

DYSFUNCTIONAL EQUILIBRIUM AND VIOLENCE IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL THOUGHT OF FRANCIS FUKUYAMA: A HERMENEUTIC OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Social inequality has remained a serious challenge that has characterized the Nigerian polity most of the times of her existence. The amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates into a single sovereign Nigeria is a creation of a contraption where the North feels superior to the South. It has also become a country where the political elites are masters to the ordinary masses who position as their slaves. This problem is fueled by three complementary phenomena that constitute a core part of the Nigerian nationhood- religion, ethnicity and politics. How can Nigeria combine the trio in one polity in such wise that they engender equity? It is the position of this paper that Francis Fukuyama's notion of dysfunctional equilibrium accounts as the foundational cause of social inequality in Nigeria. Negating Fukuyama's resort to violence as possible panacea, the paper argues that with the spirit of patriotism founded on positive national consciousness, Nigeria stands to overcome the challenges of social inequalities.

Keywords: Dysfunctional Equilibrium, Violence, Social inequality, Repatrimonialism, Nigeria

Introduction

Social inequality is a major abnormally obstructing national development, unity and integration in Nigeria. This vice is the reason for the continuous cries of marginalization by some geopolitical zones in the country since Adam. Today, the problem has worsened to the extent that the voice of dissent in the country has assumed a more dangerous posture leading to a strong clamour for secession by some parts of the country. There is a burgeoning gap in the quality of being between the political elites and the ordinary masses. The government of the day also tends to favour some parts or zones in the country more than others leading to infrastructural decay and neglect of some areas. This has created intense frustration and lack of patriotism among the bulk of the masses. What is the fundamental cause of social inequality in Nigeria? Why is the situation worsening over time in spite of all the efforts made to arrest the situation? The article attempts to proffer answers to these enigmatic questions via the study of Fukuyama's notion of 'Dysfunctional Equilibrium and Violence' exposed in *The Origins of Political Order*.

In *The Origins of Political Order*, Francis Fukuyama gave systematic analyses of how what he described as 'political decay' can result to a grave pattern of political instability and social inequality that totally forecloses the chances of good governance and sustainable development in any nation. He posits that political decay brings about dysfunctional equilibrium, which, according to him, can only

be repaired through calculated violence applied by the suffering masses. Fukuyama identifies institutional rigidity and repatriationism as the preeminent causes of political decay which directly leads to a dysfunctional equilibrium. Hence, to better grasp Fukuyama's postulate on the dysfunctional equilibrium and violence, there is a great need we begin by analyzing his ideas on political decay, institutional rigidity and repatriationism.

Political Decay

Fukuyama avows that if there is a dynamic process by which competition among institutions produces political development, there must be also a corresponding process of political decay by which societies become less institutionalized (452). Hence, he uses the expression 'political decay' to refer to the various processes that is gradual but very impactful by which firmly institutionalized societies become less institutionalized. Put simply, Fukuyama uses the term 'political decay' to refer to the gradual desecration and destruction of political institutions put in place by the supreme law of a nation to ensure and promote good governance in the nation. It is simply the processes that lead to the demolition of the institutions of accountable governance and the enthronement of dictatorship. He identifies two processes by which political decay occurs: institutional rigidity and repatriationism.

Institutional Rigidity

Fukuyama borrows Samuel Huntington's definition of institutions as a "stable, valued recurring patterns of behaviour" (450). Institutions are created in the first place to meet the competitive challenge of a particular environment. This environment, according to Fukuyama, can be a physical one involving land, resources, climate, and geography or it can be a social one involving rivals, enemies, competitors, allies and the like (450). These forms of competitiveness sustain and ensure the continuous growth, development and fortification of institutions (Fukuyama 450). However, competitions if not guided by law could lead to anarchy and the collapse of institutions; hence, the need for law. "Indeed, institutions wouldn't be institutions- "stable, valued, recurring patterns of behaviour"- if they were not further reinforced by strong social norms, rituals, and other kinds of psychological investments in them" (Fukuyama 450). Fukuyama tries to emphasize here that inability to follow the rules of an institution will bring about rapid anarchy and rampant changes in the mode of operation of the society. The fact that institutions are inherently stable and recurrent patterns of behaviour is a factor that catalyses good governance which may also be misinterpreted to support bad governance. The fact that institutions are natural rigid, according to Fukuyama, is a major source of political decay. He notes:

On the other hand, the fact that societies are so enormously conservative with regard to institutions means that when the original conditions leading to the creation and adoption of an institution change, the institution fails to adjust quickly to meet the new circumstances. The disjunction in rates of change between institutions and the external environment

then accounts for political decay or deinstitutionalization (Fukuyama 450).

Here Fukuyama emphasizes that even though institutions are inherently rigid; they are made under specific conditions to serve specific needs. Hence, it is necessary that the institutions be amended with changes in the conditions and needs which they are instituted to serve. Once institutions fail to be amended to suite the changes in the society and hence meet with the needs of the society, they become obsolete and thus constitute primary factors engineering political decay.

Repatrimonialism

This refers to the favouring of family or friends with whom has exchanged reciprocal favours in political leadership. Fukuyama described this tendency as “as a natural form of sociability and a default manner of human interaction” (453). He notes:

The most universal form of human political interaction is a patron-client relationship in which a leader exchanges favours in return for support from a group of followers. In certain stages of political development, this constituted the only form of political organization. But as institutions evolved, new rules were put in place to recruit on the basis of function or talent- the Mandarin examination system, the devshirme in Turkey, the celibacy of the Catholic priesthood, or contemporary legislation outlawing nepotism in hiring. But there is constant pressure to repatrimonialize the system. Individuals initially recruited into an institution on impersonal grounds nonetheless often try to pass on their position to their children or friends. When institutions come under stress, leaders often find they have to give into these pressures in order to secure political primacy or meet fiscal needs (Fukuyama 453).

Fukuyama indicates here that a very dangerous kind and source of political decay is repatrimonialism. This repatrimonialism concerns the building of the machinery of the state around only friends and family. People are recruited to work within the systems of the institution in a state not based on talent or competence but mainly on blood ties or friendship. This is what repatrimonialism is all about. It is similar to patrimonialism. However, Fukuyama prefers to call it repatrimonialism just to emphasis that it is a tendency that resurfaced in the governance of nations in the modern era even after it was squarely defeated during the years of political evolution from the ancient to the modern period. Hence, while we had patrimonialism practiced in the earliest periods of political evolution, what we have in the modern era in nations with weak political institutions is repatrimonialism.

The above two factors contributing to political decay may attack an institution independently and at different times; but they can also combine as a single force to

cripple an institution especially when the interests of those benefiting from the system is being threatened by reform. Fukuyama clarifies: “The two types of political decay- institutional rigidity and repatrimonialism- oftentimes come together as patrimonial officials with large personal stake in the existing system seek to defend it against reform. And if the system breaks down altogether, it is often only patrimonial actors with their patronage networks that are left to pick up the pieces” (454).

Dysfunctional Equilibrium and Violence

Institutions, by their very nature, are rigid and hence not easily changeable. Fukuyama acknowledges this. He, nonetheless, also posits that apart from the natural rigidity common to institutions, there are external factors or influences that could impose immutability on institutions because of the benefits such immutability may be bringing to them. He posits:

We can be much more precise about why institutions are slow to adjust to changes in the environment beyond saying that there is a natural tendency toward the conservation of institutions. Any institution or system of institutions benefits certain groups in the society, often at the expense of others, even if on the whole the political system provides public goods like domestic peace, and property rights. Those groups favoured by the state may feel more secure in their persons and property; they may collect rents as a result of their favoured access to power, or they may receive recognition and social status. Those elite groups have a stake in existing institutional arrangements and will defend the status quo as long as they continue to remain cohesive. Even when the society as a whole would benefit from an institutional change, such as raising the land tax in order to pay for defense against an external threat, well-organized groups will be able to veto change because for them the net gain is negative (Fukuyama 454).

According to Fukuyama, Game theorists in Economy will describe this situation as stable equilibrium because of the players (in the elite group) will gain individually from changing the underlying institutional arrangement. But the equilibrium is dysfunctional from the standpoint of the state as a whole (455). Hence, dysfunctional equilibrium may be described as the change or inability for change seen in the mode of operation of institutions or system of institutions in societies due to external influenced from elite groups benefiting from the system. Fukuyama notes that Mancur Olson has the general argument that entrenched interests groups tend to accumulate in any society overtime, which aggregate into rent-seeking coalitions in order to defend their narrow privileges (Mancur Olson in Fukuyama 455). Fukuyama insists that “they [the elites groups] are much better organized than the broad mass of people in a society, whose interests often fail to be

represented in the political system” (455). He considers democracy as just a partial solution to this problem by saying that:

The problem of a dysfunctional political equilibrium can be mitigated by democracy, which at least, theoretically allows non-elites to have a greater share in political power. But even then, there is usually a large disparity in the organizational capacity of elites and non-elites that prevents the latter acting decisively (Fukuyama 455).

The capacity of any society to improve on the condition of her institution by making changes when and where necessary depends on the ability of such a society to overcome the influence of the few elites benefiting from the system. “The ability of societies to innovate institutionally thus depends on whether they can neutralize existing political stakeholders holding vetoes over reform. Sometimes economic change weakens the position of existing elites in favour of new ones, who push for new institutions” (456). Fukuyama sees this as the essence of politics: the ability of the leaders and the people to push for change and improvement on their system of institutions through a combination of authority, legitimacy, intimidation, negotiation, charisma, ideas, and organization.

Violence is often seen as a negative element in politics; a destructive force. Fukuyama, however, sees it as a creative force that has instigated the rise and development of powerful nations. Ricardo Fuentes, thus, suggests that “On violence, Fukayama extends Charles Tilly’s claim that in Europe ‘war made the state and the state made war’ to much of the rest of the world, particularly China, where the original centralized state of the Qin Dynasty (3rd century) was born out of extraordinary bloodshed.” (par. 10). To Fukuyama also, violence applied positively, could serve to restore parity and order to a dysfunctional equilibrium. He draws a relationship between dysfunctional equilibrium and violence in a society. He notes thus:

The stability of dysfunctional equilibria suggests one reason why violence has played such an important role in institutional innovation and reform. Violence is classically seen as the problem politics seeks to resolve, but sometimes violence is the only way to displace entrenched stakeholders who are blocking institutional change (Fukuyama 456).

Fukuyama, thus, views violence as a viable means to wrestle power and control from self-centered elites and bring about positive institutional changes within any society. According to him, “The fear of violent death is a stronger emotion than the desire for material gain and is capable of motivating more far-reaching changes in behaviour”(456). Fukuyama cites historical instances where violence has defied all odds to found stable institutions:

In the Chinese history, patrimonial elites stood in the way of the creation of modern state institutions both during the rise of the state of Qin and during the Sui and Tang dynasties when they had made a comeback. In the first case, incessant

warfare led by aristocrats decimated their ranks and opened the way for non-elite military recruitment. In the latter case, the rise of Empress Wu to power early in the Tang Dynasty led to a general purge of traditional aristocratic families, and thus the empowerment of a broader elite. The two world wars performed a similar service for the democratic Germany that emerged after 1945 by eliminating the aristocratic Junker class, which could no longer block institutional change (Fukuyama 456-7).

Fukuyama doubts whether dialogue and other forms of peaceful resolution are able to resolve the problem of dysfunctional equilibrium; he used the events that led to the American Civil War as an instance:

In the United States, in the period leading up to the Civil War, a minority of Americans in the south passionately sought to defend their 'peculiar institution' of slavery. The existing institutional rules under the constitution allowed them to do this as long as the westward expansion of the country did not lead to the admission of enough free states to permit an override of their veto. The conflict was ultimately one that could not be solved under the constitution and necessitated a war that claimed more than six hundred thousand American lives (Fukuyama 457).

He acknowledges the fact that the norms and institutions of the contemporary world have closed off violence as a means of resolving political deadlocks. According to Ricardo Fuentes, "That raises an intriguing problem- has the decline in war and violence since the mid 20th century, which in any other sense we should be celebrating, closed off a vital driver of change?" (Par. 11). Fukuyama, thus, contemplates what could possibly be the way forward for Africa plagued by grave forms of political decay. To this, he expressed that:

No one expects or hopes that the countries of sub-Saharan Africa will go through the same centuries-long process experienced by China and Europe in order to generate strong, consolidated states. This means either that the burden of institutional innovation and reform will fall on other non-violent mechanisms like the ones described above, or that societies will continue to experience political decay (Fukuyama 458).

It is, therefore, obvious that while Fukuyama sees violence as taken to be obsolete and not instructive to overcoming the challenge of a dysfunctional equilibrium in contemporary times; he yet considers it as a seeming last option for underdeveloped countries like those in Africa currently suffering damages due to this quagmire. If the leaders refuse to permit constitutional changes that would permit institutional changes leading to accountability in governance simply because they are benefiting from the bad system; Fukuyama is clearly saying that

the masses will need to employ calculated violence to achieve the needed changes or remain condemned to perpetual bad governance and underdevelopment.

Meaning of Social Inequality

Social inequality occurs in a given society when the resources domiciled in that society are distributed unevenly, typically through norms of allocation that engender specific patterns along lines of socially defined categories of persons. It is the differentiation preference of access of social goods in the society brought about by power, religion, kinship, prestige, race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation and class. Naido and Wills defined social inequality as “differences in income, resources, power and status within and between societies. Such inequalities are maintained by those in powerful positions via institutions and social processes (in Ya’u Haruna 15). Social inequality refers to the existence of variations in terms of valued attributes which some members of a society possess more than others. The attributes can include income, wealth, status, knowledge and power. (Ya’u Haruna 16). Chiara Binelli and Matthew Loveless, therefore, observes that, “the term is used to refer to multiple disparities in material wealth in society... this term is used mostly as a catch-all concept rather than as a distinct and coherent concept” (2).

Social inequality can be measured through a number of ways, such as through differences in social class or role, for example position such as in the Indian caste system which divides the society into rigid hierarchies, other social divisions related to inequalities which include gender, age, ethnicity and ability (Warwick-Booth 17). This suggests that there is yet to be a specific framework or standard with which to measure social inequality. This is due to the multidimensional nature of the concept. Theoretically, the multi-dimensional measurement of inequality is motivated by Amartya Sen’s “capabilities/functionings” approach, which is based on the core concept that wellbeing depends on individuals’ “effective freedom to achieve” their life goals and full potential (chaps. 3-4). The empirical research of scholars like Anand *et al.* (145-150); Alkire 2011 (80-90); Oswald 1997 (1825-1827); Carbonell and Frijters 2004 (648-49) corroborates Sen’s theory. This leads us to acquiesce to the conclusion that “wellbeing is intrinsically multi-dimensional and therefore inequality should as well be consistently measured along a number of dimensions” (Binelli & Loveless 3). Social exclusion is another term which is related to inequality and encompassing the issues of health, education, living standards and income. Warwick-Booth avers that, “Social exclusion is a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown” (6).

Social Inequality: the Nigeria Situation

Nigeria is a country richly blessed with human and material resources. However, the promise of economic greatness projected upon the nation from its earliest beginnings has been crippled by the dark forces of social inequality. No doubt, inequality is a problem in every human society; the situation in Nigeria is however

peculiar. Unlike in other climes, social inequality in Nigeria is fueled by ethnic, religious and political sentiments. These three factors – ethnicity, religion and identity politics have been the bane of institutional decay and underdevelopment in Nigeria. Nigeria is both a multi-religious and multi-ethnic people. There are more than 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria with more than 520 different languages spoken by the different nationalities making up the country. These ethnic nationalities are scattered across six geopolitical zones in the country. There are also three major religions practiced in Nigeria- African Traditional Religion (ATR), Christianity and Islam, although Islam and Christianity are more prominent; Christianity dominating in the south and Islam in the north. There is, thus, both cultural and religious diversity in Nigeria. The notion of “unity in diversity” has not worked in Nigeria due to a myriad of factors, especially the failure of the political elites to appreciate and respect the said diversity. The consequence of this is the problem of inequality and social exclusion ravaging the Nigerian polity leading to cries of marginalization and the rise of restive and even secessionist movements within the country.

Social inequality is a unique phenomenon in Nigeria that is informed by religion, ethnic consciousness and bad politics. It is common knowledge that in Nigeria people are given appointments and national honours or privileges with considerations based on ethnicity and religion. The forces of ethnicity and religion have in turn influenced the course of political leadership in Nigeria. Elections are often contested and won based on ethnic and religious sentiments. Hence, sub-nationalities in Nigeria constituting the minority are either totally neglected or poorly represented in the governance of the country. Since they are poorly represented, they also lag behind in infrastructural development. This is a terrible manifestation of social inequality in Nigeria, which, from the beginning has continued to threaten the unity of the country. More so, there is a yawning gulf between the political elites and the ordinary masses in the country. The enormous natural resource in Nigeria seems to be a patrimony made for just a privileged few. The consequence of this is gross poverty, illiteracy and decay in national infrastructures such as health and educational facilities. The helpless masses are manipulated at will by the political elites by bending the institutions to suite their whims.

Social Inequality and the Dysfunctional Equilibrium in Nigeria

Fukuyama’s exposition of ‘dysfunctional equilibrium’ almost perfectly captures the situation in Nigeria. It does appear that Fukuyama’s thought on this subject was influenced by the situation in Nigeria. Recall that Fukuyama uses the concept ‘dysfunctional equilibrium’ to capture the situation whereby a few political elites in a country benefit from an existing constitutional imbalance which enables them to abuse political power and loot public funds at will, and hence, block every attempt or clamour by the suffering masses to push for constitutional amendment. Fukuyama argues that because the imbalance in the constitution enables the disgruntled leaders to manipulate political institutions and loot public funds, they become recalcitrant to constitutional amendment and veto institutional change.

This enables them to perpetuate their impunity. Dysfunctional equilibrium is also evident when the privilege political elites in the society push for constitutional amendment and institutional changes simply because they notice that the constitution does not allow them to abuse their offices and loot public funds. Hence, any move by the political elites to restructure or oppose the restructuring of the constitution or political institutions in a country that is inspired by selfish interest leads to what Fukuyama describes as dysfunctional equilibrium and institutional decay.

Fukuyama describes the tendency to veto constitutional or institutional change by the political elites as a concern that would lead to dysfunctional equilibrium simply because such a move is unlawful and it gives the political elite an unprecedented edge over the ordinary citizens. This definitely leads to social inequality because it damages the national equilibrium, enabling the privileged few to garner too much power, influence, affluence and control over the ordinary citizens. The overall consequence of this is that political elites become so powerful that they do not require the consent of the masses to be admitted into political offices; they manipulate the electoral process at will since the institutions of the state are all within their control. The masses are, thus, totally disarmed and lack any means whatsoever to exercise control over elected political office-holders. This is the exact situation in Nigeria. Constitutional amendment in Nigeria is almost 'a story for the gods'. The political elites benefitting a great lot from the shortcomings of the 1999 military constitution by which Nigeria is been run continue to veto any attempt at constitutional amendment.

The political equilibrium in Nigeria is both dysfunctional and imbalanced given too many privileges to the elite and almost nothing to the ordinary masses, yet nothing reasonable is being done to restore balance and adequacy to the imbalance in the Nigerian polity. Consider the billions of Naira spent by the Jonathan Administration to organize a sovereign national conference that suggested possible solutions to the myriad of problems perplexing Nigeria and hindering national integration and development. The conference was concluded with beautiful resolutions to enable the smooth running of the polity; but like many others, it has been abandoned. The questions arise: why is the Nigerian political elite so indifferent to the clamour by the masses to implement the resolutions of that conference? Why are they so comfortable with running the country using a defective constitution that was drafted by the military and greatly influenced by the military penchant for unconstitutionality? Why are the elites too uncomfortable with any push to amend or improve on the quality of the political institutions in Nigeria? The answers to these questions are not far-fetched. Fukuyama supplies:

We can be much more precise about why institutions are slow to adjust to changes in the environment beyond saying that there is a natural tendency toward the conservation of institutions. Any institution or system of institutions benefits certain groups in the society, often at the expense of others, even if on the whole the political system provides public

goods like domestic peace, and property rights. Those groups favoured by the state may feel more secure in their persons and property; they may collect rents as a result of their favoured access to power, or they may receive recognition and social status. Those elite groups have a stake in existing institutional arrangements and will defend the status quo as long as they continue to remain cohesive. Even when the society as a whole would benefit from an institutional change, such as raising the land tax in order to pay for defense against an external threat, well-organized groups will be able to veto change because for them the net gain is negative (Fukuyama 459).

The implication of this is that as long as the privileged elites benefiting from the inadequacies due to the institutional decay in Nigeria remain within the corridors of power, all attempts to better the plight of the poor masses in the country will never succeed. The elites will continue to thwart such moves because it would not favour their political interests. They will not listen to the cries of the masses for improvement in the quality of governance because they do not need their consent to acquire such positions. They will also never allow quality individuals that have the required political will to represent the interest of the masses to occupy reasonable political offices because they are sure such persons would thwart their political goals by pushing for constitutional and institutional changes. They will therefore continue to perpetuate their stay or presence in governance by creating room for their kinds to gain entrance into formidable political offices in order to maintain the imbalanced existing *status quo*. This is what Fukuyama describes as repartrimonialism; the bedrock of godfatherism in Nigerian politics. This is also the reason why we see the same kinds of persons, sometimes persons from the same zones or even families occupying important political offices in Nigeria.

The Way Forward

Francis Fukuyama posited violence as the logical means of restoring balance and adequacy to a dysfunctional equilibrium; a way of resolving the consequent inequality arising from the dysfunctional system. Fukuyama argues:

The stability of dysfunctional equilibria suggests one reason why violence has played such an important role in institutional innovation and reform. Violence is classically seen as the problem politics seeks to resolve, but sometimes violence is the only way to displace entrenched stakeholders who are blocking institutional change” (Fukuyama 454).

According to him, “The fear of violent death is a stronger emotion than the desire for material gain and is capable of motivating more far-reaching changes in behaviour” (454). There is logic in Fukuyama’s conclusion; let us consider the Nigerian experience. Democracy presupposes a government of the people, by the people and for the people. However, in a polity like Nigeria’s where the polity is not equilibrate, democracy becomes a government of the elite, by the elite and for

the elite, whether the masses like it or not. In this context, institutional or/constitutional amendment is impossible because the benefiting political elites cannot bring about a change that would hinder their selfish interests; after all the government is run by themselves for themselves. The masses may clamour, protest and do whatever they like to bring about the needed change but the elite will not yield since the said change must be implemented by them. In Nigeria, there cannot be constitutional change without the legislature playing a critical role in the process. Take for instance, the issue of high cost of governance; it would be impossible for the legislatures to pass a bill that would curb the high cost of governance because it would directly affect them. They lack the political will to represent the interest of the masses at all times. Going by Fukuyama's logic, since the political elites are apart from the masses they represent and wouldn't listen to their plea for constitutional amendments, the masses will naturally resort to violence as the last means to bring about the needed changes. The questions arise: can this be possible in a country like Nigeria where the masses are deeply polarized due to ethnic and religious sentiments? Can the masses overlook these sentiments and unite with a common front to fight the disgruntled political elites? This may seem impossible considering the notable religious extremity, and deep seated ethnic consciousness and illiteracy rate in the polity. Where then lays the solution to the problem?

Since Fukuyama's prescribed violence seems untenable in Nigeria, the paper presents the following as an alternative. The solution lies in Nigerians imbibing the spirit of patriotism; national consciousness. Until Nigerians- those from the north, south, east and west realize that Nigeria is their country and the onus lies on them to always respect and protect the interest of the nation, national integration cannot be attained. Even Fukuyama acknowledges the significance of patriotism to national integration and nation building. In response to a question on how to rebuild the public square, destroy identity politics and repair the social consensus in a pluralist society like Nigeria, Fukuyama avers that:

There are several things to be done to create greater social cohesion. National identity needs to be defined in political terms that are compatible with the de facto cultural diversity that exists in most developed societies. Citizenship can no longer be defined by ethnicity or religion but needs to be related to liberal Enlightenment values like constitutionalism and the rule of law (Gardels par. 12-13).

Without national integration, there won't be cohesion among the masses. Without cohesion, the masses cannot form a common front with which to tackle and conquer the excesses of the abusive political elites. Of a truth, with national integration and cohesion among the suffering masses, the elites will be defeated even without the application of violence. The political elites do have their way freely in the country because they are aware that the bulk of the masses are disunited and disinterested in national issues. The elites do everything within their power to keep the masses blind and help them to remain in this apathetic condition

because it makes the abuse of political power easier for them. The first step, therefore, to healing the dysfunctional equilibrium in Nigeria and restoring social equality is the attainment of national integration. National integration will ensure a united proletariat which will bring about class suicide because it would ignite a proletarian revolution that will wrestle political power from the hands of the corrupt political elites.

Conclusion

Fukuyama's conceptualization of the dysfunctional equilibrium provides an opportunity for a better treatment and understanding of the problem of inequality and social exclusion prevalent in Nigeria. His treatment of the subject demonstrates that social inequality in Nigeria is a vice that is consciously being promoted by the political elites. Fukuyama postulates violence as a means of correcting a dysfunctional equilibrium and restoring equity within a society. The article agrees with Fukuyama that violence is a logical reaction to a dysfunctional equilibrium given that the masses will require the cooperation of the political elites to bring about the required change. Since the elites would naturally fail to acquiesce to such a change, causing frustration among the masses; on the long run, the masses will naturally take to violence as a reputable means to undo the unjust *status quo*.

However, the article observes that violence, as postulated by Fukuyama may not be successful in the Nigerian situation given the grave polarization existing among the Nigerian masses. It therefore suggested that the first step to undoing the dysfunctional equilibrium and restoring social equity is to push for national integration which can be achieved by cultivating the spirit of patriotism- national consciousness among the masses. With this disposition, the article contends that the masses may not even need violence to restore parity to the dysfunctional system evident in the country.

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