

WEAK INSTITUTIONS, DEMOCRACY AND THE NIGERIAN STATE

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Abstract

Weak institutions have contributed to the weakening of the Nigerian state and its democracy. Thus, institutions are perceived as the bulwark for ensuring sustainability of democracy and, therefore, should be understood as a theorising premise for explaining democracy. Ironically, institutions have become an instrument of manipulation by elites against the poor. Institutions in Nigeria are often creatures of the rich and the powerful with consequent breeding of institutional challenges, which include the economic (creation of social groups that deny citizens factors of production) and the political (the creation of “extractive” institutions that deny citizens innovative and creative rights. Also created are the democratic processes that deny Nigerians a political voice and the formation of exploitative patron-client relations which has made the Nigerians a chessboard rather than players. In order for Nigeria to have institutions that could provide economic stability and security for individuals and their property, rational choice theory is adopted. This is achievable since the main goal of rational choice is to foster collaboration among actors in the Nigerian state. This paper uses secondary data to analyse implications of the failure of institutions in Nigeria that has caused the Nigerian state the capability to cater for its citizens. It recommends the provision of “inclusive”, rather than “extractive” institutions, that can provide for the socio economic and political demands of Nigerians.

Keywords: *Democracy, Nigerian State, Institutions, State Failure*