

## Power Devolution and Economic Diversification in Nigeria: Contexts, Connections and Contentions

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### Abstract

*This research examined the nexus between power devolution and economic diversification in Nigeria. It did this by undertaking an intellectual introspection into how the prevailing monocultural economy and monocratic polity were imposed on Nigeria during the epoch of colonial rule and how they were subsequently retained by Nigerian politicians who are largely abdullistic capitalists because the inherited reality served their rapacious intents for primitive accumulation and political domination. The research employed the Marxian theory of Economic Determinism as its framework of analysis and Content Analysis as its methodology. In the end it was able to establish that Nigeria's current monocratic political posture has inevitably negated any attempt at diversification because it has made the country excessively centrist, statist and ipso facto totalistic. It further established that as the nation's center became over-empowered the component states and local councils were simultaneously disempowered and so were encouraged to be lazy and beggarly to the end that political patronage rather than economic productivity became the only recognizable access to the national cake which continues to get narrower and increasingly monocultural. The study also discovered that Nigeria of today is far more monocultural than it was in the colonial times. This is so because in the colonial era at least no fewer than four commodity exports were produced, namely cocoa, cotton, rubber, palm oil, groundnut, etc. But today, the only recognizable export commodity is oil at its crude state. It thus recommended among other things that: Government should make conscious and concerted effort at reviewing the country's constitution in a way that transfers land management and resource control to the states and councils while the center maintains defence and external relations; and that, at the state and council levels, Government should encourage diversification by making available credit facilities at minimal interest rates.*

**Keywords:** Power Devolution, Economic Diversification, Monocracy, Monocultural Economy, True Federalism, Economic Determinism

### Introduction

There is no doubt that the phenomenon of diversification – of Nigeria's economic mainstay – has been a dominant, and *ipso facto* a contentious matter among Nigerians, both lay and learned. This is so because it is rigorously contended that the constant loss of means of livelihood – especially through retrenchment, forced closure of businesses borne out of lack of micro credits or unfriendly tax regime, unfavourable forex benchmarks, inconsistency and sometimes clash in government fiscal and monetary policies, etc. – leading to a spike in the army of the unemployed, is tied to the narrow resource base inherited as the major economic heirloom from the ex-colonialists.

This resource or economic base, it is contended, was not only made to be narrow or monocultural but also disarticulated and dependent, hence must be reversed. Scholars like Ake (1981, 2001) Onimode (1983), Rodney (1972), Ibeanu (2004) and Jacob (2012) are among those who have written profusely on the monocultural and disarticulated character of both the colonial and post-colonial Nigerian state and economy.

All the above attest to one thing: the urgent and unremitting need, and indeed clarion call, for the reversal of this trend, hence the imperative of diversification. The argument put forward in this research presentation is that the political character of the federal imperative being operationalized in Nigeria in which there is a rude over-concentration of political, economic, administrative and developmental powers in a largely *behemoth* but unproductive center is naturally and ruthlessly anti-diversification. To this end, it argues that any attempt at diversification, a phenomenon which has

wantonly assumed the status of a development paradigm, without first embarking on conscious political power devolution would amount to sheer hypocrisy, a banal travesty of reality or at worst, *ignorantio elenchi*.

The paper which employs the Marxian theory of *Economic Determinism* as its framework of analysis and Content Analysis as its methodology is broken into six parts. Part one introduces the study; part two deals with operational definitions and theoretical framework; part three examines Nigeria's colonial legacy of monocultural economic mainstay; part four x-rays Nigeria's monocratic or autocratic character; part five situates the connections and contentions of power devolution and economic diversification, and part six which is the last part enunciates some prospects in this regard; it also concludes and puts forward some recommendations for further studies and policy-making.

### Operational definitions and theoretical framework

Some concepts used in the study that require brief definitive clarification are:

**Power:** as used here it means "a form of currency that allows its holders to satisfy important values and attain objectives (Deutsch, 1966)".

**Power Devolution:** this means the de-concentration of a central government of constitutional powers so as to strengthen the component states and local councils for purposes of economic diversification and development. It also means the process of political power dispersal so that formerly weak subsidiary governments in a federal setting become strong to serve their citizenry.

**Monocultural Economy:** as used here it means two related things. The first is that it means the production of one export product. The second one is that it means the production of only raw or primary product which could either be two or more, but not necessarily one.

**Diversification:** this means the process of translating a monocultural economy into a *multicultural* one by a conscious devolution of political power.

**Monocracy:** this is a system of governance whereby virtually all powers – political, institutional, administrative, economic, etc – are vested in the center governmental authority.

**True Federalism:** as used here this represents a form of federal system where the federating or component units constitutionally control socio-economic resources domiciled in their individual domains, and pay designated percentage of their *revenue* values to the coordinating or central authority for nation-wide defence, security, disaster management, etc.

Furthermore, this study employs economic determinism as its theory. This theory has its roots in Karl Marx, and to some extent Frederick Engels, both of whom believe that the quest to control the economy or substructure is what serves as the precipitating force which pushes people (the bourgeoisie) to want to capture political power, expand and retain same *at any cost*. It is upon the substructure that every other element in the superstructure is built, and so to control it via a capture of state power is to control everything. To this end *power* becomes useless or *unadmirable* without *matter* which in this light serves as economic values like contracts, commissions, prebends, in a word *accumulation*, all of which act as prerequisites of political office. It was in this light that both Nicolo Machiavelli and Hans Morgenthau see power as a means to pre-calculated end; this end according to the economic determinists is appropriation and allocation of economic values or *matter*. This theory becomes very relevant in this study because as Nnoli (1986) would contend, in Nigeria "state power...is the basis of all security, all rights and privileges...and the maintenance of any mode of livelihood". This position is made more lucid by Ake (2001) while depicting the import of state power in the colonial and post-colonial state of Africa. He asserts that "to become wealthy without the patronage of the state was likely to invite the unpleasant attention of those in control of state power. Political power was everything; it was not only the access to wealth but also the means to security and the only guarantor of general well-being". Ake further submits that "for anyone outside the hegemonic faction of the political elite, it was generally futile to harbour any illusions of becoming wealthy by entrepreneurial activity or even take personal safety for granted. For anyone who was part of the ruling faction, entrepreneurial activity was unnecessary for one could appropriate surplus with less risk and less trouble by means of state power". The relevance of economic determinism's applicability on this study therefore stems from the fact that it is the quest to use state power as an instrument of domination, appropriation and primitive accumulation that has driven Nigeria's political elite to systematically and invidiously enthrone and

entrench a culture of monocacy or over-concentration of powers in the center which inevitably has negated and made mockery of the call, and even vigorous campaign, for the diversification and development of Nigeria's economic lifeline. This is because to domicile all powers in one *center* like the *Treasury Single Account (TSA)* gives the *crooked* politicians the licence to plunder *all* in one fell swoop.

### **Nigeria's Colonial and Post-Colonial Legacies of Monocultural Economy**

One of the major realities of British colonialism in Nigeria was that it led to the creation and fostering of a mono-cultural, one-sided and subordinated economy in Nigeria while at the same time building an all-round material life in Britain. It suffices to state that a mono-cultural economy is an economy whose major material output sellable as export commodity occupies a categorical and often dependent position in the production process or chain; this could be primary, secondary or tertiary position.

So, when it is said that British colonialism created, in Nigeria, a mono-cultural economy, this thought could be understood from two intellectual positions. The first is that the colonialists made the country to produce just one product, that is a *mono* product. The other intellectual orientation is that they made Nigeria to produce just raw materials – that is only primary product – which could be two or more products and not just *one*. It does not necessarily entail that it made Nigeria to produce just one commodity or item, but that it made Nigeria to produce commodities or goods which had one categorical nature in the production process. And this categorical nature was that which pertained to the production of raw materials or production of unrefined, unfinished goods or commodities.

The import of the above argument is that British colonialists are not to be reprimanded for making Nigerians to produce just one item because, in all reality, Nigerians produced more than one items among which were cocoa, cotton, coffee, groundnut, palm oil, etc, all of which were exportable and actually exported; but, that they engineered the engagement of Nigerians in the production of the above commodities only at a crude or primary level without creating the much needed inclination for industrialization or manufacturing. It is in this form that the mono-cultural economy created by British colonialism in Nigeria is to be understood and analyzed.

Having made the above clarification it is now left for us to consider the core reasons why this status of a mono-cultural economy was created and foisted on Nigeria especially in relation to the overall material development of Britain, and of course the consummate consequences of this act.

To begin, it should be reiterated that the core reason why the economy of Nigeria was modulated in the above fashion, that is, the reason why it was modeled to take a largely mono-cultural dimension, was borne out of the major causes of British capitalist expansionism towards Nigeria in particular, and Africa, at large. For what is worth, it is important to state that the Europeans generally made progress towards non-industrialized and non-mechanized lands in order to be able to fulfill one of four interests. The interests were mainly material or economic. The British imperialists migrated to the shores of Nigeria primarily to sell their wasting or spoiling wares or over-produced and under-consumed commodities to Nigerians. This was necessitated by the fact that the introduction of mechanization in the production process had led to a massive increase in the yield of their exercise resulting in an unprecedented influx of finished products into the then increasingly narrowing home markets of the British. It should be acknowledged that the pervasive mechanization also increased the commodification of production in its entirety. The pervasive mechanization and commodification consequently meant that the outputs of production engagement were generally boosted in the whole of Europe, a situation which also established the fact that the totality of European markets had become saturated with their own goods hence profit margins systematically narrowed as spoilage set in. This situation directly contradicted the essence and drive of the (industrial) capitalists which revolve around capitalization of surplus value, hence needed to be combated.

It was this state of industrial and commercial affairs of Europe that drove their inevitable search for markets in the so-called virgin lands or non-European, well-populated and non-industrialized territories which today constitute the third world.

Also of paramount consideration is the fact that the pervasive mechanization of the production lines specifically meant that the employment or use of manual labour or labourers became naturally obsolete. This was essentially because, for instance, a job that was done by 100 manual labourers prior to

European industrialization could now be done by one or two man-controlled tractors or other machines thereby rendering the remaining 98 manual labourers unemployed. The redundancy or retrenchment of these labourers meant that an army of unemployed was created, an army that squarely acted as a clog in the wheels of the peace and pleasures of the other one or two labourers employed and paid huge amount of money. From the army of the unemployed, criminals, assassins, prostitutes, drug addicts and drug peddlers and more, became the manifest folks in major European cities and urban centers. In other words, the mechanization of production did not only mean the retrenchment of many labourers, but this retrenchment also meant that nuisance situations had been systematically created, situations which only acted as great displeasures to the emergent European industrial bourgeoisie. Therefore, the army of the unemployed Europeans needed to be taken to other places where they could be engaged in other activities, especially expatriate activities – these activities were to be found in those already discovered virgin lands. This was because as much as possible these nuisance elements needed to be sent to places that were considerably removed from the pleasure-range of the industry and factory owners.

Meanwhile, in the face of European industrialization, agricultural and other agrarian activities were abandoned or relegated. This was because men and women then wanted white-collar and blue-collar jobs which were to be found only in the industries and factories. These jobs went with some forms of pays and respect which could no longer, by the said abandonment and relegation, be derived from the farms and plantations, or the forests and rural communities.

Agricultural activities became defaced and discarded. But, of critical consideration is the fact that the abandonment of agriculture also meant the emergence of the problem of lack of raw materials. It should therefore be noted that even though the initial motivating force that propelled the Europeans to expand beyond their borders was the quest to sell their wares, this initial motive naturally changed after the sale of their first sets of already produced wares, because the issue of raw materials to continue production in their industries and factories systematically outstripped that of the marketisation of produced goods. The point here is that it was the quest to secure raw materials for the continuation of industrial and factory production that led to the creation of a mono-cultural economy in Nigeria by Britain, the frontline industrial capitalist country as at then. So, Nigerians were compelled to produce raw materials or engage in primary production chiefly to serve and service the interests of Britain and by so doing helping to advance the frontiers of her industrialization. In this case, Nigeria was made to become the farms and plantations of Britain producing all the raw produces or materials she needed: Nigerians were only allowed to be planters and farmers of commanded crop items, and no less. The clear implication of this situation in which Nigeria became the farm and plantation of Britain was that Nigeria became the rural areas of Britain which had gradually taken upon herself the form of an urban, metropolitan or city center.

Moreover, by the instrumentality of the marketing boards which were created by the British, Nigerians were carefully held in a situation that could best be described as double squeeze, a situation which explains that the British colonial imperialists dictated what crops Nigerians were to produce and how much they (the Europeans) were to pay for these produced items. This was a complete state of the subordination of one people to another amounting to the dehumanization, exploitation and frustration of the totality of Nigerian farmers and planters.

The saddest conclusion that could be made here is that the compulsive gravitation of Nigerians into mono-cultural, raw material, production also meant that Nigerians were not allowed to industrialize. That is, there was a conscious ossification of all attempts at industrialization mainly because this would have meant that the aim of the advent of British colonial imperialism would have been defeated. This deliberate non-industrialization of Nigeria carefully created a situation of disarticulation which defined the non-complementarily or de-linkage of various sectors within the Nigerian political economy (Ake, 1981:43).

This disarticulation was pervasive in that it manifested in virtually all sectors of the Nigerian economy. It was this disarticulation that deepened the unwholesome dependence of the Nigerian economy to that of Britain, a situation which culminated in the underdevelopment of Nigeria, or what is better called a dependent development of the country. A dependent development or a situation of dependence, in the reasoning of Santos (1970) implies “a conditioning situation in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others.” It was this dependent

relationship arising from the material phenomenon of disarticulation that created the paradoxical state of the development of underdevelopment.

In this light, the materiality of Nigeria's political economy was configured to be exocentric or outward-serving and it became relevant only to the extent that it produced the raw materials needed to feed and furnish British factories and industries. This narrow production of raw materials did not agitate the necessary impulses which could have brought about the urbanization and material development of Nigeria. To this end, even when urban signs were observed in certain areas, it was as a result of the fact that it had become compelling for them to be developed so as to create a relatively more conducive, Europe-like environments in some selected areas to be inhabited by imperial or colonial supervisors who were in charge of monitoring the activities of Nigerian peasant farmers. The Nigerian farmers had naturally become peasantized because they had been converted or translated from processing necessary products to processing surplus products which were to be sold as cash crops only to the British imperial bourgeoisie.

It should be noted that the peasantization of the Nigerian farmers and planters was borne out of the monetization of the colonial Nigerian economy. The monetization of the colonial Nigerian economy meant the massive engagement or use of British pounds and sterling, the value of which was dictated externally to appropriately suffice the rapacious profiteering craves of British materialistic czars.

The bottom-line of the foregoing explanation is the fact that the materiality of Nigerian political economy was made to take a dependent, disarticulated and a heavily underdeveloped posture by virtue of the foisting of a monocultural label on it by the British colonialists. Today, even though this monocultural label has taken a new outlook yet its motive force remains unaltered. In this regard, even though Nigerian mono-cultural stature has largely shifted from the production of agricultural raw materials – not because the country has outgrown agricultural production or has done very well that she has become agriculturally buoyant – to the production of raw materials in the crude oil sector. It could even be argued that the crude oil production Nigeria does today whether at the primary level or otherwise, is done mainly with the support and pioneering efforts of external manufacturing and industrial elements.

So, the mono-cultural economic development that was superimposed on Nigeria by Britain which has also created a dependent development has continued to subsist till date. This position is taken because the crude oil which accounts for more than 90% of the nation's annual total revenue is largely produced – from extraction to refinement – by foreigners and foreign corporations, with fragments handled by not-totally local companies. Even when Nigerians and Nigerian companies are involved, they mainly end at the level of extraction and contract out the other stages which would culminate in usable refined petroleum products. This final and main stage – that cost very high to do - is mostly done abroad making Nigerians to still reside on the plane of mono-cultural or primary production.

### **Nigeria's History with Monocratic or Autocratic Governance**

It is relevant to note at this juncture that the colonization of Nigeria by Britain brought about the elevation of alien political autocracy and its entrenchment in the territory of Nigeria. This meant that Nigerians were politically subordinated to the overlordship of white rulers who acted as foot soldiers of the monarchy of England. This alien political autocracy was elevated and entrenched by reason of how political, administrative and constitutional powers were generated, distributed and operationalised.

To be sure, it should be noted that from the time when the colonial state in Nigeria was formally established as a single, concerted political entity – been an amalgam of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria – in 1914 under the political and administrative pleasures of Lord Fredrick Lugard who himself was the chief representative of the monarchy of England then, the politico-administrative head of the country who was also called the Governor-General, and at some other points as Governor, was vested with what was called the veto power. The veto power of the Governor-General who was a non-Nigerian, defined a form of political power that was immensely totalistic as it was unchallengeable, uncontestable and unquestionable especially by Nigerians.

The Governor-General was to this end, possessed with the licence to kill and to make alive; he had the totalitarian discretion to hire and fire without been responsible or responsive to the Nigerian

people or at any rate to any statutory establishment. He was only responsible to the Queen of England and responsive to the mercantile interests of British traders, manufacturers and financiers for whose sake the colonial state was originally contrived.

This situation made the Nigerian political elite to be marginalized to the extent that even when Nigerians were constitutionally permitted to vote and be voted for from 1922 – during the reign or Governorship of Sir Hugh Clifford – and thereby making Nigerians to form an active voice in the legislative council, they were still rendered politically impotent because the Governor-General who had the said all-consuming or overriding power was not answerable to the legislative council. He ruled mainly by proclamations: these were political or legal instruments equivalent to military decrees and fiats.

But, the Governor-General needed to be unchallengeable in his political power possession because of the form the colonial state in Nigeria was conceived to take. It was conceived to take an awesome form clad with totalistic powers for the economic and socio-cultural expropriation it was established to carry out.

It was necessarily conceived to be totalistic because it was expected to make – and at other times, unmake – and implement laws which were to favour one class against another, that is, these laws and legal instruments were construed and constructed to favourably serve and secure the interests of the British commercial and industrial bourgeoisie over and against the Nigerian peasants and proletariat. In this case the colonial state was a state that was conceived as “a specific modality of class domination, one in which class domination is mediated by commodity exchange so that the system of institutional mechanisms of domination is differentiated and dissociated from the ruling class and even the society ... appears as an objective force standing alongside society” (Ake, 1985:105).

This position readily implies that the colonial state in Nigeria was conceived and erected to serve as “the totality of the materiality of political class domination” in society (Ibeanu, 2004:7-8). In essence, it was ordained from the very onset to have the overriding powers to issue out instructions for the expropriation of lands, the legislation of taxes, the commodification of production, the construction of roads, railways, bridges, ports and dams; the facilitation, collection and distribution of produces, and the introduction, consolidation and regulation of chains of marketing boards for the purpose of benefiting the British colonial imperialists to the detriment of Nigerians.

It is in the above light that the overriding powers of the Governor-General squarely conformed to the royal configuration of the colonial state in Nigeria: they were in a necessary politico-economic symmetry. This was the driving force behind the reigns of Sir Lord Lugard, Sir Hugh Clifford, Sir Arthur Richard, Sir John MacPherson, Oliver Littleton, and other not-too-popular Governors-General.

In the same vein, the above explanation also implies that the personality of the Governor-General could not have been democratic because the state structure he had been summoned by imperial necessity to superintend over was non-democratic. The state structure was such that does not consider necessary, or places any value on the need to consult with Nigerians on issues that had to do with their exploitation and dehumanization, or at any rate, their peasantization and despoliation.

Since the colonial state structure was not configured to consult with the Nigerian people, it was therefore irrelevant for the Governor-General to dialogue, at any time, with the colonized subjects. So, political negotiation, bargaining and diplomacy were not significant virtues of the colonial heads of state. Even when some forms of consultation were done like the ones that preceded the 1951 McPherson’s constitution, they were mostly cosmetic as they were not fundamental enough to pave the way for the emancipation of the Nigerian people.

It is on this count that the colonial state became wayward and worthless. But, the waywardness and worthlessness of the colonial state was so seen only by Nigerians and not by the British colonial imperialists or the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie of Britain; to them, the state was seen as only living up to its necessitating establishment requirements and expectations. In this light, “Since the colonial state was called upon by the peculiar circumstances of the colonial situation to carry out so many functions – indeed to do everything – it was all-powerful. It needed to be all powerful not only to carry out its mission but also to survive along with the colonial order in the face of the resentment and the hostility of the colonized” (Ake, 2001:2).

The waywardness and worthlessness, or what Ake called the absolutism and arbitrariness, of the colonial state easily made colonialism to become “a negation of freedom from the viewpoint of the colonized” (Rodney, 1972:244). This freedom that was negated by the waywardness and worthlessness of British colonialism in Nigeria was freedom to possess political power to control economic matter and other commanding heights of material life; freedom to have a history, a culture and a community devoid of the tenets and precepts of the culture of political autocracy.

The basic knowledge to be drawn from the foregoing is that the colonial state, and of course the colonial situation in Nigeria as devised by the over-lordship of the Elizabethan powers based in Britain was oppressive having no signs of utilitarianism nor the clemency of democracy.

However, the most fundamental consideration that should be noted about the colonial state in Nigeria is the fact that it was easily inherited and sustained after the formal attainment of political independence in Nigeria. But what is urgent to state here is the fact that the inheritance and sustenance of such dimension of over-powered and over-charged Central Government, and in essence the position of the head of state, logically meant that the political activities which should naturally lead to the capture of the Central Government by a political party or electoral cabal or better still the position of the head of state by a politician, in post-colonial Nigeria, became increasingly ferocious and daring. This was compounded by the long-years of military invasion into the terrestrial vestry of power.

### **Economic Diversification Before Power Devolution: Placing the Cart Ahead of the Horse**

There is no doubt that Nigeria as a socio-economic formation that is currently in recession urgently needs to diversify its economic base so as to meet the minimum requirements to develop. This is because the inherited and consolidated monocultural economic mainstay tacitly hinders comprehensive development that will in turn broaden the country’s opportunity as well as revenue base thereby facilitating the creation of a multicultural economy which naturally results in massive job creation, enhanced standard of living, reduced cost of survival, infrastructural re-activation and mitigation, if not total elimination, of vices of terrorism, militancy, kidnapping, prostitution, trafficking, armed robbery and corruption, all of which are compounded by the axiom that ‘an idle mind is the devil’s workshop’. The argument here however is that as important as the paradigm of diversification is, embarking on it without first correcting the anomalous political posture of the Nigerian federal imperative will amount to placing the cart before the horse. This political posture which inevitably negates any attempt at diversification is the monocratic character of the country’s federalism. This reality of monocracy makes the federal system of the country excessively centrist, statist and *ipso facto* totalistic (Ostrom, 1990; Wunsch & Olowu, 1990; Olowu, 1995; Ake, 2001).

This is because, as contended by Ostrom, monocracy does not only negate true federalism but also negates true democracy and polycentricism, and invokes a “political order in which all powers emanate from and gravitate to one central point”. He adds that this “political order which derives from the Hobbesian conception of the state is highly centralised”. Olowu, in a bid to push further this discourse, posits that “for a variety of reasons, most of ...independent African countries adopted a monocratic political order...either through the adoption of a one-party state or military coup d etat”. In the case of Nigeria, the major post-colonial factor which has entrenched this culture of monocracy or Unitarian federalism is military imposition of its command, centrist and absolutist emblems on the nation’s political economy. And since this devious imposition suited Nigerian politicians who are largely abduillistic capitalists with uncontrollable rapacity according to Okowa (1996, 2005), they easily retained this model through making ‘appropriate’ legislations which helped in completing the process of centralization of powers.

As the center was empowered the component states and local councils were disempowered and so were encouraged to be lazy and beggarly to the end that diversification was obstructed as all states and councils began to look upward to the center for economic fortification. Political patronage rather than economic productivity became the only recognizable access to the *national cake* which continues to get narrower and increasingly monocultural. In short, it is the considered view of this researcher that Nigeria of today is far more monocultural than it was in the colonial times. This is so because in the colonial era at least no fewer than four commodity exports were produced, namely cocoa, cotton, rubber, palm oil, groundnut, etc. But today, the only recognizable export commodity is oil at its crude state. The

country survives on oil rents and royalties which are often looted by the *custodians of power*, a situation which automatically makes power at the center the only means to wealth, and wealth in turn means more power.

It is in this light that the devolution of *central* power must necessarily precede the diversification of *national* economy. This implies the *re-federalization* of Nigeria leading to the adequate dispersal of power from the center to the component states and councils to engender diversification and development of economic and national life. This dispersal will mean that the states and councils will then be in position to control and manage their resources – lands, minerals, etc – and liabilities thereby making them more responsible and responsive to the yearnings of their peoples – while also acting as check to their leadership. In this light, diversification becomes a natural offshoot or product of power devolution as more and more states will strive to out-develop one another so as to attract more and more development partners at home and abroad. This means devolution of power will lead to healthy economic competition and increased productivity among the states and councils – leading to the ultimate advancement of the entire federation.

### PROSPECTS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has been able to establish that the present monocratic or over-centralized political system being practiced in Nigeria is anti-diversification because it high-jacks developmental dispositions and commitments from the federating states and local governments, and concentrate them in a centre that is more concerned about collecting rents and royalties rather than broadening the revenue base of the country. This has worsened the monocultural status of the nation.

To be sure, and in today's reality, it is already trite to note that Nigeria is a monocultural nation with its economy heavily dependent on petroleum revenue which accounts for about 80% of government revenue and 90% of foreign exchange earnings. Before the prominence of petroleum industry, Nigerian economy was dependent on agriculture. The growth of petroleum industry in Nigeria brought about dramatic change in the nature of Nigerian economy. The high economic gains of the oil industry made the nation to abandon other sectors of the economy and depend solely on oil industry. The situation has led to non-development of other sectors of the economy like exploitation of abundant solid minerals, agriculture, manufacturing industries and service industries. This has exposed the nation to economic instability occasioned by the vagaries of international oil markets, gross unemployment, poverty in the face of plenty, and a passive political leadership that is lukewarm in articulating and embarking on viable economic policies (Anyahie & Areji, 2015).

The presidency of Nigeria has always harped on the need to diversify the nation's economy. The current administration led by President Muhammadu Buhari has not been any different. The president seems to be very determined in this resolve as there cannot be any official statement or comment on the economy without a mention of the need to diversify. Of course the amplification of this need has been given impetus by the fact that the country has since slid into economic recession, that is a state of zero or weak purchasing power, spikes in inflation, unemployment, underemployment, poverty, hunger, cost of living and depletion of general economic fortunes of majority of the citizens in at least two consecutive quarters. The only escaping route from this quagmire now appears to be a resurgence of the call to diversify the economy so as to rescue the nation.

It is the position of this researcher that this call, like previous ones, is largely hypocritical or hypothetical and misplaced. This is so because the same government that is resolutely calling for economic diversification is forcefully condemning devolution of powers to the states and local councils, hiding behind the *excuse* that Nigeria's *unity* is not *negotiable*. How can there be sustainable diversification without first devolving powers through conscious and systematic restructuring, enthronement of a regime of resource control or fiscal or true federalism? It is instructive to posit that this form of federalism does not amount to a dismemberment of the country as *wrongly speculated* but would rather strengthen it as it would make all the states to sit up and work, looking inwards, developing what it has - whether coal, crude, bitumen, gold or farming, - and without having to wait for, or go cap-in-hand to the federal government to share oil wealth derived from just few states. If the Nigeria's government continues to harp on diversification without the corresponding recognition of the need to devolve



political powers *first*, it would amount to mere rhetoric, hypocrisy and any diversification attained in this manner would not be sustainable.

Specifically, the following recommendations are put forward for the advancement of further research in this areas as well as aiding policy makers:

- Government should make conscious and concerted effort at reviewing the country's constitution in a way that transfers land management and resource control to the states and councils while the center maintains defence and external relations.
- In the above light Government should repeal all anti-federalism laws like Land Use Act of 1979, the Petroleum Decrees of 1969 and 1991, the Lands (Title Vesting etc.) Decree No 52 of 1993 (Osborne Land Decree), the National Inland Waterways Authority Decree No. 13 of 1997, etc
- At the state and council levels Government should encourage diversification by making available credit facilities at minimal interest rates.
- That relevant sections of 2014 national conference recommendations involving federal power devolution should be implemented as a matter of national urgency.

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