure of a federation. Also to provide for the much unity in diversity in Nigeria, each component unit should be substantially autonomous in matters of resources, claims and control of institutions of governance. This will make the minorities feel encouraged to remain as one indivisible society rather than thinking and resorting to militancy and insurgency because of government neglect.

Framework Of Analysis

The theoretical framework of analysis adopted in this paper is historiography. This will help to understand the economy and the poverty of Nigeria related to political leadership and authority. The importance of history in national development has in most cases been de-emphasized and given little or no prominence in policy formulation. This neglect has contributed immensely to the backwardness and the primitive and primordial acquisitive instinct without remorse that has wrecked the Nigerian state. Historical causation together with the sequence amplifies not only the understanding of society but also boosts the chances of positive national development. This is so necessary because there is the need to identify the path through which our predecessors had traveled. It is also pertinent to ascertain how we inherited and utilized their footprints. It is necessary to re-examine where inherited road leads to. If we discover that it leads to nowhere or that it is likely to lead to disaster, then we must follow another (Kalu, 1986). But from all indications, the Nigerian leaders from 1960 have behaved to show that there is a quarrel between the past and the present. There is the painful absence of historical consciousness. They have gladly and gleefully forgotten that human society gains part of its essence

from historical phenomena through which it has passed. In more specific terms, Nigerians must analyze their history and collate it with the present if they are to chart a judicious path for the future (Nwankwo: 1986). We try to divorce the future from the present and the past. We seek to strike out new and untried paths, forgetting or perhaps deliberately disregarding the existing limiting factors that work to negate our efforts. There is nothing more important for a leader to possess than the knowledge of his peoples past and an understanding of their reasoning patterns (Nwankwo: 1986). Nigerians are in dire need of “synoptic vision” (Kalu, 1986) anchored on historical consciousness with which to assess the performance of the country’s for over 58 years of independence. This is necessary because the problems of our time cannot be stated adequately without consistent practice of the view that history is the shank of social study and recognition of the need to develop further a psychology of man that is sociologically grounded and historically relevant (Mills, 1959). Sociological grounding and historical relevance is an understanding and appreciation that although men make their own history, they do not make it independently as the circumstances of such making is not chosen by them but given and transmitted from the past (Marx,1975).As a consequence of the above, Nigerian historiography is dominated by “the biographers of personalities, the documenters of events and by compilers of alleged historical facts which they refrain from interpreting (Kalu, 1986).

Historiography is useful to explain the economy and the poverty of Nigeria. The importance of history in national development has in most cases been de-emphasized and given little or no prominence in policy formulation. But this has contributed immensely to the backwardness and the primitive and primordial acquisitive instinct without remorse that has wrecked the Nigerian state. Historical causation including the sequence amplifies not only the understanding of society but also boosts the chances of positive national development. Human society gains part of its essence from historical phenomena through which it has passed. In more specific terms, Nigerians must analyze their history and collate it with the present if they are to chart a judicious path for the future (Nwankwo, 1986).

Participatory Development Approach

Another theory used for analysis is the participatory development approach. In the Communist Manifesto 1848, Marxism and Communism maintain that there should be association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. Participatory development is a process through which groups and communities determine through inclusive dialogue and consensus their development priorities and the design of solutions that address their priority needs and where the responsibility of implementation of a solution lies with the participants. This is why it is assumed that the prime cause of all disorders that visit society, are linked to issues of the oppression of the citizens, and the decay of nations, and lies in the single and hierarchical centralization of authority (Proudhon, 1851). It is viewed that the most important step for participatory approaches to development in Africa is in the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (Arusha, 1990). The politics of participation is in order to understand participation approaches to development especially as it is necessary to examine the role that participation plays at all levels and the functions involved.

Rahnema (1996) says participation has four functions: 1. Cognitive: Participation is aimed at finding new knowledge systems and creating a new role and image for development. Development, as conceived and designed by expatriate professionals using western scientific knowledge systems, is often inappropriate. Local Knowledge Systems (LKS) have often been ignored or rejected. 2. The objective of political participation is to legitimize development as an avenue for helping the poor, empowering the powerless and thereby leading to equitable societies. 3. Instrumental Quite simply participation is meant to ‘make things (projects) work’ by providing new avenues and techniques. 4. Social: Participation has given development discourse a new legitimacy and lease of life. In popular terms it has given encouragement to a flagging industry. Participation was the approach to bring development to the many and fulfill basic needs. Participation, as an approach to development, began in the first instance, as an approach intended to subvert development orthodoxy (Richards, 1995). It is not as modern a concept as most people think, having first appeared in the development literature in the 1950s. This, and later developments of participation, were the logical direction to take with respect to so many failed, wasted and damaging top-down projects and programmes. Participation became known as being synonymous with democracy, equity and popular success.

More recently, participation has been formalized into a development approach, which, for the purpose of academic discussions is called Participatory Appraisal (PA). Popular participation in essence, is the empowerment of the people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structures and in designing policies and programmes that serve the interests of all as well as to effectively contribute to the development process and share equitably in its benefits to the people. Participation has the rapid evolution and uptake has created many success stories and participatory models of good practice, though there has also been a host of problems and contradictions even in Nigeria. PA was first named in a Rapid Rural Appraisal workshop, held in the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex in 1980, where the concept and name were introduced to address the problems

associated with RRA (Chambers, 1994). Participation lends a completely different perspective to the traditional development approach. It is a challenge and an affront to traditional, top down bureaucracy-led, development.

Although there has been widespread adoption of participation in many aspects of development by a wide range of actors (dominated by NGOs and academic institutions), it is fundamentally a threat to many existing organizations. The concept of empowerment of individuals and communities in order that they can prioritise, implement and solve their own problems, in addition to challenging to wider political causes of such problems is unconceivable. Then the question should be asked, why has there been an unprecedented call for participatory practice by government and development institutions.

II. CONCLUSION

This paper examined the political obligation theory which enables the understanding of the reasons why Nigerian people continued to obey the governments over the years in the face of government and political leadership neglect. The Nigerian economy according to Nwankwo (1999) died without hope of recovery possibly because of inept political leadership where past Nigerian leaders are unable to prosecute their predecessors and their numerous collaborators. Political corruption places a man in the dilemma torn between loyalty to his country and loyalty to a cabal which nurtured him to prominence and power. It is shown that corruption had been very instrumental to the woeful Nigerian economic condition. Political development occurs where there is economic development, national integration and governmental capacity or legitimacy. These characteristics of certainties are not tenable in Nigerian patrimonial society and the end result is that investors, private and foreign are scared thereby shutting the door of overall development.

Beginning from the Gowon regime, the petro-dollars overwhelmed the Nigerian leadership and provoked an unimaginable lust for wastages and large scale primitive accumulation. Gowon became blind to the gross ineptitude, inefficiency and corruption of his government and as the rot deepened and the unbearable decay worsened, General Garba and other progressive minded military officers like General Murtaga Mohammed nurtured a redemptive plan for Nigeria. On emergency relief for drought victims in different African countries, Nigeria gave over \$100 million with staggering evidences of corruption at disbursement. Prosecution of economic criminals and offenders of state which is believed to remain the best antidote to corruption and corrupt practices needed to be addressed but was not. A show of shame was also displayed in the N2.8 billion missing from the coffers of the NNPC and nobody has been held accountable as at today because of corrupt leadership. This explains why after the death of General Sani Abacha on June 8, 1998 with the national economy in disarray given the looting of the treasury which had lasted over the years, the successor, General Abdulsalam Abubakar refused to visit the Nigerian nation's past dominated by greed, graft and corruption but proceeded to exacerbate the economic crisis of Nigeria.

The new regime ought to have first restored confidence on the economy in the process of rebuilding it. It is concluded that this can only be achieved when Nigerians are sensitized through political education so to understand the inter-play of forces on whose back despots ride to power (Nwankwo: 1999). The poverty of the country's historiography has also impacted negatively on the nation's economy and by extension, the citizenry hence culprits against the state are rather worshiped or given state pardon if in detention (Sun, October 2003). The Policy summersaults and ineptitude have led to the loss of the traditional exports hence the items like palm oil and vegetable oils were imported to supplement local production. The decline in the exports of some traditional agricultural commodities in recent years has been a cause of concern. It is expected the political leadership in Nigeria ought to have first restored confidence on the people and the economy by giving priority to the good life of the citizens in the process of attempts to rebuild the nation.

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Charles Chidi Eleonu Phd. "Political Obligation Theory: The Practicality in Nigerianhistorical Perspective." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 25(3), 2020, pp. 18-25.