

Full Length Research Paper

Intergenerational socio-economic mobility and national development in Nigeria

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Nigeria is blessed with an abundance of human and natural resources. It is the 6th largest exporter of crude oil, formerly the largest and now the third largest exporter of palm oil in the world. It has the largest gas reserves in Africa including a vast accumulation of other natural resources and a population of about 147 million people, but it is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. This contradiction seems to evidence the fact that resources alone are not sufficient to engender growth and national development. For development to occur, the resources (human and material) must be employed to serve the positive needs of man. The human resources must be encouraged to work, initiate, interact and direct material resources towards solving practical problems and creating conveniences for man. For these to be, each and everybody in the society should be given an opportunity to contribute his or her quota toward meeting individual and collective needs. There is a need to create an opportunity space for all to contribute their talents, abilities and aptitudes towards solving societal problems. The wider the opportunity, the better for the economy. However, in Nigeria, unemployment, poverty, corruption, inequality among others, narrow the opportunity structure with the consequence that only a few people are positively engaged while majority of Nigerians rest heavily on receipts from the petroleum industry with its pollution and corruption side effects. This, has generated so much problems as the untapped energy is dissipated in negative directions in an attempt to 'corner' a larger share of the petroleum proceeds which is seen as free, God-given national cake which needs no work to benefit from. Intergenerational socio-economic mobility is an index that measures the opportunity structure in society, and the wider the opportunity structure, the more development is likely to occur. In sum, it is not just resources (oil or no oil) but the opportunity space that will engender development.

Key words: Intergenerational, socio-economic, mobility, development.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is well blessed with abundance of natural resources including huge petroleum and gas deposits, coal, gold, bauxite, vast arable lands, extensive water resources and many more, but it is among the least and poorest countries of the world (Ugoh and Ukpere 2009). Experience all over the world has shown that natural resources alone are not sufficient to generate development

in any economy; there should be a fusion of natural and human resources. In fact, the level of development in any economy is largely a function of its human resources (Alam, 2009). It is human capital that determines what to produce, how to produce, for whom to produce and how frequent these will be produced. In other words, beyond natural resources, a critical factor in development is human capital.

Human capital is both the driver and beneficiary of development, since economic development is about a fundamental rise in the ability and welfare of the citizenry or residents in the particular economy. This explains the

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need to educate, train, and keep healthy, the greatest numbers in any economy (Alam et al., 2009). However, it is not just the training that matters, the trained or talented human resources must be given an opportunity to exhibit or use these talents and the acquired training. It is the usage of these talents that can generate development. It is the output of human resources that defines development. If an economy has a billion people who are largely incapacitated to produce, either due to poor training or opportunity constraints, that economy is not likely to be developed, whether or not it has enormous (human and material) resources. It is not just the presence of human capital or the presence of material resources, a missing ingredient is opportunity space required to enable human capital combine with natural resources to transform an economy (Alam et al., 2009). Without such space, vast human and material resources could be dormant, latent and without their potentials being utilized (Alam and Hoque, 2010). This is one essence of intergenerational economics and more specifically, intergenerational socio-economic mobility (ISM). The ISM serves as an index to measure the opportunity structure in a given economy. The ISM coefficients can explain if an economy is intergenerationally mobile or intergenerationally persistent. Each of these has its own policy implication.

Nigeria with about 147 million people is the most populated country among blacks, it has vast natural resources but how many of these resources are functional or are being utilized (beside oil) towards constructive and productive development in Nigeria? This may be a key factor in explaining why Nigeria is among the poorest of the poor economies of the world.

Research problem and question

In an intergenerational mobile economy, there are opportunities for everyone to contribute to the economy; there is an opportunity for people to make progress in life, where hard work or personal effort is rewarded, and productivity encouraged. Can this be said of Nigeria?

Research objective

This paper attempts to define the level of development in Nigeria from its level of opportunity structure. In addition, it is the objective of the paper to expose the current bottlenecks confronting development and proper human resources utilization in Nigeria, in order to suggest mechanisms to overcome those bottlenecks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper is a meta-analytical study, which relied on secondary data. As suggested by Alam (2011) and Alam et al. (2010), it is a qualitative study, which is based on conceptual analysis, theory building, literature reviews and emic perspectives (author' viewpoint).

The research also made use of exploratory methodology. Exploratory studies are typically conducted for the following reasons, to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding; to test the feasibility of undertaking on more extensive studies; to develop the method to be employed in any subsequent study; to explicate the central concepts and constructs of a study; to determine priority for future research; and to develop a new hypothesis about an existing phenomenon.

In their view, Selltiz et al. (1965, cited in Babbie et al., 2001) emphasise three methods by means of which exploratory research may be conducted. They are review of the related social science and other pertinent literatures; survey of people who have particular experience of the problem to be studied; and an analysis of 'insight stimulating' examples.

Exploratory studies usually lead to insight and comprehension rather than the collection of detailed, accurate and replicable data. Since this research intends to explore a wider phenomenon, exploratory methods were deemed fit for the research. It was necessary to follow open and flexible research strategies and to utilise methods such as detailed literature reviews, views of experts and authorities in the area of inquest, which has led to insight and comprehension. Exploratory and descriptive methodologies were adopted because the research was not an empirical study. Being a non-empirical study, the research placed more emphasis on philosophical analysis, conceptual analysis and theory building/literature review. Hence, the research was not based on any given sample of the universal population, less control was exercised and existing data on related topics were utilised.

BASIC CONCEPTS

The concepts that are basic to the understanding of the discourse in this paper are national development, and intergenerational socio-economic Mobility (ISM).

National development

Development generally has to do with dynamics; positive development connotes progressive changes in everyday usage of the term. However, the focus of this discourse is national development. Development economics emerged in the post second world war years. Since then, the meaning of economic (national) development had really not been fixed and consistent. Between the 1940s to the early 1960s, development was seen as synonymous with economic growth. Many theories as Rostow (1952), Harrod and Domar (1957), among others, proposed models of development, generally identifying structural changes, savings and investments as the source of economic development and growth. It was assumed that as the economy grows and output increases, there will be more happiness and improved welfare arising from the larger pull of resources which, if well distributed, would have generally improved the well being of the masses. The basic assumption was that in so much as the economy grows, trickle down effect will at least lead to improvement for everybody in the economy, and the standard of living would generally improve (Kamaludin et al., 2011).

Growth targets were set and in several cases,

achieved. To the consternation of these theorist, sometimes referred to as high development theorist (Krugman 1992), it was discovered that misery, poverty, unemployment, etc., grew worse vis-à-vis economic growth. This prompted a redefinition of development to mean a growing economy in addition to even distribution of resources and reduction in poverty, unemployment, inflation, among other social undesirables.

In the 1970s, capacity became a key determinant in the definition of development. At this time, the ability to understand nature and transform it to meet human needs became the focus of the definition. In other words, a developed economy was one that had a high capacity to transform nature and its inter-human environment to meet the needs of man. In fact, according to Nnoli (1981), development defines a dialectical phenomenon in which man and society interact with their physical, biological and inter-human environments transforming them to better humanity at large and being transformed in the process.

Development therefore connotes a high ability to exploit nature for the improvement of the greatest good of the greatest number in society. In recent times, intergenerational consideration has become part of that definition with the introduction of the adjective 'sustainable' to development. Sustainable development defines development of today (the present) that does not compromise the development of tomorrow (the next generation). To say Nigeria is developed, we would be saying that its capacity to meet its need had increased significantly.

This work essentially identifies a missing gap, a basic factor necessary for development (that is, opportunity structure) which may be captured by the rate of intergenerational socio-economic mobility (Dunn, 2003; Van de Gaer, 2004).

Intergenerational socio-economic mobility

According to Dunn (2003), equality of opportunity is a topic social scientist have considered for many years. Intergenerational social mobility according to Von de Gaer (2004) is an index for measuring the equalization of opportunities in an economy. It concerns the changes in economic and social status from one period or generation to another. Intergenerational mobility studies, analyze the time path of a given distribution among the same dynasties or same individuals in a given society. It is about the distributional transformations over two periods in socio-economic sense. More specifically, the transformation from socio-economic status of birth, to other socio-economic statuses at later life (adulthood). For instance, some people born poor are able to migrate to non-poor socio-economic statuses at adulthood. Other people were born into non-poor households but at adulthood, they had become poor, or at least poorer (on a lower status) than the status into which they were born.

In some economies, there is a high tendency for offsprings to end up in similar social strata in which they were born (Ugoh and Ukpere, 2009). This is usually referred to as intergenerational persistence of socio-economic statuses. In other economies, the tendency is for people to be mobile, up or down in their socio-economic achievements dependent on individual talents and hard work. The latter situation is referred to as intergenerational socio-economic mobility. In point, if the tie between the adult socio-economic outcomes of children and their family socio-economic background is loose generally, then such societies are intergenerationally mobile. There are different degrees of mobility or persistence, intergenerational Socio-economic mobility (ISM), therefore refers to social, income or socio-economic mobility between generations. In a mobile economy, hard work and personal talents are rewarded, so people can migrate to any status in society depending on their efforts (Jordaan and Ukpere, 2011). In another economy where parental influences are the key determinants of progress, hard work is discouraged. Intergenerational mobility is an old concern in economics either as a policy objective in its own right or as an instrument leading to greater efficiency.

National development and intergenerational mobility

According to Roemer (1993), policy makers in Europe and North America often imagine a new economy based on human capital and skills as the source of economic growth and are increasingly concerned with the extent to which all members of their societies are able to participate and experience a rising standard of living. Access, social inclusion and equality of opportunity are the terms by which public policy are often judged. This has long been the case and is one of the reasons the degree of intergenerational mobility is viewed as being policy relevant. It is believed that a more free wheeling economy where the tie between adult economic outcomes of children and their family background is loose, signifies a more level playing field in which outcomes are determined by personal talents, abilities, determination, drive, initiatives or the will to contribute to national development and in the process also achieve personal development since in such economies, hard work and individual contribution to society are rewarded commensurately. Thus, in an intergenerational mobile society, there is a widened opportunity space for all to bring in talents, innovations, drive and other abilities that will help to generate development. It is a state where by lobbying sycophancy, cronyism, patronage, network of friends and their likes play little roles, and personal output become the key determinant for growth (Congress of the People (Cope), cited in Mail and Guardian online, 18 December 2008). With more output by a large audience in society, aggregate output and development is more

likely. In other words, there is a positive relationship between development and intergenerational mobility in any economy. This can be mathematically cast as:

$$Y = f(\text{ISM})$$

$$\Delta Y = \Delta \text{ISM}$$

Where Y = Development; ISM = Intergenerational Social Mobility; Δ = changes

Several experts have contributed and identified factors that can lead to national development, these include increase in savings (Harrod and Domar, 1957), the role of entrepreneurs (Lewis, 1954), innovation, (Schumpeter, 1934). This work believes that these factors are necessary but not sufficient, it is the human resources that define what development is, it is the same human beings that are the beneficiaries of development, so development will be fast tracked, if all and sundry in the economy are encouraged to participate equally in a positive direction, bringing in their talents, resources, innovation, initiatives and other abilities through an equitable reward mechanism. Development will be fast tracked when there is a widened opportunity space for all Nigerians, irrespective of background (tribal or parental), to positively and meaningfully contribute their quota. Besides, as Seers (1970) observed, what will be development in an economy where so many people are excluded either from contributing or partaking in the distribution of economic growth. More intergenerational mobility suggest more equal opportunities in an economy, an encouragement for all to put in their best, knowing that outcomes will depend on personal effort, contribution or talents, irrespective of parental, ethnic, social, or other backgrounds.

BASIC CONSTRAINTS

There are however, constraints debilitating the ability of many Nigerians to contribute their quota towards national development. These factors limit the opportunity structure and the rate of development in the country. Thus, in spite of vast natural and human resources, Nigeria remains poor and underdeveloped, in fact, even in the petroleum sector of the economy which is the largest revenue earner of the country, the productive force is external to the economy. The sector is dominated by foreign capital and technology and since the sector is capital intensive, the real source of output in the sector is external and this explains its low contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) in Nigeria. It can be argued, that the country may have difficulties if foreign interest is completely removed from the sector. It is important to note that some of those countries actively engaged in oil production in Nigeria do not have oil resources in their countries but their human resources have found space in Nigeria to produce and

earn fair returns as suggested by Kamaludin et al. (2011) and Rabby et al. (2011). It is their rigs and know-how that has helped to translate the gift of nature to the huge revenues that Nigerians clamour for.

In what follows, some basic constraints are discussed as limiting factors that affect the level of opportunity of self actualization in Nigeria.

Poverty

Poverty is defined in various ways. Some authors define poverty as the inability to meet basic or subsistence needs such as food, clothing, shelter and health. Poverty may also be defined as deprivation that includes a short fall and inadequacies in basic human needs, which prevent people from achieving internationally accepted levels of well being.

Poverty is particularly serious in Nigeria and impacts greatly on the psyche of many Nigerians. Some are so affected and infected by poverty that their reasoning is impaired. They are confused and are hardly able to look beyond the immediate problems of poverty, lack, and deprivation. Quite often, these resort to negative and primitive tendencies which are inimical to economic development of the country. Instead of thinking of how they or their children might get out the clutches of extreme poverty, deprivation and want, it is observed that they become envious of progressive neighbours, which might in some cases end with the lives of such neighbours being cut short or their progress being stalled. This is particularly very common in the rural areas where poverty is endemic but by no means limited to such places.

In towns, modern offices and other such places, it is possible to see people whose thought processes have been corrupted by economic poverty (such as material poverty), that they cannot bring out their best, so their potentials lie latent. Others might not be so negative in thought but are preoccupied with how to generate subsistence. These often think of their immediate needs and much effort are expended towards meeting the immediate needs of food (poor quality food), health challenges, extended family needs and school needs of children, which in many cases are in poor quality schools, where the children learn with difficulty and really absorb little. In such schools, the necessary motivation and ideas to confront life and its challenges are rarely taught. This can explain why with a huge turnout of graduates every year in Nigeria, not much is being produced that can address challenges in Nigeria. A lot of emphasis is on the proceeds of crude oil which is produced with foreign technology. For those who would even like to innovate and contribute to national development and in the process migrate out of their status of poverty, the thought of how to finance the idea is limiting, especially given the level of poverty many people face in Nigeria, and it is important to note that there are over seventy eight

million (78,141,389) people in Nigeria who are extremely poor.

In point, poverty is a great constraint to generational and intergenerational mobility and affects development negatively. From the ongoing, it is clear that; (1) Material poverty leads to poverty of ideas; (2) Poverty diverts the attention of the poor from positive actions to vices; (3) Poverty negatively affects implementation of initiatives that can generate development and mobility; (4) Poverty itself can cause death.

It is a major challenge that must be given due attention. It is the poor who desperately need to be generationally and intergenerationally mobile. An economy that does not guarantee socio-economic mobility to the poor masses is socio-economically persistent. Intergenerationally persistent economies have growth constraints because it is the masses that make demands on goods and services. Production cannot continue without demand and often, the most guaranteed demand is local demand. As Keynes (1936) found out, without money or purchasing power, demand is constrained, output is affected, unemployment and ultimately stagnation is an outcome.

Unemployment

Unemployment is a real problem in Nigeria; it denies people especially graduates of the school system, the opportunity to utilize their talents and contribute to the national economy. Thus, many graduates cannot positively contribute to development in Nigeria. In fact, this is an understatement because the sophistication of crime in Nigeria in recent times is a clear manifestation of the caliber of people involved in such crimes. In other words, unemployment in Nigeria encourages a negative impact on national development in Nigeria since it encourages the agile, able and educated minds who had been denied the opportunity of gainful employment to resort to destructive, distractive and disastrous activities that seemingly return to those criminals, some form of economic benefits. For instance, why should a citizen resort to illegally importing and equipping other unemployed youths with arms to terrorize fellow citizens, his government and to destroy the very meager infrastructure which had been put up at great cost to help his kiths, kins and his community (Alam et al., 2010)? According to Kolapo (2010), citing the National Bureau of Statistics in 2009 alone, about 10,000 bankers and other workers joined the pool of 10 million Nigerians that had already been unemployed as at March 2009 (Punch Newspaper, 2010). This is aside from the 83,400 jobs that were lost when 834 manufacturing firms closed shop due to the adverse operating environment in the country. With about 18% of Nigerians unemployed, who are those to produce the needed output that would drive development in the economy, given that this 18% are in the age range of the active work force?

Social inequality

Inequality, social disparity or stratification exists in every society at every time, in different forms, at different levels. Some of these forms are natural others are artificial. For instance, because natural resources are not proportionally distributed, those with more and better access to scarce resources, tend to have an edge over those with less. But society can ensure some level of redistribution that will ensure harmony and progress in human society. However, while some societies concert efforts to ensure equitable redistribution, others tend to encourage unproductive social inequality.

Social inequality negatively impacts on development and national welfare especially when it is chronic and intergenerational. According to Todaro and Smith (2003), chronic inequality leads to economic inefficiency. This is because with high income inequality, the rate of savings in the economy will be lower since the highest rate of marginal savings is done among the middle classes. In Nigeria now, the middle class is fast becoming extinct and this is the class that spends more of its resources to promote local production and is still able to have left over which it could save to promote investments in the local economy. The rich typically consumes ostentatious goods, as imported and expensive cars, ornaments, frequent trips overseas for holidays or medical attention and are likely to seek safe havens for their savings abroad (Ugoh and Ukpere, 2010). This group is also less likely to expend much time and effort on positive and productive ventures that can lead to equity, change, and development. Much of their energies and attention are more likely to be in the direction of retaining their extant status through rent seeking attitudes which may include corruption, oppression, distorting values, and cronyism, among many others which will enable them sustain the status quo. These attitudes undermine social stability and solidarity.

High inequality may also lead the poor to support wrong and populist policies especially when such policies are being advanced by those they depend on for subsistence. So, when a few individuals in society possess a high percentage of the economic resources in that economy, more often, productivity is likely to be the casualty because more resources are likely to be diverted from productive purposes that could lead to faster economic growth.

In Nigeria, there are a class of wealthy individuals who are comparable to rich men anywhere in the world. Many of these became rich through methods other than hard work, innovation or positive and developmental ingenuity. Quite often, wealth is accrued through patronage, cronyism or corruption. The class of very wealthy Nigerians constitute less than one percent of Nigerians and control more than ninety percent of Nigerian wealth. The far greater majority control about 10% of national wealth including those we may consider "workaholics".

Even in offices (aside the core civil service), promotions

Table 1. Salaries of political office holders.

S/N	Category	HASS Basic(₦)	CONSS (₦)
1.	Special Assistant to the President (TTP) Chief Speech Writer to the President; Chief Press Secretary to the President	626,700	4,392,012
2.	Members, House of Representative, Deputy Chief of Staff (TTP), Senior Assistant TTP	865,200	13,102,402
3.	Ministers of State; Senators, Principal Officers of the House of Representatives: Special Advisers TTP	1,015,700	13,374,240
4.	Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives; Ministers, Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Head of Civil Service of the Federation, Chief of Staff TTP; National Security Adviser, Chief Economic Adviser, Inspector General of Police, Chairman, Federal civil Service Commission, Federal Character Commission, National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission, Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission.	1,194,600	15,094,426
6	Speaker of the House of Representative	1,649,400	15,240,500
7.	Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President of Senate, Chief Justice of Nigeria	1,938,000	16,348,920
8.	President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria	2,506,000	24,954,405

Source: NLC campaign and mobilization 11th May, 2009.

may not always follow merit or hard work. Sycophants easily access positions and could use such positions to dwarf the progress of perceived enemies through different sorts of blackmail, character assassination or other base methods without challenges from appropriate authorities. So, increasingly, hard work which is necessary for development is being jettisoned in favour of cronyism. This limits the opportunity space for talented citizens to contribute their quota to nation building and constrains development. Various sentiments serve as tools to advance the cause of the lazy indolent, inefficient, less frugal, and less qualified against those who genuinely put in honest effort but do not belong to relevant power blocs.

Social inequality has also tended to encourage corruption, according to Amadi (2005), the poor are susceptible to corruption with ease. The opportuned (that is, the rich) steals what belongs to millions of people in order to ensure the future of their generations unborn. The rich also steals to satisfy the passion of materialism and to stay out of the reach of the law in Nigeria.

Thus, social inequality is a limiting factor of national development and intergenerational mobility, yet there are many sources of socio-economic disparity in Nigeria. There is a sharp divide between the wages and salaries of those in the public sector and those in formal private sector especially workers in petroleum related firms, banking and telecommunications. There is also a sharp divide between wages in the informal sector and the formal sector. More importantly, whereas the minimum wage of the Nigerian worker in the formal sector is only seven thousand, five hundred naira (₦ 7, 500.00) or fifty dollar (\$ 50) monthly, Table 1 shows the wages of political officers in the same economy.

The Nigerian workers in the language of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) are increasingly excluded from the wealth created by their labour. The difference in pay between managers and workers is not only one of the highest in the world, out of every ₦ 1 paid as wages, managers collect more than 80 kobo, leaving only 20 kobo for the other workers (NLC, 2009). There is urgent need to redress these inequalities and to encourage hard work if the country will realize a quick transformation of its economy in line with expectations of the 21st century. A nation in which only a few people monopolize resources required for national development and encourage only those loyal to them will breed sycophancy, cronyism, and nepotism.

Inadequate access to capital

Inadequate access to development capital is also a key limitation, affecting intergenerational socio-economic mobility and development in Nigeria. According to Schumpeter (1934), a key source of development in any economy is the spirit of entrepreneurship. This is because the entrepreneur, engineers spontaneous and discontinuous changes in the economy, which is able to launch the economy into the paths of economic growth and keep that growth sustained. The high point in the theory is that development is facilitated by the introduction of new ideas, that are relevant, timely and cost efficient in the given economy, and because over time, a new idea will become stale, another new idea should spring up to replace an obsolete idea. These ideas could be in form of services, goods, or know-how (method), organizational pattern or even raw materials. In Nigeria,

innovation possibilities exist. There are several people with good ideas. In seminars, conferences, workshops, universities and related institutions, people are generating new ideas but one missing gap is the necessary development capital required to drive the idea into reality. The insufficiency or absence of the required capital has given the impression that such innovations are lacking (Alam et al., 2010). The innovator is therefore deprived the economic value of his innovation and cannot enjoy socio-economic growth in spite of good and brilliant mind set or idea. Therefore, socio-economic mobility and development are stalled.

Management and leadership

According to Atiku (2010), as aired in the Federal Radio 7:00 a.m. news of 29th October 2010, leadership is very vital for national development. No country can grow above the visions and initiatives of those that manage it. In Nigeria however, the political class has largely been the same group of dynasties intergenerationally presiding over the affairs of Nigeria in one form or another. In other words, at the top of the socio-economic strata in Nigeria, there has been a high level of intergenerational persistence (Obulor and Nwosu, 2009). The Sarakis, the Obasanjos, the El-Rufais, the Jery-Ganas to mention a few, are examples. Apart from those in the 'corridors' of political power, and using such powers to achieve economic power, there are those who find themselves perpetuated in the economic realm (such as in industry). This has even been enhanced by policies as privatization. In fact, according to Otto (2009), some public office holders use their access to power as leverage to buy up firms that have potentials for profit, so that when they vacate their political positions, they and their generations can remain sticky on their extant socio-economic statuses. This persistence of this same group in the Nigerian leadership has constrained development. It has limited the quality and quantity of initiatives that could bring about necessary socio-economic transformation. Of course, these groups that are already at the peak of the socio-economic structure may not fully realize the need for change given the fact that economic and political power are in their control. Slogans for change are more of lip service to many of these political leaders.

Nigeria needs the infusion of a new breed into leadership; it needs a widened space for more and better initiatives that will increase the pace of development. A good example of what the fusion of the new breed will do is the success of President Jonathan in the fuel supply market. All the complaints that the Nigerian refineries could not work; fuel and other petroleum products must be imported until the arrival of privately owned refineries have been proved wrong. Nigerian refineries are working. Fuel and other pipeline products are stable at the petrol stations. With some better ideas, the power supply will

also stabilize if new entrants are encouraged into leadership and allowed to contribute to national development. The extant leaders (elites) have failed (or proved incapable) to provide the necessary management and leadership that would engender national development.

Conclusion

The high point of this discourse is the relationship between intergenerational mobility and development especially national development. Intergenerational mobility is an index for the equality of opportunity in an economy, that is, when more efficient, hardworking and determined people are given equal opportunity to initiate and implement their ideas, it will lead to personal development and national development. So, people, irrespective of their socio-economic class and place of birth, have a fair chance of socio-economic development if they have talents, determination and a will to succeed. This widened opportunity space therefore invites those with ideas, talents, and other positive abilities to contribute to national development because such hard work is the yardstick and source of growth. The more ideas, innovation and contribution, the more likely the economy will develop. There is therefore a positive correlation between the opportunity space and development. In an intergenerationally persistent economy, hard work may not be adequately rewarded because the success factors in such economy may typically include household background, place of birth or upbringing, network of friends or associates (including "god-fatherism") among others. So, it will be common to see those who have no experience assume positions over those with experience, based on patronage or any of the listed factors. Such patronage ensures that the bidding of the masters (or god-fathers) becomes sacrosanct whether or not it aligns with societal interest. This is more likely to be seen at the political level, bureaucratic level and elsewhere in such society. It is not hard work but 'smart work' or connection. Sycophancy and other vices become the major channels of growth. This may not stop hypo-critical pontifications of social problems by the same people who are beneficiaries and perpetuators of this mindless and repressive policy. The Nigeria of today is not too far from this, incidents of kidnap, militancy, prostitution, blackmail, sycophancy observed in the national economy and in our places of work are just manifestations that merit and hard work which used to be the channels of growth in Nigeria of the past are fast being eroded by those who stand to gain from such confusion.

Except something is done to redress this, regressive tendency development will continue to elude Niger Deltans in particular, and Nigeria in general, whether oil, gas and other resources are present or absent. The authors of this paper believe that it is not just resources

(material or human) that determine the level of development but the opportunity space for people to contribute to national development with the expectations of reward is critical to the development process. So, while this work agrees with authors as Rostow (1952) Harrod and Domar (1957), and Schumpeter (1934) among others, that material resources, savings, and innovations are necessary conditions for development, the contribution here is that until an opportunity space is created for a wider audience to contribute, development will be illusive or slow to come. It is human beings that generate development and they must be given the opportunity to contribute to national development and in the process, also generate personal development. An open and inter-generationally mobile society is both efficient and morally desirable because outcomes are driven by talents, merit or endowments. Social inclusion is imperative. Every body, section, and region in Nigeria should be rewarded according to its level of contribution to national development. This is equity.

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