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EVALUATING THE ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN STATE IN THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION SYSTEM

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Abstract

Over time, the welfare and protection of the people living within the state's borders have been its main goals. As it stands today, the state's function is contradictory, weakened, and conflicting. As a result, the status quo of the social reproduction system's mode of operation is maintained, and there is no equality, fairness, or justice because the Nigerian State does not act on behalf of all classes. Evaluation of the Nigerian State's role in the Social Reproduction System is the aim of this study. Using the structural theory of the state as a framework for analysis and secondary sources of data from published papers, the study discovered that the Nigerian State is operating for the sustainability of the social reproduction system's current state, which has mostly benefited the capitalist class in society. As a result, the capitalist class in Nigeria continues to oppress, exploit, and rule over the middle class and the masses. The study thus recommends that, as a matter of political will, the Nigerian State should guarantee that policies are made for the benefit of the people rather than for a particular level of class in the society, and that an African Socialism should be modified in order to accommodate all of the needs of the society by establishing equality, fairness, and justice.

Keywords: Social Reproduction System, The State, Capitalist class, proletariat/masses, socioeconomic development.

Introduction

There have been a number of debates regarding the role of the State in the social reproduction system. The social Reproduction system in this context is conceptualized to mean the recycling of the social and economic order created and perpetuated by the ruling class.Silvia (2019) noted that the idea of social reproduction originated in the context of bourgeois economics to indicate the processes by which a social system reproduces itself. This is how'social reproduction' was first conceptualized by François Quesnay (1694–1774) and other Enlightenment-era physiocrats, who, according to Marx, were the first economists of capitalist society and also the first theorists to identify the nature of productive labor with agricultural activities.

While Nicolo Poulantza and other'structuralists' Marxian scholars 'views on the role of the state argue that the state plays a role of social cohesion in maintaining the status quo, and as

such, the state is or possesses what is known as ‘’relative autonomy’’. On the other hand, Ralph Miliband and others argued that the state is purely an instrument in the hands of the capitalist class. Therefore, the state exists in order to serve the interests of the ruling class (Fred,1980)

The concept of the state is abstract. The state has different definitions and different perspectives across scholarship. Majorly, we have two competing paradigms of interpretation of the state as a concept. First, the liberal perspective: the liberal perspective views the state as a contractual structure of society. An agreement between the leaders and the led is also seen in structures of government, otherwise known as the organs of government—the legislature,the executive, and the judiciary as expressed by especially Hobbes, Locke, Rouseou (Steinberger,2008) and the second, the Marxian perspective: the Marxian perspective sees the state as an instrument of the capitalists. For Marx and Lenin, the

executive arm of the modern state is a committee to manage the affairs of the bourgeoisie. It is to be noted that this piece of work mainly dwells on the Marxian perspective of the state. Although there are variant perspectives on the conceptualization of the state across Marxian scholarship, classical Marxism, neo-Marxism, and post Marxism all draw their inspiration from the fundamentals of the earlier works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

Historically, the Nigerian state has had the rudiments of capitalism in its traditional society. The society of the pre-colonial era has the features of the slavery era and feudalism; the advent of colonialism accelerated and exacerbated the social reproduction system and planted the seeds of capitalism and globalization (neocolonialism). After independence, the colonial masters, in the process of handing over political authority to the local politicians, planted indigenous capitalists who would continue the legacies of capitalist modes of production(Princewill et al,2020). Unfortunately, the state that was supposed to play a level playing field that would address the situation in the favor of all classes has become an instrument of the bourgeoisie, both indigenous bourgeoisie and transnational capitalists. In the face of the insecurity bedeviling Nigeria, the role of the state in the socio reproduction system is worrisome. This is because the parity that has been created is enormous between the two classes in the social strata. Many of the affected places and people as a result of insecurity in Nigeria are of the lower class. The elite's class is not hugely affected compared to the lower class.

The role of the Nigerian state in the social reproduction system is assessed in five dimensions, namely: the state and the indigenous capitalists; the state and the working class and masses; the state and transnational capitalists; insecurity in the education sector; and the role of the Nigerian state and insecurity in socio-economic development**.** At the end of the study, there are a number of findings based on the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework.

Review of Literature

The literature review is structured into four sections, or headings, in order to enable understand the role the Nigerian state has played in the social reproduction system in each of the social classes.

The State and the Indigenous Capitalists

This is to examine the relationship between the state and capitalists in the social reproduction system in Nigeria.

Nigeria provides par excellence in capitalist penetration because of the full potential it has. Size, population, and resources are the main factors that will spur the penetration of capitalists (Paul, 2012). The character of the Nigerian state could be understood in terms of the genealogy of global capital accumulation; obviously, capital accumulation has shaped the relationship between the classes (Agbu, 2017). The state has become a tool in the hands of capitalist forces, which have used it as an instrument to pacify, dominate, and keep the pristine forces apart to enable capital accumulation. The neo-liberal state in Nigeria has transformed the political center, at the core of which people at the echelons, who are referred to as the 'Bureaucratic' Bourgeoisie of the government, prioritize marketization, corporatization, and outsourcing, as well as economic relationships in the pace of the social reproduction system (Agbu 2017).

The Nigerian state actors in her economic and financial policies have invariably favored the indigenous bourgeoisie at the expense of the masses; the evidence of this assertion is seen in maintaining or fostering neoliberal policy (Avadia, 2013).

Powerful interests have helped ensure that the Nigerian elite will be the primary beneficiaries of Nigerian content. He contends that by embracing Nigerian content as a new strategy of accumulation, the elite are creating more capitalistic social relations of production in Nigeria.

Agbu (2017, p. 13) asserts that "the modern Nigerian state invariably acts to preserve the existing social order in which the capitalist mode of production is not only prevalent but consistently reproduced." In congruence with the above assertion, Marx and Engels jointly expressed in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" that "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie"(Marx & Engel,1884, para 1).

In furtherance to the above insight, which argues that the state is an instrument of the dominant class, it is explained that public policy is determined by international finance capital, which uses the indigenous bourgeoisie as key stakeholders in the input and output of the nation's economy (Fasakin,2021). As a result, and in the subsequent activities, policies that help cement the social reproduction system as given by the colonial masters are apparent and ubiquitous in the hands of the bourgeoisie (Nnoli, 1981).

The relationship between the state and capitalists in Nigeria may be seen as coherent in the mode of social reproduction operations. They both work in collaboration. The indigenous bourgeoisie tries to sustain its capital-oriented maximization of profit at the expense of the masses. These practices often lead to the subjugation, suppression and exploitation of the working class in the working environment.

The state supports the status quo by making economic policies that will benefit the indigenous bourgeoisie and be detrimental to the poor masses.

The State and the Working Class/Masses

In society, the working class, or masses, is usually the majority. The bourgeoisie of any kind is but few. The masses can be subdivided into the proletariat (the working class) and the peasantry (those at the bottom of the strata).

The Nigerian state has not been a neutral institution in the operations of the social reproduction system; rather, it has acted as an instrument of domination, oppression, primitive accumulation, and the preservation of the elite (Agbus, 2018). According to Olaopoetal (2012), the consequences of these effects are that the masses have lost confidence

in government policies and the ability of the policies to salvage them from the untold hardships and imbalances. Another consequence is that, due to the helplessness and defenseless situation of the people, the masses have resorted to becoming apolitical and apathetic in order to avoid the state and have started indulging in various illegal activities such as banditry, Boko Haram, kidnappers, etc. that retard development (Okopa et al., 2012).

In addition, the Nigerian state plays a vital role in industrial relations. As a bureaucratic bourgeoisie, it supports capital whenever crucial conflicts occur between labor and capital. According to Chike and Eguavoen (2007), the policy of liberalization has removed barriers to trade and controls on the movement of capital and services, which allows market forces to play themselves out. And unfortunately, labor cannot prevail over capital, and therefore the circle continues; accordingly, state action helps in securing the base for the government elites.

This is not without the attendant consequences, as Okoye and Ifeakor (2024) noted that the consequences of the support given to the capitalist class through the state's policies are twofold: first, because political repression is used to suppress the masses, who are rather numerous in the socio-political system, there is a propensity that society is bound to give way to some level of violence by the masses. In light of this, Seteolu states, "The protests and agitations on the social implications of market reforms in Nigeria and the growing social movement for new economic initiatives point at the crisis of neo-liberalism and its inherent contradictions" (Seteolu, 2017, p. 18).

Apparently, the working class and the poor masses are the majority in the social strata of Nigeria. There is always strength in numbers; supposing that an immense and concerted effort between the dominant class is put in place, this may facilitate and give way for a "revolution." But the contending factor and challenges to this notion above are that, first, the state (bureaucratic bourgeoisie) and the indigenous bourgeoisie connived and have formed a formidable force to perpetuate this suppression and domination of the masses, hence the continued recycling of the social reproduction system. Second, the poor masses of Nigeria are disunited across religious and ethnic lines; this has caused a great challenge or obstacle to fighting back, and third, the poor masses, the jobless youth, are constantly being used by the elite to carry out their dubious agenda.

The state and the transnational capitalist

Nigeria's international economic relations rest within the unequal global capitalist system (Seteolu,2017). The character and nature of the Nigerian state global economy could be viewed in terms of the chronology of global capital accumulation and the interplay of local and global class translational capitalists and the indigenous ruling class that plunder the economies of the disadvantaged of the exploited and alienated working class in the urban center and the poor masses in the rural center, mainly peasant farmers (Seteolu, 2017). The global capital accumulation started from the slave era to imperialism to colonialism and neo colonialism. Cinti (2002), in his view, argues that reconnecting the geographies with those of production, both translocally and across geographic scales, starts to redress the losses encountered in the realm of social reproduction as a result of globalized capitalist production. Global capitalist production is intertwined with the third-world states, because without them, the leading global capitalists cannot strive or survive.

The introduction of structural adjustment in the 1980s across several African states, Nigeria included. The reforms, which aim at curtailing the economic downturn of African states instead of improving the economies of the countries, deteriorated the general situation to the

worst. The Nigerian state, within the neo-liberal paradigm as an example, abandoned its crucial role of making regulations regarding international trading and economic interactions' which should favor her citizens; unfortunately, this paved the way for transnational capitalists to hold the economy sway. For example, it is evident that the textile industry, known for its high labor intensity, lost over 120,000 workers as a result of the introduction of SAP (Okopa et al., 2012; Seteolu, 2017).

The dialectics of the existing social forces in their struggle with global capital and wealth accumulation led to the continual transformation that resulted for the betterment of the global capitalist or transnational capitalist at the detriment of the majority of the poor masses, and these developments reflect the historical unevenness of capitalist development and the importance of assessing and having insight into the political economy of individual countries. (Lawrence, 2023)

The financialization of the market also exposed the country to volatility and shocks. Yet, access to credits is granted to the country under some stringent conditions.

These economic hardships usually trickle down to the common men on the street, who are mostly affected by Nigeria's indebtedness (Onkuka&Eguakve, 2007).

Furthermore, the primary role of the Nigerian state in global capital , argues Agbu (2017), is basically to establish, maintain, protect, and expand conditions conducive to capitalist accumulation in general, without which neither foreign nor Nigerian capitalists can survive.

However, indigenous peoples all over the world have been terrorized, exterminated, abused, and misused in the capitalist world system. The homelands, economic resources, and natural resources of indigenous peoples were expropriated and transferred to colonial settlers and their descendants and collaborators, who have no interest in protecting the political, economic, civil, and social rights that are articulated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Since the indigenous peoples are not represented in academia and media institutions, their voices are not heard, and most people are misinformed and know nothing or little about them (Asafa, 2011).

From the foregoing, one can state that the independence of Nigeria in 1960 was but a trap the colonial masters set, and unfortunately, the Nigerian state fell into it. The colonial masters created a petty bourgeoisie before relinquishing political power to the indigenous people. This petty bourgeoisie is also found in state institutions, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and the traditional bourgeoisie, who shall continue to act as puppets on a string to perpetuate the conditions of the reproduction system in the face of capitalism.

Insecurity in the Education Sector and the Role of the Nigerian State

As the role of the Nigerian State has continued to favor the capitalist and her variants, the education sector is not left behind. Since the inception of Boko Haram in 2009, especially in north-east Nigeria, the educational system ranging from elementary to tertiary level has never remained the same. The damages have been colossal and pathetic. And the retrogression of the education system remains constant. To support these claims , Mohammed and Mohammed (2019, p. 81) in their empirical study of '' Analysis of the Effects of Insurgency on Education in North Eastern Nigeria: A Case Study of Yobe State of Nigeria'' revealed that '' The findings of the study revealed that educational output (human capital investment) is significantly and indirectly affected through school enrolment, school infrastructure, and school attendants by the Boko Haram insurgency, as shown by their estimates and probabilities''. Similarly , Ugwumba and Odom (2015) enumerate some of the impacts of

insurgency on education, which are interwoven, namely: falling enrolment or attendance of students, effects on teachers and teaching, impact on infrastructure, effect on education management, and recruitment of schoolchildren for child soldiers (Bilaminu, 2019). As a result of the many dropouts of schoolchildren in the North East, many of these children are being lured to join the insurgency.

The fact that the children of the 'ruling class' and the 'elites' are not found in the schools that are vulnerable to insurgent attacks has proved that the Nigerian State is but a committee representing the interests of the ruling class. This is why many of the affected schools are mainly public schools attacked by the insurgents. The education and security of these poor masses are not the priority of the Nigerian State; otherwise, the Nigerian State has what it takes to put in certain and right mechanisms to end the continuous attack on schoolchildren.

Insecurity and socio-economic development

The socio-economic development of any meaningful society is invariably in one way or another tied to adequate security. It means that, without adequate security put in place, there will be no meaningful development (Brisco & Ginkel, 2013). There are various causes of insecurity in Nigeria today, namely the level of poverty, illiteracy, and bad governance, otherwise known as state failure, among others. Yusuf and Mohammed (2020), in empirical research, found that the high unemployment rate, domestic capital formation, foreign direct investment, and government spending on education and security are negatively affected by the incessant level of insecurity, consequently retarding growth in the long and short run. Lessmore (2022) warns that if insecurity is not urgently addressed in Nigeria as a whole, it could result in massive starvation, which could lead to citizens' revolt, resulting in a monumental impact. The gravity of insecurity in the country as a whole, caused by Boko Haram and bandits commonly referred to as killer-herdsmen, would be detrimental to the socio economic development of Nigeria.

In another dimension, according to Brisco and Ginkel (2013, p. 3),

Above all, there is now growing evidence of linkages between the emergence of violent extremism and conditions of economic deprivation, bad governance, and conflict. Until now, efforts to map a correlation between violent extremist affiliation in numerous contexts and economic factors have struggled to prove any direct link.

This is to say that poverty is not solely the cause of economic retardation. The underdevelopment of Nigeria in its socioeconomic phase is mainly caused by bad governance, and the state is responsible for it. Once the state stands above and acts as a neutral between the upper class and the middle class, other aspects will fall into place for good.

Theoretical Framework

This work adopts the structuralist theory of state, which is widely associated with Nicolo Poulantza.

The structuralist theoretical model is rooted in classical Marxism. Poulantza followed the works of Marx, Engel, Lenin, and Gamsci (Martin, 2008). Marx focused on the economic level of the capitalist mode of production and did not explicitly deal with the state; he dealt only with these levels through their effects on the economy. For Lenin, the reasons are different: it is involved in direct political practice, and this is focused on essential polemical works such as state and revolution (Poulantza, 2008). This classical Marxism views the state

as an effect of class formation and struggle. Shaaperu (as cited in Aondohemba, 2017) vividly captured this: that material production in an organized society and social relations of production necessitated the emergence of the state, which rests upon economic conditions to provide the condition of social reproduction in the society. Interestingly, Gramsci developed the view that state power is nowhere necessary for the capitalist class, but the state has to combine coercion and hegemony in order to remain firm and integrate capitalist society (Jessop, 1982). To this note, Poulantza views the state as a factor of cohesion; that the state, in its role as a cohesive factor in the formation (a role that is especially important in the capitalist formation), has several functions: economic, ideological, and political. These functions are the particular modalities of the globally political role of the state: they are overdetermined by and condensed in its strictly political function, its function in relating to the field of the political class struggle (Poulantza, 1969).

This insight gives us the room to examine these ideas in relation to the role of the Nigerian state in the social reproduction system:

Nigeria's state as a factor of cohesion: Poulantza has established that the state is a unifying factor amidst class struggle; Fred Block adds that these contradictions threaten social dislocation and social rebellion, so that state managers are compelled to intervene in regulating the market in order to both protect society and the ruling class. Yet in doing so, state managers act to save capitalism by reforming the system. (Block,1980). In this context, the state is in a dilemma because it is reluctant to distort the accumulation process, but on the other hand, it faces pressure to intervene to ameliorate the economic and social strains produced by capitalism (Block, 1980).

In Nigeria, the state assumes this position in its mode of policymaking and implementation. In 2012, when the fuel subsidy was removed, the capitalists would benefit enormously while the proletariat would suffer. As a consequence, this led to massive protests by various civil society groups and the masses. The Nigerian state then intervened in order to curtail the situation and was able to placate the masses through the introduction and implementation of the subsidy social programs, which aimed at cushioning the effects of the fuel subsidy removal. However, against this backdrop, as opposed by the instrumentalist, Miliband argues that "There may be occasions and matters where the interests of all classes coincide. But for the most part and in essence, these interests are fundamentally irrevocably at odds, so that the state cannot possibly be their common trustee." (Miliband, 1969). For Miliband, there is no way the state will act as neutral in the midst of a conflicting and irreconcilable class struggle. Nevertheless, in response to this, Poulantza buttresses that:

This means that if the function of the state in a determinate social formation and the interest of the dominant class in this formation coincide, it is by reason of the system itself: the direct participation of members of the ruling class in the state apparatus is not the cause but the effect, and moreover a chance and contingent one, of this objective coincidence (Poulantza, cited in Blackburn 1968, p. 25).

This explains the fuel subsidy scenario in Nigeria; the interests of the capitalists coincide with those of the state, and it is because of the character and formation, which are the effects of the social reproduction system.

Ideological disposition: the role of ideology in the state apparatus is also very essential in understanding the concept of structuralist propositions. For Poulantza, he considered the constitution of the ideology to be the church or mosque, the political parties, and the unions. These groups are ideologically institutionalized by the state apparatus (Blackburn, 1968). In

Nigeria, this can be seen in the way religious institutions in particular have been used by the state bureaucratic bourgeois. The ideology is that, according to Poulantza, they are not different from the repressive state apparatuses.

The fight against corruption is a state ideology sold to the masses in order to win their approval and maintain the social reproduction system.

The neutrality paradoxes of the Nigerian state: the structuralists posit that the state is a neutral entity to regulate social formation and, consequently, the mode of reproduction of the system. Of course, the system is of a conflicting nature, characterized by class struggle and antagonism. This means that the nature of the neutrality of the state coincides with the interests of the ruling class, and its effect serves its interests. Draper, as quoted by Carnoy, posits that "rather, the state arises from and expresses a real overall need for the organization of society, which exists no matter what the particular structure. But as long as there is a ruling class in socioeconomic relations, it will utilize this need to shape and control the state along its own class line" (Carnoy, 1984, p. 56). In this light, it gives what structuralists called "the relative autonomy" of the state. Even the classical Marxists equally admitted that the state seldom enjoys relative autonomy and becomes ‘independent’ from and superior to all social classes as the dominant force in society rather than an instrument of the dominant class. To this regard, Capitalists are protected as a consequence (Itiman & Wolf, 2021). In order not to allow the system to collapse because of its complex relationships and intense conflict, the state sometimes appears to be neutral by intervening in some cases just to save the system and maintain the social reproduction. On this note, it can be said that the Nigerian state is needed and is imperative in the reproduction of social formation and social relations.

Conclusion

The study of the role of the Nigerian state amidst the insecurity nexus between the indigenous bourgeoisie, the proletariat/masses, and the transnational capitalists, the effects on education, and the socioeconomic formation in the social reproduction system,this study assessed the role Nigerian state has played and is playing in the social reproduction system, which it has done in favor of the dominant/upper class. Though the Nigerian state also enjoys some level of relative autonomy, this relative autonomy would have been exercised appropriately, supposing that the Nigerian state, being imperative and necessary for the reproduction of the system, can use its political and economic power and will to serve the general interest of the whole and not just the interests of the capitalists or certain class in the society. The society in which we find ourselves today is one that is characterized by class struggle. These classes are divided alongside intense ‘Interests’. The dominant class always tries to expropriate and oppress the dominated class. Therefore, the summary of the findings of this work includes; first, that the Nigerian state works for the ‘unity’ of the socio-economic system. It is a factor of cohesion; it tries to intervene in order to preserve the system; by doing this, its interests coincide with those of the dominant class in society. Second, that The Nigerian state adopts ideological underpinnings to manipulate the system in favor of the dominant class (the bourgeoisie or capitalists) in order to maintain the social reproduction system. Third, that the Nigerian State, to some extent, can be said to play a neutral role in the social reproduction system by being above the class struggle and acting with some 'relative autonomy’.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations put forward

1.In Nigeria, the indigenous, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and the transnational bourgeoisie are identified as the tools for the suppression and exploitation of the working

class and the masses. Therefore, the Nigerian state can do better to arrest the inequality, the imbalances, the oppressions, and the subjugations in the social reproduction system by having the political will to curtail the negative tendencies of capitalism.

2.That indigenous socialism can be adopted so as to fill the gap of inequality in the socio-economic system and the social reproduction system; this would pave the way for modifications in the sociopolitical and socioeconomic systems.

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