AN EVALUATION OF THE OBJECTIVES AND PLANNING PHILOSOPHY OF NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2025

Onoho'Omhen Ebhohimhen
Department of Development Studies
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja, FCT

ABSTRACT

This article evaluated the objectives and planning philosophy of the National Development Plan 2021-2025 and compared it with the medium-term development programmes between 1946 and 1985. With secondary resources and a qualitative methodology of interpretive and content analyses, the study found that the current plan embraces counter-development outlines and diverges from the fundamental transformation of the socio-economy. The plan also failed to embrace the culture of federalizing centres of economic actions entrenched in the previous plans from 1955 to 1985. Overall, the current plan neglected to adapt the tested Lewis model of economic development with unlimited supplies of labour. It is important to revise the plan early to take into account the need to transform the traditional and modern sectors of the economy and leverage the rapid growth of the population as a source of development.

Keywords: economic transformation, development plans, economic policy, planning philosophy

JEL classification: O20, O21, 024, E61, E69

1. Introduction

Nigeria's National Development Plan, 2021-2025 (GoN, 2021) is the seventh in a series of medium-term development programmes. Historically, the first was the Development and Welfare Plan for Nigeria, 1946 (GoN, 1946)[1] and the second, the Economic Development Plan, 1955 (GoN, 1955). The two plans were products of colonial rule. While the former sought the modernization of traditional economic practices, the latter reflected the planning philosophy of decentralization, borne out of the introduction of the federal system of government in 1952. Technically, Okigbo (1985), argued that the inter-colonial plans were “an assemblage of project proposals for implementation by the various governments, in the belief that they would spur general development in the country” (Okigbo, 1985, p. 51).

The 1955 plan had other concerns which were twofold, comprising rectifying “the symptom of a wrong approach to development” frowned upon by the Select Committee of the House of Commons during the modification of the 1946 plan (House of Commons, 1948, p. viii). Stolper (1963) agreed with the British House of Commons that the 1946 plan suffered from an inability to “meet the problem of the grassroots and how to draw as many people as possible into the development process” (Stolper, 1963, p. 407). The second was the federalizing imperative of the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 that advised “decentralized decision making… which itself had been developed from below” (Stolper, 1963, p. 407). The 1955 plan attempted to correct the noted errors in the parent planning framework and adopted a different approach to planning to positively enhance the dispersal of the centres of economic activities. The four post-independence medium-term plans are 1962-68; 1970-74; 1975-80 and 1981-85.

The broad objectives of this study are to evaluate Nigeria’s development planning experience and her historical economic policy. Specifically, the study also clarifies the representative notion of development itself by drawing comparisons with NDP 2021-2025. It thus argues the need for the domestication of elucidatory international scholarship in the discursive exploration of the universal conditions for the appearance of the development phenomena. Cross-country experiences in development planning are

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[1] This refers to the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 24 of 1945, "*A Ten-Year Plan of Development and Welfare for Nigeria, 1946"* and passed by the British House of Commons. It was later laid before the Nigerian Legislative Council on 13th December 1945, amended by the Select Committee of the LEGCO and approved on 7th February 1946.

significant in characterizing the similarity of the steps necessary for activating the causality of socioeconomic transformation.

The methodology of the study adopts the qualitative approach. Data were obtained from secondary resources, especially previous and extant development planning documents, which were subjected to interpretive and content analyses against experiential magnitudes. In so doing, it took account of the relevant literature intersecting both local and international perspectives. The datasets generated and analysed in the study are publicly available and were not manipulated; they are open and available for other interested scholars. All this is important for an evidence-based juxtaposition of the contents of the development plans (1946-1985) on the one hand, and the extant NDP 2021-2025 on the other, including their informing theory and qualitative outcomes.

Also, the qualitative methodology is vital in the analysis of the objectives and planning philosophy of NDP 2021-2025 so as to yield a synthesis of evidence which, subjected to rigorous examination, will enable us to answer the question on whether the plan has a workable philosophy of substantive development against the backdrop framework of previous exercises. Therefore, the conclusion reached by the study would be ineluctable for any other scholar employing a similar methodology and relying on the same set of data. An early revision of the plan seems a reasonable inference as it would not only correct plausible drawbacks but also, help to retain the hopes invested in the return to medium-term development planning as a tool for measurable outcomes; otherwise, the purpose of national planning would become lost.

2. Brief Overview of Development Planning in Nigeria

In the planning literature, national development planning has clear objectives. Thus, Nigeria's parent plan, the Ten-Year Plan of Development and Welfare for Nigeria (1946-55) had its objectives to allocate "national resources mainly to activities that would bring about improvements in the welfare of the people, and the provision of those physical facilities which may be regarded as the minimum necessary for the general improvement of the country and its population" (Hancock, 1977, p. 34). It underscored improvement in transportation and communication infrastructure and the development of social services. The "original estimate [of the 1946 plan] was some £55 million, of which £23 million was [from] Colonial Development Welfare Fund, £17 million by loans and £15 million by means of taxes on the internal economy of Nigeria" (Falola, 1996, p. 151).

The plan provided for the investment of public resources in the industrial and agricultural sectors and incorporated an investment policy to nurture private businesses. The plan also effectively resourced state partnership with private enterprises and created the enabling environment for private sector investments to thrive. The state assumed that through the public-private partnership policy, the private sector would provide job opportunities and instil productive capacity in the people. The executing templates of the plan explicitly craved the private sector to inculcate "modern skills and production techniques (i.e. technological capability) necessary for the growth of the economy and the improvement of people's material well-being."[2] The remit of the private sector's duty was in "directly productive activities while the government concentrated on the provision of physical and social infrastructure" (Diejomaoh, 2008, p. 10). However, the development targets and welfare objectives of the 1946 plan were ultimately impaired by "poor financial resources for plan implementation, weak formulation and implementation machinery, lack of technical skills by the generalist administrators who prepared the plan and the absence of clearly defined national objectives" (Okigbo, 1985, p. 51).

The Economic Development Plan (1955-1960) acknowledged two eminent practical issues arising from the preceding plan and attempted their resolution. The first was the mistaken assumption that the local business groups or the private sector alone could develop the necessary productive capacity. The second was the concrete necessity of the constitutional dispersal of the centres of economic activities. Although the economic objectives of the 1955 national plan were not substantially different from its predecessor, the colonial state made serious efforts to assume greater responsibilities to stimulate and develop productive activities alongside the private sector. Hence, physical projects bestrode both the public and private sectoral landscapes. In other words, the revised policy position showed that any sector could spur modernization and

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[2] See "Nigeria Planning." Available at: https://photius.com/countries/nigeria/economy/nigeria_economy_planning.html. The sources were reportedly the Library of Congress Country Studies; *CIA World Factbook.*

growth. This improved policy made the plan essentially public sector-driven. Also, the federalization of economic centres in the Macpherson Constitution resulted in a multiplicity of planning methodologies. Thus, the national planning regime witnessed the integration of the economic programmes of the three regions and Lagos with the central government's plan.

2.1 Post-Independence development plans

The National Development Plan 1955 ushered the Federation of Nigeria into independence in 1960. However, its scope was extended to 1962 to enable the indigenization of planning philosophy and for Nigerians to autonomously plan their development, free from colonial control. The philosophical underpinning of the National Development Plan 1962 (GoN, 1962) states that "the basic objective of planning in Nigeria is not merely to accelerate the rate of economic growth and the rate at which the level of the population can be raised; it is also [about] an increasing control [of Nigeria] over her own destiny" (p. 3). The overarching objective was achieving “a modernised economy consistent with the democratic, political and social aspirations of the people” (GoN, 1962, p. 3). Out of the total capital expenditure of about £600 million, fifty per cent of the capital expenditure was to be financed from foreign inflows. However, the planners anticipated the failure of the private sector to source the requisite external financing for the planned expenditure. This turned out prescient. In the end, “foreign loans, in fact, amounted for only about twenty-five per cent of the realised capital investment” (GoN, 1970, p. 65).

Under the 1962 plan, major physical development projects were executed, such as the Port Harcourt refinery, the security and minting plant, the paper mill at Jebba, the sugar mill at Bacita, the Niger dam and the bridge across the River Niger at Onitsha. Many other road projects like Maiduguri-Beni Sheik, Gusau-Sokoto, Bauchi-Gombe-Yola, Shagamu-Benin and Kano-Zaria were constructed and major extensions to the seaports were carried out. An identifiable weakness was that like the preceding inter-colonial plans, the 1962 plan was mainly drawn up by foreign experts.[3] Nevertheless, the plan was not

[3] Wolfgang Stolper was the Economic Adviser to the Federal Government of Nigeria that anchored the preparation of the NDP 1962-68. His experience resulted in the book, Stolper, W. F. (1966), *Planning Without Facts: Lessons in Resource Allocation from Nigeria.* Harvard University Press. Also, an earlier scholarly article explained the issues, hopes and impediments

rated an outstanding success *qua* technical process. Okigbo (1985) observed that:

> . . . the planning in 1962 ran counter to the rational utilization of resources that could be dictated by a truly national planning . . . The procedure could not have been otherwise, given the environment of the time. The centre had remained relatively too weak to impose its will on the politically powerful regions . . . The political rivalry between the heads of the Regional Governments . . . descended into the arena of economics, which retarded the possibility of developing a truly national economy (Okigbo, 1985, pp. 87-88).

The 1962 plan has often been mistakenly labelled the first national development plan in the national literature, despite it being the third since 1946. The chronological inaccuracy is partly due to the plan being the first formulated under the sponsorship of a politically autonomous Nigerian state and that it came into being upon the scrutiny and approval of the independent Nigerian legislature. Also, as a development programme superintended by Nigeria's indigenous political leadership, it had application in a geographic sense to the whole country. As a beneficiary of previous plans, it subsumed the programmes of the self-governing regional governments as well as the Lagos capital territory plan.

The next National Development Plan was launched in 1970, instead of 1968, due to the intervening civil war. It aimed at "the possibilities of using planning as a deliberate weapon of social change by correcting defects in existing social relations in various spheres of production, distribution and exchange" (GoN, 1970, p. 7). This broad philosophical outlook had no operational magnitude hence, the planners detailed some specific objectives and goals of "a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; a just and egalitarian society; a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and a free and democratic society" (GoN, 1970, p. 29). Ekundare (1971) highlighted the plan's objectives as incorporating essential

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of the plan, Stolper, W. F. (1963), Economic Development in Nigeria. *The Journal of Economic History*, *23*(4), 391–413.

outlines of socioeconomic transformation and applauded it as a weapon of social change.

> The growth mechanism of the plan rehashed the inter-colonial classical dichotomy between the traditional and modern, agricultural and industrial sectors of the economy. As the plan stated, the . . . growth of the rural sector in Nigeria is more a process of mobilising under-utilised and non-utilised land and labour. . . . the character of the labour force, the potential for industrial expansion as leverage for economic growth is quite strong . . . Correspondingly, the need for articulate public policy and development planning has become increasingly important for effective mobilisation and rational utilisation of resources (GoN, 1970, p. 65).

The estimated cost for its execution was £1,025.367 million. The public capital expenditure was to be financed through £450.2 million (57.7%) of government budget surpluses; £106.5million (13.6%) of surpluses of public corporations; £72.3 million (9.3%); and £151.0 million (19.4%) from internal and external financial sources, respectively. The projected private sector investment was £815.8 million made up of foreign capital inflows of £412.5 million or approximately (51%) and other sources of financing amounting to £320.8 million (39%). The source of the remaining 10% was unexplained.

The National Development Plan of 1975 has been the most ambitious thus far. It had a short-range framework "aimed at facilitating the ultimate realisation of the five national objectives" (GoN, 1975, p. 9). Its broad objectives were unambiguous, an "increase in per capita income; more even distribution of income; reduction in the level of unemployment; increase in the supply of high level manpower; diversification of the economy; balanced development; and indigenisation of economic activity" (GoN, 1975, p. 29). However, the planners acknowledged that the objectives did not represent the "operational magnitudes against which the success of a plan could be unambiguously measured" (GoN, 1975, p. 29). The projected capital expenditure of the plan of ₦30 billion with a high GDP growth rate targeted a radical transformation of the economy. In exhilarating language, the plan hoped to:

> . . . raise the GDP of Nigeria by about 9 per cent per annum in real terms. [With an] estimated population growth of 2.5 per cent per annum per capita income is expected to grow at about 6.5 per cent. If this rate is maintained per capita income will double in less than twelve years and exceed the ₦700 mark in two decades. (GoN, 1975, pp. 38-39)

Lewis (1977, p. 60) in a robust scholarly contribution, characterized the plan as “surprisingly in socialist character.” This assertion is arguable as the aspirations were not in tandem with the recognized socialist characteristics of state monopoly over ownership of means of production. It is safer to agree that the goals imitated the examples of other “less developed world typically [with] a rhetorical commitment to socialist objectives, a technical commitment to neutral policy tools, and practical achievement of capitalist results” (Van Arkadie, 1972, p. 111).

The 1975 plan recognized that development is more than growth in per capita income as the “sectors whose direct impact on the bulk of the population is small . . . to spread the benefits of economic development for the average Nigerian to experience a marked improvement in the standard of living” (GoN, 1975, p. 57). The consequent large social expansion and almost democratization of access to social services and human capacity development witnessed the enlargement of space in secondary, technical and tertiary educational institutions. The aim to overcome the noticeable shortage of higher-level human resources, due to the hitherto restriction of educational coverage, was transformational. This policy plank was necessary for human capital accumulation for the skillful management of society and the absorptive capacity to structure quality investment.

The National Development Plan, 1980 had broad goals. However, its specific objectives ranged from an "increase in the real income of the average citizen; more even distribution of income among individuals and socioeconomic groups; reduction in the level of unemployment and underemployment; increase in the supply of skilled manpower to the reduction of the dependence of the economy on a narrow range of activities." The objectives also propounded "balanced development – that is, the achievement of a balance in the development of different sectors of the economy and the various geographical areas of the country; increased participation by citizens in the ownership and management of productive enterprises and greater self-reliance – increased dependence on our own resources in seeking to achieve the various objectives of society. This implied increased efforts to achieve optimum utilization of human and material resources; development of technology; increased productivity; and the promotion of a new national orientation conducive to greater discipline, better attitude to work and cleaner environment" (GoN, 1980, p. 37).

The economic targets revolved around agricultural production and the processing sectors. The planning strategy evidently favoured these sectors for the highest priority attention, having been underpinned by the preceding Operation Feed the Nation and its successor, the Green Revolution programmes. In a clearer statement of policy, the plan proposed "hastening the development of the rural areas to stem the drift of population from rural to urban areas. A rapid growth in agricultural production is indeed an essential component of the strategy of self-reliance, which is a major objective of the plan" (GoN, 1980, p. 38).

The plan was launched during the partial stabilization of the production of crude oil and so, income from the oil mining sector formed the mainstay of government revenue and foreign exchange earnings. It was in this context that the planners consciously reiterated the policy of the 1975 plan to apply "the resources generated by these wasting assets to ensure an all-round expansion in the productive capacity of the economy so as to lay a solid foundation for self-sustaining growth and development in the shortest time possible" (GoN, 1980, p. 38). Altogether, the plan proposed the

> . . . consolidation and maintenance of existing facilities to prevent the gains from the recent development efforts from being lost through rapid deterioration of productive assets... and diversification of the economy away from overdependence on the petroleum sector . . . In this regard, the export potentials of textiles, tyres, coal, pulp and paper, etc. and those of cocoa, groundnut, palm produce, rubber, etc. will be actively exploited . . . (GoN, 1980, pp. 38-39).

The 1980 plan had the distinguishing characteristics of the first comprehensive economic blueprint under the new presidential system. It suffered from a repeat history of political drawbacks like the 1962 plan and its implementation was interrupted by military intervention on 31 December 1983.

The slant on historicity and content analysis situates all the previous development plans within the interactions of development phenomena. Thus NDP 2021-2025 deserves central interest to avoid past pitfalls and subsequently, to benefit from the analytic comparisons of other countries.

3. Nigeria's Development Plans in International Comparative Context

Since the Meiji restoration dynasty in Japan (1868-1912), development planning has essentially served as a key feature of the developmental state in the quest for "higher labour quality and intensity of the human capital in production-based economic activities" (Ebhohimhen, 2022, p. 103). The Soviet Union copied the Japanese planning model in 1928 and adapted it to five-year medium-term cycles from the perspective of the state's role in rapid economic development. Some other developing nation-states at comparable conjunctures, including capitalist countries like the Republic of Ireland, adopted the medium-term planning model as well to drive rapid economic growth.

India's first development plan launched in 1951 focused on the development of the primary sector. Technically, it adopted the Harrod-Domar model assumptions of the existence of a full-employment level of income, the needlessness of government interference in the functioning of the economy, the absence of likely complications in international trade, and the inherent lack of government restrictions on trade. These classical assumptions were not intrinsically sustainable and were later discarded as non-valid for a developing economy. Succeeding Indian plans have abandoned the pollyannish expectations of the neoclassical growth path, altogether. Successive plans verged emphatically towards extracting aspects of the Lewis (1954) model of economic development that involves leveraging the existence of surplus labour in the subsistence sectors to improve the pre-existing techniques for rapid industrialization and increase the marginal productivity of labour.

India's reigning 2021-26 plan has sustained the unlimited labour supplies underpinnings. Its objectives are to "double the current growth rate of the manufacturing sector by 2022 and promote the adoption of the latest technological advancements, referred to as 'Industry 4.0', that will have a defining role in shaping the manufacturing sector in 2022" (NITI Aayog, 2018, p. 20). This is in accord with the second feature of the Lewis model concerning the prospects of industrial capitalization to raise income levels in a developing economy.

China's development planning began in 1953 and was structured on the Soviet model. Thus it emphasized high rates of economic growth and industrial development with a concentration on heavy industry and capital-intensive technology. The current Chinese 2021-2025 plan may be summed up as ambitious programmes of domestic economic enlargement to build an economy with a per capita GDP of about US$30,000 by 2035. Thus, China's future growth curve aligns with the expansion and deepening of the internal market to boost domestic consumption of locally produced goods and services and reduce the disparities between urban and rural living standards (Sutter and Sutherland, 2021). This is of significance to qualitatively lift the leftover Chinese out of poverty.

Briefly, the two examples validate the need for economic expansion to generate quality employment and output increase to consistently raise wages with increasing productivity. Therefore, correlating Lewis's arguments with the Indian and Chinese programmes advise that through planning the "development policy elite paid attention to the inclusive purpose of the instrumentalist state to fashion suitable tools to creatively localise industrialisation" (Ebhohimhen, 2022, p. 103).

Nigeria ranked high among the prime countries that adopted the medium-term development planning framework soon after WWII. Compared to India and China, Nigeria started planning in 1946 and so, was ahead of India by four years and China by seven years. Nigeria also had the good fortune of the physical presence and hands-on development planning involvement of William Arthur Lewis.[4] Although NDP 2021-2025, the seventh in the planning cycle, marks a return to the medium-term planning framework, after a considerable break, it shied away from leveraging the catalytic theory of economic growth

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[4] Sir William Arthur Lewis was the Economic Adviser to the Western Regional Government that carried out far-reaching economic and social programmes, including substantive efforts at rapid human capital accumulation.

(Lewis, 1955) earlier experimented in Nigeria. Instead of focusing on output and growth, building the requisite economic institutions, diffusing knowledge, expanding the production capital base, leveraging population and resource endowment as well as enhancing governmental competence to distil their role in the growth of output per capita, the current plan is more concerned about distribution and consumption. Hence, it is riven by unsupported objectives and an almost incoherent philosophy. India's medium-term development planning is in the thirteenth planning cycle and China's reigning medium-term plan represents the fourteenth in an uninterrupted planning cycle. Each country's plan focused on aspirations for rapid economic development. Despite the substantive development outcomes of the previous planning cycles, NDP 2021-2025 unaccountably lost the requisite consistency, verve and intensity in projects-based planning.

The abandonment of projects-based planning in Nigeria since 1985 could be explicated against the paradox of the Sisyphean curse or due to temporary setbacks. Nigeria began an arduous journey afresh, through an uncharted route of rolling plans and strategies. Upon abandoning projects-based planning in 1985, Nigeria initially resorted to short-term policies-based biennial National Rolling Plans (NRPs 1990-98). Later, the country adopted strategy-based programmes, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) (GoN, 2003), after another five-year break and the Nigeria Vision 20:2020: Economic Transformation Blueprint (GoN, 2009), after two years break.

The policy-based planning model associated with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced in 1986, failed to respond to the challenges of domestic underproduction and trumped the prospects for state-led industrialization. The intervention of SAP externalities rather advanced the non-protection of infant industries and opened the Nigerian market to all manner of unrestricted competition from developed external economies. All this impinged upon the appetite for rapid development. Particularly attendant to the SAP philosophy was the radical retreat of the activist state from its hitherto propensity to organize the economy. The SAP orthodoxy strongly advocated the reduction of state investment in social capital outcomes. Consequently, the policies- and strategies-based programmes were no development plans per se. Instead, they represent attempts to cauterize the possibilities of procuring rapid socioeconomic transformation through formal projects-based planning.

4. Political Economy of Nigeria's Development Planning

A political economy analysis is offered subsequently to interrogate NDP 2021-2025 vis-à-vis Nigeria's historic development planning philosophy. This effort at scientific rigour may highlight the underlying hypotheses in the formulation of the current plan. To this end, we examine the pertinent objectives and planning philosophy; policy framework, and projected financing, including growth rate of the 2021 plan to provide a clearer understanding.

4.1 Objectives and planning philosophy

The concrete objectives of NDP 2021-2025 are difficult to locate due to the tendency to litter the plan with individualized thematic objectives. In a foreword, President Muhammadu Buhari stated that the "plan is guided by four strategic objectives, namely, establishing a strong foundation for a concentric diversified economy; investment in critical physical, financial, science and innovation infrastructure; building a solid framework and enhance capacities to strengthen security and ensure good governance; and enabling a vibrant, educated and healthy populace" (Buhari, 2021, p. 3). This statement lacks concreteness and definite milestones to eventually judge the success of the plan. In comparison, the 1970 plan held that "it is appropriate for the Government and people of the country to seek to give concrete meaning" (GoN, 1970, p. 36) to planning objectives.

The most overarching objective of NDP 2021-2025 seems to be located elsewhere; that its successful execution "cumulatively would have lifted 35 million people out of poverty and created 21 million full-time jobs" (GoN, 2021, p. 153). Accordingly, "the Government will work with multiple stakeholders to diversify revenue sources that will ensure the sustainability of social protection programmes without relying on oil revenue. Attention will be paid to targeting and identifying the most vulnerable members of society to ensure the program serves those most in need" (GoN, 2021, p. 153).

4.2 Policy framework

The discursive substance of NDP 2021-2025 prioritizes policy-based implementation strategies. The planners claim that “all the 36 states of the Federation and Federal Capital Territory Administration, as well as representatives of the local government councils and organised private sector, youths, labour unions, traditional and religious organisations among others, are all involved in the preparation process” (GoN, 2021, p. 28). This, *ipso facto* indicates centralized, top-down policy making. The non-existence of various economic programmes to integrate into a holistic national plan makes social dialogue mechanisms incapable of remedying an incurable defect. This incongruity represents an attempt to substitute trifling endeavours at consociation for complementarity. The centralizing proclivity of the planning policy flouts the erstwhile development practice and is perhaps a reversion to atavism in policy formulation. The format of consultation with subnational civil servants to conceptualize and select projects without the input of the people neglects the federal structure of Nigeria and its necessity for "decentralized decision making, developed from below" (Stolper, 1963, p. 407). In the end, the centripetalism of the plan did not result in much technical improvement.

Contemporary planners favour a private sector-led economic growth policy with claims that “the National Development Plan, 2021-2025, aims at accelerated, sustained inclusive and private sector-led growth” (GoN, 2021, p. 7). This assertion is short of an operational magnitude as it is not grounded in the immediate policy environment and may even be contradictory. The private sector-led development policy contradicts the findings elsewhere in the Global South which implicates the private sector as not inclusive. Indeed, proprietary rights are exclusive and so, the private sector cannot be compelled to deliver unexcludable public goods. Alternatively, the state would bear the cost of the proposed investments, in the long run, to be able to dictate to the private sector and ensure that transaction costs in the economy are not too high. Against the historic practice in Nigeria of the state mediation of credit for domestic private enterprise to thrive, the current private-sector-centeredness flies in the face of tested principles.

4.3 Development financing

The NDP 2021-2025 requires an investment of about ₦348.1 trillion. Government capital expenditure is estimated at ₦49.7 trillion or 14% while the balance of ₦298.3 trillion or 86% would accrue from the private sector (GoN, 2021, p. 186). There is no evidence in NDP 2021-2025 that private sector organizations declared the willingness to undertake such huge liability. The current plan repeated the errors of 1962 that the private sector could raise 50% of investment capital but realized only 25%. The plan repeated the error of the 1962 plan that saddled the private sector with a responsibility it lacked the capacity to bear. In a similar circumstance, Okigbo (1985, p. 89) highlighted similar vexing points in the 1962 plan that "how the private sector could be guided to meet this objective" was absent.

If NDP 2021-2025 planners had any consultation with the Nigerian private sector, they provided no evidence about the planned private sector projects and investment plans. It seems rather that the planners attempted to formulate investment projects for the private sector to accessorize. This would be co-constitutive with the calcification of centripetal arguments extended to non-state business organizations. While incapable of resolving the shortcomings inherent in programmes superimposed from above, the assumptions tend to neglect the divergence of the production base of the private sector.

4.3.1 *Growth Rate*

The NDP 2021-2025 has a growth rate projection that “by 2025, the effective implementation of the Plan is expected to achieve average economic growth of 4.6 per cent” (GoN, 2021, p. 3). In comparison, the 1970 plan had projected a GDP growth rate of 6 per cent but at the end of the planned period, an average growth rate of 8.2 per cent was recorded. The 1975 plan had projected a GDP growth rate of 9 per cent, to ensure a radical transformation of the economy during the plan period. The 1980 plan projected an income per head at an average of 6.6 per cent per annum of GDP as a minimum. Compared to preceding post-independence plans, save the 4% growth projection of the 1962 plan superintended by the departing colonial satraps, NDP 2021-2025 has a remarkably low growth rate projection.

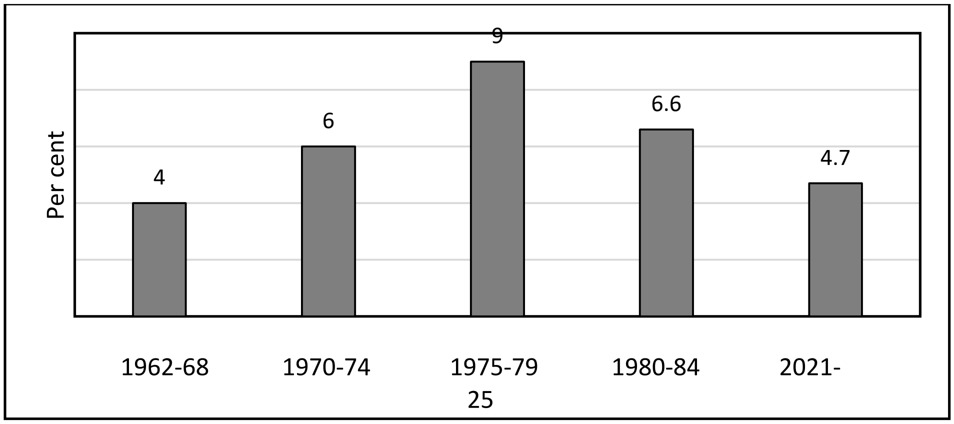

Figure I: Projected GDP Growth (Post-Independence Development Plans 1962-1980) and NDP 2021-2025

Source: Data computation by Author; based on sundry reports and documents.

Similarly, it equates anticipatory investment as necessarily flowing *pari pasu* with GDP growth. The plan seems unclear on what constitutes economic growth rates and to what end. For example, the plan envisages private investment to grow in real terms on average by 5.1 per cent within the period. The question of the minimum possible growth in the economy to be led by the private sector was unanswered. Instead, the NDP 2021-2025 gives the impression that it made an audacious claim of achieving a level of growth with the projection unaligned with a concrete investment plan. This renders the projected GDP growth without rationalization, short on ambition and so, hope purblind.

5. Evaluation of NDP 2021-2025

The NDP 2021-2025 is the second plan under Nigeria's presidential system of government. From the broad and narrow nature of previous development planning in Nigeria, two major characteristics stand out. These are meeting the needs of the grassroots through decentralized decision-making and using planning as a tool for socio-economic change. These defining purposes of planning were inadequately applied or factored into the current plan. Its philosophical goal setting appears stunted, unlike the ringing ambition of social change of the 1970 plan and the balanced development of the 1975 plan.

The evaluation of the totality of development planning in Nigeria between 1946 and 1980, arrayed against the essence of NDP 2021-2025 indicates a contradiction with the benchmark of development planning. Generally, planning has the definite purpose of the "structural transformation of the national socio-economic system to secure high and sustained economic growth and a distribution of national income which is acceptable to all parties in the society" (Temmar, 1992, p. 17). Detailed analyses of the pertinent preceding economic policies indicate the inability of the current plan to synthesize the accumulated planning knowledge, evidential checklist and tested proposals for a qualitative leap. The plan did not engage the underlying purpose and fundamental principles of development planning as socioeconomic transformation. It would be unsurprising if it fares less against comparative objectives of social change.

6. NDP 2021-2025: A Critique

There is a major snag in the national political economy conceptualization of NDP 2021-2025. This includes how diversifying revenue sources, essentially based on increasingly inelastic taxation of domestic goods, on the one hand, and social protection featuring conditional cash transfers in current national practice, on the other, can lead to the lofty goal of lifting 35 million citizens out of poverty. The ostensive anti-poverty thesis of the plan is unsupported by contemporary scholarship and revealed knowledge of development practice. Moreover, a conventional fitting methodology to achieve the objectives is unexplained in the detailed narration. This situation compounds the absence of specific projects and the operational magnitude by which the success of the plan could be measured. Without definite programmes for deliberate economic expansion, it is difficult to subscribe to the hopes of lifting people out of poverty.

The catchphrase 'to diversify revenue sources' derives from the NV20:2020 objective for "effective exploitation of the existing revenue sources and exploring new ones, e.g. solid minerals and other royalties" (GoN, 2009, p. 29). The NDP 2021-2025 appears to have reworked this policy but neglected to develop it or acknowledge its signal failure in practice. At any rate, the key policies of NV20:2020 were to replace top-down development policies with decentralized decision-making. Therefore, the broad policy goals of NV20:2020 were that:

> . . . adopting a decentralized approach to the development and implementation of poverty reduction programmes, for the citizens to have full ownership of poverty reduction strategies, with greater prospects that the strategies will be translated into budgets, programmes and concrete results, and will benefit the intended groups. That federating units ... adapt strategies to their respective circumstances, constituencies and developmental challenges (GoN, 2009, p. 19).

In addition, diversification has not been a stand-alone theme in development thought. In the objective setting of the 1975 plan, Aderinto (1985) noted economic diversification interlaced with other critical determinants. Specifically, diversification in national development literature has coexisted with "even distribution of income; reduction of unemployment; balanced development; indigenisation of economic activity" (GoN, 1975, p. 29). Failure to interlink diversification with major landmarks suggests that the NDP 2021-2025 policy represents an incorrect comprehension of economic philosophy and so, resonates with a confusing objective setting.

Another substantial planning problem relates to social protection in Nigeria, which currently revolves around conditional cash transfers (CCT). Aiyede et al. (2017) found that the Care of the People (COPE) form of social protection operationalized in conditional cash transfer could contribute to poverty alleviation, even though it is not the panacea to making poverty history. Other studies find noticeable gaps in COPE's multiple objectives covering health, education and investment. A Friedrich Elbert Foundation study established that "the programme's design is not necessarily well suited to the needs of households… This is indicative of poor implementation of social protection programmes in Nigeria" (FES, 2018, pp. 34, 43). In Uruguay, studies found that CCT is not effective unless benchmarked against certain indices like “the impact on school attendance, child labour and labour supply” (Borraz, 2009, p. 260). The studies found that CCT yielded “zero or negative impact on child labour ... a negative effect for girls in the capital, Montevideo (Borraz, 2009, p. 258). In other words, "the literature generally does not find significant impacts of the [CCT] programmes on labour supply" (Borraz, 2009, p. 260).

There are similarities between Nigeria and Uruguay in CCT ineffectiveness but dissimilarities concerning clearly defined benchmarks. An example of similarity is the rampant disregard for the threshold of the entrance to CCT. Significantly, "the threshold to enter the programme has not been respected in the practice" (Borraz, 2009, p. 261). A dissimilarity is that Nigeria's CCT is bereft of clearly sustainable anti-poverty parameters. All this could explain why in Nigeria there is a large number of out of school children, poor health outcomes and a rising overall misery index which seems unaffected by CCT and explicated by rising multidimensional poverty. In Nigeria, the urban-rural contradiction is not resolved by CCT, instead, official findings are that multidimensional poverty is "higher in rural areas, where 72% of people are poor, compared to 42% of people in urban areas. Approximately 70% of Nigeria's population live in rural areas, and 30% in urban areas" (NBS, 2022, p. 24).

The NDP 2021-2025 seems also uncertain about the need to privilege budgetary cycles as necessarily derivative from the plan. An example, the annual budgets of various Nigerian governments for 2023, the first in the presumably five budget cycles since the launch of the plan in 2022, do not claim practical sources from the plan. Even the Federal Government Budget 2023 did not accept the key norms of NDP 2021-2025 hence "the parameters underlying the 2023 [FGN budget] deviates from the projections in the NDP 2021-2025; for instance, the real GDP growth is projected at 3.75% in 2023 compared to 4.39% in the NDP… the inflation rate is projected to average 17.16% in 2023, and the 14.93% projected in the NDP for 2023" (GoN, 2023, p. 16).[5] The detailed items of budgetary expenditure were not designed to capture the centrality of physical projects to lift people out of poverty and create 21 million full-time jobs. The capital expenditure outlay for the FGN 2023 budget cycle of "₦6.46tn is 30% of total expenditure" (p. 23).

The planning philosophy of NDP 2021-2025 feeds into the set of free-market policies which subordinate the state. This is not only evidenced in its

[5] Public Presentation of Approved 2023 FGN Budget – Breakdown & Highlights presented by Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Budget & National Planning, 4th January 2023.

vigorously pushing the argument about private sector-led growth. Also implicated in the rigmarole is a negation of the erstwhile practices of emphatic state determination of the impact of development plans by measurable milestones in physical capital accumulation, economic projects and welfare programmes successfully executed by the government. All this has reduced the planning philosophy of the 2021-2025 plan to indistinct slogans if not confusing fancies.

The NDP 2021-2025 panders to a policy of centripetalism instead of solidifying federalizing politics. Thus, it radically diverges from the tested norms of dispersal of the centres of economic action operationalized since 1955. The susceptible assumption appears to be that since the central government has adopted a plan, the state governments would necessarily implement it. This is wrong-footed and counterfactual. Perhaps it indicates incorrect thinking resulting from an apparent loss of institutional memory of what a truly national plan entails. The history of development planning since 1955 has significant characteristics. The regions had their plans independent of the central government plan. All the subnational and central plans coexisted and each structure of government implemented its plan. Consequently, the National Economic Council (NEC) was created in 1955 to harmonize the various subnational and central government plans or resolve areas of duplication and eliminate project overlap. This is the context, origin and meaning of national development planning.

The NDP 2021-2025 is not a product of the subnational governments and so, does not capture their peculiarities and would not enjoy the force of law in their individual territories. In other words, national planning in the Federation of Nigeria necessarily demands coordinating the plans of the thirty-six subnational governments, the Federal Capital Territory alongside that of the central government. A national plan would emerge from the amalgam of the various documents. Notwithstanding the stated consultation with representatives of the subnational governments and civil society, NDP 2021-2025 is at best the development plan of the Federal Government of Nigeria. Even though it is the central government, it is only one of the thirty-seven governance structures in Nigeria. It goes without saying that the top-down policy approach instituted in Nigeria with the adoption of SAP was reinforced in NDP 2021-2025. The plan is not a country-wide effort nor does it subscribe to the analogous consensual normative and inclusive parameters for the federalization of centres of economic activities. Also, primarily due to the absence of the various plans of the subnational governments, the ostensible national plan had no areas of duplication to eliminate or project overlap to reconcile.

Furthermore, the Nigerian private sector or indeed, any private sector in the Global South has not been the strong bulwark ascribed by the reigning free-market orthodoxy; especially, the private sector cannot be guided to invest in any enterprise in which it cannot maximize profit. The contemporary neoliberal musings in the national political economy neglect the fact that the private sector itself needs the full mobilization of resources by the state and is thus, competing with the public sector for national resources. This partly explains why the organized private sector in Nigeria has not attracted the percentage of investment required to fund its specific projects and why it is struggling to substantially aid the state in job creation or lead growth. It follows that the borrowed theoretical constituents of NDP 2021-2025, besides being not derivative from successful past experiences, were not adapted to the concrete Nigerian milieu. This unenviable situation could affect the plan's hopes to be impactful in reducing poverty.

The private sector in Nigeria is ever more becoming an appendage to the public sector and the state bureaucracy, increasingly less of an independent entity. The uncritical acceptance and adoption of foreign-crafted ideas impairs the autonomous action of both sectors. As Bodenheimer (1971) found, "when the private sector is largely controlled by foreign interests, and when the state bureaucracy itself relies on material and ideological support from abroad, the 'autonomy' of the state bureaucracy [for an independent path of development] must be illusory" (Bodenheimer, 1971, p. 163).

According to Diejomaoh (2008), the SAP orthodoxy argument meant "the production of most goods and services left to the private sector, dominated by commercial activities and foreign trade, and peasant agriculture, and prices largely determined by the market" (Diejomaoh, 2008, p. 10). However, this market policy failed and resulted in a crisis of development. Importantly, the crisis of the local private sector seems oblivious to the planners. The industrial sector produces less than the country needs; most times, private sector-managed industrial production is less than half of the installed capacity.

Without the uplift of the production base both in quantity and quality, the expectation of private sector-powered growth will be futile. The planners needed to privilege the transformation of the totality of the mode of production to develop the economy.

Regurgitating the same assumptions about the market is unhelpful and testifies to the ineffectiveness of uncritical acceptance of free-market assumptions in developing economies. The effective experience of the last thirty years or more of surrender to market forces and veneration of borderless capitalism has defenestrated governance and governability such that Nigeria has been pursuing confusing national objectives. Nigeria produces school leavers she cannot employ, raw materials she cannot convert to finished products and, without the ability for external competitiveness, opened the socio-economy to social dumping. Nigeria exports crude oil and imports petroleum products; sells hides and skin, cocoa beans and cereals and imports shoes and leather bags, cocoa beverages, baby food and pasta. With the implementation of market-based policies, government competence has withered and practically fallen into desuetude.

The planners ceded the drivers of development to the private sector without an understanding of the history of Nigeria as the creation of the private sector. It is instructive to put the matter of the private sector in perspective. Nigeria as currently constituted largely represents the trading areas of the United African Company (UAC). According to Tamuno (2011), the establishment of the UAC involved the acquisition of several small trading companies in the Niger Delta and Atlantic shore bed. In the course of the events, the UAC forcibly pacified resistant indigenous people and put other European competitors to flight (Alagoa, 1964). It organized far afield and its later acquisition of a Royal Charter yielded two fundamental implications. The first is significant as the Royal Niger Company led by Sir George Dashwood Taubman Goldie recruited Captain Frederick Lugard to command its Royal Niger Constabulary. Subsequently, Nigeria's Ministry of Defence states, "in 1889, Fredrick Lugard had formed the incipient body of what was to be known in 1890, as the West Africa Frontier Force (WAFF), in Jebba, Northern Nigeria. The new unit expanded by absorbing the Northern Nigeria-based elements of the Royal Niger Company (RNC) Constabulary. The two regiments were used for expeditions during the annexation of Nigeria between 1901 and 1903" (MOD, 2021).

The RNC's muscular pursuit of the so-called freedom of trade mantra resulted in the expansion of exclusive economic zones into larger spatial geographies, coastal and inland. As the UAC/RNC extended octopod tentacles into the hinterland, it covered practically the same physical reach as contemporary Nigeria. Second, the ruthless method of the UAC/RNC brought the British state and public fully into the picture and led to the subsequent divestment of RNC interest in Nigeria. According to Cheta Nwanze (2019), following the revocation of its charter, the Royal Niger Company sold its holdings to the British government for £865,000,[6] thus, the constitution of the official Nigerian state. Consequently, it is an ahistorical narrative that the private sector in Nigeria was ever inhibited by the state and sheer misrepresentation of facts that it is under mortal threat.

On the contrary, even in the era of the mixed economy approach to development, the state vigorously partnered with private sector organizations in capital formation to enlarge socioeconomic possibilities. Indeed, the private sector that birthed the Nigerian state was never denied leadership in the economy. An extreme ideological agenda concealed in NDP 2021-2025 is to further push the radical retreat of the state from profitable sectors. So doing would restrict the state to minimal social service delivery and enfeeble state interventions in the market. Nevertheless, this subscription to counter-development ideology is a faulty style of characterization of the role of the state in developing economies. As Aoki, Kim and Okuno-Fujiwara (1996) and Evans (2010) reported, in Latin American and Southeast Asian countries, development entailed the state mediation of the purity of free-market economics.

Significantly, development planning is a major attribute of a developmental state, "whose ideological underpinnings are developmental and … seriously attempts to deploy its administrative and political resources to the task of economic development" (Meyns & Musamba, 2010, p. 10). Another important characteristic of the developmental state is the existence of a progress-inclined

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[6] The story was first published on April 28, 2014. See: https://africasacountry.com/2014/04/historyclass-who-sold-nigeria-to-the-british-for-865k-in-1

elite, able to visualize great social and economic programmes for the good of the people. This caring state commitment to the moral good is increasingly enervated and firmly rejected by NDP 2021-2025. The ostensible return to formal medium-term development planning in Nigeria ought to copy the good examples of the critical determining properties and success factors of the instrumentalist state system. Instead, the plan espoused leaving development to the market for project determination. Therefore, the plan privileges a continuation of the logic of the divestment of interest of the state from the economy and abdication of its vanguard role in the lives of the people. This is tantamount to leaving the welfare of the citizenry to be unattended, a guarantee for widespread immiseration. The plan fails to take account of the earlier substantive efforts and resolves no major challenges. Nigeria's elite, "too slanted towards transnationalisation of policy thought, crafted in the West for domestic consumption" (Ebhohimhen & Akenzua, 2018, p. 15) seems indifferent to autonomous development thought.

The anti-developmental state caprice was exemplified in the contradictory expectation of the market to deliver unexcludable public goods while it is currently unable to supply the excludable public goods and services required by society. This confusion would make the country assume the worst of the binary features of a watchman state guarding against limited dangers and letting people generally look after their welfare. This derision of the paternalistic state system neglects that it pushed the frontiers of development in Nigeria. The inability to think through the fuzz and offer alternate programmes to tackle mass poverty is evinced by the faulty assumption that welfare would trickle down to the populace from a development construct that excludes industrialization. This situational proposition ensconces Nigeria's careless elite class in fragile cocoons. The local elite spewing ideas incubated in Western capitals and institutions even lack the ability for leadership performativity and are bereft of commensurate skills for the domestication of success factors from the Global South. As Nigeria's elite worships on the altar of false gods, the imperialistic bind tightens and it becomes the victim of multiple crises, a "direct consequence of the crisis resulting from Western theories" (Aboyade, 1983, p. 140). Indeed, the contemporary catchphrase of the private sector as the engine of economic growth is not altogether new in Nigeria's development thought. However, without an empirical base in the immediate milieu, the prodigious anticipations for development through the private sector as an engine room of growth will become forlorn. Ebhohimhen (2017, p. 155) argued that the "distinct accomplishments of the state informed arguments about replicability in the Global South." Anyway, a weak Nigerian state system would be inexorably hamstrung to effectively supply any form of public goods.

The NDP 2021-2025 planners' attitude is similar to promoting the Thatcherite ideological politics that raised but eventually dashed the high hopes that the most useful economic system thrives in a democracy of private property ownership (Katwala, 2013). For Nigerian governments to relinquish their roles in the national political economy and become the agents of a watchman state may not conduce to private sector growth. Despite the dubious bourgeois swerve of the plan, it is trite logic that Nigeria requires strong state action, including in the regulation of the market. Without a strong state, the Nigerian "society would be mired in immobility and inclusive development will fail, whether in the economy, social and political or the whole gamut of superstructural relations" (Ebhohimhen and Akenzua, 2018, p. 9).

Furthermore, since the material well-being of the people appears neglected and subordinated to the interplays of the market, the ensuing watchman state may yield at least, one predictable outcome that could lead to the creation of a permanent underclass (Freire, 2005). This should be deeply concerning as it entails persons without aspirations to higher standards, reproducing and raising offspring without ambitions to be worthy members of society. The phenomenon of the permanent underclass would necessarily generate a consequential need to contain the visible risk of "dangerous classes" to the dominant class in society. Such "individuals bereft of economic function and social worth … the relative surplus population which is superfluous to capital's average requirements for its own valorisation" (Marx, 1876[1976], p. 782) represent the most visible threat to state stability. It is costly to increasingly subject the surplus population to the violent discipline and penal instruments of the state. The several security operations to contain the risk (Shammas, 2018) of state failure and the spate of banditry and kidnappings for ransom (Osumah and Aghedo, 2011) inhere epistemic lessons of the wrongness of cavalier treatment of the state social and welfare obligation to the people.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

We have argued that the National Development Plan 2021-2025 represents a welcome return to predictable planning methodology and tools. However, the plan fundamentally diverges from the nature and character of previous project-based plans, promulgated between 1946 and 1980. The current plan adopts uncritical and questionable free market theories, which would hamstring the Nigerian state from interposing in the market to manage the major economic variables and protect national interests. Similarly, the plan inadequately espouses the major characteristics of transformation and fails to seize the high moments in Nigeria's development planning experience.

The plan also mischaracterized the fundamental ambition of development and divorced it from the conferment of material welfare on the people. The plan is opposed to the execution of physical projects and welfare programmes as the historical standard proof of the impact of development. The other contradiction is that the private sector is assigned the role of driving development but cannot selflessly lead economic growth. This is astounding since the private sector is not an altruistic operator; it is driven by the profit motive. Therefore, the policy framework seems to subscribe to nonconventional ideas of development.

The applicable objectives and planning philosophy, methodology and policy thrusts lack substantive transformative iterations. The disembowelled rhetoric of the plan places it in jeopardy due to its deficient grounding in the impactful historical environment and diminishes the conceptual rapid economic growth. This problem chiefly makes its objectives puny, contestable and even unrealizable as it squanders the faith reposed in the inevitability of progress. All this threatens the confidence invested in the return to medium-term development planning as a tool of measurable development outcomes.

We suggested that the National Economic Council hitherto facilitated economic policy formulation, encouraged the planning process and coordinated the emergent plans against project duplication and programme overlap. However, the NEC currently dabbles into macroeconomic issues in which it lacks the necessary capacity; its members are bereft of the cognate training and expertise. It is imperative for the NEC to borrow a leaf from the past of holistically structured national development plans, incorporating the plans of the subnational governments. As a vital macroeconomic measure, the National Economic Council should revert to its statutory function and execute its traditional role as the coordinator of the various economic policies of the subnational and central governments.

The ensuing planning exercise should be unencumbered, the subnational structures allowed free rein to adopt independent planning parameters and not be harangued into the uniformization of planning philosophies. The subnational governments need to own the planning tools they find appropriate for their environment. This is essential to refocus the available scientific temper to engage the *zeitgeist* to drive the national economy through innovative technology and produce the requisite needs of society. All this means that the Nigerian state system has to reclaim instrumentalist and developmental attributes to facilitate rapid economic growth and the provision of critical physical and welfare infrastructure. Qualitative state action should include encouraging and equipping the various Nigerian governments to resuscitate their propensity to organize the economic lives of the citizenry. The conferment of material welfare on the people should not be given short shrift.

Overall, NDP 2021-2025 should be subjected to an early review to align it with Nigeria's development experience and to appropriate analogous gains in the Global South. Such a revised plan needs to focus on output and growth, developing economic institutions, knowledge diffusion, capital accumulation and recognition of population resources to leverage the growth of output per capita. Therefore, it is necessary to return to a workable theory of development such as the Lewisian quality model, which aspects have been previously applied and are still found attractive in the Global South.

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