

## THE DISENCHANTMENT OF MARXISM AND REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS IN MARLEAU-PONTY: AN IDEAL FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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***Abstract:** Maurice Merleau-Ponty who uses Marxism to analyze the social struggle and violence from the standpoint of economic relation once believes that our society can only be changed positively through revolutionary violence. But later, he changed his mind and has it that it is no longer suitable to every society. He postulates that it will hinder the present relationships and of course the national development. He therefore avers that civilization can only come when there is unity - a growing relationship of man to man. He believes that there will be development when everybody puts hand together for common work of production and complement every ones effort. This essay, however, tries to make a critical study of Merleau-ponty's political philosophy and reveal this political ideal of him and investigate its possible relevance to Nigeria's socio-economic challenges.*

***Keywords:** Marxism, Production, Development, Economic, Socialization*

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### INTRODUCTION

The study is basically on socio-economic challenges faced by the entire citizenry of Nigeria. Nigeria is engulfed with socio-economic problems which have caused poverty and conflict in the country. The growth of the country is still hampered by social and economic challenges. The prevailing high rate of inflation in the country, coupled with unstable and widening exchange rate differentials between Nigerian currency (the Naira) and currencies of other nations like the American dollar and British pounds or

the Euro etc, uncertainty in interest rates and conflicting Central Bank of Nigeria and Nigerian government monetary and fiscal policies show that there is no economic development in Nigeria. The so much dependent on oil revenue by both the federal, state and local governments through the monthly revenue or "excess crude" allocation and sharing is fast killing and under-developing our country. Because of the constant assurance that money must come to the purse of the government in question at the end of the month for little or no work done, most of the leaders of these tiers of the governments in question see no reason spending money and time investing in order to actualize this socio-economic development. Others are inconsistent government policies on the economy, political instability, general state of uncertainty and inadequate infrastructural bases that are giving a setback to social and economic development. It sounds funny that up till date, Nigeria is still battling with some social infrastructure like good motor-able roads, constant electricity, pipe and portable water, constant communications supplies, good health facilities and other social forces that are prerequisites for social development. Most citizens are suffering from scarcity of these social infrastructures. Another is the poor policy implementation. Poor policy implementation is part of the problem in Nigeria because a good policy will not work without proper implementation. The government does not properly staff, fund and equip the departments involved in policy implementation for proper project supervisions (at the local, state and federal levels) and quality control. It does not channel resources towards promoting industrial development by assisting domestic industries through research and development, etc and to promote a better social relationship among the citizenry.

There exists an uneven wealth distribution in Nigeria, with a huge gap between the very few extra wealthy and the poor masses. The wealth resides in the hands of a few who mostly are not engaged in productive ventures. These few have access to government contracts which are consumptive and not productive in nature. This strategy cannot create social and economic growth. The federal government of Nigeria has attempted numerous socio-economic reforms but, however, most of the reforms have some adverse social impact. Economic reforms in developing countries are designed to stimulate the economy and especially help the poor; unfortunately, these reforms have not met the expectations of the populace. The leadership only

prescribes solution to socio-economic problems without actually providing the institutional framework to solve them. Consequently, the peoples' needs and wants often out-run resources. Based on the foregoing, however, this study delves into the research with the aim of finding solution to the problems through Merleau-Ponty's political ideal in achieving a sound socio-economic development in Nigeria.

### **The Basis of Merleau-Ponty's Political Philosophy**

The basis of Merleau-Ponty's Political philosophy emanates from the problem of political violence. By what standards can violence and terrorism be judged? From the outset, he rejects any new-Kantian moral philosophy that would evaluate acts on the basis of intention rather than consequences. Moreover, he feels strongly that any absolute condemnation of violence is unrealistic; violence has ruled all societies to date, and violence in some circumstances may even form a necessary precondition of justice. In other words, "he who condemns all violence puts himself outside the domain to which justice and injustice belong. He puts a curse upon the world and humanity--- a hypocritical curse, since he who utters it has already accepted the rules of the game from the moment that he has begun to live. Between men considered as pure consciousness there would indeed be no reason to choose. But between men considered as the incumbents of situations which together compose a *single common* situation it is inevitable that one has to choose..."<sup>1</sup>. The question is therefore not the condemnation or approval of violence, but rather a discrimination between "Progressive" and "Regressive" Violence. According Merleau-Ponty, Progressive violence tends to cancel itself out, by aiming at a more humane social order, while the regressive type sustains an exploitative regime in power. Throughout his work - *Humanism and Terror*, he calls revolutionary and "Marxist" violence progressive, because it putatively has a "Future of humanism". The argument of *Humanism and Terror* concerns the Moscow Trials and Arthur Koestler's Fictional account of them in *Darkness at Noon*. But the more general problematic of the book involves the evaluation historical acts as just or unjust, progressive or regressive. Merleau-Ponty's position on these matters proves paradoxical, and was fraught with problems. Basically, he argues that although the meaning of history necessarily remains ambiguous to its immediate participants, we must nevertheless judge acts on the presumption of a rational historical end, namely, communism. He derives this position by a

kind of backward deduction. He accepts the view that any historical act can be meaningful only if history in the large exhibits a coherent meaning. Merleau-Ponty maintains that the justice or injustice of a political act has to be measured against its world – historical consequences, rather than in terms of a subjectively universal ethic or natural law. And this is why, Marxism, for him, comprises the only valid philosophy of history for the twentieth century. As such, Marxism cannot be rejected as there is no providential ordering of history or else all meaning in history will be rejected. He writes:

*On close consideration, Marxism is not just any hypothesis that might be replaced tomorrow by some other. It is the simple statement of those conditions without which there would be neither any humanism, in the sense of a mutual relation between men, nor any rationality in history. In this sense Marxism is not a philosophy of history; it is the philosophy of history and to denounce it is to dig the grave of reason in history. After that there can be no more dreams or adventures<sup>2</sup>.*

Put the same, to deny Marxism's meaning even as a critique of the current situation under bourgeois rule would not only mean, for Merleau-Ponty, the impossibility of limiting violence and class exploitation; it would also mean that inter-subjectivity and common projects are impossible and that man has no powers over social structures. For this reason, however, Marxism then supplies the "General formular" of this historical contingency. It is Marxism that supplies what becomes necessary simply because it offers what is known in future and ahead of time. It not only deciphers events but as well discovers in them a common meaning and thereby grasps a leading thread that allows men to orient themselves toward the events. Marxism for him, therefore, seeks to offer men a perception of history which would continuously clarify the lines of force and vectors of the present<sup>3</sup>. The sense of this extremely audacious claim is that "any philosophy of history will postulate something like what is called materialism", inasmuch as it could not fail to see history in a way that maintains the identity of subjective and objective factors, while still remaining oriented to truth in a universal sense. But more importantly, that Marxism is the philosophy of the historical emergence of the world – it maintains that the world is not just, that as a singular universal frame of reference this remains an open and unfinished

historical task, and that philosophy is ultimately not a matter of understanding the world, but of realizing it. Hence, Marxism then, is like a philosophy of political expression. Meanwhile, a Marxism that is clear as to the basic drift of history would hardly imply a philosophy of ambiguity. Here Merleau-Ponty's philosophical argument in the phenomenology of perception comes into play. As he succinctly put it in *Humanism and Terror*, "there is no science of the future"<sup>4</sup>. The meaning of history deciphered by Marxism remains provisional and uncertain. No univocal meaning can be guaranteed in history, because (as the phenomenology has already argued at some length) determinism in any predictive sense was incompatible with the essence of human existence, the eventual object of history. Merleau-Ponty therefore affirms that chaos remains as likely an historical outcome as human relations among men (i.e., Communism), and it is doubtful about the eventual outcome of history that renders its contemporary meaning ambiguous. Marxism, taking away of a rationalist theology or deterministic support, becomes Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of ambiguity. Hence, another problem is that if no historical act can be definitively judged unless history evinces a coherent meaning, then the ambiguity of history may plausibly be taken as a signal that historical acts could not in fact be meaningfully judged, at least in any irrevocable sense. He therefore contends that a modified Marxism supplies a more adequate provisional meaning of history than any other available standpoint. Because Marxism embraces the only "Universal and human politics", its truth cannot be proven. In this fashion, Merleau-Ponty provisionally justifies revolutionary violence ever since he believes that our society is created by violence and exists continually through violence. It is this revolutionary violence that is justifiable as it can only come up when there is a bad government which according to him, brings about future humanism, i.e., co-existence among men. He acclaims that even to always restraining from violence either towards a person or a class that is doing so is in itself an act of violence. Indeed, using non violence in order to stop another violent act is a tacit form of accepting that act. Thus, he states confidently that: "We do not have a choice between purity and violence but between different kinds of violence. Inasmuch as we are incarnate beings, violence is our lot ---- Life, discussion and political choice occur only against a background of violence. What matters and what we have to discuss is not violence but its sense or its future"<sup>5</sup>. To this end, since we cannot totally be free from violence, because for him, such violence aims at creating

a humanistic society where each man will recognize every other as a peer: a progressive end of history provides a rational standpoint for judging existent societies and historical acts. He is in effect asserting that a liquidation of putative opposition elements can be justified by a progressive future outcome of history. It is a position that Merleau-Ponty, as an intellectual being can afford to take. Yet it is a position that can hardly afford much solace for anyone actively trying to institute growing relationship of man to man without abandoning elementary standards of justice and proof, without any reference to a possible moral utopia. In effect, he becomes disillusioned with Marxism and revolutionary politics and abandons or revises many of the philosophical and empirical propositions he has defended earlier. He also lost faith in communist practice, Marxian theory, and revolutionary rhetoric as ways of genuinely grasping and dealing with the complexities and ambiguities of modern life.

### **Merleau-Ponty's Disenchantment of Marxism and the Revolutionary Politics**

Merleau-Ponty's declining estimation of Marxism as a philosophy parallels his declining estimation of Marxism as a movement. He lost faith in Marxism and revolutionary politics, partly in light of revolutions about the wide-scale atrocities in the soviet labor camps, partly in the wake of Russian aggression in the Korean wars<sup>6</sup>. He thus claims that Marxism could not resolve the problem that is presented and from which we started. It could not maintain itself at that sublime point which it hoped it could find in the life of the party, that point where matter and spirit would no longer be discernible as subject and object, individual and history, past and future, discipline and judgment; and therefore the opposites which it was to unite fall away from one another<sup>7</sup>. Marx's ideas are no longer simply true or false. The options of Merleau-Ponty's eyes are simple. One either remained a dogmatic Marxist, owing allegiance to communism as a movement, or one opted for a powerless, skeptical radicalism, without immediate political efficacy, but also without intellectual compromises. So, Marx's ideas are nothing but "failed truths" he suggests, deep and important insights articulated in works that endure not as part of a living political creed, but as classics in humanistic tradition. There is nothing whatsoever in Marxism that is new outside the material world and of which no future description is revealed through it:

*Nothing is further from Marxism than positivistic prose: dialectical though is always in the process of extracting from each phenomenon a truth which goes beyond it, waking at each moment our astonishment at the world and at history. This "philosophy of history" does not so much give us the keys of history as it restores history to us as permanent interrogation. It is not so much a certain truth hidden behind empirical history as the genealogy of truth. It is quite superficial to say that Marxism unveils the meaning of history to us: It blinds us to our time and its partialities; it does not describe the future for us; it does not stop our questioning –on the contrary, it intensifies it. It shows us the present worked on by a self-criticism, a power of negation and of sublation, a power which has historically been delegated to the proletariat<sup>8</sup>.*

He comes to feel that Marxism strips of rationalistic guarantees cannot in any way justify the designation "Marxism" any longer. While it may retain a relative heuristic value, Marxism cannot therefore be considered true – "Certainly no longer true in the sense it was believed to be true"<sup>9</sup>. His main reason behind this sort of view is that the view of the communist orthodoxy assumes a mechanistic tendency toward social, political, and economic revolution. Moreover, the more appropriate reason remain that there is no automatic movement of history, the seeds of which are in socio-economic events or the human essence and its drive toward freedom. There may well be certain tendencies in certain socio-economic structures but there is no fixed logic of future development. Moreover, human nature is malleable enough to accept a variety of social, political and economic conditions and, subsequently, is not predestined for any one of them. We have learned from history what does not work, he concludes, but we have not definitively learned what does or will work. Hence, Marxist dogmatic and intolerant – rigidly mechanistic in its account of historical change, blindly optimistic and intolerant of dissent in the face of evidently diminishing prospects of revolutionary social transformation. Merleau-Ponty also feels that classical Marxism has rested on the "ferment of negation" being "materially" incarnated in actual historical force. According to him, Marxism can only maintain its ultimate verity on this real historical basis, the proletariat conceives as a self-transcending being and the agent of universal history

through meaningful negation. But he now argues that the party and proletariat necessarily navigate within the plenitude of a positive world; the proletariat can therefore never exist as pure philosophical negative, but only as one positive institution among others this circumstance in turn encourages a set of fateful identifications: "The proletariat is the revolution, the party is the proletariat, the heads are party...as being is being"<sup>10</sup>. Even if a militant proletariat does exist, the chances for success at the task of negative transcendence toward a better society seem dim: its negativity will surely be corrupted by bureaucratic institutionalization. Merleau-Ponty thus comes to hold that negativity only descends into history at privileged moments: for the most part, even revolutionary policies are represented by mere functionaries or rather, the government who cannot help but corrupt the aims of the movement only to continue governing. As a matter of fact, he raises a question and sums it thus:

*.... Is revolution an extreme case of government or the end of government? It is conceived in the second sense and practiced in the first. If it is the end of government, it is utopia, if it is a type of government, it always exists only in the relative and the probable, and nothing allows us to treat as the fact of a particular class and to group Pell – mall under the designation of "bourgeoisie" the contradictions which break out between the exigencies of the government and those of the revolution, and even less to give ourselves, under the name of "proletarian power", a ready – made solution to this antinomy<sup>11</sup>.*

What appears to him as a process that may create humane relations among men now seems more a vicious cycle of unsuccessful attempts to seize institutional power. In a similar case, though, Merleau-Ponty has always denied Marxism the crutch of empirical determinism or rationalist necessity, yet in the immediate postwar period he has still believed that the proletariat may possibly fill the lofty role assigned it by the theory. He has a great of achieving a more democratic society which according to him shall be accomplished by a proletarian revolution. Given that this will be the first revolution of the majority of the population, society will be based on majority or even universal interests and not just the interests of a small dominant class, as has been the case in all previous societies. But (by 1955), this hope has been replaced by distrust as he asserts that "there can be truth



outside the proletariat and that, inversely, not everything that comes from the proletariat is true, since the proletariat, in a society where it is powerless, is contaminated by its bourgeoisie"<sup>12</sup>. In other words, it is not only the absence of militancy among contemporary workers that bothers him; it is also the seemingly unavoidable degeneration of revolutionary favor into bureaucratic torpor. He says:

*Now, if the revolution is the horizon of labor struggles, it is already present when the proletariat emerges, and the movement toward emancipation does not stop with it; revolution is a process, a growth. If, in the contrary, everyday action does not have a hold on history, revolution is a convulsion, it is at once explosive and without a future, and the revolution of which one knows only that it will reverse the present relationship. It is no longer the truth of the existing society and of every society; it is a dream which passes itself off as truth but which, as far as everyday life is concerned, is only a comforting beyond. In a word, it is a myth<sup>13</sup>.*

Another is that the structural notion of his political writings are dominated by the will to "understand" and the refusal to grant that some reason govern history. Where Merleau-Ponty later agrees with Marxist conception of history is less than everything about Marxism as a whole. The overall claim aimed by Merleau-Ponty remains that as a practical project of proletarian self-emancipation, Marxism is less a body of truth than a method of interpreting political phenomena and with respect to subjectivity and consciousness. As such, he refuses to grant that there is a universal class and that the proletariat is this class. Hence, there is a great decline of the revolutionary idea since it is clear that a revolutionary politics cannot be maintained without it pivots, that is, proletarian power. If there is no universal class according to him, and that of the exercise of power by that class, the revolutionary spirit will become either pure morality or moral radicalism. Revolutionary politics is in other words, a doing, a realism and of course, the birth of a force. Thus, this phenomenon becomes the great decline of the revolutionary idea<sup>14</sup>. In addendum to the above, Merleau-Ponty summarizes it thus:

*If the Marxist revolution were a general idea, there would be nothing to say against this play of the imaginary and the real, of expediency and utopia. But the dialectical idea of revolution is no more an advance toward "some more human social order" than it is a "Chimera" or a star in the farthest reaches of the future. Revolution in its beginnings is rupture, because revolution is the seizure of power by the proletariat. The rupture is always to be renewed, for revolution is also self-suppression of the proletariat as a class. It is thus a process, but not an "advance" in the vague and "bourgeois" meaning of the world. It is an identifiable becoming because it always moves toward the development of the proletariat in consciousness and in power. Even in its beginnings, in its atypical forms, it is never a perhaps<sup>15</sup>.*

However, taken together, it is also reasonable to summarize that Merleau-Ponty abandons the growth of a large middle class in western societies by the mid 1950's and that social allegiances may be formed along a variety of lines other than that of class, as he argues that revolutionary movement loses its revolutionary momentum once it becomes institutionalized and transformed into a regime. Besides, the revolutionary, he says, judges what exists in the name of what does not exist, and of which the revolutionary regards as more real. Thus, he concludes: "If one has to class the revolutionary dialectic as 'optimistic twaddle; let us no longer speak of revolution"<sup>16</sup>.

### **Merleau-Ponty and Socio-Economic Challenges in Nigeria**

Having changed his mind for portraying Marxism and revolutionary politics as the only system through which the society can be changed positively. It is pertinent to note that though his new liberal principle did not strategically explain how to establish a more socio-economic relation in a society; it is still remarkably relevant that his will plays very significant roles in our social and economic lives. This is because, going by his early theory will constantly *elude* us and keep our national economic circle to be on the retrogressive basis. After all, Marx's prediction that the socialist society will not only emerge but will render philosophy and religion redundant is not realized. Experience has shown that agitations for human development and all other aspects of development (whether politically, socially and economically) in

the form of revolutionary politics in Nigeria so far have not yielded any positive result as long as development is concerned. No wonder Merleau-Ponty suggests that the justice or injustice of a political act has to be measured against its world – historical consequences, rather than in terms of a subjectively universal ethic or natural law. The consequences of the past experience will help us to develop both socially and economically. It is to this intrinsic logical (adherence) value of an experience that makes Merleau-Ponty to observe that:

*We do not want to present as a syllogism what gradually became clear to us in contact with events. But the event was the occasion of a growing awareness and not at all one of those accidents that upsets without enlightening. The Korean War and its consequences confronted us with a condition of history from which the postwar years had only apparently freed us. It recalled to us the identity of practice and theory; it made us remember that even the refusal to choose must, to be considered a political position, become a thesis and form its own platform, and that the double truth ceases to be duplicity and complicity only when it is avowed and formulated unequivocally, even in its practical consequences<sup>17</sup>.*

Sequentially, it should be realized that the transition from the ancient (Greco – Roman) economic and social structure, to the Middle Ages (feudal) was not revolutionary but gradual and continuous. In England, against Engel's prediction social development came through gradual continuity. This is why Merleau-Ponty proclaims that development is mechanical in such that it passes from one stage to the other. For trim therefore: "All these conceptions of development are mechanical. A dialectical conception demands only that, between capitalism, where it exists, and its antecedents, the relationship be one of an integrated society to a less integrated one"<sup>18</sup>. So, it is just a simple formula as he goes on to say that we should take up our conditions and our past in order to move them in a different direction. For in order to understand human beings, their communities, and their behavior within them, all aspect of human experience must be taken into account. It implies, therefore, that for Nigeria to develop as a nation, it owes allegiance to the community institution – "One Nigeria" (the popular slogan) that brings us into existence and work out the socio – economic changes and reforms associated with either classical or modern liberalism.

This liberal values remain to be more fully established in actual concrete relationships, and these have to be established only when our leaders and all government officials alike actually give an authentic account of the public projects. In other words, the Nigerian government should provide more equitable access to the economy and to the economic and political policy decisions that will impact upon people's lives. Merleau-Ponty, moreover, advises that any society that needs transition to any great degree must adhere to a certain social structures and establish a decisive relationship with itself. This sort of relationship, according to him, prevents us from placing backward a philosophical meaning of social development. It rather, enables us to access what he calls a "socialization of society". In his own words:

*To say that there is a "socialization of society" is to say that men begin to exist for one another, that the social whole retraces its dispersion in order to totalize itself, that it goes beyond various partitions and taboos, toward transparency, that it arranges itself as a center or an interior from which it is possible to think it, that it gathers itself around an anonymous project in relation to which various attempts, errors, progress, and, finally, that brute existence is transformed into its truth and tends toward meaning<sup>19</sup>.*

Paradoxically, Nigeria however paints, in the main, a different picture. Nigeria as individuals find it difficult to exist for one another not just because of being in political trouble as insinuated by Chinua Achebe but because of individualization. A social process which tends to make the individual more or less independent of his group and to create in him a self-consciousness. This mainly has brought about the anomalies towards the social development or rather, the "socialization of society" as it has been fueled up by the realities of religious intolerance, multi-ethnicity, wrong colonial legacy and incompetence. Consequently, every reflection on the Nigerian society is seen as stagnation and lack of progress in all aspect of human endeavor. And the way out should be to take everyone as oneness, treat the other as a member of some interaction group to which everybody belongs. When this is done, we shall inscribe meaning into nature and perceive our own subjective forms impressed upon us, including certain habitual forms of behavior and common human relationships. Thus, the social development shall come through gradual continuity. And this is why Merleau-Ponty is quite right when he says that "the 'socialization of society'

does not mean that the development of history is subordinated to an eternal essence of society. Rather, it means only that the moments of this development are inter-connected, complement one another, step by step constitute a single event, and that the negative conditions of a solution are thus brought together"<sup>20</sup>. Human experience thus opens upon not on a material world but also a human one. Humans are born not just into a material world but also into certain economic, social and political institutions, into patterned ways of acting into and interpreting the world, including so – called forms of discourse. As a matter of fact, these socio-economic problems present a mixture of volatile, ambiguous and complex issues that have no simple template solutions. It therefore implies that for there to be progress, individuals, groups, the leaders and the led, and of course, institutions should work collectively not just to address the issues of poor infrastructure which would stimulate socio-economic development but also to embrace ideological politics with active participation of civic actors that would provide some avenues for managing stability. The socio-economic problem in Nigeria should not be left for one hand. With the aid of collective effort, there would be an improved formulation and implementation of sound social and economic policies. This shall be a building block of improved social and economic performance of our economy, indeed, socio-economic development. For Merleau-Ponty, "---it is only in the structure of the whole that there is progress. The balance sheet of history shows that, taken as a whole, there is a growing relationship of man to man"<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, we should start this pursuit of considering the "whole of civilization" sharing the truths and values with the individual's concrete, lived through bodily perception of the world and its particular object and events, compare it to other experiences and to that which is experienced by others in order to move toward shared and stable development. Thus, out of the shared world upon which the individual's experience opens, there is a degree of progress. This kind of epistemology and social ontology leads naturally to socio – economic development.

With regard to economic development, we as a nation often shot below the mark. Our national economic circle has been on the retrogressive basis. There is no improvement in our economy simple because the current class and economic stratification also undermines both the principle of equality under the law, for the poor (and even the middle class) do not have the

access to the legal system or to the legislative process that the rich do, and the principle of equality of opportunity, for dramatically different economic conditions create dramatically different enabling conditions. In relation to this, Merleau-Ponty observes that "the canals and roads created by the process of production to join these sectors are at each moment blocked by relationships of prestige and by the brute facts of tradition. The economic function is never without its religious, legal, or moral components, which do not have exact equivalents in economic language"<sup>22</sup>. What is more, the leader – president, governors, senators, house of assembly members (as the case may be) hijack the national resources and allocations made for the general public and divert them for their private use. Some of them go ahead to deny their villagers a mass plot of land and build animalistic estates. Estates that are not lived by human being except rats and all other sorts of animal, wasting the national resources. The Nigerian Socio-economic condition has also undermined the principle of identification with the right leaders which is so important to the maintenance of the values of the nation, for so many people in the middle and poor classes (the vast majority of the population) feel they have little or no influence over the nation's (public) economy which is the resources that so powerfully impact upon their lives. If people are to value and identify with the nation, then they must have meaningful and equal access to it. And this access must not be only an empty formal equality of opportunity. It must be based upon an actual equality of enabling conditions. If we want people to value and identify with the nation, then they must have real access to democratic control over the economic and political institutions that so impact upon their lives. The current class of leadership and economic stratification in Nigeria have largely prevented this access and denied broader Socio-economic development. The dialectical link of corruption between governance styles and the maintenance of the values of already established national resources for economic production have overwhelmed the sense of social and economic development in Nigeria. According to Merleau-Ponty:

The economic analysis would miss criteria essential to the distribution of privileges; and if relationships between castes are religiously observed by the exploited as well as by the exploiter, it is because relationships cannot be challenged as long as men do not think of themselves as partners in a common work of production<sup>23</sup>.

What is evident from the above contribution is that the problem of development is not a purely economic one, but lack of partners in a common work of production. It has become a tradition for every succeeding government to always abandon uncompleted project left by their predecessors simply because they are not from the same or that they will not make much of their individualistic and selfish profit. So, the Nigeria's Socio-economic predicament is not due to absence of resources and policy packages for there have been many. The problem is lack of strong and visionary governments that are able to harmonize and even work from where the predecessors stopped. With this, they will be able to orchestrate the mobilization of national resources for Socio-economic development. Thus, Nigeria is in dire need of leaders who will harness the resources of the nation and promote nation prosperity and an efficient, dynamic and self-reliant economy. It is only by this that the Social and economic ideals of Merleau-Ponty could be realized.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the above points and in our consideration, the problems facing the Socio-economic development in Nigeria are mainly our individualistic laxity on the basic foundation for a genuine Socio-economic development, and abandoning the necessity of shared experience and even of rational agreement. Lack of political commitment and will is another trouble with government who often lies in the fact that they are often undecided about the means by which social and economic challenges could be tackled. However, going by Merleau-Ponty's political (philosophical) insight to Nigerian Socio-economic challenges, this work submits that Nigerians should join hand together and work in unity for common work of production. We should endeavor to avoid the use of violence in agitation for our needs and rather employ dialogue and negotiation just for our common good. Government should be honest with its national development program in order to achieve the socio-economic development in Nigeria. In fact, there should be an empirically grounded transformation agenda in Nigeria, so as to formulate and implement policies that would stimulate and create the much desired socio - economic development, and indeed, contrast contemporary realities in our country where the so - called 'transformation agenda' is more real in rhetoric than reality.

## Endnotes

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