

AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL ECONOMY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian state emerged in 1914 as a British colonial enclave when the Northern and Southern regions were amalgamated. Although the country gained cosmetic political independence in 1960 it remains tied to the apron strings of the more advanced west economically and politically till date. Today Nigerian remains a bureaucratic neo-colonial state, which maintains the joint order of absentee imperialist investors and the local bourgeoisie. In terms of typology Nigeria falls within the category of autonomous predatory democracy aiming to maximize rent siphoning. Its governance has been dominated by military elites over time with soft constraint and guided deregulation as the base tool of economic management. To move this nation forward, we advocate good governance, economic transformation, and end to corruption, welfarist internationalism for global solidarity as well as broad based participation of all in decision-making.

KEY WORDS - Governance, Bureaucracy, Democracy and Development

I. INTRODUCTION*

To the layman and the uninformed, the state is simply a territorial association divided into two groups: the government and the governed. It is also seen as a force for law and order within a defined territory, an association that gives orders to all and receives orders from none. These views on the state are to some extent correct, but generally superficial, not going to the heart of the matter. These views dwell on the disciplinary function, perhaps the welfare function, and the crucial social content of that authority.

In the so-called "organic view" of the state as suggested by Plato and Aristotle but expressed by writers such as St. Augustine.

George Hegel, Bernard Bosanquet, Johann Herder, Francis Bradley, Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre, the state is pictured as a natural organism, likened to a family or even a human being. Therefore, we should not try to distinguish the rights and welfare of the individual from the welfare of the state, for the ultimate welfare of the individual is the welfare of the political organism within which he can fully develop (Urmson, 1967). John of Salisbury, a mediaeval political thinker reasons that the soul of the state is the clergy; the head is the king; the heart the senate; the eyes, ears and tongue the governors of the provinces. The hand is either armed or unarmed, the armed hand being the military force and the unarmed the officials and administrators in subordinate posts, chief among them being the publicans and the tax collectors. The feet of the state are the peasant farmers and artisans who provide food, clothing and the necessities of life (Jacob, 1967).

Related to the organic view of the state is the notion that the state is also a moral and divine order representing the will and mind of the people. Sometimes it is pictured as a rational force for order whose various parts should work in harmony or the society is doomed to destruction. Bowle (1963) for instance, holds that "in this organic interdependence most societies have their being" and that "sovereignty is a mystery." In this conception the state becomes fetish, a mythical personality, a demi-god that assumes different forms in different societies: a superior moral force whose will must not be challenged because society, civilization and the personality of a people depend on it. This view belongs to the conservatives, nationalists and racists who glorify the exploitative state as the supreme guarantor of the exploitative social status quo. It may be true that because the state is an organization, its parts must somehow work in harmony for it to be stable. It is true also that for the laws and policies of a state, necessary to hold people and institutions together, to be meaningful, the state must also establish a moral order and its force to enforce its will.

Be these as they may, the state is not divine, neither is it an organism like a tree, whose life is independent of the actual interests of the people in a given society. The reason of the state is none other than the reason or will of the ruling class or group at any one time who are liable to error and to the other weaknesses that afflict other human beings as well as the specific weakness of the ruling class. We must look at the state historically, because states are products of historical

events and historical conflicts.

**Sections 1 and 2 draws heavily from "The Nature and Character of the State," a handout given by Professor Eskor Toyo to his students in 1983 at the University of Calabar, Calabar.*

The nature of states do not follow any divine rule. States come and go with complex socio-economic systems, and the conflict of interests and practical needs arising in such systems. Rulers are not a divine or chosen race with superior morality, wisdom or intelligence. The state (nation) directed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria like those of other Nigerian rulers before him is nothing near to a harmonious family. This amalgam of the British empire called Nigeria is not the divine will either. It does not represent any superior wisdom or moral code. It is simply the machinery of coercion set up in 1914 by the conquering Britain to serve their interest. Presently, it serves the exploitation of the poor by the rich inside Nigeria and the exploitation of Nigeria by the advanced nations represented by their multinational companies.

The Nigerian state falls short of the liberal notion. It is not the result of a contract or agreement among its multi-ethnic and multi-tribal components. The parliamentary system of governance of the first republic, the presidential system of the second republic, the military dictatorships which have plagued Nigeria for about two decades, as well as the present democratic experiment present the Nigerian state essentially as an instrument for coercive integration through the forcible resolution of social contradictions. The socio-political and geographical entity called Nigeria is an artificial creation. It is a product of history and the handiwork of a dominant class in 1914 to safeguard its own selfish interests. Nigeria, a conglomeration of over 250 ethnic nationalities came under British influence in 1906. The federation had never been one homogeneous entity. Till date its component ethnic nationalities are yet to find the basis for true unity.

The colonialists forced these differing ethnic nationalities together in order to effectively control her economic resources. The colonialists themselves also used the northern tribes to dominate the south. Form Hausaland in the North, Benin Kingdom in the Mid West, Calabar Kingdom in the eastern region, and the Yoruba Kingdom in the West, states had existed before the Europeans came. In TIV land there was no state while Ibibioland was dominantly a segmentary society

which was organized on the basis of village republics. This was the situation under which Nigeria was forcefully created. Today Nigeria is a bureaucratic neo-colonial, autonomous predatory state which aims at maximization of rent siphoning by military elites, imperialist investors, powerful traditional rulers and the bourgeoisie. The imposing outcome of the above stated socio-economic and political structuring in Nigeria has been the massive alienation, emasculation, and impoverishment of the vast majority of the citizens. The Nigerian state as it is presently constituted has become a veritable arena for rent seeking, corruption, graft, unemployment, hunger and crime. These have become antithetical to equitable growth and development of the nation.

This paper attempts an analysis of the Political Economy characteristics of the Nigerian state. Immediately following this introductory section is section 2 which reviews the literature on the state, its government and society; origin of the state, the essence and forms of state; modern states, as well as the future of the state. Section 3 is an exposition on the concept of bureaucracy. In section 4 we take an exploration of the Nigerian state in terms of its political economy characteristics and the contradictions of the Nigerian socio-political and economic development. Section 5 is the final chapter which presents a summary of the paper, offers recommendations and concludes the paper.

II.1 The State: Its Government and Society

The term "state" is used generally to refer to the whole apparatus of institutions and structures for the maintenance of overall social order by compulsion, which exists in a society over a given historical period. The state uses law as an institution by which it commands obedience and also uses the law courts, police organizations and the armed forces as agencies by which it enforces order. The state is a specialized organization of men, armed with rules and with means of coercion for the maintenance of order over a population in a defined territory over which the organization exercises power. The term "state" sometimes "kingdom" is also often used to refer to the kind of community in which such a coercive order has been established, as distinct from early tribal or class communities where such an order did not or does not exist (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, 1940).

The term "government" is normally used to refer to the

particular set of people who happen to be directing the affairs of the state or exercising the authority or power of the state at any given time. The term "government" according to Bogdanor (1991) has its roots in Greek word for steering and refers to the direction of an economy and other institutions by a country's political institutions. Furthermore, Frischtak (1994) uses "government" to refer to the coordination of the aggregation of diverging interests and promotion of policies that can credibly represent the public interest. Similarly, the World Bank (1992) defines government as the exercise of power in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. Although the Bank suggests that, in general there are three distinct aspects to governance the forms of political regimes, the processes of the exercise of authority and the capacity to formulate and implement policies, it focuses on four areas considered to be consistent with its mandate: public sector management, accountability, the legal framework for development and information as well as transparency (Chete and Roberts, 1996). Thus in Nigeria, we talk of Buhari government, Abacha government, Obasanjo government, military government, civilian government, the local government, etc. Sometimes, therefore, by "government" as a function we mean directing the affairs or exercising the authority or power of the state.

There is a distinction between the state and society (that is, civil society). A society, according to Osipov (1969), is a complex of social relations and interactions based on a mode of production. "Civil society is a system of human social interaction in historically established social forms ... mediated by economic interaction." In general, therefore, a society is constituted by the complex of interrelations and interactions among men. However, a particular society, or a society at a particular stage of historical or social development, is characterized by the existence of a particular mode of production which basically defines the pattern of social relations and interactions that exists and can exist in it. Thus, an "industrial society" differs from "traditional society". The difference, which conditions all the other differences between them, is the way people reproduce their lives (i.e. their mode of production). The two aspects of the mode of production include: the pattern of division of labour and the pattern of distribution of rights to resources. The important resources include the means of production, the labour of people and the output of labour. The sum total of duties and obligations in the reproduction of life are called "relations of production" (Kay, 1975). Among these, the most

important are the ownership rights attached to the means of production, since this is decisive for all other allocations and obligations. To exist at all, a society must produce. Therefore, the allocation of rights to the most decisive means of production of the society is at the same time the allocation of power.

II.2 Origin of the State

The state appeared at the same time as classes (Ryndina, et.al., 1980). The development of productive forces led to an increase in material wealth and the emergence of private ownership and economic inequality. Exchange enriched certain families, who began to use slave labour on a regular basis. Slavery as a mode of production became dominant when private ownership appeared and society became divided into two antagonistic classes of slaves and slave-owners. There were also free small producers artisans and peasants as well as merchants and usurers. There is enormous anthropological evidence that the state arises out of social conflict. Lenski (1970) sees this as the reason that the state is an organization by leaders of society for discipline over communities found in a given territory irrespective of tribal identity. This then makes it an extra-tribal or post-tribal kind of order.

The state arose out of the conflicts of interest accompanying the intensification of tribal wars, the clash of migrating people, struggle over land as population grew and the emergence of trade, competition and the power of private wealth which came with trade. With such development the rules of clan life and clan order broke down. A new discipline and organization then became imperative to hold divided society together, and that is the state (Crowder, Cootes and Snellgrove, 1972). Marx and Engels (1970) maintain that when it arises in history, the state is associated with the concept of private property. Except during periods of revolutionary transitions, the state protects the wealthy. On the other hand, the military leaders (prevalent in Africa) who control the state apparatus use this military machinery to acquire wealth and protect it for themselves.

It must be pointed out that whatever the complexity of the social conflicts that bring any particular state into being; the dispute over the distribution of wealth is always a vital issue. In order therefore to maintain the social order, the state, when it is stabilized, must protect the interest of those who own the most vital means of production. Where the means of production are not commonly owned,

the ruling class must be those who own the most vital means of production for the given society.

II.3 The Essence and Forms of State

There are all sorts of conflicts in society. Therefore we can trace a specific kind of state to the specific kind of conflict that brings it into being. We have slave kingdoms, feudal states, capitalist states and socialist states. Each of them expresses a distinct kind of order in a distinct mode of production which is linked to the rest of the social system (Harlany, 1970). We do have transitional states which exist where one socio-economic order is passing and another has not yet definitely taken its place. In such a situation, two or even three ruling classes may share power, depending on their sources of power (i.e. their control over the resources of society). Such a state, however, is unstable and will be characterized by governmental crises arising from the context for shares in power by the two or three rival groups. Stability is restored only when one of the ruling groups becomes supreme over the others (Engels, 1970).

States may be monarchies, or republics, autocracies or democracies, unitary or federal. The monarchical and autocratic forms suit feudal states. The unitary form fits a mono-ethnic state while the federal form is useful to a multi-ethnic country such as Nigeria. According to Marx in Avineri (1968), the modern state stands for alienation. Marx uses the term "modern state" as it developed within traditional German philosophy with its protestant overtones. The view is also shared by Poulantzas (1978). The power of a modern state has to be organized to reflect the locus of power in modern industrial society, and this locus is either the bourgeois class or the working class. Where the bourgeois class hold power (in which case the socio-economic system of modern or industrial society is capitalism), the state is a capitalist state. Where the working class hold power (i.e. where the socio-economic system in modern or industrial society is socialist) the state is a workers' state (Sampedro, 1967).

The so-called "welfare state" is a capitalist state where the working class is so strong that they have been able to force a number of concessions from the capitalists. These concessions which inaugurated the "welfare state" are unwillingly made by the capitalist class in order to avoid being overthrown by a working class revolt led by socialists. Such concessions include public health scheme, pension scheme, etc. to which workers contribute, unemployment insurance

scheme to which workers contribute and state investment in public utilities such as gas, water, electricity, rail transport and education. These make it possible for these services to be offered more cheaply both to capitalist industries and to homes which again include capitalist homes. The so-called "welfare" benefits are financed by the taxation of the population, including workers. Therefore the "welfare state" makes no departure from the traditional exploitative nature of state power (Marx and Engels, 1970).

From the ongoing discussions, it follows that since the state arose from social antagonisms and contradictions, if matters can be so contrived that such antagonisms and contradictions no longer arise, the state will naturally cease to exist. Even if people out of inertia try to keep it aloof. At some time kings were considered so necessary that they were venerated. Now they are no more. At one time religion was so dominant that men were sacrificed in hundreds to gods. Now, such religious practices are withering away.

III. A CONCEPTUAL EXPOSITION OF BUREAUCRACY

In his critique of Hegel's philosophy of Right Marx saw bureaucracy as the institutional incarnation of political alienation. Hegel, the "universal class" of civil servants proves that the state's social content is adequate to its conceptual determination. For Marx, the illusory universality and the practical egoism of the bureaucracy reveal the gulf that divides the Hegelian concept of state from its actual existence. Marx's approach to bureaucracy is similar to Weber's handling of the bureaucratic 'ideal type' (Weber, 1946). Like Weber, Marx characterizes bureaucracy by division of functions and hierarchy (Marx and Engels, 1977). That bureaucracy is the alienation of public life implies, according to Marx, two consequences: on one hand, the abolition of the state will be achieved institutionally by the destruction of the bureaucratic apparatus; on the other, the bureaucratic dimension of political reality offers a criterion for the assessment of different political structures. In his writing on German political system, Marx saw in the bureaucratic traditions of the German working class a main difficulty which might frustrate the emergence of a revolutionary working-class movement in Germany.

Bureaucracy is one of the central phenomena of modern political and socio-economic life. It is central to the understanding of the modern state because it is the political expression of division of labour. Hence it must be explained not only in functional but also in

structural terms. As far as Marx is concerned, the degree of bureaucratization of any particular society determines the degree of violence required by the proletariat in overthrowing it.

The sociological significance of Marx's analysis of bureaucracy lies in his insistence that bureaucratic structures do not automatically reflect prevailing social power relations but pervert and disfigure them. Bureaucracy is the image of prevailing social power distorted by its claim to universality. The state and its bureaucratic structure is therefore a reflection of socio-economic forces and their ideal pretension. The basic contradiction in which the modern state finds itself reveals that, to attain its expectations and standards, the state must reject its origins in the material world. It is doomed to appear different from what it really is its alienation lies in its very essence. Like religion, which projects onto God what is lacking in this vale of tears, the state ascribes to itself (and to bureaucracy) those attributes which should have been part of every person as a subject (Avineri, 1968:48-51).

III.1 Governance and the Bureaucracy

The wide variation in the quality of economic policy within both democratic and authoritarian governments suggest that the prospects for policy reform depend on the characteristics of the state itself, particularly the discipline and competence of the bureaucracy (Callaghy, 1989). Consequently, many structural adjustment programmes require a selective strengthening of the government's role in the economy rather than a simple reduction in government intervention (Levy, 1990).

Auty (2000) argues that variations in economic performance among countries are caused by differences in the quality of governance. However, he maintains that such differences in governance are linked through the type of political state and the pattern of structural change to the natural resource endowment. In furtherance of this argument, he develops two models to explain the diverging performance of resource-poor and resource-abundant countries. He concludes that resource-poor countries have performed better than resource-abundant ones since the first oil shock. One of his reasons for this situation is that resource-poor countries are more likely to engender a 'developmental' political state that has both the autonomy to pursue coherent and prudent economic policies and the aim of maximizing social welfare (Leftwich, 1995). Second is the pattern of

Table 1: Auty's Extension of Lal's Typology of Political States

Autonomy	Aims	Basic type	Market role	Country examples
Autonomous benevolent	Maximize social welfare	Growth with equity Paternalistic monarchy	Hard constraint Relaxed constraint	Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan Brunei, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE
Autonomous predator	Maximize rent siphoning	Military elite Central Planning	Soft constraint Soft constraint	Ghana, Nigeria USSR
Factional democracy	Maximize social welfare	Growth with equity Equity priority over growth	Hard constraint Relaxed constraint	Malaysia, Botswana Costa Rica, Sri Lanka
Factional oligarchy	Maximize rent siphoning	Urban/industry captures policy Public officials capture policy Ethnic alliance capture policy	Soft constraint Soft constraint Soft constraint	Argentina, Brazil, India, Mexico, Bolivia Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Uzbekistan Kenya, Sudan, South Africa

source: Auty (2000)

The autonomous benevolent state is strongly associated with the successful resource-poor East Asian countries. On the other hand, in the consensual democratic states, social tensions spill into civil strife; contests over resource rents engender factional or predatory states that promote sectional or regional/ethnic interests at the expense of a coherent welfare maximizing economic policy. This scenario captures the situation in Nigeria since her political independence in 1960.

IV.1 Formation of the Nigerian State

Nigeria is a West African country. It has the largest concentration of black people in the world. It is named after River Niger which flows into the sea through a vast swampy delta. The five main ethnic groups of people are the Hausa and Fulani of the north, the Yoruba of the South-west, the Ibo of the South-east and the Efik/Ibibio also of the South-east. However, Nigeria is a conglomeration of more than 250 ethnic nationalities. Generally, the Yoruba, Ibo and the Efik/Ibibio are negro people but the Muslim, Hausa and Fulani are Hamitic, a brown-skinned people. Nigeria was the home of several African civilizations, which produced some of the finest African art. The greatest cultures were the Nok culture of the 200s B.C and the Ife culture of the AD 1100's and the Benin culture which lasted from 1200's until the 1770s.

British influence in Nigeria began in the 1700s. From 1906, Britain ruled the country till 1960 when Nigeria gained independence (Dempsey, 1972). The Federation of Nigeria, as it exists today, has never really been one homogenous country, for its widely differing peoples (ethnic nationalities) and tribes are yet to find any basis for true unity. Despite this unfortunate yet obvious fact, the former colonial master (Britain) forced the hitherto several ethnic nationalities together in order to effectively control her vital economic interests concentrated mainly in the more advanced but "politically unreliable" south. Thus for administrative convenience, the Northern and Southern Nigeria became amalgamated in 1914. Thereafter the only thing these peoples had in common became the name of their country.

In Hausaland, states existed for centuries before British colonial rule. Examples included the state of Kano or the State of Zaria. In the country of the TIVs in the middle belt, there was no state. The early states were usually established under the authority of kings, and were called "kingdoms". In the mid western region of Nigeria, the

Benin kingdom had already existed before the advent of the Europeans. Likewise, the old Calabar Kingdom in the Eastern region.

Apart from the exception of Ibiono Ibom in which modern researchers have revealed elements of some level of centralization through the institution of Okuku, Ibibioland was a segmentary society which was organized on the basis of village republics with each village being autonomous and independent. No village legislated for the other and the village was the only political entity which actively affected practically the daily lives of the citizens. The village head, a man chosen on the basis of age and experience who as well could claim descent from the founder's first born male, was regarded as the first among equals. He was the only individual expected to give voice to public sentiments (Noah, 1988). The foregoing analysis indicate clearly the scenario under which various unrelated tribes were brought together to form Nigeria.

IV.2 Characteristics of the Nigerian State

From the 1950s till date, the state in Nigeria has expressed the partnership in power in the imperialist investors, the Obas and Emirs, and the bourgeoisie. In 1960, the Obas and Emirs and the bourgeoisie gained an ascendancy over the imperialists. By the new constitutions the bourgeoisie has gained ascendancy over the Obas and Emirs and thus gained supremacy over them. This supremacy of the bourgeois class is expressed constitutionally by the fact that no House of Chiefs is provided as part of any of the legislatures in the country since the 1979 constitution as was the case in previous constitutions (The Nigerian Constitution, 1979).

Nigeria is now an example of a bureaucratic neo-colonial state which maintain the joint order of absentee imperialist investors and the local bourgeoisie. The present federal structure is considered suitable for Nigeria because of her multi-ethnic makeup. Furthermore the country, for over two decades have suffered from military autocratic dictatorship. This gloomy picture is made clearer by table 2 below. In table 2, a typology of political regimes in Nigeria is summarized. It is clear that in forty-four years of independence, military autocratic dictatorships have ruled for thirty years.

Table 2: Typology of Political Regimes in Nigeria

Period	Regime Type-Economic Regime
1960-1966	Civilian (Parliamentary) market with strong planning and control
1966-1975	Military, market system; Demand management
1975-1979	Military, market system, Demand management; planning and control
1979-1983	Civilian, market system (Austerity measures)
1983-1985	Military, market system, controls and stabilization measures
1985-1993	Military, market system; structural adjustment (minimum Government)
1993	Interim (civilian) market system
1993-1999	Military, market system; guided deregulation
1999-2004	Civilian, market system, deregulation

Source: Ekpo and Udoka, 1996:496

IV.3 The Nigerian Political Economy

The establishment of the British colonial state in Nigeria was through conquest. As periods of social interaction between peoples always precede conquest, the conquest was an attempt to resolve forcibly the contradictory interests of groups in the interaction and to put one side as against the other in a position of supreme power. However, the establishment of a sovereign Nigerian state in 1960 was through an internal revolt led by Nigerian nationalists who keenly felt the constraints of British colonial rule on their own development or the development of the country as they saw it. The economic antecedents of Nigeria, over the past forty-four years cannot be adequately understood from an economic standpoint alone, nor can the present economy and the economic prospects of the country. The interaction of economic behaviour with politics, law and institutions therefore merits analysis.

Over the past four decades, Nigerian governments have not been content to serve as economic referees. They have played active and leading roles in the game. The state and its government has seen itself as the regulator of economic fortunes and the prime mover of economic change. The rule of law in economic life has consequently been surrendered in favour of government arbitrariness, illustrated by

the conscious selection of interests to be promoted, defended at the expense of others, and the devising of "appropriate" policy measures. In consequence, economic life has become extensively politicized. Economic opportunities are recognized to be commonly dependent on political decisions and political influence is, therefore, seen as a precursor of economic success. Political decisions tend to countenance the interest of those best organized to influence them. As conventional economists have long remarked, particularist interests, tend in these circumstances to be favoured at the expense of more general (societal) interests (Chete and Roberts, 1996).

As a consequence of the coincidence of rapid growth in Nigerian export earnings and the new philosophy of the state as the protagonist in economic struggle, the additional earnings became the financial foundations of development policies. As a result, government's command over the resources was furthered at the expense of private enterprise. By the early 1960s the fortunes of businesses, communities and households in Nigeria had become inextricably linked with governmental favour and political influence.

The singular impact of the colonial political economy in Nigeria was the production of a fundamental regionalization of the economy and hence of the material basis of the state. The British preferred their northern class allies and supported them more than those they perceived to be radical Southern nationalities. This did not go down well with the Southern elites who sought the same rights and privileges as their northern counterparts.

The regional elites were heavily polarized by ethnic and religious affiliations and regionalism bred a special sort of politics in which intense competition (especially between regions), patrimonialism and clientalism were central. Cohen (1974) perceives that behind the liberal façade of formal political institutions and debate lay a series of vicious struggles over the allocation and distribution of political offices, the award of contracts, positions in the corporations and state boards, and the distribution of social and economic benefits. Unfortunately, these divisive tendencies are still the order in Nigeria today.

Consequently, resource allocation has had strong political undertones as government strove to assuage the fears and

apprehensions of the Southerners and Northerners. On one hand, the Southerners feared the political aspirations of Hausa/Fulani of the north to dominate the political culture of Nigeria, while on the other, the northerners feared economic domination of the more prosperous south. The post-war Nigerian political economy is based on oil receipt accumulation. The emergence of oil in Nigeria's economic structure had profound effects on the country's economy and society. Government revenue exploded through a combination of the improvement in the net barter terms of trade for oil exporters in the 1973-1974 period and growing tax rates, royalties and equity participation. Government expenditure grew meteorically, spanning diverse fields such as infrastructure, social services and production. State organization also proliferated. Interestingly, public expenditure moved in tandem with the expansion of credit to the private sector, the protection and encouragement of an indigenous capitalist class, the enhancement of public welfare through subsidies and services and the creation of a class of government salaried workers employed in an unwieldy administrative bureaucratic structure. The Nigerian state inevitably has become a terrain of struggle and conflict as political exigencies came to bear on the allocation of revenues. Clientelism, political rivalry, factionalism and patronage became commonplace. The proliferation of the inefficient public investment projects can be blamed on the myriad of ethnic, regional and religious dichotomies symptomatic of Nigeria's political mould. The state has become a source of private accumulation rather than a capable managerial agency. Rent seeking, corruption, graft and political sectionalism were rife. The renter state in Nigeria was simultaneously enabling and constraining; an avenue for personal aggrandizement and an impediment to meaningful growth (Watts, 1986; Chete and Roberts, 1986).

The proliferation of "states" in Nigeria numbering 36 (plus a federal capital territory) at present has raised the number of civil servants and bureaucrats required to run the various state machineries and promoted a new form of clientelism. State intervention has also penetrated most aspects of Nigerian social life. By 1983, the number of parastatals was put at 800 (Watts, 1986). There has been an expansion of the number of public companies and state monopolies in strategic industries like fertilizer, pulp, paper, iron and steel. Another dimension of the structure of the state power was the corruption, graft and bureaucratic inefficiency bred and fostered by oil wealth. During the

various military and civilian regimes accountability was nil as the presidency operated dedicated or special accounts in utter disregard of convention and due processes. There was also the sacrifice of merit on the altar of ethnic exigency. The so-called federal character, the personalization of power; weak and shallow institutions steeped in primordialism, corruption and the pursuit of personal wealth at the expense of the common good are antithetical to the achievement of equitable growth and development. These are prime factors in the explanation of Nigeria's present political-economic crises.

IV.4 Contradictions of the Nigerian Socio-Political and Economic Development

Like any other underdeveloped bureaucratic economy, the Nigerian economy is full of contradictions. According to Toyo (1997), a set of these contradictions have to do with forces of production. They concern opposed directions in the allocation of national income. These contradictions include:

- (a) The vicious circle of poverty, namely that the poorer people are, the more the need to save to generate growth, but at the same time the less they can save.
- (b) As the greater percentage of Nigerians are poor, an increase in income (small in the first place) will be largely consumed rather than saved. The problem is worse, as it were, if the population has already been exposed to a taste or a need for foreign goods, say, through colonialism. A rise in consumption is desirable but saving is necessary to increase production capacities that have the potential to increase the consumption in due course.
- (c) Intersectoral contradiction: The more resources are put into one sector the less will be available for investment in others.
- (d) The fourth contradiction concerns the technology of development in relation to employment. The more capital intensive development is, the less employment of the unemployed labour force will be generated. At the same time the income increase due to high technology will generate a rural-urban drift since capitalism is urban-centred.
- (e) A fifth contradiction concerns borrowing. As Nigeria borrows to overcome capital shortage, she tends to sink into a larger debt because of the tendency of her terms of trade to move against the goods which they export. The terms of trade behave this