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NIGERIA AT THE CROSS-ROADS - CAN THE “GIANT OF AFRICA” OVERCOME HER SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES?

György I. Nesz mélyi

Budapest Business School – University of Applied Sciences, Budapest, Hungary

Abstract. The paper, beyond a comprehensive geographical, social and economic introduction of the most populous country of Africa, attempts to provide an insight to those challenges and problems which Nigeria faces nowadays. Beyond the rapid growth of the population, another main factor is the exploitation and export of crude oil which has been providing Nigeria with “easy cash” for the recent few decades. Another point is that agricultural holdings are small and scattered, and farming is carried out with simple tools and techniques. Modern and large-scale farms are not common as well as the manufacturing industry is also lagging. The political leadership and the economic decision makers of the country have already recognized the necessity of re-structuring the economy, the development of the food and agricultural sector and the manufacturing industry. All these are of key importance in order to stop frictions and tensions among the various ethnic and religious groups of the Nigerians and further develop their peaceful and long-run co-existence in the country. The study also talks about the desired ways and those measures which the former or incumbent Nigerian leadership has already made in order to find appropriate answers to the challenges. A brief overview from the European point of view makes the analysis, which was prepared on the basis of mainly secondary and partially primary research, complete.

Key words: Africa, Nigeria, political challenges, public security, terrorism, social stability, regional disparities, economic reform, climatic changes.

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НИГЕРИЯ НА РАСПУТЬЕ: МОЖЕТ ЛИ АФРИКАНСКИЙ ГИГАНТ ПРЕОДОЛЕТЬ СВОИ СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ, ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ И ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ?

Дьёрдь Иван Несмелий

Школа Бизнеса Будапешта – Университет прикладных наук, г. Будапешт, Венгрия

Аннотация. В данной научной статье, помимо вводной объемной информации о географии, социологии и экономике самой густонаселенной Африки, дается анализ вызовов и проблем, с которыми сегодня сталкивается
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Нигерия. Помимо быстрого роста населения, другим важным фактором является добыча и экспорт сырой нефти, которая обеспечивает Нигерию «легкими деньгами» в течение последних десятилетий. Другой особенностью страны является рассеянный характер и небольшие размеры агрохолдингов. Сельское хозяйство осуществляется при помощи примитивных инструментов и техники. Современные и крупные фермы для страны не типичны, промышленность также отстает по сравнению с другими развивающимися странами. Политические лидеры и экономический блок в стране уже признали необходимость реструктуризации экономики, развития агропромышленного комплекса и пищевой отрасли, а также обрабатывающей промышленности. Все это имеет ключевое значение для того, чтобы остановить трения и снизить напряженность между различными этническими и религиозными группами в Нигерии, а затем и дальше развивать их мирное сосуществование в стране. В статье также рассказывается о желаемых способах и о тех мерах, которые предыдущее руководство Нигерии приняло для того, чтобы нейтрализовать вызовы. Обзор с точки зрения европейца позволяет сделать полный анализ, который был подготовлен на основе вторичных и частично первичных данных.

Ключевые слова: Африка, Нигерия, политические вызовы, общественная безопасность, терроризм, социальная стабильность, региональная неравномерность, экономические реформы, климатические вызовы.

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Introduction

Nigeria is located on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea between Cameroon and Benin as well as Niger and Chad, between the 14° and 4° of northern latitude and the 3° and 15° of eastern longitude.

Its territory is 924 thousand km² which is divided by 36 federal member states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) according to the present public administration system. Its highest point is the Chappal Waddi on the Cameroonian border, its height above sea level is 2.419 m.

The coast of the southern parts of the country lies along the Atlantic Ocean known as the Gulf of Guinea. It shares boundary with Lake Chad in the northeast. Popular and remarkable geographical features in the country are Mambilla Plateau, Adamawa highlands, Obudu Plateau, Jos Plateau, River Niger, River Benue and Niger Delta [Anumiri, 2016].

The country – by its official name – the Federal Republic of Nigeria – is one of the most significant countries of Africa both from the point of economy and demography. This is the reason why some of Nigerians like to call their homeland as “Giant of Africa”.

Owing to its geographical location, Nigeria has tropical climate, during both of the seasons (rainy and dry) temperature is relatively high. In the southern part of the country the rainy season lasts from mid March till October while in the north from May till October.

Nigeria is a very rich country in natural resources: it disposes with 34 different mineral resources, including gold, iron ore, coal and limestone. It has been proven that the country has 37.2 billion

barrels of petroleum, and 187 trillion cubic feet reserves in natural gas. The average daily yield of oil exploitation is around 2.3 million barrels per day, but in case of need it can be increased till 4 million barrels. The previous British colony obtained its independence on the October 1, 1960, however Nigeria is still a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The Objectives and Methodology of the Research

The aim of this study is, beside the presentation of Nigeria from geographic, social and economic side, to explore those factors which obstruct its path of development. For all these, considering as challenges the leadership of the country has to find a solution without delay. The main point of the paper is represented by the descriptive-analytical exploration of economic, social and political factors and processes. The study is based partly on secondary results of researchers, international databases, and also on the author’s primary local experiences (he worked in Nigeria between 2007 and 2009).

Manifold Challenges

Since 1999 there has been civilian regime in Nigeria. The country has a formal democratic political framework, however it still belongs to underdeveloped countries having traditional political system of authoritativeness, moreover being socially and economically exhausted caused by ethnic, religious and social division of people. Nigeria represents all the characteristics of the African development: the exaggerated concentration of power, almost the

complete exclusion of those ethnic groups which do not dispose of power, the overdone role of power of armed forces, a sort of parody-sound conception of legislative activities, the lack of the separation of power branches, etc. The Nigerian administration is very weak. The effort of the federal governmental apparatus contributes to this weakness that it throws almost all state duties to the federal member-states, however without rendering the necessary financial instruments from the budget to it.

Muhammadu Buhari is the incumbent president of Nigeria since May 29, 2015 (he was re-elected in February 2019 for another four years). The 77-year old politician once, some decades before, used to be the head of state as a general for about 20 months as a result of a bloodless military coup in 1983. That time Buhari gained a serious popularity, since he decidedly took strong line against corruption, further his way of living was characterized by sociability and modest behaviour. However, his victory was not just due to his popularity of more than a quarter of a century ago, rather it could be explained by the fact that his predecessor, ex-president Goodluck Jonathan could not cope with the internal problems of the Nigerian society and economy. The present government was obliged to face, in the meantime, the necessity of more and more urging economic reforms and with the discontent of the population which was not always supporting it.

The Most Important Issues Concerning the Nigerian Economy

The Nigerian national economy faces very significant challenges. From among these three factors seem to be the most important: the

predominance of the hydrocarbon-energy sector, the backwardness of agriculture and food production and the underdevelopment of the manufacturing industry moreover the delay of the structural shift in the economy.

The structure of the Nigerian economy was specialized for producing two basic groups of products: agricultural commodities and crude oil. In the past fifteen years the country could show a relatively imposing economic growth. The exploitation and the export of crude oil was the most important and almost the exclusive resource. The oil exploitation sector still keeps on being the main driver of the Nigerian economy however the pace of economic growth came to a standstill by today as a result of the drop of oil prices at the global market.

According to the figures of Table 1, the GDP growth fell back from 2015 – mainly as a result of the fall of petroleum prices on the world market – in 2016 it fell to minus, then from 2017 a slow and modest stabilization can be seen. The inflation rose considerably, reaching the highest value in 2017, however in 2018 it was still significantly higher than before 2015. The exchange rate against USD plunged in 2015–2016, since then it seems to be stabilized. The current account had a high deficit in 2015, since then it shows surplus. In the course of the examined five years the amount of international reserves could slowly grow, however the same about the rate of external indebtedness comparing to the GDP.

The negative implications of the urbanization process are getting strengthened and more visible as a result of the imbalanced and distorted development and the social tension which is growing between the urban and rural regions of the country. That part of the rural population which cannot live longer from

Table 1

Macroeconomic indicators of Nigeria (2014–2018)

Indicators	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Population (million)	174	181	186	191	196
GDP per capita (USD)	3,271	2,699	2,155	1,951	2,134
Economic Growth (GDP, annual variation in %)	6.2	2.8	-1.6	0.8	1.9
Inflation Rate (CPI, annual variation in %)	8.1	9.0	15.7	16.5	12.1
Exchange Rate (vs USD)	167.5	196.5	304.5	305.5	306.5
Exchange Rate (vs USD, aop)	156.5	192.6	253.2	305.3	305.6
Unemployment Rate	4.4	5.3	6.2	6.0	6.0
Current Account Balance (USD bn)	1.3	-15.4	2.7	10.4	5.3
Exports (USD billion)	82.6	45.9	34.7	45.8	63.1
Imports (USD billion)	61.6	52.3	35.2	32.7	40.8
International Reserves (USD)	34.5	29.1	25.8	38.8	43.1
External Debt (% of GDP)	1.7	2.2	2.8	5.1	6.0

Note. Source: [Own compilation on the basis of Focus Economics, 2020].

farming migrated to the bigger towns searching for job and livelihood. The population of Lagos, the former capital city, nowadays already exceeds 10 million capita, where problems of a big city deriving from the population growth (e.g. criminality, environment pollution, etc.) appear more and more firmly [Zsarnóczai et al., 2011].

It is also a significant circumstance that the economic growth of the past years basically does not go steadily with the creation of new jobs neither with the decrease of poverty. According to statistical data the unemployment rate is relatively low (4.4% in 2014 and 6.0% in 2018). However, in reality the effective unemployment could be much higher, as mainly among rural population wives, who work in the households are not even registered. The crude oil and the natural gas exploitation remained basically a capital-intensive “enclave” within the Nigerian economy. Its ability to generate new jobs is very low. Therefore, one of the most important economic and socio-political issues is the job creation, first of all for the young generation.

The capacity of the processing industry is low, and during the past decades it did not broaden but dwindled: its contribution to the GDP decreased to 4% from 6% (of the year 1985). The majority of finished products and consumer goods being sold in Nigeria are imported from abroad. It can be mentioned as a striking example, although the country is in possession of one of the biggest petroleum reserves in the Gulf of Guinea, the oil refinery capacity is rather limited in the country, thus the shortcomings of fuel happen frequently as much of petrol and gasoline used in Nigerian vehicles is imported.

Until now the main driving forces of the economic growth did not need manual labour in a bigger extent thus they were unable to adsorb all the 1.8 million job new seekers who enter the labour market annually. The issue of agriculture and nutrition should be also pointed out where the unreasonable management with goods and possibilities could particularly be observed.

Moreover, the general phenomenon is also valid for Nigeria, that the due to the characteristics of the rural economy, the ability of self-financing is very low in the case of agricultural enterprises [Széles et al., 2014]. According to the figures of the World Bank, the territory of arable land is about 76.9–73.1% (Agricultural Land, 2015) which means 70–73 million hectares, if we take into consideration the total area of the country. Nigeria has huge agricultural potentials, however agricultural cultivation goes only on less than half of the arable lands and the efficiency

of the production is low owing to the lack of modernization. For this reason, the population of Nigeria stands in need for significant amount of food import in a value of 6.4 billion USD annually.

This phenomenon has existed almost since the beginning. The import of agricultural products had a fivefold growth between 1962 and 1982 [Nwufoh, 1986]. In 1960, the year of the independence of Nigeria, the contribution of agriculture to the national GDP used to be 63.9%, while twenty years later, in 1980 it was only one fifth (20.5%). It has to be added that in the time when the mentioned study was published the population and the food demand of Nigeria was half as much as nowadays.

There are also analyses which strived to explore the most important reasons of the low efficiency manifested in the Nigerian agriculture moreover the deficiencies appearing in the domestic production of agricultural goods. Oruro (2014) emphasized six main factors the former military regimes did not pay proper attention to this issue, baseless, voluntaristic targets, greediness of farmers (to become rich at once), the infrastructural shortcomings, the lack of qualified labour force, the under-utilization of the advantages deriving from the economy of scale (there are still very few big farms and also very few leading professionals who are experienced in their management), further the difficulties in accessing the necessary financial sources (loans) [Oruro, 2014].

Altogether it can be said that one of the most important causes of the present social and economic problems was the lack of structural diversification of the Nigerian national economy. The economic growth was not followed by significant structural changes thus national economy would need a comprehensive modernization.

Challenges and Problems in the Nigerian Society

Owing to the geographical situation of Nigeria, it composes a continuous transition between Sahara and the equatorial tropical zone, Sahara itself does not extend (yet) into Nigeria’s territory, although in the almost infertile, arid Northern edge of Nigeria – which is a part of Sahel zone – proceeds southward. As a consequence of the above there are significant differences between certain regions of the country, which could be observed both in density of population and for example in the agricultural potential.

It is not without reasons why the territories of the federal member states located in the north are much bigger than those being in the southern part of

the country. However, a larger territory does not necessarily mean more population as well. Thus, Borno state, which extends to more than 70 thousand km² in the north-eastern part of Nigeria, while Rivers State, one of the southernmost states with its 11 thousand km² have almost the same population (cc. 5-5 million people). The regional disparities are considerable, but not only from the point of population density, but also from ethnical and religious point of view. Nigeria is a country of more than 200 ethnic groups (tribes), however beyond all these it is an essential fact that the decisive part of the population belongs to two main religious communities (Christian and Moslem). It is characteristic that in the northern part of the country the majority of people is Moslem and belongs to the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group, while in the South the population is mostly Christian. Furthermore, on the southern part the ethnical-tribal division is much more “colourful” than it is in the North. In the south-western states mostly Yoruba people, while in the south-eastern states Igbo (Ibo) people and several other ethnic groups are living.

The climatic changes, the “spreading” of territories being stricken by drought towards the south and the rising scantiness of water resources caused a considerable internal migration in the northern territories of the country. The inhabitants of the

northern part of Nigeria which became more and more dry – primarily among those who earned their living from agriculture – started to wander gradually towards the southern direction, hoping to find more favourable conditions for production. African people have learnt for thousands of years how to protect themselves against drought, desertification, devastating floods and epidemics, by migration [Búr, Tarrósy, 2011]. However, this phenomenon is considered relatively new in Nigeria. It has to be added that the inner migration, in many cases, led to turbulences respectively to conflicts between religious communities. In the past years Plateau State, which is located in the central part of Nigeria, became such an area, due to its flat highlands character and its relatively balanced rainfalls, and became one of the most favourable agricultural land of the country. To the settlements of the region which had Christian majority previously, more and more Moslems arrived, originated from the northern federal states with the view of finding new existence and livelihood.

The gradually changing religious and ethnic composition of this region frequently led to bloody and armed conflicts during the past few years (see conflict zones in Nigeria on Figure 1). Although the cause of the tensions appears on the surface as religious intolerance which is made more intense and



Fig. 1. Conflict zones in Nigeria

Note. Source: [COI Report, 2014].

aggravated by the actions of extremist groups (like Boko Haram). However, it has to be understood that the real cause of this problem is mainly the issue of possession of natural resources (agricultural land and water resources). It is a fact, irrespectively from the above, that the previously relatively peaceful co-existence became more fragile and in many places even deteriorated.

Unfortunately, it cannot be said that the internal social discrepancies were raised only on religious basis. One of the historical heritage of Nigeria – in which its destiny is very similar to the majority of developing countries – that the boundaries of the country were not drawn on ethnic or religious bases, but it simply inherited the territory of the previous British colony with the manifold ethnic and religious characteristics. In majority of the history of independent Nigeria the effective power was in the hands of Hausa Moslems. There have been rather few among the heads of state who have not been originated from this circle [Neszmélyi, 2012].

The Moslem population consider this dominance normal and natural even today. However, other ethnic groups, like Igbo people have different opinion about it. At the beginning of 1966 the Igbos tried to take

over the power with military coup then following a counter-coup of the northern Hausas, they declared their independence and in the south-eastern, oil-rich part of Nigeria they founded the Republic of Biafra in 1967 (Figure 2), which had a short life and ended tragically. Only a few countries recognized its independence. Due to the massacres committed by the Nigerian army and the arising lack of foodstuffs one but rather two-three million people died, according to estimations and about a further 3 million Igbos escaped from the region [Rózsa, 2012].

The Igbo population more or less reintegrated into the Nigerian society since that time, however their members still suffer from discrimination in certain fields of life. It could hardly be imagined that for example Nigeria should have an Igbo president in the foreseeable time. Even in other positions at federal level and in governmental positions it is a rare exception to find an Igbo politician. The Igbo people strive to find jobs in the business sphere which is open also for them. They form the major part of the intellectual élite of the country. There are several members of the Igbo population who remember the once upon Biafra with nostalgia however there is hardly anyone who considers realistic their



Fig. 2. The once upon Biafra region

Note. Source: [Iaccino, 2015].

independence should it happen among any kind of boundaries. However, there is an organization, MASSOB (Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra) which is still striving for the revival of that state. Nowadays MASSOB makes itself visible mainly in the form of manifestations, demonstrations only, fortunately no violence or terrorist actions have occurred yet.

The State of Public Security and the Relations with the Neighbouring Countries

The internal security of Nigeria moreover its judgement at international level are considerably influenced by extreme organisations committing violent actions in certain parts of the country, from time to time. From among those it is worth mentioning two of them: the rebel groups of the Niger-delta region, further the Boko Haram. Although both organisations are active on major parts of the country which can be relatively well identified, on the basis of concrete scenes of conflicts the regional tensions are altering in space and time. The rebel groups of the Niger-delta region are present in the South, in the delta-region of Niger river, one of the most neuralgic regions of Nigeria: Delta, Bayelsa and River States. This is the area in which the oil exploitation goes on which generates the decisive share of the national income, prevailingly by multinational companies and by numerous foreign professionals. This part of Nigeria can be characterized by political instability, corruption, environmental pollution and the actions of militant groups. From among the causes of social unrest corruption, disproportional division of the incomes of the federal state can be underlined. For a more just division of the oil revenues (that means to leave a higher share of the incomes to the oil-rich states) there have been struggles going on since decades by the peaceful organizations of the aboriginal inhabitants and those of the illegal armed groups. The acts of terrorism, beyond the broaching of or exploding the oil pipelines, spread also on taking hostages from among the foreign employees. These actions can be connected to the most important rebel groups: Liberation Movement of Niger Delta (MEND) and the Movement of the United Ijaw Communities of Niger Delta (FNDIC). As the former president (Goodluck Jonathan) originated from Bayelsa, one of the oil-producer states, thus he had high respect and prestige in this region, he strived to make significant efforts to create peace in the Niger-delta region. Due to this effort in the past years the

violent activity of these organizations decreased. However, the question is when it would flame up again even heavier if there were no positive changes in the distribution of the oil-revenues and in the local living conditions.

The Boko Haram is the most well-known West African terrorist organization. It has a predilection to be called also as "Nigerian Taliban". This organization took the field for the total Islamization of the country and the general introduction of sharia, the Islamic jurisdiction, some years ago already. Although Boko Haram was founded in 2002, it turned to be radical only since 2009. The Boko Haram took the responsibility for most of the terrorist actions committed in Nigeria in recent times. In international context the organization means also more and more serious challenge, because it made closer the relations both with the AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) and with the Al-Shabab of Somalia even during the past years it started to keep close links with the Islamic State (IS). Therefore, experts call the attention to the risk of the establishment of a pan-African terrorist organization. Even though, Boko Haram is not only active in the territory of Nigeria, but also in the neighbouring countries which also have significant Moslem population.

Boko Haram has still been active by now in the Northern, mostly in the Moslim-populated states. Abductions, suicide bombings, and attacks on civilian targets by Boko Haram persisted. At least 1,200 people died and nearly 200,000 were displaced in the northeast in 2018 [Nigeria. Events of 2018, 2019].

To draw the entire state of affairs it is necessary to present the direct international environment of Nigeria mainly the relations with its neighbours. From this point of view, it is worth recalling the fact the country and its neighbours have been established along the boundaries of former colonial territories and they rarely coincided with the geographic extension of ethnic and religious communities. The majority of West and Central African countries which have obtained their independence at the beginning of 1960's is characterized by heterogeneity in this respect. Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to say that in the course of the nation-building process Nigeria is still a young country and so are its neighbours. However, the intermediary language makes a sharp difference. In Nigeria as a heritage of the British colonial past, the English language (in colloquial use a simple local verse of it, the so-called pidgin English) is common, de facto an official language, while its neighbours (Benin, Niger, Chad completely, and also the major part of Cameroon) are francophone countries.

Having a look at the map, representing the situation of the colonial times, it is well visible that Nigeria with its territory of almost one million square kilometres is still an “island” only in the former French West and Central Africa.

Nigeria – with the exception of Cameroon – fosters good or at least balanced relations with its neighbours. Considering the population respectively the economic potentials, these surrounding countries being of smaller size, are depending on the Nigerian economy, from the point of view raw and basic materials and also from energy carriers. Owing to the overcrowded Nigerian harbours, the neighbouring Benin is important because many importers ship their goods to Nigeria through the seaports of Benin.

The strained relations with Cameroon are burdened by territorial disputes from the very beginning. The northern part of the trust territory of British Cameroon was annexed by Nigeria in 1961 (the present Adamawa and Taraba States) while its southern part was annexed to the French Cameroon, establishing the Republic of Cameroon of today. According to the sense, the “halving” of the once upon British territory was not pleased by any of the parties. Later on, a much smaller territory, but having a strategic importance, the affiliation of Bakassi peninsula (Figure 3), located at the frontier of the

two countries, was the object of disputes for long time. There used to be armed frontier incidents frequently and the two countries almost launched serious war conflict between each other for the possession of this piece of land. The dispute has been closed, and in 2002 the International Court of Justice in the Hague decided the peninsula to Cameroon. Nigeria accepted the resolution and in gradual steps it ceded the peninsula to its neighbour. However, all this did not make any improvement in the bilateral relationship. A great majority of the local population of Bakassi, estimated for about several hundred thousand people, feels unsafe and hostility towards the new “fatherland” considering Cameroonians as colonizers [GaceTillero, 2007]. For a partial solution of the problem, Nigeria established a special zone, named New Bakassi Zone in the neighbouring Cross River State to help settling those who absolutely did not want to live under Cameroonian administration. However, only a few of them took advantage of this possibility since there was almost no infrastructure existing there.

Another peculiar issue is between Nigeria and Cameroon (and partially also with Niger) arises from Lake Chad which is special body of water. The boundaries four countries (Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad) share are poorly demarcated and also the



Fig. 3. The Bakassi Peninsula

Note. Source: [Kimengsi, Lambi, 2015].

Nigerian side is poorly patrolled and defended. Although it is an inland lake with no outlet, it is a freshwater lake. It receives water mainly from Central Africa (the River Chari) and secondarily from Nigeria (Rivers Komadugu-Yobe, Ngadda and Yadseram). Because the lake is in a shallow basin, its area varies considerably depending on variation of rainfall in the areas supplying water to it.

Lake Chad used to support a large fishing population and supplies the country with a large proportion of its animal protein. Therefore, the Lake was, or still should be important to Nigeria’s food security. Conflicts often arose between Nigerian, Chadian and Cameroonian fishermen over fishing rights [Ologe, 2010]. The situation is really severe now as Lake Chad has gradually been drying up (see Figure 4). According to a report of the United Nations Environment Programme, since 1963, the Lake Chad has shrunk to nearly a twentieth of its original size, due both to climatic changes and to high demands for agricultural water [Vital Water Graphics, 2008]. Nigeria is in an especially unfavourable situation the Nigerian part of the Lake has already not much open water.

Attempts for Solution, Possibilities

The present leadership of Nigeria inherited numerous problems from its predecessors which have to be answered within a short time. From among these the most important is the continuation of the diversification of the national economy, guided by the

petrol exploitation and export, which was set up already. Reducing the import of foodstuffs and in parallel the improvement and reforming the agricultural sector is another key issue. This is really an urging task, because the agriculture could ensure food-supply, possible whole food self-sufficiency and less dependence on the world economy [Zsarnóczai, Zéman, 2019], and Nigeria has the potentials to achieve self-sufficiency and even export various foodstuffs in longer run. But at present food imports mean high burden to the budget

Another core task is to assure the peaceful co-existence of the Christian and Moslem communities of the population. The successful actions against Boko Haram and other extremist organisations could also be mentioned.

From among the geographical and natural problems, before all, a more intense and rational water management would be necessary mainly in the dryer northern part of the country including the agricultural production by irrigation, respectively the exploitation of the reserves in the utilization of hydro-power energy. Here the issue is not only about the unconditional implementation of new projects but the better use of the already existing ones. Already in the country in a number of places water management projects have been implemented (e.g. the dam constructed by Hungarian technical aid in the 1970s on Tiga river in Kano State). Further modern irrigation systems were built, however their capacities are frequently under-utilized.

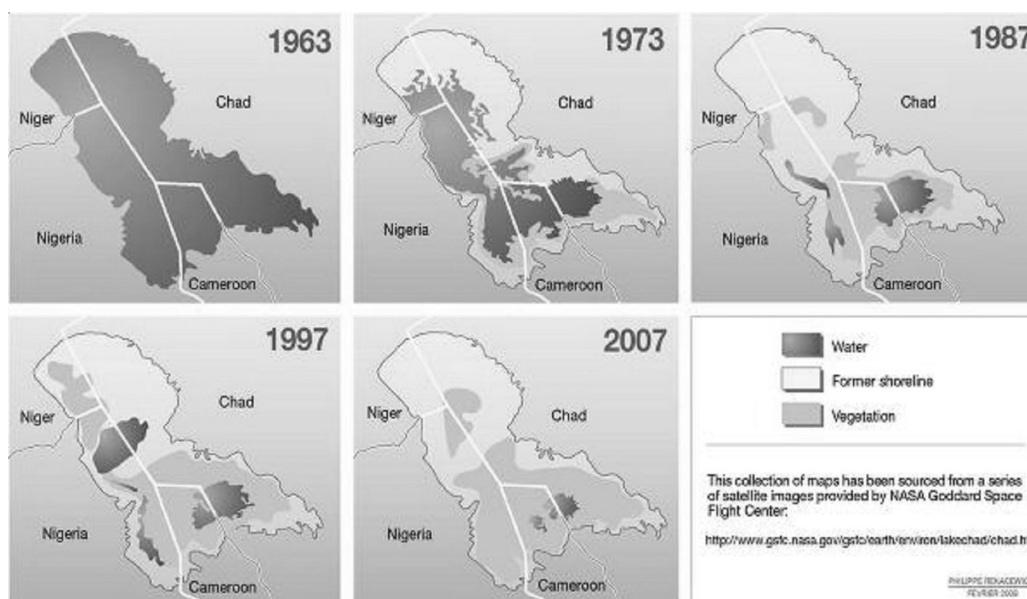


Fig. 4. The shrinking Lake Chad

Note. Source: [UNEP (Vital Water Graphics), 2008].

Although during the dry season there are such rivers which get completely desiccated, it is not characteristic in the case of all. And even it should not be regular, that during the time of the dry season especially, the electric energy supply should be interrupted all over the country. However, this is the typical situation today, thus not only considerable part of the establishments but households too use electric power generators driven by gasoline. The difference in water discharge caused by the dry and wet seasons is well visible in the central part of Nigeria, in the case of Gurara Falls being nearly 70 km distance from the capital city to the north.

The reduction of social tensions is also an extremely important task. The afore-mentioned Moslem-Christian discrepancy was not really sharp until the recent times, the two communities lived beside each other in a relative peace. The improvement of living conditions of the population, the establishment of new jobs might make an end that the major part of the local Moslem community of about 80–90 million people being basically peaceful, should have radical measures, since the extreme ideologies always spread mainly in regions of most disadvantageous situation and in the poorest social circles. Practically this refers to the population of the Niger-Delta too. Although the social situation in Nigeria is strained, the immediate risk of a comprehensive civil war extending to the major part of the country does not exist at this moment, however on a longer run, in principle, the emergence of such events cannot be fully excluded. However, it is not probable that the country should be broken up to two or more separate parts along the religious or ethnic fault-lines.

Beyond the poverty of great extent and the social disparities it is also shocking that the majority of the population cannot benefit from the achievements of the economic growth, although the conditions for the accession to foodstuffs have been improved during the recent 20 years, thus the undernourishment decreased. By all means it would be necessary that the government should use more rationally the export incomes deriving mainly from the sales of oil and also in a more just way by taking into consideration the local priorities of development differing considerably from each other according to regions. The government established a so-called Sovereign Wealth Fund in 2012 replacing the former Excess Crude Account (ECA). This sovereign fund is to manage Nigeria's excess earnings from crude oil. However, the current administration stated the current Excess Crude Account has no real legal backing since it was formed under a political

arrangement from the previous administration. The Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) would receive monthly funding of a significant portion of oil and gas revenues above the budget revenue and approved by parliament with the view of managing the following three development funds: Future Generations Fund, Nigerian Infrastructure Fund and Stabilization Fund.

The structural changes in the economy should be implemented together with the establishment of new jobs which have to be followed by the development of the manufacturing industry. However, an appropriate care and attention and thorough knowledge of local conditions seem to be necessary in connection with the realization of economic diversification. Tarrósy (2009) for instance emphasized as a criticism of the modernist theory, that expectations of modernization had not been taken into consideration the African endowment, which might be a critical issue in the development of the lately established nations: whether it might be possible further in which extent could be the industry realized in such regions which had been arranged mainly for agricultural production, since the models proposing the raising of industrialization could not be relevant for Africa [Tarrósy, 2009]. However, this theoretical statement seems to be contradictory if we take into account that certain industrial branches of Nigeria, mainly the construction and manufacturing industries show increasing performance in the recent years [Nigerian Snapshot 2014, 2014]. However, it could be decided only on a longer run that the afore-mentioned phenomenon is a long-term or just temporarily existing trend.

The import of foodstuffs should be shrunk in parallel with agricultural reforms which might be an incentive for the increase of domestic production. Moreover, reform of the distribution system, abolishment of import tariffs on agricultural equipment, the improvement of the farmers' access to bank-loans should be implemented. If these efforts were successful, much of the rural population could be kept in place and the negative impacts of the urbanization trends further the internal or transboundary migration could be mitigated.

The fight against corruption is another important task. President Buhari has already proven his attitude of anti-corruption, thus hopefully during his official tenure the country will be able to show development in this respect as well. After all, in agriculture and power-energy sectors there are large scale reforms in process although their efficiency needs further improvement.

Conclusion

The "forced marriage" of more than two hundred ethnic and two major religious communities is a colonial heritage in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, however, it is absolutely not necessary that this co-existence should be bad. Nigeria is rich in natural resources. In addition, its present incomes of petrol assure sufficient coverage that its national economy should be modernized and diversified. In the field of economy, the rational utilization of export incomes is a factor of key importance, similarly the development of agriculture and the manufacturing industry. The effect of job creation of the latter is very important from the point of view of driving back the negative social phenomena (e.g. unemployment, poverty, internal migration from villages to towns).

Another essential point of view due to which the present government should treat the job creation as priority (especially in rural areas) is that the employment and in parallel the improvement of the income conditions would reduce the social tensions. And the attractiveness of radical political and religious ideologies and organisations would decrease among the members of the young generation being receptive for those. After all, it can be said that reforms aiming the economic structural changes could not only serve the development and growing wealth of the Nigerian society but they might facilitate creating peace and security in the entire West African region.

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Information About the Author

György I. Neszmeélyi, Doctor Hab., Professor, Director of International Affairs, Faculty of Commerce, Hospitality and Tourism, Budapest Business School – University of Applied Sciences, Alkotmány St., 9-11, H-1054 Budapest, Hungary, Neszmeelyi.Gyorgy@uni-bge.hu, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0707-5403>

Информация об авторе

Дьёрдь Иван Несмелий, доктор Хабилизат, профессор, директор по международным связям, Факультет торговли, гостеприимства и туризма, Школа бизнеса Будапешта – Университет прикладных наук, ул. Конституции, 9-11, H-1054 г. Будапешт, Венгрия, Neszmeelyi.Gyorgy@uni-bge.hu, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0707-5403>