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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Political Science Review (PSR) is the official journal of the Department of Political Science, University of Ilorin. The journal is published twice a year and contains insightful articles about political processes in Nigeria, Africa and the entire globe. This edition has not detracted from that focus. From Tunde Agara's piece on constructivism as a tool for analyzing International Relations to Hassan Saliu's article on Buhari's Many Perceived Sins, this edition moved from theoretical premise to reality as far as International Relations is concerned. It is thus, a stimulating intellectual engagement.

Abdulrasheed Alada MUHAMMAD, PhD
Editor

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A Historical Analysis of the Impacts of Political Transitional Programmes on Industrial Establishments in Kwara State

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Abstract

Nigeria got her independence from British colonial dominance in 1960. The early Nigerian leaders settled for a federal constitution which made self-rule possible for the existing three regions in the new republic. These leaders were able to instil in Nigerians a sense of national awareness by speaking collectively. Unfortunately, the events that started the tragic course of Nigeria occurred in 1966 when some military officers seized power in a bloody coup against the then democratically elected government. They set aside the constitution and appointed military officers to administer the states created and proceeded to rule the country by military decrees for years. By 1993, Nigeria had witnessed eleven coups and counter-coups. The effect of these draconian policies firstly was the polarisation of the ethnic groups. Also, unemployment rose sharply while crime and corruption became the order of the day. Industries and other economic establishments were shut down due to lack of basic industrial ingredients and lives became unbearable for generality of Nigerians. These unfortunate situations usually calls for a return to democracy and the military officials answered by setting up transition programmes This paper examines the effect of these continual transitional programmes on Kwara States industrialisation efforts. The paper submits that protraction of the transitional programme severely undermined the structure of manufacturing industries in the country as a whole and in Kwara state in particular.

Keywords: Impacts, Political transition, Industrial establishment, Kwara State

Introduction

Nigeria was liberated from British colonial rule in 1960. The first Nigerian leaders negotiated a federal constitution which guaranteed self-rule for the then three ethnically based regions in the new republic. The Independence constitution also offered equal and proportional representation in the central government as a way of ensuring stability in the new multi-ethnic nation. Our founding fathers were able to inspire in Nigerians a sense

of national awareness by speaking collectively of the possibility of a great nation where ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity would constitute a source of strength rather than weakness. It was also expected that the federal plan would liberate the potentials of the constituent units of Nigeria's multi-ethnic character. As long as this constitutional arrangement was followed everything seemed to work relatively well. The prevailing euphoria, therefore, seemed to be justified that Nigeria had everything it would take to be a progressive nation as it was also abundantly endowed with human and natural resources of high quality that will transform the nation into an industrial giant. (Ibrahim, 2009)

Unfortunately, the events that started the unfortunate course of Nigeria occurred in 1966 when military officers, driven by inordinate ambition supported by some external supporters, seized power in a bloody coup against a democratically elected government. Both the central government and the regional administration were ousted. The constitutions of the federal and regional autonomies were set aside. The military government then appointed officers to administer the states and proceeded to rule the country by military decrees for years. With military intervention came various forms of rapid instability as other opportunistic army officers staged coups and counter-coups. By 1998, Nigeria had witnessed twelve different coups and counter-coups as every successive military junta used the pretext of the shortcomings of its predecessor as yet another reason to intervene in the polity of the country (Eyinla, 1998)

With the constitution abrogated, participation or access to the governing process of the country was foreclosed to civilian Nigerians (Maiyaki, 2013). The effects of these draconian policies first drove the various ethnic groups to polarise themselves while ethnic identity became sharper. Unemployment rose sharply, crime became overwhelming, corruption became the order of the day and many industrial and other economic establishments were shot down and lives continued to become unbearable for the generality of Nigerians. All these made Nigerians to remain always on the toe of the military authorities and to continually demand for the country to be return to democracy. These demands also forced almost all the military administrations to embark on transitional programme which failed in turns. The transition failed after all, because the military had no plans to leave as proclaimed. As usually the case, they erected difficulties and outright cancellation of some already completed parts

of the elections, and counter coups were staged thereby frustrating the process (Eyinla, 2014).This eroded Nigerians and even outsiders' confidence in the country's polity which had negative impacts on many facets of the country's activities, including political, social and economic activities. As expected shortly, the industrial sector which is our concern was also hard hit in the process across the country and particularly in Kwara State. Our concern here is therefore to look at the effects of these protracted transitional programmes on some industrial establishments in Kwara State. To do this, we have divided this work into four sections. Section one introduces the topic while the second section analyses the various transition programmes. The third section looks at the effects of these transition programmes on Kwara State industrialisation efforts since its creation in 1967 and section four concludes by summing up the results of the analysis.

The Transition Programmes

Nigerians often see a military government as an aberration imposed on the nation. Political administration belongs to the civilians and not to the military that are not trained in the delicate matters of socio- political administration. Nigerians always reminded the military that their primary mission was not to rule but to restore sanity to the body politics, cure the nation of its debilitating political diseases and stem the increasing tide of corruption then return to the barracks, and wait for the dully constituted government to invite them to defend the country when the need arises (Mustapha, 1998). Not long after military seized power, the nation had to engage itself in internal war that lasted more than three years. The expectation of the people after the war was that due process of democratisation would be put in place immediately. But General Yakubu Gowon, who had earlier named 1976 as the date for return of civil rule, changed his mind in October 1, 1974 broadcast to the nation and said the deadline for returning the nation to democratic rule was no longer possible (Nigerian Herald, 1974).Gowon rule was subsequently terminated in 1975 by Brigadier Murtala Ramat Muhammed. He responded to the calls of the people by announcing a five stages process for returning the country to democratic government on October1, 1979 (Federal, 1998).

However, on February 12, 1976, General Murtala Muhammed was assassinated in an abortive coup led by Lieutenant Colonel Bukar Suka Dimka. Lieutenant General Olusagun Obasanjo who was the Chief of Staff

Supreme Headquarters succeeded him and proceeded to implement his predecessor's programme to the letter (Nigeria Herald, 1976). Political parties were formed and elections were conducted into various positions at the third tiers of government with Alhaja Shehu Aliyu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria emerging as the President of Nigeria and sworn in as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1979 (Diamond, 1994, Federal, 1979).Nigerians thought that the expected solid foundation for lasting democracy had been launched. They therefore hoped to build on the achieved glory. On the night of December 31, 1983, which marked the first four months into Shagari's second tenure, another soldier, Muhammed Buhari, seized power signalling the end of the Second Republic. The military was back; the recently gained freedom was eroded and searches for it had to begin all over again. However, this regime was sent packing in August, 1985 by General Ibrahim Babangida (Guardian, 2000).

September 3, 1990 marked another hope for Nigerians and step to another transition programme was launched. Babangida returned all senior military officers holding ministerial positions back to the barracks and embarked on demilitarisation process. He explained that his regime would in effect begin a programme of transition which would manifestly be different from the past experience. He concluded that by October 1, 1992, his administration would have successfully completed the transition programme (Olurode, 1990). The government lifted the ban on the activities of political parties after the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) had deliberated on the draft constitution and creation of more local government areas and even states (Federal, 1998).The electoral commission submitted six political parties out of eighty- eight political associations that applied. On 7th October, 1990, government decided that none of the political associations qualified to be registered as a party. It therefore set up the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) to realise and conclude the transition process (Kwara, 1990).

The reason for sponsoring parties was given among others, to provide grassroots or mass platforms for the emergence of a new leadership, and to give equal rights and opportunities to all Nigerians to participate in the political process (Eyinla, 2014) .The process was well started with elections into offices from wards, states and to the two national assemblies. Presidential election was also conducted on 12th June, 1993 for the two presidential candidates; hopes were rise only to be heralded in the media that

election has been annulled (Diamond, 1997). In annulling the presidential election, Babangida had hoped that the political crisis in the country would provide him with an opportunity for staying on in power. Unfortunately, for him, the top military officers refused to give him the needed muscle to continue in office. Denied the support of his military constituency and confronted by civil society, the wily general "stepped aside" from office on 27th August, 1993. While leaving office, he handed over to an Interim National Government (ING) composed mainly of civilian politicians and technocrats (Eyinla, 2014).

The ING was faced with legitimacy, acceptance and series of legal battles when the military again took over power with General Abacha as Head of State. Between November, 1993 and June, 1998, Nigeria came under the firm grip of yet another ruthless military rule. President Abacha adopted and used all powers at his disposal in making sure that he transformed his regime from military to acceptable civilian administration (Anthony, 2014). He registered five political parties that adopted him as their sole presidential candidate. Fortunately for Nigeria, General Abacha miraculously dropped dead on 8th June, 1998 ahead of his coronation as civilian president (Eyinla, 2014). General Abdusalami Abubakar, the Chief of Defence Staff and the next man in the military hierarchy succeeded General Abacha and quickly moved to ease the tension that had built up in the countries. Not only did he order the release of notable political prisoners and detainees, including General Olusegun Obasanjo a former president of the country but began the process of inaugurating another transition to civil rule programme on 20th July, 1998. Abdulsalam shifted the handing over of power to a democratically elected civilian government from 1st October, 1998 to 29th May, 1999. In the time table, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) defied logic of earlier transitions by demonstrating that a transition programme need not be a long and drawn out affair by scheduling local governments to presidential elections for period of only three months between December, 1998 and February, 1999. As promised, the handing over to elected civilian administration was done on 29th May, 1999 and this ended the protracted transition programmes in Nigeria which started in 1978 (Mustapha, 1999).

Effects of Transition Programmes on Industrial Development in Kwara State

As expected, most of the military regimes were always anxious to propound and introduce their own economic and industrial measures as they assumed office. These policies were always predicated upon the context that they would be better than the former. However, as discussed above, identification of economic policies is one aspect; the ability to design optimum effective policy to achieve the goals depends upon other factors. Such factors include an ability to formulate the political will to realise optimum solution and the growth that may be disadvantageously affected by the introduction of such a policy. For example, on assumption of office by General Ibrahim Babangida, the issue of the IMF loan and its conditionality initiated by Buhari's regime was thrown out and another round of public debates were put in place for a new policy (Bashir, 2013).

Also, a new policy known as National Emergency Recovery programme was initiated during the transition period. The programme could not achieve anything since it was not nurtured beyond gestation period before another military administration took over after the confused transitional programmes of Babangida. The new regime of General Sanni Abacha did not command respect, both internally and externally, even from foreign investors, thus meaningful industrial development did not take place throughout his period (Human Right, 1996).

In Kwara State, for example, an industrial establishment, Resino Plastic Nigeria Limited, built and nurtured in one era, did not see the light of the day in another regime. Equally, during the same Babangida administration, many cottage and small-scale industries sprang up as an aftermath of the National Directorate of Employment's (NDE) activities in Kwara State (Olu, 2001).

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) has, as its main focus on arrangement of training programmes to cover vocational and apprenticeship scheme to tackle the problem of unemployment in a concrete way. Also, medium and small scale industries were provided with loans to facilitate their operations. Under the programme, the apprentices that were trained and certified by their trainers were mobilised financially to set up their small or medium scale industries. Some industrial establishments that specialised in fabrication of machines and tools were encouraged to produce the needs of those trained under the NDE programmes (Kwara, 1990).

One of such industries was Selia (Amukude) Industry. Its products were acclaimed to be good and many graduates of the NDE bought one product of the industry or another for their small scale businesses. This, in turn, made the industry to increase its production capacity from fifty per cent to more than ninety per cent. However, when Abacha came as the Head of State, he did not only discourage the activities of NDE that gave loans to small and medium scale industrialists, but recalled most of the loans enjoyed by beneficiaries. With that development, Amukude Technical Company lost most of its customers and its production capacity was forced back to about twenty per cent. Similar conditions applied to other industrial establishments during the transitional programmes (Africa, 1998)



Front view of De- Johnson Nigeria limited, Apata Yakuba. This industry was noted for the production of highly graded fridge in Kwara State in the 70s and early 80s but became a shadow of itself an aftermath of the transitions programme.

In a similar vein, many economic measures introduced by previous administrations were often thrown out by their successors. They in turn would start over again with a new policy only to be set aside by their successors without serious appraisal of the existing policy. This unfavourable political scenario no doubt scared investors from within and outside the country. (Ogunsanwo, 2002) As stated earlier, many home investors preferred to invest in quick yielding ventures such as transportation and petty trading activities. Little wonder that in his acceptance speech when he assumed office as a Civilian President of the country, Olusegun Obasanjo

said that successive administrations since 1979 were kind enough to have left most of the projects he executed before 1979 the same state in which he left them, in 1999, twenty years after he handed over (Obasanjo, 1999).

Conclusion

The picture which we have painted so far has been to look at the impacts which the prolonged transition programmes of military administration had on the Kwara State's industries. After looking at the various military transition programmes in Nigeria, we discovered that they were instituted just as cover up to persuade the citizenry into believing that they were going to hand over power to democratically elected administration only for another military officer to take over and start another transition activities that would last for some time. It then seems as if they were only passing the batons to themselves to milk the nation. People's confidences both locally and internationally in the county's economic viability were highly eroded. As indicated, the rate of closure of firms was therefore not matched by the rate of formation of new ones. The loss of capacity which arose from raw materials shortage was not in any way matched by expansion of production by industries for which inputs were available locally. In other words, since the transition programme was protracted for so long, it severely undermined the structure of manufacturing in the country and indeed Kwara State.

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