Nigeria and other countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have been searching for national development since 1960 when the majority secured political independence and freed themselves from colonial domination. Leaders and citizens expected political independence to unleash the human productive instinct and catapult the country to national development. National development is about growth and diversification of the economy, modernization of physical infrastructure, advancing education, science and technology, enhancing socio-political participation, building and maintaining an efficient bureaucracy, and using the dividends of changes in the economy and other social institutions to increase opportunities for citizens to improve their life chances and quality of life on a continuing basis.

National development, therefore, refers to the ability of citizens who under the leadership of a developmental state apply their mental and physical energies to transform their natural resources and social and economic institutions for individual and national self-actualization. Just as Nigerian political leaders have been searching for the path to national development, or it is assumed that they do. So have academics, supranational agencies, public intellectuals and commentators done through seeking, producing and disseminating knowledge for educating generations of scholars and practitioners of development. However, it is one thing to search for answers to a problem, it is quite another to search in the right direction or know how to use such answers to solve the problem at hand.

The present collection of essays adds to contribute to understanding Nigeria’s, effort in search of development with marginal reference to Africa in general. It does so in its unique way. It uses empirical research accompanied by theoretical propositions to examine the structure and process of the political economy of development in Nigeria in four areas of human action historically strategic to the development of nations. These include the effective deployment of human resources in general and science and technology human resource in particular, encouraging entrepreneurship universally known as a powerful engine of economic development, a society in which political expression is not encumbered by debilitating parochialism, and a political leadership that embodies courage and knowledge of the trajectories of development. Optimal harness of these four parameters has marked the development of every nation.
I chose to study these topics as single issues from the time of my undergraduate and graduate education to my career as an academic. But these topics or issues serendipitously coalesced to encompass the foundation on which national development has historically been anchored, namely human resource, science and technology, entrepreneurship, the political institution, and leadership.

I became inquisitive about national development when I worked as an accounts clerk in the Head Office of the Research and Production Directorate (RAP) in secessionist Biafra. There, I observed Biafran scientists and engineers produce societally relevant materials and products of which I did not know the black man could do without the help of Europeans or experts from other parts of the world.

Biafran scientists built armored cars, though in crude form, produced bombs and bullets, made an in-road into building a rocket launcher, refined crude oil and produced petroleum products, led the building of an airport, produced some value-added consumables, played a visible role in the optimal use of land for food production, and managed their research laboratories and workshops with unprecedented efficiency. Biafran scientists and engineers made things from nothing. They achieved all these without the help of foreign experts. That experience cemented in my mind the strategic role of indigenous human resource in general and science and technology manpower in particular in national development.

Hence, my search for the path to national development has centered on trying to understand the role of human capital and how best to utilize it for the progress of society. That search began in 1974 during my undergraduate education at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, when I sought to conduct a study of worker morale in industrial organizations in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my bachelor’s degree. I chose to study workers because the history of the Industrial Revolution showed how the productivity of labor generated and expanded wealth and paved the way for capital accumulation and technological development in Western societies. Additionally, industrial sociology advanced the idea that a well-motivated work-force with high morale increases the capacity of labor to produce more and enhances the chance to create more wealth for capitalists, the organization and society, though many times at the expense of the workers who produce the wealth.

But my effort to conduct my proposed study in any of the three major multinational corporations in a commercial town in the former East Central State of Nigeria did not materialize. That commercial city is Aba presently located in Abia State. The three companies were Lever Brothers Nigeria Ltd.; Nigerian Breweries Ltd.; and Paterson Zochonis (P.Z., pronounced P. Zed in Nigeria). The Nigerian managers of each of the companies were excited by my intentions, genuinely wished they could
allow me access, but regretted that they could not approve my proposal to conduct the study in their organizations without permission from their European bosses domiciled in Europe. I wondered how a mere undergraduate research needed approval from London. That was the beginning of my practical understanding of the idea of economic dependency and dependent industrialization.

I, therefore, was forced to change my research topic to occupational choice among students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and conducted my study on campus where I did not require permission from anyone. Although I involuntarily detoured from my original interest of seeking to understand the role of human resource in industry, the study of occupational choice still centered on human capital.

My doctoral dissertation on the utilization of Nigerian scientists and engineers was inspired by my experience of the work of scientists and engineers in Biafra. I wanted to know, even if only indirectly, whether scientists and engineers in Nigeria felt the same degree of zeal and intellectual curiosity to create things and make contributions to society as I observed in their Biafran counterpart. I leave readers to draw their conclusions from the relevant chapters on the subject.

Entrepreneurship is also about human capital. The icon of entrepreneurship studies, Joseph Schumpeter, made us understand that the entrepreneur is a special kind of person. He/she sees and perceives what others cannot. History shows that entrepreneurial persons and personalities have left and continue to leave legacies on which the development of their countries depend. They did and continue to do so through 'creative destruction'. The Nigerian entrepreneur operates in a developing country characterized by dependent industrialization, a parochial political environment, and generations of political leadership that find it difficult to pave the way, or who do not seem committed, to national development. Hence the political, economic, social and physical environment in which the Nigerian entrepreneur does business makes his/her entrepreneurial task extremely onerous.

Because leadership is made up of a string of psycho-social attributes that determines the potential for the success or failure of a leader in his/her quest to achieve a goal, it is also a human capital question. Leaders may be born, educated, trained, groomed, spontaneously created, or made by events and circumstances. Leaders are therefore a resource that can be tapped to achieve specific national development goals, just as entrepreneurs and scientists and engineers can be mobilized and utilized for development objectives.

This collection of essays is therefore intended to equip students, scholars, policymakers and those who implement policies, with the praxis
of development. By praxis of development I mean the process by which ideas about development are translated or realized in practice. Put another way, the essays are not limited to theories of development which I summarized in chapter 1. The results of the individual studies end with some suggestions on the way forward.

The collection also contains discussions of development problems in various sectors and some suggestions for their solution. They draw from my meditations or musings on different sectors and institutions of society I published in Nigerian newspapers. Students, scholars, policymakers and development practitioners will find these opinions to be handy definitions of the Nigerian development problem and the way to deal with it.

This book does not claim to answer all the questions about Nigeria’s development. I doubt if any one book can claim such on any issue or in any discipline. There is no finality in knowledge. It is my hope, however, that the content will raise more questions, spark more research, and provide more suggestions as Nigeria and Africa continue to search for the ubiquitous phenomenon known as national development.

The collection is divided into 7 parts:

Part I focuses on the utilization of scientific and technological manpower in Nigeria and Biafra and the outcomes of scientific practice in the two environments.

Part II highlights four areas of entrepreneurial activity in Nigeria namely, how owner-founders and managers of enterprises manage their organizations, working conditions, succession problems of enterprises, and the business environment in which indigenous entrepreneurs operate. Chapters about work in Nigerian bureaucracies are included in this section because they also focus on organization and management.

Part III discusses aspects of rural development especially the problem of conflict in rural development and issues about food security.

Part IV addresses political expression in Nigeria using data from my study of the presidential election held on June 12, 1993. It analyses voter behavior and voting patterns in the Southeast geopolitical zone and presents the ethno-regional responses to the annulment of that election and its implications for national development.

Part V examines leadership as a popular concept in the discourse of national development in Nigeria and Africa. Articles in this section discuss the various dimensions of leadership and how the ability of Africans or Nigerians to put their developmental destinies in their own hands depends on the emergence of a political leadership that takes development seriously.

Part VI revisits the centerpiece of this collection namely, human capital and the human condition in Nigeria using contemporaneous data from several supranational agencies to assess the present status of development
in Nigeria in relation to the conclusions and projections in my earlier publications. Chapters 27 and 28 were written as an epilogue initially but became so long that they were split into two chapters. This section also includes my contribution to the debate on the status of theory and methods in African studies which took place among Africanists years ago. An endeavor on African and Nigerian studies, this contribution to the debate deserves inclusion in this collection as a useful tool on the importance of theory and method to students and scholars.

Part VII contains a number of opinion articles I published in national newspapers on various aspects of the Nigerian political economy. The articles derive from my reflections on constrains to Nigeria’s development and ways to disentangle those constrains and thereby pave the way to national development. They define specific developmental problems and proffer some suggestions.

This collection is the product of many years’ work. Hopefully, its contents will contribute to our knowledge of the trajectories, prospects, constraints, optimisms and pessimisms of national development in Nigeria.

The chapters of this collection were originally published in various academic venues. Academic journals and editors of anthologies require bibliographical styles unique to them. Hence the formats of citations vary and reflect those in which the chapters were originally published.

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