



From the Hub of Lagos: Horizontal Integration for the Southwest Region of Nigeria, a Developmental Imperative

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Abstract

In Nigeria, the experiment at federalism has demonstrated that no meaningful development could be achieved with the present structure of economically and politically weak federating units and a dominating strong centre. The imperative for economic development, therefore, calls for the strengthening of the federating state units. This article investigates the nexus between horizontal integration of the southwest states of Nigeria into a regional bloc within the Nigerian state and the socio-economic development of the region, in relation to the long-term economic development plan of Nigeria. It argues that this horizontal integration is the major catalyst necessary for the attainment of the vision 20:2020 goal of the country. The success of this integration in the southwest would serve as a model for the other regions of the country. This study is an attempt to encourage regional integration and from it regional planning as a critical element of the new economic development strategies of the federating state units in Nigeria in order to provide the spatial development framework for other strategies to succeed.

Keywords: development, horizontal integration, federalism, regionalism, underdevelopment

Résumé

Au Nigéria, l'expérience du fédéralisme a démontré qu'aucun développement significatif ne pourrait être réalisé avec la structure actuelle composé d'unités fédératives économiquement et politiquement faibles et d'un gouvernement central fort et dominant. Le développement économique nécessite donc le renforcement des unités étatiques fédératives. La présente étude examine le lien entre l'intégration horizontale des États du sud-ouest du Nigéria dans un bloc

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régional au sein de l'Etat nigérian et le développement socio-économique de la région, par rapport au plan de développement économique du pays à long terme. Elle soutient que cette intégration horizontale est le principal catalyseur nécessaire à la réalisation de la vision 20: objectif 2020 du pays. Le succès de cette intégration dans le sud-ouest servirait de modèle aux autres régions du pays. Cette étude vise à encourager l'intégration régionale et, par conséquent, la planification régionale en tant qu'élément essentiel des nouvelles stratégies de développement économique des unités étatiques fédératives au Nigéria dans le but de fournir un cadre de développement territorial propice à la réussite d'autres stratégies.

Mots-clés: développement, intégration horizontale, fédéralisme, régionalisme, sous-développement.

Introduction

While it is incontrovertible to say that the contemporary structure and practice of federalism in Nigeria has continuously emasculated development within the federating components, it is also true that this experience has continuously engendered poverty and underdevelopment of the different Nigerian peoples. In other words, the total disconnect between the political and economic structures made it impossible for the centre to develop or help develop the federating units. Therefore, the imperative of development rests squarely on the federating units and in the contemporary Nigerian political compartments, represented as geopolitical zone or regions, namely, southwest, south-south, southeast, northwest, northeast and north-central regions. In the southwest region, comprising Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti and Lagos states, apart from the common historical antecedence and geopolitical factors, the imperatives of economic growth and development driven by the people themselves have necessitated a well-articulated strategy for the creation of a solid socio-economic foundation for the region and her upcoming generations. Scholars and studies around the world have shown that the economic growth and development of the most advanced regions were founded on basic community integration programmes which allowed for joint harnessing of resources and ideas for collective good (Badinger 2005; Feng and Genna 2003; El-Agraa 2009). In other words, small-scale integration of socio-economic processes remains the major factor that underpins gradual but large-scale development.

In construing Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia as regions, factors such as historical, cultural and ideological affinities were taken into cognizance, and in turn, smaller, geographically and historically similar spaces were constructed into sub-regions (Garcia 2008:55) such as West Africa, Southern Africa, Central America, etc. These technocratic constructs called regions and sub-regions became new analytical units for reconstruction and development economics (ibid.). Following the successes recorded in

coordinating the war efforts during WW II, construction development and reconstruction economics advocated the creation of regional economic communities to harness the advantages of economies of scales and complementarities to boost economic reconstruction and development. Hence, the creation of the European Economic Community, the European Free Trade Association and other regional blocs all over the world (ibid.). In the contemporary world economic order, regional economic and trade agreements as well as micro-economic blocs have become operational economic units. These have become the new building units for economic growth and development. Studies have shown the effectiveness of these micro units in economic coordination and as development centres for larger economic units (Feng and Genna 2003; Haughton and Counsell 2004).

This study is straddled between historical and contemporary issues relating to federalism, regionalism, development architecture and regional integration. Therefore, the qualitative method and from within it the historical method is adopted. This covers the use of both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include oral information, focused-group discussions and newspaper reports. Journal articles, books, published government documents and online materials constitute the secondary sources. However, the analysis and presentation have followed the multidisciplinary approach, using concepts and analyses from economics, politics, sociology and political economy. The presentation is both analytical and thematic.

The Dictates of the National Development Blueprint (Nigeria Vision 20:2020)

The Nigeria Vision 20:2020 (NV 20:2020) is an economic transformation blueprint with a long term plan for stimulating Nigeria's economic growth and launching the country onto a path of sustained and rapid socio-economic development (ibid.). This blueprint articulates Nigeria's economic growth and development strategies, for the eleven-year period between 2009 and 2020 (ibid.). The blueprint is expected to be implemented using a series of medium-term national development plans with these commencement periods respectively: 1st Implementation Plan from 2010 to 2013, 2nd Implementation Plan 2014 to 2017, and 3rd Implementation Plan concludes from 2018 to 2020 (Usman 2010).¹ The 2020 targets are based on a dynamic comparative analysis of the country's potential growth rate and economic structure vis-à-vis those of other top forty economies in the world.²

Designed to capture the interest of Nigerians, using a bottom-up approach which is anchored on a deep grasp of the aspirations of Nigerians, and knowledge of the needs of the country, this economic blueprint was put in place to position Nigeria among the top twenty biggest economies in the

world by the year 2020. The Vision has two basic broad objectives: optimising human and natural resources to achieve rapid economic growth, and translating that growth into equitable social development for all citizens.³ This vision is encapsulated in four broad dimensions, namely, social, economic, environmental and institutional dimensions.

The expectation from this blueprint is encapsulated in its vision statement thus: 'By 2020, Nigeria will have a large, strong diversified, sustainable and competitive economy that effectively harnesses the talents and energies of its people and responsibly exploits its natural endowments to guarantee a high standard of living and quality of life to its citizens.'⁴ This aspiration rests on three pillars of: 'guaranteeing the productivity and wellbeing of the people; optimizing the key sources of economic growth; and fostering sustainable social and economic development.'⁵

Though well-articulated and promising, these strategies have been trailed by pessimism from several quarters. From the first National Development Plan, 1962–68, not less than five development plans have been enunciated, yet none was realised. The pessimism that trailed the NV20:2020 therefore, was understandable if the record of performance of these past economic or development plans were anything to go by. Nevertheless, a further boost to the articulation of the blueprint came with the report in 2005 of Goldman Sachs, which predicted that if Nigeria was able to sustain the reforms, it could emerge the strongest economy in Africa, overtaking South Africa and Egypt and would by 2020 be amongst the twenty-five biggest economies in the world and also could by 2025 make it to the top twenty in the world (Ayodele, Obafemi and Ebon 2013:144). The report also predicted that Nigeria had the propensity to become the twelfth largest economy in the world ahead of Italy, Canada and South Korea by 2050.⁶

Moreover, the NV20: 2020 First National Implementation Plan has three volumes: Regional/Geopolitical zone development occupies the second part of the third volume, while State Investments Plans occupy the third part of the same volume. It is against the vital positions of these dynamics in the blueprint that this paper articulates the need to pay more attention to horizontal rather than vertical federal integration if Nigeria is to realise the objectives of the Vision 20:2020 especially in major issue areas as factors that can enhance horizontal integration of Southwest Nigeria – a process that will provide a model for the rest of the country.

It is on the basis of the imperatives of the national development plan (Vision 20:2020) and the success story arising from the integration of micro socio-political and socio-economic units that the call for the integration of the southwest region of Nigeria as a catalyst for effective economic coordination and development in the region is made and by extension other

regions of the federation with the resultant synergies across broad segments for an improved national economy. Following this, debates on the functionality, nature and future of the integration of the southwest region of Nigeria have dominated economic and political discourse in recent times especially on national dailies.⁷

Review of Relevant Literature

The concept of regional or sub-regional integration can be defined either in term of geographical or socio-economic and political boundaries. Although the concept has been widely used, yet its understandings vary considerably from one author to another. Indeed, some have seen it as ‘a chaotic concept ... used by many but understood differently by most’ (Ager and Strang 2008:166–191). This explains why some writers believe it is an elusive concept to define (Adetula 2009:18). However, the literature on integration is generally linked to the desire for economic integration by a group of different entities. For instance, Joseph Nnanna believes that the desire for economic and monetary integration in West Africa was propelled by the need to create a common economic space that would foster trade, promote growth, reduce poverty and enhance prosperity among member states (Nnanna 2009:174–178). This relationship between integration and economic activities is also emphasised by Fritz Machlup when he stresses the levels of integration such as common markets, production, goods and services, resources, and so forth (Machlup 1976).

Moreover, the different approaches to integration have emphasised economic issues. For instance, the customs union approach to economic integration popularised by Jacob Viner focuses on production effects as well as the realisation of more efficient utilisation of productive resources (Viner 1950). Indeed, the Vinerian approach argues that the desire for trade creation can be achieved if member countries are initially competitive but potentially complementary in trade (Adetula 2009:19). The issue of competitiveness may be absent in some integration efforts in Africa, but the comparative advantage concept, which the approach emphasises is relevant to the understanding of the integration process in the southwest region of Nigeria.

On the other hand, the dependency school calls for a re-conceptualisation of the purpose of regional integration, especially as it affects the less developed regions of the world. Specifically, it argues that economic integration should aim at creating economic stimulus among member states, an alternative development strategy that will enhance rapid economic development and eliminate underdevelopment (Adetula 2009:19–21). Proponents of this school have emphasised the need for policy makers to consider the politics of integration in order to fully understand the concept (Asante 1989). However,

dependency theorists have advised against transplanting market conditions in Africa by imperialist agents such as the IMF, the World Bank and others (Adetula 2009:21).

Lastly, it is also important to stress that integration is different from cooperation in the sense that the latter may indicate loose forms of interstate activity designed to meet some commonly experienced needs, the former refers to a much more formal arrangement that has to do with political and economic interest as well as commitments and processes to actualise the interest (ibid., p. 18). Hence, we can say that regional cooperation is a phase in the process of regional integration.

In all, whatever model of integration is chosen, there is the need for all stakeholders to develop a mechanism for the distribution of losses and gains, obligations and benefits if integration is to succeed. Interestingly, the southwest is an example of a regional grouping in Nigeria that has a geographical context and whose members share common historical and cultural ties (Abitogun 2011). This should be an advantage in their integration efforts and processes.

Character of the Nigerian Federation and the Underdevelopment of its State Units

A political system or arrangement is considered a federation if the arrangement is established by 'compact with a minimum of two "arenas", "planes", "spheres" "tiers", or "levels" of government, each endowed with independent legitimacy and a constitutionally guaranteed place in the overall system, and possessing its own set of institutions, powers, and responsibilities' (Elazar 1985:22). This could be said to be true of Nigeria's federalism adopted in the 1954 Constitution, with power exercised between two tiers of government, one tier controlling the foreign relations, defence, currency, and common legislative and other external policies, while the other (the subordinating states) taking care of local affairs. Nigeria's federal system comprised a national government and three regional governments at inception namely: Eastern, Northern, and Western (Adamolekun 1991:1). These were somehow built around people of similar socio-cultural and linguistic orientation. The regions, however, became self-governing in different periods. The Eastern and Western Regions became self-governing in 1957, followed by the Northern Region two years later in 1959. At independence in 1960, this form of government was maintained following its adoption in the Independence Constitution of 1960 which replaced that of 1954 and its continuous adoption in subsequent constitutions. In 1963, however, the number of the federating units was increased to four as the Mid-West Region carved out of the Western Region was added to the Federation.

The exigencies of the Nigerian Civil War led to the replacement of the regions with the creation of twelve states as successor units to the four regions of the country. Six of the states were created in the Northern Region while the same number was shared between the Eastern and Western Regions. By 1976 when a three-tier federal structure was put in place, seven additional states were created and by 1989, two more were added bringing the total to 21 states and 304 local government areas (*ibid.*, p. 3). On the eve of the 1989 Constitution, the number of local governments was increased to 453. By 1991 due to the clamour for more states (Ekekwe 1986) additional nine states were created bringing the total number of states in Nigeria to thirty. Five years later in 1996, six more were added. As at 2016, Nigeria has 36 states including the Federal Capital Territory and 774 local governments.

The fragmentation of the federating state units itself has raised some controversies. While some believed that it has advanced the goal of national stability and decentralised political and administrative power in the country, (Olowu 1991:161) others see it as creating an imbalance in the share of national resources accruing to the major ethnic and minority groups and reducing the viability of the federating states or units and their capabilities (Phillips 1984:93–102; Akande 1988:219–237). However, as Olowu observed, the problem is not really about the size of the federating units, but the strongly centralised federal system, the consequent fiscal centralisation and concentration of resources in the federal government (Olowu 1991:161). This situation led to the underdevelopment of the federating state units, which are left with inadequate resources for development. This situation is worsened by their inability to develop other revenue generation sources because of their heavy dependence (up to 65 per cent) on intergovernmental transfers (Akanle 1985; Olowu 1990; Phillips 1984:93–102) and the dearth of healthy competition and rivalry.

From independence in 1960, certain events in the body polity of the country had influenced the evolution of Nigeria's federal structure. These include the experiment with the Westminster-style parliamentary system, the attempt at replacing the federal system with a unitary government by the military in 1966 and the practice of the United States' presidential system. The impact of the first and third events is derived from the centrality of political party structure in those systems, while the second event is insightful in the understanding of the concentration of power at the centre and power structure of Nigeria's Federalism, which is an 'up-to-bottom' power structure instead of the reverse, drawing from the unitary structure of power as a result of the dominance of the military in the country's political history.

With regards to power and economic context, a point to note which significantly contrasted with the US federalism and which makes the Nigerian model peculiar is that in the US context, the states or federating units created the centre or federal, while for Nigeria, the federal created and dictated the federating units, thereby dictating and appropriating disproportional powers to itself. Among other effects, this reduced the expected healthy rivalry and competitiveness among the federating units in Nigeria's federating system. The healthy competition, which Awolowo described as the 'soul of development and progress' (Awolowo 1966:57) would have allowed the units to develop at their own speed and removed the overdependence on a monthly allocation from the centre. In fact, the evolution of the federal system and within it this form of fiscal federalism as practised today in Nigeria was consolidated by the dominance of the federal government in national economic management throughout this period (Adamolekun 1991:6).

Imperatives for Southwest Regional Integration

In this context, integration of Southwest Region simply refers to the continuous removal of all barriers within the region for articulated and accelerated economic development. It primarily focuses on economic, institutional, joint development and geopolitical issues. Regional economic exchanges such as trade and investment, transportation, economic structures, as well as geographical and demographic factors are high on the list of variables articulated upon in this context. Other areas of integration and cooperation include tourism, agricultural economy, construction of dams and bridges in contiguous border communities, housing, sanitation, environmental management, traffic/vehicular management, education – common curricular, common admission examinations, common admission policies, exchange of teachers, etc. Others include, communication – common radio and television programmes that support the integration philosophy, joint celebration of festivals by government agencies and traditional rulers, promotion of sister cities/communities for the purpose of fostering unity among the different Yoruba groups and communities, among others. These require gradual but systematic and diligent implementation. Since all these issue areas would be difficult to undertake at the same time, the implementation should be in phases.

Three key factors that constitute the context upon which the integration is to be fostered remain: geopolitical, economic and cultural-historical factors. However, how these are managed is crucial to the formation of a functional regional identity and the articulation of a political project of regional integration. The contemplation of economic integration in the Southwest Region of Nigeria as a growth and development strategy is heightened by various factors. First,

in spite of fragmentation and political differences, there has always been a common economic interest among the states of the region, with the exception of Lagos, which revolves round the Odua conglomerate (Abitogun 2011), a tradition of regional associations that stems from cultural and historical affinities. Second, the attempts at bonding into regional coordination and effective integration as articulated in the post-independence regional arrangement reinforced the drive for regional coordination within the context of nation building in Nigeria. Third, this development strategy draws from the vintage vision of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the first Premier of the old Western Region, who attempted to strengthen and develop the people through the integrated social and economic development of the region.

Chief Awolowo, even before his emergence as the Premier of Western Region, had a blueprint for the development of the region. His development plan was anchored on the development of the human person and hence the centrality of education as a critical strategy for realising this objective.⁸ Besides education, Chief Awolowo convincingly articulated his ideas on democracy, politics and governance, federalism, regional development and others. The success and whole notion of free education in Nigeria which started in the Southwest under Awolowo was a basic aspect of his development vision, that only an educated mind can 'play a full and meaningful role in the affairs of society'.⁹ Free education was therefore, offered to the people, 'so that every man and woman can stand up for himself or herself and find the way for the good of society'.¹⁰ In a public lecture delivered to a union of teachers in 1947, titled 'Education as a Means to National Liberation', Awolowo equated education and democracy as not only integral and inseparable but also irreducible components of any society's development.¹¹ Chief Awolowo's free education policy, which was implemented in 1955, was revolutionary in the context of the national development plan.¹² Just as he did in education, Awolowo also improved the healthcare system of the Western Region through the provision of massive health infrastructure: 10 general hospitals, over 165 dispensaries, 170 additional maternity centres (Baffour 2015). His administration also pioneered technological milestones such as the first television station network, the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV), Ibadan, established in 1959, making it the first in the whole of Africa (ibid). Among his plethora of achievements were the reforms of the electoral system, women empowerment, massive infrastructural provision, regional cooperation especially in investments, etc. These were considered revolutionary at the time.¹³

The imperatives for economic integration of the Southwest Region are enormous as these boost economic activities within the region, including employment generation and economies of scale, especially in manufacturing. Opportunities to exploit economies of scale in an increased market are stressed

by Balassa as a propelling force of economic integration (Balassa 1961). Similarly, quick, efficient and effective conflict resolution, common political will to act in an ethnically and culturally diverse country and values to solve immediate and long-term problems, exchange of ideas and policies for effective administration, the pulling up of resources for prioritised development as well as peace among the inhabitants of the southwest (Abitogun 2011) are other benefits that may accrue from this model. Indeed, integration of the southwest would ensure joint ventures in areas of mutual benefits and comparative advantages in a globalised and competitive world. It would also assist the region to optimally harness the resources of the states having comparative advantage. This would be significant especially in the provision of infrastructure, power generation, commerce, agriculture and other areas. This was the development model of the old Western Region under Chief Obafemi Awolowo, which made it the most successful region during this period.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding the process of integration whether at the global, regional, state or intra-state levels requires the understanding of integration theories. To this end, the most dominant paradigm developed is undoubtedly functionalism, and from within it the proliferation of modified versions known as neo-functionalism. In David Mitrany's pioneering work on functionalism (1966), he propounded the theory of functionalism, in response to the ever-growing quest for ways to stop wars especially those on the magnitude of the two World Wars. In this work, Mitrany put forward the philosophy of state collaboration in the non-political field as the solution to the occurrences of war. According to him, where states form the habit of functional cooperation in economic, technological and social areas, the practice is bound to have political effects, reducing economic disparities and eventually eliminating any pretext for war. An instance of this effect is the transition from the European Coal and Steel Community of 1951 to the European Union of the contemporary times. Mitrany also posited that by forming cooperation with international bodies especially on daily social activities which cut across state boundaries and which were hitherto performed separately by states outside the area of high politics states would gradually relinquish some of their sovereignty to these international bodies of technical experts.

From Mitrany's functionalist tradition, there evolved other variants of the functionalist paradigm, which were critical of some of the positions and omissions of Mitrany's postulations. These were referred to as the neo-functionalists; chief amongst them was E. B. Haas. In his work *Beyond the*

Nation- State, Functionalism and International Organisations, (1964), Haas subscribed to the economic factor in the incidences of war and international insecurity (ibid., p. 11) but criticised Mitrany's silent position on the mechanism of allocation of scarce resources, which he considered a political decision among states that were engaged in the integration process.

The thesis of Haas' postulation remained the concept of 'spill-over' and 'automaticity'. By these, he argued that the success in any one technical area will automatically cause a spill over into another and this would cause the integrating members to continue in the process until they gradually attained a full integration. Other exponents of neo-functionalism include Philippe Schmitter (1970), and Leon Lindberg and S. Scheingold (1970).

Like the functionalist paradigm, the neo-functionalist's position as represented by Haas also received a knock. The chief criticism against the neo-functionalist position was the one raised by Joseph Nye (1968) on Haas' 'automaticity and spill-over'. According to him, Haas' 'automaticity and spill-over' was not practicable especially looking at the experiences in Europe. Other critics of Haas' position also included Roger Hansen (Hansen 1974:1). Despite some of its criticisms, the functionalist paradigm especially on the collaboration or association of states, still offers a good theoretical explanation to this study especially as it provides an insight into the outcome of this collaboration, the role of integrating states within them, the social and economic benefits as well as other derivable benefits. While the concern of the functionalist and the neo-functionalist positions are on states in the international system, the same concerns can be extended to the subject of the present study, and the theoretical basis also applied to it. The present study is concerned with the integration of the six federating state units which make up the Southwest Region of Nigeria, with the view to forming a functional regional bloc in the troubled Nigerian federation.

Regional Transportation and Traffic /Vehicular Management

While there are several issue areas for possible integration and accelerated groundwork cooperation, the imperative to act on some of these areas are more pressing. One of the major problems confronting the road sub-sector in Nigeria remains the near total lack of maintenance at all levels (federal, state and local government) and the absence of a national planning and road investment system based on economic criteria, except for recent efforts in Lagos State under the Fashola Administration. This is where a regional approach can prove effective. The implementation of an effective regional transportation system is the key to the development of trade, agriculture and other economic activities within the region. This is central to the easy

movement of goods, agricultural produce, essential services and people. Indeed, due to the agrarian nature of the region, of great significance is the movement of agricultural produce because of the perishable nature of most of the agricultural produce, which means that very little gets to the urban markets. A good road network surely brings with it a reduction in the prices of foodstuffs in the market where the forces of demand and supply dictate the pace (Abitogun 2011). This is because the transportation of farm produce from the rural areas to the urban centre would be unhindered. However, this involves mass infrastructural development in particular in road construction, including building of bridges and railway construction, in the short term, and in the long term, the creation of a jointly owned airline. While the construction of interstate roads falls within the jurisdiction of the federal authorities, local governments manage 67 per cent of urban roads, state governments 27 per cent and the federal government 6 per cent only.¹⁴ In this regard, concerted effort by the Southwest Region perhaps on the basis of counterpart funding or build-and-reimburse arrangements with the federal government will accelerate the provision of a good road network within the region and by extension, easy movement. The same applies to railway construction in the region. In the latter, however, the involvement of private partnerships remains most plausible and profitable in the linking of the Southwest Region through rail lines. These arguably would have significant positive social and economic impacts. First, the problems associated with the haulage of cargo, in particular petroleum products, into the region would be reduced if not eliminated as large consignments of these would be delivered by rail, thereby removing the incidences of road mishaps associated with petroleum tankers going ablaze, trailers falling over in transit and all other forms of big vehicular accidents on the road.

Similarly, coordinated traffic/vehicular management under a regional traffic authority heightens the propensity to efficiently manage the movement of people and goods across the entire region. This reduces the rates of automobile breakdown on the highways, accidents, as well as the burden on the health sector created by road traffic accidents. Indeed, proper and effective management of a good road network as an infrastructure not only ensures a longer life span of these facilities but also stimulates greater economic activities in the region.

Regional Tourism

In tourism, the cultural affinities of the region even advance greater imperatives for regional tourism. This is on the basis of a cultural industry that would thrive with the growth and revolution in telecommunications centred on the internet. The development and promotion of historical sites,

parks and monuments, festivals and other regional cultural heritage, values and diversities are critical for the success of this regional tourism industry. Indeed details of various events, a calendar of local festivals and their classification based on their popularity should be placed on the internet and marketed to international tour operators by the regional tourism industry. This imperative is further heightened by the fact that over 50 per cent of the Africans in the diaspora from countries like Brazil, Cuba and the Caribbean trace their origin to Nigeria¹⁵ and in particular Southwest Nigeria. The exploitation of this fact, therefore, should be the major focus of this industry. Indeed, attracting these over three million descendants of the Yoruba race to their roots as well as other tourists, domestic and international, offers not only attractive opportunities for capital inflow into the region, job creation, but also investors in the multimillion Naira industry. Integrating cultural festivals and events such as the Eyo masquerade in Lagos State and all other Egungun festivals practised by the Yoruba, Osun Osogbo and Olojo festivals in Osun State, Ojude Oba festival in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State and all other similar festivals in Yoruba land as well as tourism and historic sites and monuments in a yearly calendar which would be promoted by Southwest Tourism Board would be a first step in redirecting, building and exploiting the huge tourism potentials that abound in the Southwest.

Electricity Generation

Nigeria is currently experiencing severe challenges in electricity generation and supply despite the privatisation of the sector. This has undoubtedly stalled socio-economic development in the country despite the nation's vast natural resources. According to the Nigeria Vision 20/2020 Report,¹⁶ facilities for power generation are either dilapidated or poorly managed. Also, the transmission and distribution networks are poorly maintained and inefficiently operated, thereby hindering power transmission from generation sites to consumption points. Further, analysis of the power generation capacity vital to support the economic vision suggests that, based on the assumption that the country will take a low energy intensity (less than 0.4) growth path, midway between the energy intensity of India (0.18) and China (0.91), Nigeria will need to generate electricity in the range of about 35,000 MW by 2020. Therefore, the overall target for the power sector is to raise installed power generation capacity from 6,000 MW in 2009 to 20,000 MW by 2015 and 35,000 MW installed by 2020.¹⁷ Apart from the strategic roadmap to meeting the target in the power sector suggested by the report,¹⁸ additional generation capacity is solicited by the report. This is encouraged by the implied provision of incentives and concessions to be granted to new entrants, especially for

renewable power generation. Since this capacity expansion is capital intensive, the report proposed that the significant capacity expansions envisaged for the power sector would be driven largely by the private sector. Private capital will be attracted into the power sector by creating a deregulated and competitive electric power sector underpinned by a viable commercial framework, which promotes transparency, guarantees security of investment and a reasonable rate of return on investments.

In the light of the above, therefore, a regional integrated power programme especially in the alternative, renewable energy resources (including wind, solar, hydro and biomass) is a viable issue area. A key element of this project would be its commercial viability while first and foremost focusing to serve Southwest Regional domestic needs. To ensure efficiency in planning and management, it is suggested that a Southwest Regional energy corporation be established to draw up modalities for this. The experience of the River State Government with gas turbine power generation as well as a mini power generation project at the *Redemption Camp*, Mowe, Ogun State, Nigeria¹⁹ are pointers to the feasibility of the project, first for domestic consumption and later for supply into the national grid on agreed terms with Power Holding Corporation of Nigeria (PHCN). The commercial viability of this project is based on the vision 20:2020 strategic objective for the power sector, which is to ensure the ability of the sector to 'efficiently deliver sustainable adequate, qualitative, reliable and affordable power in a deregulated market, while optimizing the on- and off-grid energy mix'.²⁰ It is expected that the electricity supply industry will be private sector led with government providing an appropriate legal and regulatory environment for private capital investment. Similarly, it is hoped that the legal impediments stalling power generation by individual investors and states would have been removed by the privatisation of the sector and by legislative instruments.²¹

The Centrality of Lagos in the Integration Process

While one of the most important and greatest challenges facing any regional cooperation and integration project is the similarity of the economies of the integrating units which leads to unhealthy rivalry, the mainly agricultural economies of the Southwest Region, which produces similar agricultural produce, may be an exception in an ambience of increased demand for food and agricultural raw materials for exports and for local industries. The establishment of regional marketing boards and the revitalisation of the Odua Conglomerates remain the obvious strategy needed to overcome the challenge. This is because these could handle the marketing, export and processing of agricultural produce. Perhaps the only state in this region with an economy

that transcends agricultural production is Lagos. This is made possible by the relatively increasing physical growth and development of the state largely due to its expanding economic and political roles, aided by its rapid and explosive population growth (Filani n.d., p. 5). In addition to these is the strong and effective leadership, which has been an asset for the state in recent times. Consequently, this largest market city in the region has gradually grown her population overtime. Estimated at 25,000 in 1866, 40,000 in 1901 and 74,000 inhabitants by 1911, the population of the city exploded geometrically. By 1931, it grew to 126,108 inhabitants and by 1952, the census put the population of metropolitan Lagos at 272,020 (ibid). Subsequent headcounts of 1963 and 1991 put the population of metropolitan Lagos at 665,000 and 5.8 million respectively. In 2006, the population of Lagos State was 9.1 million, although this figure was contested following an independent census by the Lagos State government, which came up with a figure of 17 million for the state (ibid). With an estimated population of 24.6 million inhabitants, it was projected to become the third-largest megacity in the world by 2015 (UN-HABITAT 2006). In fact, the World Bank statistics reveals that as at 1996, the state accounted for about 30.8 per cent of the national urban population, with a very high population density of over 4,000 persons per square kilometre (Adebola 2006:1).

These figures seem to have been growing over time and with it the rate and level of economic activities and infrastructural developments. Right from independence, up until when the capital of the country was finally relocated to Abuja in 1992, much of Nigeria's wealth and economic activities were concentrated in Lagos, with sectors such as manufacturing and service delivery, banking, and telecommunication services taking the lead. Indeed, metropolitan Lagos alone accounted for 38 per cent of total manufacturing employment in Nigerian cities and over 60 per cent of the total value (Filani n.d.:5). As the only southwest state with functional port and export facilities, Lagos easily serves as the window through which joint investment and trade opportunities could be explored.²² The opportunity which Lagos, the Nigerian commercial hub, presents in this direction is significant. Having over 80 per cent of national and multinational corporations located and driving its economy, the megacity status of the Lagos economy offers the Southwest Region a huge economic and infrastructural base necessary for sustaining a horizontal integration of this magnitude.²³ Indeed, the free export zone in Lekki as well as the industrial and commercial facilities offered by the Lagos economy in contrast to those of the other southwest states places it as the driver of this cooperation.²⁴

Conclusion

In modern times and in the light of the prevailing global economic order, emphasis is on new regional approaches as imperative for dealing with some of the effects of globalisation and the attendant restructuring of the powers of the state and corporations (Porter 1990). In addressing the deficiencies in the Nigerian federalism and, in particular, underdevelopment, which this economic and administrative structure has engendered across the federating units, the devolution and redistribution of power and resources, therefore, call for regional strategic planning and regional economic development, hence the need to restructure the federating states or units in Nigeria to make them viable and competitive. The imperative of southwest regional economic integration, therefore, lies in the fact that this will improve the regional economy's overall efficiency, as the constituent member states not only completely liberalise their intra-trade relations, but also introduce common institutions with considerable supra-state competencies and common or coordinated policies in several important areas such as tourism, agriculture, joint investment, competition, energy, etc. (Badinger 2005:50–51).

The success of this model would catalyse resource democratisation in Nigeria.²⁵ This will bring about general participation in wealth creation or generation. It also provides the necessary environment for states and regions to create and own their resources.²⁶ Consequently, this model would engender a change from the federal allocation regime to state or regional allocation of resources to the centre and, by implication, a weak centre and strong federating units. Similarly, this model provides a vista of opportunity to achieve a lateral to vertical redistribution of resources and also addresses fundamental problems associated with Nigeria's federalism, including issues of resource control, sharing formula and the economic dominance from the centre.²⁷ Consequently, this study is an attempt to encourage regional integration and from it regional planning as a critical element of the new economic development strategies of the federating state units in Nigeria in order to provide the spatial development framework for other strategies to succeed.

Notes

1. Nigeria Vision 20:2020, the 'First Implementation Plan (2010–2013)', a paper presented at the Validation Workshop on the First Four-Year Implementation Plan for NV 20:2020 at Eko Hotel and Suites, Lagos, 5 August.
2. Nigeria Vision 20:2020, Economic Transformation Blueprint National Planning Commission.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.
7. For example, see Abitogun, N., 15 March 2011, 'Integrating South-West's Economy for Development', *General NBF Topics*. Available online at <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com/generaltopics/?p=96031>. Accessed 20 Dec 2011; Kodilinye Obiagwu, 'S/West should build on regional integration based on shared values, says Mimiko', *The Guardian*, Friday, 10 June 2011. See also Segun Balogun, 'Southwest to form regional bloc', *Next*, 10 July 2011. Available at <http://234next.com/csp/cms/sites/Next/News/index.csp>. Accessed on 20 December 2011; Emmanuel Oladesu, 'Regional economic integration on course in Southwest', *The Nation*, 30 August 2011, p. 1; and Sulaiman Salawudeen, 'A quest for regional integration in Southwest', *The Nation*, 15 July 2011, p. 1.
8. Oral interview: Akinjide Osuntokun, Professor of Diplomatic History and Head Department of History & Internationals, Redeemer's University, Mowe, Ogun State, Nigeria (20/09/12).
9. The free education scheme in the context of Obafemi Awolowo's vision and governance – 1', Tribune Wednesday, 21 January 2015. Available at <http://www.latestnigeriannews.com/news/1079609/the-free-education-scheme-in-the-context-of-obafemi-awolowos-vision-and-governan.html>. Accessed on 16 February 2017.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Oral interview: Akinjide Osuntokun, Professor of Diplomatic History and Head Department of History & Internationals, Redeemer's University, Mowe, Ogun State, Nigeria (20/09/12).
13. Ibid.
14. S. I. Oni, and K. R. Okanlawon, Nigeria's Transport Infrastructural Development: An Integral Part of The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Department of Geography, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos. Available at <http://docplayer.net/40153857-Nigeria-s-transport-infrastructure-development-an-integral-part-of-the-national-economic-empowerment-and-development-strategy-needs.html>. Accessed on 22 February 2017.
15. National Tourism Policy for Nigeria, (2005), Federal Republic of Nigeria, p. 5.
16. Nigeria Vision 20:2020: Economic Transformation Blueprint, 2009, p. 138.
17. Ibid, p.139.
18. Ibid.
19. The Redeemed Christian Church of God Camp in Mowe, Ogun State, Nigeria, currently generates electricity for its local consumption since electricity supplies from the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) has been epileptic.
20. Nigeria Vision 20:2020: Economic Transformation Blueprint, 2009, p. 139.
21. This is because, according to the Nigerian Constitution, power generation falls under the exclusive list of the federal government.
22. Oral Interview: Lateef Raji, former Special Assistant on Information and Strategy to the Executive Governor of Lagos State, 23 February 2017.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.

25. Focused Group Discussion: Bernard Fyanka, Lecturer, Redeemer's University Ede, Osun State, and Visiting Lecturer McPherson University, Seriki Sotayo, Ogun State, Nigeria, 24 February 2017.
26. Ibid.
27. Focused Group Discussion: Olusegun Bolarinwa, Senior Research Fellow, Nigeria Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) at McPherson University, Seriki Sotayo, Ogun State, Nigeria.

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