



The Ideology of Sufficiency of Colonies, Fiscal Colonial Policies and Economic Development in Colonial Nigeria.

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Abstract

Economic underperformance in African countries has continued to spark scholarly discourse to identify the root cause of the problem. While some scholars have blamed colonialism, others have argued that differences in colonial experience in relation to different local circumstances were a determining factor. However, the British policy of making colonies pay for their administration through local sources is often mentioned in colonial historiography but rarely explored adequately. Against this backdrop, this paper examines the structure and efficiency of the British policy of colonies supporting themselves and its effects on colonial spending on administration, modern transport and communication systems, education, and health. The qualitative content analysis method of research was adopted for the realization of the research objectives. The study finds out that the policy was the British initiative to achieve a balance in its mission in West Africa without diverting the British taxpayers' money. Contrary to the dominant perspective which sees nothing positive about the colonial economy, the study contends that despite the exploitative tendencies of the colonial taxation system, it left Africa better than it met it in terms of material development, and laid a foundation for economic development, which post-colonial Nigeria failed to capitalize on.

Keywords: Self-sufficiency, Exploitation, Fiscal Colonial Policies, Economic Development, Colonial Nigeria





Introduction

The impact of governance is dependent on how well revenue is generated and spent. Thus, the question of fundraising was of great concern to the British since the early phase of colonial rule in Nigeria. Consequently, debates on the most viable ways to generate revenue locally for financing colonial administration and the infrastructures needed received serious attention. Central to the debates was the need to create an enabling environment that made it possible for colonies to finance themselves and minimize anxieties over budget deficits. Hence, the British policy which required colonies to support or sustain themselves, was predicated on the cost and benefits of colonisation. This is because empire-building was an expensive enterprise that drained taxpayers' money from the treasury of the colonizers.

The British seemed to have realized that the amount spent on overseas territories was not the issue, but how they were funded. Against this backdrop, a new phase in the political economy of colonialism, marked by a unique fiscal and monetary system evolved, with profound impacts on individual colonies across Africa. One of the colonial policies that reflected this policy and helped shape the colonial economy in Nigeria, was colonial taxation. Taxation in colonial Nigeria was itself based on the resource potential of the different areas under British rule. Together with public expenditure, industries that served colonial objectives were encouraged at the detriment of others, primarily to promote expansion in economic activities that empowered each colonial territory to finance its administration. In the process, however, job opportunities were created, which promoted economic development and set Nigeria on the path to becoming self-sufficient.

This paper is a departure from the dominant discourse on the theme of colonial taxation, which tends to focus almost entirely on its role in the exploitation and underdevelopment of Nigeria. It examines the overall impacts of colonial taxation on the Nigerian economy and society on a balance sheet, against the background of the British strategy of colonies achieving self-sufficiency.

The Colonial Magic of a Balance Sheet

The completion of the scramble for the partition of Africa increased the number of people under the control of the British to 43 million



people, covering a quarter of the globe.¹ Governing such a large overseas territory was considered costly in the light of historical facts. In ancient times, the availability of resources limited the extent to which an empire could expand. Herodotus, popularly referred to as the father of history, has on this backdrop averred that the expansion of King Xerxes of Persia was limited by financial constraints.² The same was true for the Romans, who were reported to have reconsidered their push for territories in response to mounting costs.³ Although the imperialist of the 19th and 20th centuries were better equipped owing to their industrial and technological edge, they recalled with a deep sense of nostalgia, the challenges of the preceding years of imperialism.

British scholars at the beginning of the 19th century concluded that empire-building had never been a source of great wealth to Britain.⁴ Thus, it was perceived as a misleading state ideology, capable of draining the resources of the state. According to a renowned critic of British imperial expansion abroad, J. A. Hobson, the economic opportunities colonies offered, were in no measure equaled to the cost of running them and may in fact, end up swallowing the national resources of Britain.⁵ The arguments of empire-building pessimists seemed to have resonated with the British government. For instance, initial plans made by Joseph Chamberlain for the development of tropical Africa, through financial aid during the early phase of colonial rule were turned down by the Colonial Treasury Department.⁶ Consequently, British administrators and financial experts fashioned out a plan that would require colonies to support local expenses without assistance from London. The initiative was meant to limit British spending abroad.

The British policy, which required colonies to be self-sufficient at the relief of the state's treasury, was the colonial magic of achieving balance in their colonial enterprise in West Africa. It was thought out to enable colonies to finance themselves without causing unease amongst officials of the British treasury. Being separate units, unlike the case of French colonies in West Africa that were incorporated into a Federation with a capital at Dakar, British colonies were expected to be responsible to themselves politically and economically. However, support could be given by the colonial state in difficult times to ensure that important projects were not halted.⁷ According to Richard Frost, it was based on the principle of self-help – however, the British soon realized that the policy would be a mockery of itself if economic opportunities were not created to make it work.⁸ Hence, the provision of an environment that was conducive for business to flourish. He further observed that the policy was also aimed at achieving financial



independence for Africa, without which political independence would be without a solid foundation.⁹ In this sense, the indirect rule system was also considered a political path to self-government, to augment economic independence.

Although his argument is partly true owing to the increased revenue that accrued to the native treasury, which was practically left in the hands of Nigerians, especially in the closing decade of colonial rule, it appears to be secondary. The reason is that the policy was primarily influenced by historical antecedents and economic realities in Britain. Therefore, the rationale behind the policy of colonies supporting themselves also raises serious questions on the purpose of colonization; whether it was driven by financial gains, prestige, or the civilization motive, often advanced by the proponents of colonialism.

In simple terms, the self-sufficiency doctrine of the colonial state was anchored on the principle of "no free ride for the colonized people of Nigeria", as everyone was required to work, earn, and pay the bills in order not to drain the economy of the British. Similarly, it forms the basis for an objective cost-benefit analysis of the colonial economy. During the first decade of the 20th century, the British seemed to have realized its objective, as the bulk of colonial expenditure came from revenues generated locally. The imperial government felt relieved because there was a need for an increase in domestic spending. After all, industrial growth in Britain had slowed down, and the resources to meet increasing demands were on the decrease.¹⁰ The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria fits into this plan, as the rich resources of the port cities of the South were used to assist the relatively poor landlocked North. Thus, colonial taxation, one of the major sources of revenue for the colonial state, played a dominant role throughout the colonial epoch and influenced and shaped the experience of Africans, who were affected by it. Where locally generated revenues were high, social investments in education, hospitals, and modern transport systems were proportionately high, and vice-versa.

An Overview of the Perspectives on Colonial Economy

Debates on the nature of the impacts of the colonial economy in Africa have not been settled. Some of these contentious debates have been detailed in a plethora of scholarly works.¹¹ For convenience, the storms of controversies surrounding the topic may be categorized into two. First, the colonial economy benefitted the colonizers tremendously but was completely destructive for colonized territories. This perspective sees the colonial era as fundamentally



parasitic in all its practices. Second, it was a balanced sheet because it produced mutual benefits for both the colonized and the colonizers. For this school of thought, the colonial economy produced a symbiotic relationship that was both a blessing and a curse for Africa. A critical look at the content of their claims in relation to the facts on the ground becomes imperative.

Lugard's theory of colonization has dualized the mission of the British in tropical Africa while denouncing pure philanthropic gestures. His conceptualization of colonization was that of the British deploying their resources, brains, and technology to uplift the backward status of the "uncivilized people", who were required to reciprocate by providing the industrial needs of Britain.¹² The above mission statement by one of the foremost theoreticians and practitioners of colonial rule implies that colonial enterprise in Nigeria was intended to provide mutual benefits to both participants. Lugard identified the introduction of modern transport systems, health facilities, building of schools, fair trade and the competition they engendered as well as the maintenance of law and order as some of the benefits Nigerians derived from British rule.¹³

Akin to the Lugardian theory, A.G. Hopkins was objective enough to emphasize the primacy of economic factors in British colonial venture in Africa. He argued that although the maximization of profits was the major motive of colonization, the colonized people, however, benefitted from the booming international trade that resulted from it.¹⁴ He based his argument on the fact that the external trade created economic opportunities that were hitherto, nonexistent, and the ability of the colonized to purchase European goods, which sold for exorbitant prices.¹⁵ Similarly, the British merchant during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, E.D. Morel, has poignantly brought out the overriding motive behind British imperialism. He observed that "commerce took and kept us in West Africa; it is the fons et origo of our presence. The day that ceases to be so, West Africa will cease to be of use to the empire".¹⁶

The foregoing shows that colonialism was borne out of the economic imperative of the British to expand and gain, not to lose. The trade imperative in the argument of Morel was informed by the fact that capitalism derives its strength by expanding to include others. In the process, surplus value is created, through the accumulation of capital. Therefore, the British expansion into Nigeria was a stage in the development of capitalism. Conversely, Morel commended the efforts of Europeans in Nigeria, calling it a blessing that must be consolidated, so that in the future, no one will dare contest the benefits of British

suzerainty over Nigeria.¹⁷ This has beyond reasonable doubt echoed Lugard's dual mission of colonization in Nigeria.

On the other hand, British colonial rule has been narrowed down to a single mandate. According to Ebere Nwabuani, it was a zero-sum game because the developing Indigenous economy was destroyed and an economy that focused entirely on the demands of the British economy was imposed on the people.¹⁸ The outcome is thought to be unpleasant because the prices of primary products were drastically reduced while those of European manufactured goods, increased exponentially. For Ebere, Nigeria was reduced to a capitalist enclave that was not only controlled but also dependent and directed by Britain.¹⁹ Within the British capitalist scheme, the job description of Nigerians was the supply of raw materials, given their area of specialization, before the imposition of colonial rule. Hence, colonial rule and its economic programs reproduced one of the basic ideologies of imperialism; unequal relationships.

Radical African scholars such as Rodney, Cabral, and Wa Thiong'o are of the view that the contemporary realities of African states can only be understood in the light of their colonial experience.²⁰ Their major thesis is that Africa's state of backwardness is the consequence of the contradictions the colonial economy created. In addition, neo-colonialism has flourished because leaders of independent African states continued on the political, social, and economic trajectories of colonialism. It is eminently important to note that Rodney concluded that colonial rule was one-armed bandit – it underdeveloped Africa and incorporated it into the world's international capitalist system as a dependent partner.²¹ This development is believed to have reversed all the economic progress made during the pre-colonial period and set in motion the basis upon which neo-colonialism has thrived.

The thrust of the dependency/underdevelopment theory could be summed up this way: Africa's wealth was mercilessly drained; its lands were expropriated, production and terms of trade were determined by the colonialists, and the people and resources of the continent were exploited, leading to underdevelopment. In addition, where any form of development was/is seen, it was necessitated by the economic potentialities of the colonies and their usefulness to the imperial objectives of the British.

A cross-examination of the two perspectives reveals some limitations, deserving of critical observations. The parasitic view of the colonial economy appears to be hopelessly rigid and inconsiderate of certain facts about the colonial economy, which cannot be denied. They are



oblivious to the fact that refusing to accept the truth does not harm the facts on the ground. Despite the evils of the colonial economy, it left Africa and Nigeria better than it met it in terms of infrastructure, which is the material base for achieving economic development. The rigidity of the school of thought is borne out of the fact that it emerged as a counter-intellectual discourse by African scholars, to push back the frontiers of colonial historiography, which had denigrated the history of the people of Africa and made attempts to deny their roles in the making of their pre-colonial and colonial histories. Regrettably, however, it has become manipulative in that, African scholars who hold contrary views are more often than not, stigmatized and considered shameless worshippers at the imperial shrine! Thus, violating their right to freedom of intellectual perception and association.

From the symbiotic view, it is very difficult to equate the benefits that accrued to the colonizers and the colonized. The reason was that the economic interest of the British was at the forefront of its political, economic, and social relations with its subjects in colonial Nigeria. The point being made is that Nigeria did benefit from it, but not exactly as the British did. As Leigh Gardner rightly observed, the imperial government's adoption of the colonial self-supporting policy reveals the fundamental objectives of Britain's colonization of Africa.²² For instance, while the utilization of a significant percentage of locally generated revenues in Nigeria tends to undermine the argument of the excessive expropriation of funds to the British treasury, the limited commitment of the British government to financing colonial administration gives credence to the claims that it was not interested in developing its colonies.²³ The self-supporting policy it introduced and held throughout the colonial epoch, suggests its mission in Africa was to achieve 'law and order', to maximize profits at the lowest cost possible. This contradictory operation of the British government has raised questions on its usefulness and the nature of its impacts on its colonies.

Be that as it may, the historian has a sacrosanct duty of analyzing historical events dispassionately and in the light of facts and figures. The position of this paper is that the colonial economy was beneficial to both Nigeria and the British in several ways. However, the benefits the British derived from it far outweigh that of Nigeria, given the motive of colonization and the fact that the development that came about was meant to facilitate the objectives of colonialism.



The Unity of Opposites

Colonial taxation was the life wire of the self-sufficiency policy of the British. It became one of the most difficult issues in the relationship between the British colonialists and their subjects in Nigeria and other British colonies in West Africa. In most of these colonies, over-emphasis on tax collection strained relations with the locals and also undermined the maintenance of law and order. It should however be noted that taxation combined with other British policies to facilitate the realization of colonial objectives in Nigeria. Some of the major policies were on land tenure, labor, transportation, and agricultural production. The role of colonial taxation in exploitation and promoting economic development in Nigeria can only be appreciated in relation to the above colonial policies.

Agriculture in most parts of Africa was subsistent. Land was controlled and transferred to those in need of it by traditional rulers, who collected taxes on them.²⁴ In addition to local trade, there were numerous long-distance trades in pre-colonial Africa, which were inhibited by low population despite their abundance of land, high cost of transportation, and low per-capital income.²⁵ The fact that cash crop production formed the basis of the colonial economy, the question of land, labor, and transport systems became critical to the colonial state. The seriousness of the colonial state in promoting the cultivation of groundnut, palm oil/kernel, cotton, coffee, rubber, banana, pineapple, and cocoa was reflected in the setting up of botanical gardens and research centers across Nigeria. They introduced improved varieties of seeds and provided extension services for their cultivation. Consequently, colonial policy on land was chiefly aimed at making large tracts of land available for cultivation in the interest of British imperialism.²⁶ It was achieved through the promulgation of laws on land between 1900 and 1910.²⁷

But to get the people attuned to their objectives, which included the need for labor, the British systematically introduced a money economy. This was achieved in three ways. First, transnational pre-existing legal tenders were demonetized. Second, labor was commoditized and paid in European coins. Third, taxes were to be paid in cash, not in kind.²⁸ With this, the people had no option but to come out en mass to work for the colonial state to earn a living and pay their bills, especially the purchase of European manufactured goods. Thus, the communal traditional system of labor was commoditized, as was the social structure of the people.



The circulation of British currency contributed significantly to the development of trade and commerce in Nigeria. Apart from the new currency regime being more portable and mobile, it was also more stable and measured to the worth of the British currency. The standard of living of a considerable number of people was gradually enhanced in what became a largely integrated economy. Socially, Nigeria's traditional exchange systems and commerce were transformed, leading to the emergence of a new elite who took advantage of greater investment in the economy. Politically, the imposition of foreign currency on Nigerians was a symbolic representation of British suzerainty over Nigeria.²⁹ Overall, it set the stage for future fiscal and monetary policies in Nigeria and the development of the banking system, which was dominated by European banks such as the West African Banking Corporation and the First Bank of Nigeria (Formerly Bank of British West Africa).

There is no doubt as to the fact that colonial banks granted loans to foreign firms at the expense of the local people. This, however, encouraged a climate of healthy competition. For instance, the discrimination against Nigerian businessmen in the granting of loans led to the establishment of local banks, especially the National Bank in 1934.³⁰ The bank enabled Nigerian businessmen to compete with foreign firms and also to challenge their dominance. In the process, some Nigerians benefitted immensely and were able to create wealth. For example, Dantata, a Kano trader in groundnuts and Kola nuts and also a distributor of European manufactured goods in Nigeria and Ghana, became the wealthiest man in West Africa because of the economic development witnessed during the period.³¹ Thus, it is unlikely that any objective observer will dispute the fact that the culture of savings and investment in contemporary Nigerian societies, is one of the positive legacies of economic modernization introduced by the British. Nigeria's regulatory bank, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), was established in 1959, as an upshoot of the fiscal and monetary policies of the colonial state.

Taxation was critical in the incorporation of Nigeria into the capitalist system and the modernization of traditional institutions. For Lugard, the absence of taxation would mean the non-existence of treasury and a measure of self-rule in the long run, because taxation was meant to promote development and enable the payment of state officials.³² In line with the British objective of increasing revenue for infrastructural development, the pre-existing tax system that exempted royals and other district heads as well as idlers and practitioners of minor occupations was considered unsatisfactory and abolished.³³ Direct and indirect taxes were introduced. Some of the direct taxes were



personal income tax, property tax, and poll tax. Although some of these taxes were levied on the people based on their income, and property ownership, others were a flat fee per person based on estimates. Indirect taxes particularly targeted revenues from trading activities and included export duties, import duties, sales tax, and excise duties.³⁴

Revenue generation was consequently transformed to the amazement of the Native Authority. For instance, revenue rose to £233, 000 during the 1920s, from an initial £ 15, 000 in the early days of colonial rule.³⁵ By 1928, a colonial department of planning and supervision was created to manage the increasing revenue to the colonial state. The department employed 11 British engineers to maintain a pipe water supply and electric light service.³⁶ A large chunk of the funds raised through taxation was invested in modern transport system. In earnest, the construction of railways began in West Africa in the 1880s and was finalized in the 1920s. In Nigeria, for example, the Lagos rail that linked up with Kano was started in 1896 and completed in 1911- Another linking Port Harcourt in the Eastern part of Nigeria to Kaduna through Enugu and Jos, was completed in 1926.³⁷ Feeder roads were equally constructed to convey cash crops to the nearest railways. On realizing that pre-existing harbors would no longer meet the number of railway deliveries, modern ports were developed in Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Calabar.³⁸

Modern transport systems reconfigured the Nigerian economy because they created a business-friendly environment that made commercial activities far more profitable over a large area. The international trade that began during the legitimate commerce of the mid-19th century was expanded upon. Commercial activities increased tremendously due to the mobility of labor and capital as well as the spread of information about market opportunities.³⁹ The movement of the Europeans into the interior contributed to the expansion of cash crop production between 1910 and 1930. For instance, groundnut production increased from 8, 000 tons to 250, 000; Palm produce rose from 270, 000 tons to 400, 000 tons.⁴⁰ Products such as cotton, Timber, and rubber witnessed similar expansion within the same period.

Furthermore, improvements in transportation and communication enhanced the mobility of people from one place to another in search of better economic opportunities. The result was urbanization, especially at the coastal termini of the railways Such as Port Harcourt and Lagos. As a result, the population of Lagos increased from less than 50, 000 in the early 1900s to over 200, 000 people in the 1950s.⁴¹



Major towns such as Kaduna, Jos, and Enugu also emerged during the period in response to the boom in commerce. Similarly, old towns such as Kano and Ibadan were modernized. Growth in commerce in some of the towns mentioned equally created conditions necessary for industrialization, though only a few extractive industries were established in Nigeria; coal in Enugu and Tin in Jos, which created employment opportunities. This was in addition to the employment opportunities created by several branches of British companies established across urban centers in Nigeria.

It is interesting to note that soft-drink bottling companies were established after World War II. Also, the United African Company (UAC) established the Nigerian Breweries Limited in 1949.⁴² The company has since then continued to contribute immensely to Nigeria's revenue. Furthermore, Raleigh bicycle and Bedford lorry plants were established in 1958.⁴³ Although it merely assembled parts of cars manufactured in Britain, it nevertheless, facilitated the importation of bicycles and Lorries and also transferred a measure of technical know-how to those they employed. In 1956, the colonial administration discovered oil in large quantities in Nigeria after decades of exploration. BP-Shell, which managed the oil sector at the time, exported Nigerian oil for the first into the international market in 1958.⁴⁴ Since the oil boom of the 1970s, the crude oil deposits discovered by the British have become Nigeria's major source of foreign earnings. The rise in oil prices in the international market and the membership of OPEC during the 70s earned Nigeria the coveted status of the largest producer and exporter of oil in Africa.⁴⁵ The role of successive leadership in Nigeria in expanding the oil field since independence is not in doubt.

In addition, proceeds from colonial taxation were also used to build modern hospitals to attend to the health needs of the people, though at the expense of traditional medicine. Investment in primary, secondary, and higher education, was another benefit that accrued to Nigeria from colonial taxation. For example, the involvement of the colonial government in financing education led to increased spending in higher education from £ 2, 513 in 1904 to £ 306, 233 in 1930. These schools not only produced manpower for Nigeria at independence but were also left behind to serve the educational needs of future generations.⁴⁶ Therefore, investment in Nigeria during the colonial period, which enhanced communication networks, harnessed human capital, and expanded trade and commerce, brought about considerable economic development.



However, the prioritization of export crops over food crops, and the delinking of the agricultural sector from local industries, underline the selfish interest of the colonial state. According to Mr. Orr, a colonial officer in Zaria, communication networks were improved so that the Northern protectorate could develop into a great cotton-exporting country.⁴⁷ Akin to his position, Hugh Clifford, during the 1920's made it clear to British researchers, companies, and colonial officers that Britain was a manufacturing country, in need of maximum raw materials in Nigeria and other British West African colonies.⁴⁸ The result was that so many people were forced to abandon local crafts and the cultivation of food crops for cash crops. On the part of the people, the abandonment was non-negotiable because it was a requirement for earning money to satisfy the demands of colonial taxation.

The neglect of food crop production led to food insecurity and created poverty, especially in rural communities, where people lacked the wherewithal to purchase European goods. The failure to either develop local industries or build new ones seemed deliberate to protect European firms from competition. Another reason that may be alluded to it, is the British decision from the onset to relate with Nigerian farmers as essentially producers and suppliers of primary products. Therefore, indigenous technology was not only discouraged but also left undeveloped. The current state of technological backwardness in Nigeria may not be unconnected to the colonial agricultural production policy, which divorced the agricultural sector from local manufacturing industries.

Instead, export crops and minerals were bought and sold abroad by expatriate firms, especially the UAC.⁴⁹ Some of the finished products that were cheaper and of greater quality suppressed the market value of locally manufactured goods when they were imported into the country. The expatriate firms undoubtedly dominated the markets in Nigeria, exploited the people, and evacuated huge profits to Britain, while investing only a little in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the expansion in trade and commerce would not have been possible without their participation in the colonial economy.

It is instructive to note that the process involved in building colonial infrastructure was both capital and labor-intensive and geared towards the advancement of the political and economic interests of the British. The construction of modern transport and communication systems was largely financed from the revenue generated through taxation. Also, wage labor for stipends and forced labor were used for the building of colonial infrastructure. On this backdrop, it has been



argued that the modern transport and communication systems were not intended to stimulate internal trade, because they were strictly situated in areas endowed with natural resources, needed by the British.⁵⁰ In the case of Nigeria, one may argue that tarred roads were not constructed to link the North and the South. At the regional level, inter-territorial railways and roads connecting Nigeria and her neighbors were not built. Consequently, internal and regional trades and traders were in the process displaced. In addition, urbanization around colonial infrastructures has led to dependence on export crops, uneven regional development, and unbalanced economic growth throughout Nigeria.

More disturbing was the fact that the hospitals and schools built from the resources and labor of the Nigerian people were limited in scope and purpose. In the case of modern hospitals, the health needs of the Europeans serving in Nigeria were prioritized over those of the local people because the best of them all was reserved for the whites. Similarly, although Western education produced an educated elite in different disciplines; some of whom won independence for Nigeria in 1960, its major objective was to produce manpower to aid the British exploitation of Nigeria.

Be that as it may, the innovations that resulted from the colonial economy rebased the Nigerian economy and stimulated growth that incidentally benefited some Nigerians. Nigeria benefitted from the expansion of cash crop production that resulted from the introduction of modern transport and communication systems. Between the 1950s and early 1970s, Groundnut, Cotton, Cocoa, and Palm products dominated Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings, accounting for more than 70%.⁵¹ Unfortunately, however, Nigeria has not done enough to improve on the infrastructure left behind by the British, despite the huge oil revenues that have been pouring into the country since the oil boom era. Even the railways, schools, and hospitals originally built to serve British imperial objectives have been left dilapidated due to poor maintenance culture. Nonetheless, colonial taxation was exploitative in all its facets. It was used to intimidate and extract surplus from the peasants. Defaulters were mercilessly dealt with to ensure compliance. It created hunger and famine in rural communities, which impoverished many families.

Conclusion

The paper has shown the nexus between the self-supporting policy of the British and its outcomes, in terms of exploitation and economic development in Nigeria. It argues that the policy was beyond

reasonable doubt business friendly because it inculcated a positive attitude of self-reliance for development in Nigerians. However, the culture of individualism fostered by the policy, brought about numerous challenges, often considered completely exploitative because it was erratic to traditional societies. What remains unequivocal is the fact that the reforms, despite their shortcomings, have modernized Nigeria to its present state. The challenges of development faced by Nigeria today are partly due to the failure of successive administrations to build on the positive trajectories of the colonial economy while dismantling the retrogressive ones, such as the non-linkage of the agricultural sector to local industries. An example of irrational economic policies in Nigeria could be seen in the one which seeks to fight poverty by transferring the sum of ₦ 8, 000 to the poorest of poor families for six months. The plan is not only retrogressive but also a pointer to the fact that Nigeria has refused to learn from history. It is important that the government immediately reverse the policy and instead create an enabling environment for trade and commerce to thrive, as was the case during the colonial period. In this way, more taxes can be generated, and growth leading to development achieved, as the example of the British policy discussed has shown.

End Notes

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