

The Place of History and Culture in the Leadership Style on the Development of Nigeria

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Since the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria by Sir Lord Lugard, a former Colonial Master, in 1914, the country has not remain the same, because of historical/cultural differences of both Protectorates, that tends to affect the unity and leadership style of the country. This is because both sides of the country see themselves as strange bed fellows, as regards governance style and approach to issues of development, in most occasions. Various crisis across time in the country, can also be traced to the historical and cultural differences, amongst others, that exist between both sides of the country. To a large extent, affect the utilization of resources for development in the country by the various leaders that occupy positions of leadership. The main source of data for this study was through the Desk Study (DS) method, coupled with the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Interview of this, this paper critically looked at the effect of history and culture in the leadership style and development of the country.

Keywords: history, culture, leadership and development

Introduction

Nigeria as it is today is made up of pockets of nations that have different orientations, religious beliefs, political arrangements and cultural affiliations as per their historical emergence from different parts of the world. For instance, the Hausa-Fulani that is the dominant ethnic group in the northern part of the country traces their origin and cultural affiliations to the Arabian counties; while the Yoruba, the major ethnic group in the western part of the country traces their origin to somewhere in Israel. Different claims can be associated to the Ibos that are the major ethnic group in the eastern part of the country; and other ethnic groups that have their own history in the country. To a large extent, this tend to affect their different cultural, political and religious affiliations which affect their various leadership styles. For instance, the northern part of country was practicing the centralized system of administration, with the Emir at the helm of affairs as both the spiritual and political leader in the northern region before the coming of the colonial masters. While in the western region of the country, centralized system of administration was also practiced with slight distortion in some part of the region because of the Ijero and Iseyin wars. This arrangement had the Obas, Alafin and Baales at the helm of affairs. But this was not the case in the eastern region of the country where the Ibos were the major ethnic group, where segmentary system of administration was the order of the day. This system of decentralization was carried out through the age-grade arrangement. That is not to say that we don't have some sort of variation in this type of arrangement in that part of the country, where we had the Efik and the Ibibios who practiced

some elements of centralized system of administration in the southern part of that region. More so, the Ibos that were close to the then Midwestern part of the country, like the Ibos around Onitsha etc., tend to practice centralized system of administration, with an Obi at the helm of affairs. This is exactly the nature and structure of the country before Lord Lugard, the then Governor General of the country, decided to amalgamate the Northern and the Southern Regions together in 1914.

Taking all these into consideration, the colonial masters decided to deliberately distort the political arrangement met on ground to enable them achieve their main purpose of coming to Nigeria, which is mainly economic. That is to say, that the British carried out a deliberate act of political distortion which is necessary before the imposition of the British political system. Thus the traditional social political system was either destroyed, or defaced. For those in Britain were not bold enough to own up to that act of political vandalism. This rearrangement is done to enable the British achieve their main purpose of coming to Nigeria, that is, their economic aim.

It should be noted, that in the cause of doing this, certain basic problems which have endured up till now arose from this singular act of imposition, as briefly discussed below:

(1) Problem of political synthesis: This is the process of combination of various political philosophies. Some of which are of best intention but are incompatible with that the British colonial masters met here in Nigeria. For example, the British imported the system of achievement criteria. The traditional political philosophies were grounded on the blood criteria (Relationship). This continue to create conflict between the traditional arrangement and the newly introduced British achievement criteria. This conflict continue to bedevil the Nigeria political system. Nigeria political leaders begin to shift ground whenever it is convenient for them to do so (western/traditional). Thereby combining both system tends to lead to confusion in most situations.

(2) The problem of time-span: British prescribed time-span policy into Nigeria political system. By this any holder of an office is expected to occupy such position for a stipulated time span. Before now the Nigeria political philosophy is by and large based on holding office for life. It doesn't matter the sort of person who takes over. This tends to create confusion, because a culture that is not completely destroyed by foreign culture will create a situation where incessant movement from one to the other depending on the situation. For example, those in office want to remain there while those who are not there are fighting to go there, sometimes using weapons freely to achieve this, this can be seen from the various political tussle for power at different level of governance in Nigeria today.

(3) The problem of corruption: In the traditional political system in Nigeria, it was normal and usual to pay homage in kind and cash to political leaders. It was also normal during different seasons and festivities to present gift to political leaders. But under the British political system which was introduced, it was an offense to give either money or materials to get somebody to perform such functions. Because of the contradiction between these two practices, the British themselves further complicated the problem by accepting that some amount of corruption must be allowed within a political system to grease the administrative machinery of the state. So when it became clear that Emirs/chiefs and other functionaries working according to the dictates of the British colonial masters were taking bribes from their subjects, the British pretended not to be aware as if to say it was not bad or as if it was not happening (Dudley, 1982).

As far as the British were concern, "the colonial enterprise was a temporary affair" in the words of prominent colonial administrator in Nigeria, Major General Lord Lugard (Ezera, 1958). The colonial

enterprise was a dual mandate: It was one in which the colonies were suppose to provide raw materials in support of British industries.

On the other hand, British on their part was suppose to give colonial education which will lead to the country political maturity and eventual independence.

It must be said that, however, unlike the handover of power by the military, the British did not set a specific date for the handover of power to Nigerians. And that was why it was necessary through negotiations, conferences and threats for Nigeria nationalists to demand independence. The British colonial masters were more interested in the first mandate of getting and exporting of raw materials from Nigeria to their industries back home. That is why the type of education provided was the type that will aid their exploitative motive in Nigeria. And that is why the leaders i.e. the *petite bourgeoisies* that took over from them followed the same trend of exploitation in the society, with little changes here and there.

Theoretical Framework

Universally, effective leadership has been acclaimed as critical to attain organizational or a country's goals. However, leadership is not a peculiar attribute of business involvement alone, but traverse even the military, in universities, churches, mosques and other sectors of the society, anywhere you find people working in groups. It therefore connotes that there must be a flag bearer to guide the group.

Although, the concept of leadership has not lend itself for a consensus definition, notable scholars in their bid to underscore the frontline role effect of leadership and what constitutes it, have variously offered working definitions. According to Bedeian (1986), an explanatory view was adopted when he defined leadership as "synonymous with holding an upper level position" (p. 464). Thus a President, Governor or Chief Executive is a leader by virtue of holding a high office. Other scholars use the term leadership to mean the possession of certain personal characteristics which may include alertness, perseverance, maturity and intelligence. To some other scholars, leadership in any form is a function of a category of behavior. Thus, it is a dynamic process in which an individual behaves in a peculiar way, thereby influencing others to follow. Leadership has being widely defined in line with the latter notion. Koontz et al. (1983) defined leadership "the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly toward the achievement of group goals" (p. 660). In the same stroke, Bedeian (1986) wrote, that leadership is the "art of influencing individuals or group activities towards achievement of enterprise objectives" (p. 466). From the two foregoing definition, it is therefore extremely difficult to divorce the process of leadership from anywhere there is group activities designed to achieve any specific goals. These goals may be, developmental or even spiritual. Ezeani (2006) further stated that "the essence of leadership is therefore fellowship. It is the willingness of the people to follow that make a person a leader" (p. 156). Having this in mind, the colonial masters were able to coax the Nigeria people to follow their dictates as much as possible, to enable them achieve their economic aim of coming to Nigeria society.

The British introduced what they described as indirect rule into the political system of Nigeria. To all intends and purposes it was not in any way indirect. The British explanation was that indirect rule is a system of government of colonial tutelage in which the colonial officers ruled through the local traditional chiefs. But in reality the local traditional chiefs did not have an alternative, because they were instructed from above by

British colonial officers, and such instructions were not subject to negotiations. The traditional chiefs therefore were expendable tools in the hands of the British colonial officers. If any of them misbehaves he was deposed or sent on exile. Nana of Itsekiri and Jaja of Opobo, amongst others had taste of this from the hands of the British.

The British put the local chiefs on regular salaries and therefore captured their conscience and liberated them from their traditional constituencies or beliefs. To that extent, they were no longer traditional rulers because the cause of traditions had been weakened by the colonial officers. Traditional, local rulers were not paid by the people as specified by the British, but were given gift, traditional tokens on the bases of how a traditional ruler performs. The system introduced by the British colonial masters made them non-traditional and no longer responsible to the people. Traditional rulers cannot influence the decision of the colonial rulers been passed to them before it has been passed to the people i.e. direct rule became operative in vicinity.

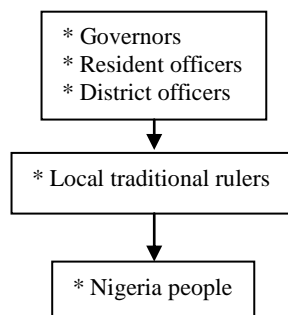


Figure 1. Structure of British governance in Nigeria during the colonial period.

So to a large extent, the British used both force and persuasion to secure the obedience of the Nigeria people and their chiefs or leaders.

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Some European authors tends to describe the system of administrations introduced into Nigeria political system as Anglo-African. Anglo-African extreme implies some major of cooperation between the British colonial rulers and the traditional rulers, but there was no such cooperation, if critically viewed (Yahaya, 1979). It was a rule of force, distortion and confusion. It is not true as the British say that they came to preserve the culture of the people, this is because they don't understand the language of the people, they were not having enough money and human resources to carry out a direct rule system as required and so on. So the argument is weak since there was no mutual understanding between the people.

Even if the indirect rule was succeeded, it negated the philosophy of the "dual mandate". Traditional rulers were not trained to carry out the system, actually the training was directed to the wrong people. The people who were to succeed the British, that is, the Western elite, were kept out of government deliberately. Out of frustration some of them started picking up clerical jobs, while some of them now went for more professional studies, for example, law, surveyors studies etc; so that they can be on their own. People like Herbert Macaulay, a strong nationalist, was jailed for six months so as not to enable him to get into government, because if you are jailed for six months you are not allowed to take up any government post. This can also be seen in the case of Chief Anthony Enaghor, a foremost Nigeria Nationalist, jailed for six months after the delivery of a speech

that is supposed to be delivered by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Dudley, 1982).

The imperialists occupation has triggered off a revolution within the Nigeria societies since the 1960's. In their efforts to reorganize Nigerian agrarian and mining production to supply to needs of industrial Europe, the conquerors found it necessary to train cheap Nigerian labor for new tasks. Within a generation this bore unexpected political fruit. A new class of westernized Nigerians, petit-bourgeois in outlook had been produced, their position was based not on their class origins in traditional Africa, but purely on their possession of western education and skills. Not owing their use to the traditional rulers of Africa, and having quite often been alienated from African traditions by their indoctrination in Western ways, these new men felt no particular loyalty to the country's traditional rulers and their ways. Except for a handful of them who had traditional ruling-class backgrounds and who still retained their loyalty to their origins, this class structure. Cultured in European attitudes and values and also deriving their livelihood from their Western skills, they felt in the old and traditional, and they sought an adequate place for themselves within it. Thereby leading to the protection of their own interest with that of the imperialists to the class in most cases was trained in colonial schools to accept Eurocentric version of history thrill at best ignores but more often condemned pre-conquest Nigeria.

Through these petite-bourgeoisies and the imperialists perpetuated their exploitative moves in the country. It should be noted that the situation when viewed on regional base reveals that the situation was slightly different in the northern region of the country where the Emirs were used as the link between the people and the imperialist, from what operated in the South where other citizens were used (instead of the Obas) as links between the indigenes and the imperialists, especially where they had uncompromising Obas like Jaja of Opobo and Nana of Itsekiri, who were later expelled from their different kingdoms due to conflicts between them and the imperialists. Furthermore, with the abolition of the slave trade, the British developed a gradual change in attitude towards the coastal rulers. Whereas, in the past, they were accustomed to having their power respected by European slave traders, the situation changed with the new traders who ignored their sovereignty. And as a result of this, they, that is the imperialists, formed their own links from sons and daughters of nobody' among the indigene of the coastal areas, with some rulers included only where necessary. This class of citizens who later on acts as agents to the imperialists, through which they carry out their exploitative motives, did not actually see themselves as agents of exploitation. Like Ikime (1977) put it:

While it is true that by siding with the British such groups aided British imperialism, it is important to appreciate the fact that they did not necessarily see themselves as saboteurs or collaborators. As one historian in Tanzania puts it... Such groups individuals were merely seeking to use the British as allies for the promotion of their own ("specific") interest... and that when the chips were down such British interest fundamentally incompatible. (p. 211)

That is without knowing it, the petite bourgeoisie class of Nigeria were successfully used by the imperialists to achieve their exploitative and profit oriented motives that was strongly behind the clandestine operations and deals carried out with the local bourgeoisie.

Closely affiliated to the above, are the multi-purpose opportunities, which made the fall of Nigeria possible as agents to the British during the colonial period. They were often sent to the hinterland to prepare the land or grounds for the British. They served as guards or interpreters to early British missionaries and traders, and they persuaded their people to accept the British rule. This group and the group of frustrated traders emerged as the first set of bourgeoisie in the South, and of course, they passed on this to their off-springs, who later on formed the local bourgeoisie class and to a large extent are still the major links between the capitalists

bourgeoisie and the country till present day. Good examples of this are the Thomas. Williams, Davies and so on, of Lagos and Cross Rivers States especially whom their parents were among the early set of people to come in contact with the imperialists.

All these things, amongst others, actually created the ground for the centre/periphery, and subsequent dependent relationship between the capitalist center nations which are the imperialists nations and the Nigerian economy. Through these local bourgeoisie class and the imperialists were able to distort the economy of the entities and therefore distort the micro-economy of the new entity. And consequently abrogated the independence of the various entities that makes up the country. Of course, the overall result was the central distortion of the economy of the country. The local bourgeoisie which constitute the middle class that took over political activities and power after the colonial rule did not organize their deals with the capitalists countries in a different form from those that they took over power from. They still, to a large extent depend on the capitalist countries for most of their need till date. They have no economic power, and in any case, what they have is in way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it replaced (Fanon, 1966). Nigerian bourgeoisie lack a very important factor that makes up a genuine bourgeoisie class, such as those of the western world that they want to replace; that is the lack of financial and investment capital to carry out their development projects. And this tend to hinder their progress towards forming an authentic bourgeois society with all the economic and industrial consequences which they entail. And in order to enable the local bourgeoisie class to obtain this necessary capital, they engaged themselves in small business corruptive practices arid mal-administrative practices with the co-operation of the leaders of the nation, who to a large extent collaborates with this class of middle men to carry out their notorious, exploitative and atrocious activities on the economy of the nation with collaboration with their counterparts in the capitalist counties. In other words, it is this class of middle men that the imperialists are using as instrument for the reproduction of the colonial pattern of economic life in the present day.

That is on the whole, the nascent nature of the Nigerian bourgeoisie and their dependently nature on the exploiters industrialized societies is a factor in Nigerian under-development. A great proportion of the population of Nigerian suffer presently from such unbeneficial relationship with the western capitalist countries. This is made possible because most Nigerian businessmen are otherwise dependent on the latter for their livelihood. As expected, the exploiters of the industrialized societies capitalize on this to milk the nation of its much needed capital for development. This local bourgeoisie class “were permitted by the colonialists to use the regional governments, which they controlled, to use the regional considerable vested interest in the colonial economy. Through the public they made loans for business ventures to themselves and member of their class, exploited business and contract opportunities and facilities available in the country to their own advantage, acquired considerable landed resources and property, and enjoyed immense privilege and advantages in the distribution of social welfare services such as housing, scholarships, education, health, cultural facilities and so on. Inevitably, they became the greatest local apologists and advocate of the colonial pattern of economic activities. To do otherwise, of course, would have clearly implied an undercut of their prestige and political power, as well as expose their parasitic dependent role in the economy and the total irrelevance of the economy to the needs of the majority of the population and local resources (Nnoli, 1981). Because of this, the local bourgeoisie strive hard to maintain this sort of relationship between them and their international allies, not minding the exploitative nature of the relationship, where a lot of financial and investment capital is being

siphoned out of the country.

This leads to two things: (1) It makes one doubt the sincerity of British as far as the dual mandate is concerned; (2) It provides explanation but not justification by Nigeria political leaders, for the misuse of independence. So when Nigeria became independent in 1960, some of this novices were thrown into office but they misused it. The spillover effect is still noticed in the leadership style of the country's leaders till date.

All these have a lot to do with the leadership style operated by Nigeria leaders in the country across time. The history and culture of the country cannot be ruled out of all these.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration of the fact that the past is a vital component of the present and an inextricable contributor to futuristic projections. The place of history and culture in the leadership style of Nigeria leaders, especially in their role in the utilization of the natural resources for the development of Nigeria society, cannot be over emphasized. Especially since the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914 by General Lord Lugard, the then colonial Governor General of the country, Nigeria. Nigerians, generally are brilliant and hard working under informed and committed leadership, which has been absent since the country was amalgamate by Lord Lugard.

Like Lawrence (2014) said, under a committed and informed patriot, Nigeria has the men and resources to recover without seeking foreign aid. All she needs now is the organization of the necessary structures for stability and production. That is, a genuine planning scheme for the development of the country. The first is reorganization of the civil service, which had been bastardized overtime, to take its professional status that will make for the development of the country. The second is to reorganize the private sector to reflect the developmental drive that the country, require today. Why most Nigeria import petrol, kerosene, diesel and so forth when we have the capacity to produce them in the country. General Sani Abacha, one time Military Head of State of Nigeria wanted to generate 20,000 units of electricity in 2010, he left behind 8,000; and General Ibrahim Badamusi Babangida, another Military Head of State of the country operate with 6,000. The country have less than 3,000 units in the present dispensation. In line with the above, General Ibrahim Badamusi Babangida built a refinery, a fertilizer factory, an aluminum plant and also new roads, including completing the Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos in eight years with an average earning of 16 Dollars a Barrel for crude oil in his time. Workers were not owed salaries. Now that Nigeria earned an average of 100 Dollars a barrel for 15 years, with just recent drop in the price of crude oil, there is little or nothing physically, to show but broken-down oil refineries, roads, industries and unemployed young men and women.

What is needed upper most now is the re-orientation of the Nigeria leadership class, to be more committed and dedicated to the needs of the general masses and the country in general. Though the reorientation will be difficult to achieve in Nigeria, especially taking into consideration the great impact the imperialists had already impacted into Nigerians, however this can still be achieved with great steps taken towards such direction, such capitalist and exploitative views will be eliminated to a great extent. Once this determination is achieved, the basis for overcoming the maladies of Nigeria's political economy will be hopefully be in sight.

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