

HISTORICIZING DEMOCRATIZATION AND THE CRISIS OF GOVERNANCE IN THE NIGERIAN STATE

By

Chris S. Orngu

Department of History & Strategic Studies, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper provides a historical analysis to democratization and the crisis of governance in modern Nigeria. The discussion takes its roots from the country's colonial experience with regards to the early struggles for democratization. From a historical perspective, it explores and interrogates the tortuous trajectory of the country's democracy along with its crisis of governance. It argues that the paradox of Nigeria's geography, its flawed conceptualization of federalism, dysfunctional institutional framework of governance and several other factors are at the base of the country's democratic imbroglio and crisis of governance. The paper concludes that the incapacity of Nigeria's democratic system to guarantee the well-being of the citizens and the failure to cause a significant improvement in the material conditions of the citizenry since 1999 demonstrate a systemic degeneracy in the country's governance. Key words: democratization, governance, federalism, sovereignty

Introduction

A casual analysis of Nigeria's political history reveals an admixture of failures, challenges and feeble successes in the journey of democratization and governance. From the first republic, when Nigeria became a political sovereignty to this moment, the experience of the country with politics and government has shown a systematic degeneracy in democratization with severe consequences for governance and grave implications for nation building, national integration, national security, growth and development. The systematic degeneracy is made increasingly complex by the cascading impunity of corruption, general erosion of moral and ethical standards and the impairment of value perception among a significant stratum of the country's leaders and the led. This is the rowdy picture that characterizes the state of affairs in modern Nigeria, leading to a painful conclusion by some analysts that the country has acquired all the features of a failed state. On the extreme position, others have categorically insisted that Nigeria is a failed state. These contentious issues have continued to engage the keen and critical attention of some scholars in the same way they have instigated the need for constant interrogations around the sources and causes of the problematic with the desire to identify the pathways for repositioning the country within the framework of good governance through political reformation – the primary target being the establishment of a viable and sustainable democratic culture. It is the constant struggle to establish a viable and sustainable democratic

culture out of Nigeria's unenviable political history that has brought democratization to the fore of historicizing and evaluating the trends and dimensions of governance in the country.

Democratization in Nigeria has suffered profound setbacks over the decades. Beginning from the immediate post-colonial era, the country has remained trapped in a vicious circle in the struggle to establish and institutionalize democratic governance without significant outcomes. With a series of military interregna in Nigerian politics and botched military-guided political transition processes in the not-too-distant past, the critical institutions of democratic governance, particularly the legislature, have suffered a fundamental underdevelopment. The common fact derivable from this sad reality of Nigeria's political history is that the institutions of governance have suffered a severe dislocation and staggered transformation for many decades – and still counting – arising from a multiplicity of factors that have concomitant implications for democratization and governance in modern Nigeria. This is exactly what has led to the bundle of paradoxes and seemingly irreconcilable contradictions that define the parameters of governance crisis and leadership failure in modern Nigeria.

The focus of this conversation is on the crisis of democratization in Nigeria and the extent to which this crisis has constantly robbed the country of good governance over time in spite of the persistent desire of Nigerians for the nation to remain a democratic entity. Specifically, the conversation is premised on the desire to historicize the complexities of induced frustrations that combine with a seemingly unending tragedy to perpetually hold Nigeria down in the quest for political transformation over the decades. The engagement is evaluative in context and is deliberately driven towards a futuristic projection that aims to navigate the country through the pathways of political redemption within the framework of a viable and sustainable democratic system so that the country's journey of true democratization can become realistic.

Democratization: A Contextualization

The key concept of this conversation is *democratization* around which the mechanics of governance, politics and leadership find expression in Nigeria's political experience over time. To understand what democratization entails, therefore, requires an adequate understanding of what democracy connotes in both the strict political context and broad intellectual parlance. To begin with, *democracy* is arguably a familiar concept that has become a recurrent decimal in everyday political discourses particularly among scholars, political actors and public affairs analysts at both national and global levels.

Although there is not likely to be a commonly applied definition of democracy among scholars and practitioners of politics from different backgrounds and orientations, the concept is roughly perceived as a system of government in which those in the majority have their way and those in the minority have their say.¹ This perception places premium on the majority factor in a democratic system where

the groups with greater number suppress the opinions and preferences of those in the minority. The implication of this perception of democracy suggests that the choices and preferences of the minority do not necessarily count in the decision-making process within a democratic system, even though there is always the room for the expression of such minority choices, opinions and preferences – whether or not, this changes the outcomes of decisions and choices is not paramount on this premise. In practical terms, this translates to the superiority and tyranny of the greater number to the disadvantage of groups with lesser number in such a democratic system. This idea of democracy defies common logic and merit in the spheres of a true democratic system.

From a simplistic and commonsense interpretation, democracy entails an all-inclusive system of government in which the eligible members of a geopolitical entity enjoy unhindered participation in the governance and management of their public affairs. It provides the institutional framework for a representative system of government through which an elective government derives its legitimacy from the people. Put differently, such a democratic system derives its legitimacy from the people – which implies that leadership and decision-making must derive from the consensus of the governed. This interpretation of democracy is idealistically connected to the Lincolnian definition, which popularly conceives democracy as a government of the people, by the people, for the people.² The logic embedded in the Lincolnian definition establishes a nexus between democracy and good governance as an inextricable imperative within the framework of the Hegelian tradition. To that extent, therefore, it is plausible to argue that basic to the idea and concept of democracy is good governance, which should connect with its positive impacts on social transformation and systematic improvement on the material condition of the governed within time and space.³ The indication here is that democratic systems are conceived and perceived to function in a manner that places priority on the wellbeing of the governed in a geopolitically defined entity. This is the guiding philosophy that underpins the essence of a true democratic system. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja reinforces this notion when he trenchantly stipulates that democracy provides the enablement for social transformation in terms of meeting people's aspirations and basic conditions for survival identified as needs and welfare.⁴

Basically, a democratic system is characterized by the rule of law and social justice (supremacy of the constitution), freedom of expression and other forms of fundamental human rights that are universally applicable, periodic elections and institutionalized representative government. Added to these is the autonomy of the key arms of government – the executive, the legislature and the judiciary – which are structured to work independently to drive the fundamentals of checks and balances in the interest of political sanity. Thus, the functionality or otherwise of these three arms of government in a democratic system has tangible impacts on the nature of democratic governance and service delivery in a geopolitically defined sovereign entity.

Arguably, democracy appears to be the most cherished of all the known forms of government in world history, notwithstanding some identifiable deficiencies

and imperfections associated with its operational tenets. Perhaps, this explains why even the most dictatorial and autocratic regimes have always claimed to be democratic; and this is explainable to the extent that all systems of government have some democratic trends embedded in their operations, no matter how insignificant.

Connecting with the above, *democratization* will, therefore, entail all the processes involved in the entrenchment of a democracy with its institutions of governance in a political system. New democracies, especially in Africa, have been trapped in the struggle to entrench democratic values in governance and to consolidate institutions of governance without much success since the end of colonialism in the continent. Nigeria's unenviable experience with democratization sufficiently demonstrates this sense of frustration.

A Historical Sketch of Democratization in Nigeria

The earliest struggles for democratization in Nigeria can be linked to the era of colonialism. In colonial Nigeria, native peasants constituted themselves into a number of social forces to challenge the authoritarian colonial regime in the country through liberation struggles. The struggles manifested a number of uprisings, revolts and demonstrations against the British colonial administration and its policies. The struggles were progressively intensified by deliberately calculated responses to the worsening conditions of social and economic realities that were accentuated by the economic policies of the colonial authorities. During the period, the indigenous working class, which was at the receiving end of the worsening social and economic conditions, became actively involved in the liberation struggles to halt the exploitation of the Nigerian worker and to press home the demands for improved workers welfare. With the involvement of the working class, the liberation struggles began to assume a more structurally organized social framework. Some of the well known organized liberation struggles in colonial Nigeria were the Mahdi revolt of 1905, Iseyin uprising of 1916, Egba revolt of 1918, Ekumeku Movement uprising of 1925, Dancing Women Movement rampage of 1925, Calabar Market Toll uprising of 1925, Warri riots of 1927 and Aba riots of 1929.⁵ These confrontations were essentially targeted at the British colonial authorities with the common objective to address the petulant social and political discontents that were helmed in opposition to colonial domination, oppression, exploitation, injustice and illegitimacy.⁶ These earliest liberation struggles against the colonial authorities are historically linked to the agitations for the entrenchment of democratization in Nigeria.

With time, the initial struggles provided the vents for the emergence of more coordinated social forces that broadened the horizons of agitations for democratic governance and representative government through the instrumentality of nationalist movements between the 1930s and the 1940s; and by the 1950s, the struggles and agitations for political independence and democratic governance in colonial Nigeria had reached a crescendo during which the unrelenting agitations for political independence gained impactful momentum when nationalists like Herbert Macaulay, Alvan Ikoku, Anthony Enahoro, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, among

others, closed ranks with the West African Students Union (WASU) in the syndicated quest for political independence. The political independence that was attained in Nigeria in 1960 was realized essentially due to the dogged liberation struggles against colonial rule; and this was bolstered by the desire to establish a leadership structure of government and institutionalize the elements of governance within the framework of the peculiar configuration of Nigeria's heterogeneity.

The various stages of constitutional development in colonial Nigeria climaxed into the 1959 federal elections that were conducted to prepare the grounds for the emergence of a crop of indigenous leaders that would take over the realms of government in a politically independent sovereign state of Nigeria. Thus, in 1960, Nigeria was ushered into a democratic system of government when she gained her political independence, giving birth to the first republic; but the 1966 military putsch and the political upheavals that trailed it provided the fecundity for a series of coups and counter-coups to flourish in the immediate post-colonial Nigeria. The intermittent military interventions in Nigeria's politics remained a seemingly irretrievable clog in the wheels of democratization and democratic consolidation between 1966 and 1999. It was in 1999 that the present democratic enterprise was enthroned in the country following a number of failed political transition programmes amid heightened uncertainties, intimidations, and fervent agitations by pro-democracy groups and social activists, among others. With the enthronement of democratic governance in Nigeria in 1999, there is the question of whether or not the country has imbibed the values of a true democratic culture in the context of democratization and governance. This is the question which the next segment of this conversation turns to.

Democratization in Nigeria since 1999: An Appraisal

The enthronement of democracy in Nigeria in 1999 inspired greater expectations among the citizenry. It presupposed a new beginning for good governance in the country through the entrenchment of a virile and sustainable political culture of democratic values and institutions. Contradictorily, Nigeria has clearly relapsed into a horrible state of democratization crisis and disarticulated governance under her longest democratic order so far (1999-2025). This unfortunate reality manifests in different levers of the country's collapsed economy and sociopolitical milieu in the face of other critical indicators of systemic failure.

One of the critical challenges of Nigeria's democratization derives from what Toyin Falola calls the burden of the country's past or its historical experience.⁶ This unfortunate historical reality appears to have largely accounted for Nigeria's litany of post-colonial predicaments in the face of flawed structures of governance. This much has been stridently noted by Falola when he insisted that the country has persistently remained entangled with its past to the extent that its contemporary political modernity cannot be divorced or disentangled from its long history of political experience.⁷ For instance, Nigeria's post-colonial history alone reflects a series of horrible disarticulations in the country's quest for political modernity. The series of botched military-guided democratization processes readily indicate a practical

frustration to the establishment of democratic governance in the country during the period before 1999. This is one of the conditions that have set the tone for the multiplicity of irreconcilable contradictions within the political framework of modern Nigeria with negative implications for the country's quest for democratization.

The paradox of geography and natural endowments can sufficiently explain one of the key challenges of democratization in Nigeria. The geographical location of the country, its landmass, natural endowments and geopolitical configuration along with its ethno-regional mapping are critical in understanding the extent of this paradox. There is the failure or incapacity of the Nigerian state to take advantage of its natural endowment to engineer a robust and sustainable economic growth and development over the decades. Contradictorily, the quantum of natural endowments has led to high profile corruption and extensive plundering of national wealth by an opportunistic political class to the disadvantage of those who are constantly kept away from the inner court of the country's wealth distribution. What emanates from this faulty resource management is a political economy that has implanted an overpowering statism with the centrality of the state in the dispensation of national wealth and political patronage with a deep-seated clientelistic network of an exclusive cabalism. The crisis of resource control and related vexatious national debates are all pointers to the simple logic that Nigeria has become a prisoner of geography in the face of persistent self-imposed contradictions.

Added to that is the fact that political opportunism has reduced Nigeria's democracy to a rent seeking enterprise where a few political patrons, political godfathers and their protégés have continued to hold sway in the determination of outcomes in the country's political and economic spheres.⁸ The mismanagement of the natural endowment of the country and the exclusion of other groups from the distributive manipulation of the opportunistic few have combined with other infelicities to create a sustained political culture of rowdiness and porosity that readily and constantly play out in frustrating the quest for a stable democratic order in the country.

Closely related to the above is Nigeria's collapsed economy. The resultant effects of this reality are thrown up in escalating poverty among the majority of Nigerians. A recent publication from the country's National Bureau of Statistics, for instance, indicated that over 130 million Nigerians are living in abject poverty. The fact remains that poverty and crime are two sides of the same coin. The levels of banditry, kidnapping, violent extremism, smuggling and other organized crimes in modern Nigeria are all pointers to the notion that the country's present democratic order lacks the capacity to manage its internal crisis and appalling security problematic. Democratization can hardly flourish in an atmosphere of escalating insecurity; and Nigeria's experience with democratization adequately demonstrates this basic truism.

Dysfunctional institutions of governance have combined with other factors to frustrate the progressive swing of democratization in modern Nigeria. The bureaucracy, for instance, has become overtly politicized to the extent that the

country's machinery of public administration operates in consonance with the dictates of political pendulum at any given point to the extent that loyalty shift has become an inherent character of the civil/public service. The resultant effect of these manifests bizarre levels of unprofessionalism with severe consequences for public policy formulation and programme implementation. This has telling consequences for democratization as the fundamentals of programme implementation in electoral processes rests with an aspect of Nigeria's bureaucracy.

Similarly, the legislature has failed in making laws to improve on the present nature of the country's electoral process while the judiciary has been trapped in the dispensation of technical justice in the events of litigations that arise from flawed electoral processes. Thus, the country's electoral process has remained unhygienic in the face of deliberate manipulations of extant laws under the escapist routes of technical justice in place of substantial justice.

Closely linked to the above is Nigeria's flawed electoral system that discourages participation. Claude Ake, in his thesis on democratization in Africa, has stridently noted that Africa is democratizing but the democratization taking place in the continent is less participatory and non-emancipating. Since the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, it would appear that the more elections that the country has conducted, the more the people are becoming disenfranchised. This petulant disenfranchisement of a large population of the citizenry is a function of many factors such as the incapacity of the country's election management bodies in conducting free, fair and credible elections, flawed and easily manipulated electoral laws, growing apathy on the part of the electorate, lack of access to electoral materials during elections as a result of rough and impenetrable topographies, and many other geographical and logistical impediments.

Insecurity in modern Nigeria is typified by a large mass of ungoverned spaces. Terrorist groups have taken over a sizeable portion of Nigeria's geopolitical space such as in the north eastern part of the country. Similarly, terrorist attacks have created humanitarian crises, which have led to the establishment of a number of camps for internally displaced persons across the country as experienced in Benue State. Thus, a sizeable number of Nigerians have been forced to abandon their ancestral homes in states like Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba, where they are confined to refugee camps otherwise known as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps. These incidences have more often than not inhibited the victims from participating in the country's periodic electoral processes. If periodic elections are considered to be critical aspects of a democratic enterprise, it takes a little stretch of imagination to conclude that Nigeria's democratization is under siege.

Crisis of Confidence is another major challenge to Nigeria's democratization project. The Nigerian masses have gradually lost confidence in the quality of the country's democratic culture, which does not connect governance with improved material conditions of the governed. The return of democracy in the country in 1999 with the attendant hopes and expectations it inspired have evaporated and the majority of the people have moved from disenchantment to despair in the face of

rabid corruption and brazen mismanagement of the public wealth, among other aspects of misgoverning elements. Added to that is the continuous erosion of confidence in the country's election management body, the Independent National Electoral Commission, that has inadvertently and gradually slid into a body of controversial electoral outcomes.

The Crisis of Democratization and the Challenge of Governance in Modern Nigeria

The challenges that stand against governance in modern Nigeria are too complex in their composition and dynamic in their manifestations to be undermined. Perhaps, the most conspicuous challenge to governance in modern Nigeria derives from the country's crisis of democratization and translates to a complex mass of irresolvable complications. The crisis of democratization has, for instance, debased the institutions of governance in the country and rendered government and politics impotent in responding to the basic needs of human survival. The fact that the country has been struggling in vain to embrace political modernity is reflective of much deeper contradictions which manifest in various forms and dimensions.

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson have insisted that poor countries have remained in poverty, not only because of the poor management of their geographical endowments or bad leadership but also because of other important forces such as institutions of governance.⁹ The absence of functional institutions of governance or dysfunctional institutions of governance occasioned by the crisis of democratization has translated to a weak machinery of politics and government in modern Nigeria. This has inadvertently led to a weak bureaucracy, which ultimately characterizes the near collapse in governmental policy formulation and the failure in programme implementation in the country.

Another challenge of good governance accentuated by crisis of democratization in modern Nigeria is the absence of strategic interface between leadership, institutions and policies. This has led to failures in the feeble efforts of government to initiate and successfully implement policies to drive the essence of good governance in the country.

Prognosis and Pathways to Sustainable Democratization for Good Governance in Nigeria

Conscious efforts are required to place Nigeria's democratization on the path of consolidation and sustainability; and if meaningful outcomes in this direction can be attained, the following will constitute the prognosis and pathways.

First, there is the need for constant reforms in the country's electoral laws. The reforms should encourage the wholesome deployment of ICT infrastructure in all electoral processes in Nigeria and also make provision for independent candidature in all elections in the country. This will add up to check the inherent flaws and inadequacies that encourage clandestine manipulation of the electoral

process through the collaboration of some politicians with some fraudulent election officials. It is the flaws and inadequacies embedded in the country's electoral laws that have always provided the ambiguities for the judiciary and some legal practitioners to hide under bogus legal interpretations to deliver technical justice in the face of electoral flaws.

Second, Nigeria's election management body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) requires an unconditional autonomy to insulate itself from executive overt or covert influence. The autonomy should be clearly defined by an enabling legislation and supported by financial independence, including the process for the appointment of the Chairman of the Commission and its Resident Electoral Commissioners.

Third, political parties in Nigeria should embrace internal democracy and imbibe the principle of transparency in electing their party candidates for general elections. The dictatorial tendencies and autocratic disposition of political godfathers that produce party candidates are prelude to democratic dictatorship – and this has remained inimical to Nigeria's democratization.

Fourth, punitive measures against negative mobilization by political actors and their cohorts should be taken more seriously and applied to discourage the constant criminalization of the country's electoral process. It is this culture of impunity that encourages the crisis of confidence in Nigeria's electoral process and undermines the entrenchment of a true democratic culture in the country.

Again, the call for institutional reforms has become very imperative. Nigeria's institutions of governance have been rendered dysfunctional by rabid corruption, underfunding and overpoliticization. There is the need for the country's judiciary and legislature to operate autonomously without undue interference from the executive arm of government to enable the principles of checks and balances in the conduct of governmental affairs. This is what a true democratic system represents.

Added to the above is the need to reduce the present cost of governance in Nigeria's democratic system. The cost of administering the executive and legislative arms of government in Nigeria remains one of the highest in the world today. This has adversely affected the meaningful application of resources into other critical sectors for development in the same way it has profiled Nigeria's democracy as one of the most expensive in the world. This is not encouraging to the country's democratization project.

Finally, and very importantly, the character of Nigeria's federalism is bogus in its application and ambiguous in its interpretation. Thus, the present character of Nigeria's federalism lacks a clearly defined direction and a clear constitutional framework in its operationalization. This explains why the framers of the country's federal system have inadvertently created the room for persistent contestation over which kind of federalism is appropriate for the country. Such debates have often

thrown up concepts like true federalism, fiscal federalism and quasifederalism to guide the nature and dimension of the country's federalist idea; but more often than not, they have ended up in mere political debates with deeper complications. There is, therefore, the need to etch the contours of the country's federalist idea. In this regard, what Nigeria requires is a clearly defined fiscal federalism, especially given the heterogeneous nature complex geographical configuration of the country. Fiscal federalism has the capacity to define the autonomies of the geopolitical entities or federating units that make up the organic composition of the Nigerian federation. Under the fiscal federalist structure, Nigeria's democratic system will be more viable and sustainably operational. This will then substantially address the country's crisis of governance.

Conclusion

This conversation has demonstrated that democratic governance in Nigeria has a history that connects to its colonial experience; and that the return of democracy in the country in 1999 after the collapse of previous democratic projects does not indicate a cheering experience for the citizenry. This is illustrated by the uncertainties in the country's democracy and its complex character of disarticulation at the moment. The crisis of Nigeria's democratic system to guarantee the well-being of the citizens and to cause a significant improvement in the material conditions of the citizenry since 1999 demonstrates a systemic degeneracy in the country's governance. This is a function of a combination of factors, all of which have conspired against democratization and good governance, particularly in modern Nigeria. It is in response to this unfortunate reality that the prognosis provided here is conceived to reposition the country on the pathways to viable and sustainable democratization and good governance.

Endnotes

- 1 This is a very defective idea that seems to consign the minority within a democratic system to perpetual denial and exclusion from governance and decision-making in public affairs. Conceptually, this interpretation of democracy is commonly expressed in developing societies such as Nigeria, where the meaning of democracy is variously interpreted to suit the purposes and intentions of the power elite who are privileged to determine political outcomes without recourse to the governed.
- 2 This definition of democracy, which has become very popular was originally coined by Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States of America and since then, it has remained the most simplistic interpretation to the understanding of the fundamentals of a democratic system of government. Reference is made to this all-time definition of democracy by Y.B.C. Omelle in one his works, "Introduction: Democracy: Is it a Means or an End in Itself?" in A.T. Gana and Y.B.C. Omelle, Eds., *Democratic Rebirth in Nigeria: Volume One, 1999-2003*,

New Jersey, African Centre for Democratic Governance, 2005, p.1.

- 3 C.S, Orngu, “Democracy and the Trajectory of National Security in Modern Nigeria: Recalibrating the Institutions of Governance for Strategic Policy Options,” SATIRU International Journal of Peace and Security Studies, Vol.2, Nos.1&2, 2021, p.159.
- 4 For this disquisition, see G. Nzongola-Ntalaja, “The Democracy Project in Africa: The Journey So Far,” *The Nigerian Social Scientist*, 4(1), 2001, p.21. Also see C.S. Orngu, *Political Patronage and the Challenge of Development in Contemporary Nigeria*, Makurdi, Bookmakers Publishing, 2008, p.15.
- 5 For a comprehensive account of these confrontations, oppositions, uprisings and demonstrations against the British colonial authorities in colonial Nigeria, read Okwudiba Nnoli, *The Struggle for Democracy in Nigeria*, Enugu, Pan-African Centre for Research and Conflict Resolution, 2011. See particularly, Chapter Three of this publication. 6 Okwudiba Nnoli, *The Struggle for Democracy in Nigeria*, Enugu, Pan-African Centre for Research and Conflict Resolution, 2011, p.60.
- 6 For an extensive discussion on the linkages between Nigeria’s contemporary political modernity and her historical past, read Toyin Falola, *Nigerian Political Modernity and Postcolonial Predicaments*, Austin, Texas, Pan-African University Press, 2016.
- 7 The country’s long history of political experience shows a continuous struggle to forge a united nation out of an agglomeration of various ethnic groups with divergent cultural and political orientations. Even the struggles for political independence were shrouded in ethnic and regional differentials in terms of perception that led to heated disagreements on the appropriateness of time for political independence. For more on this, see Toyin Falola, *Nigerian Political Modernity and Postcolonial Predicaments*, Austin, Texas, Pan-African University Press, 2016.
- 8 For more on this, consult Chris S. Orngu, *Political Patronage and the Challenge of Development in Contemporary Nigeria*, Makurdi, Bookmakers Publishing, 2008.
- 9 Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, London, Profile Books, 2012. Also, see Chris S. Orngu, “Foreign Direct Investment as a Re-Invigoration of Colonial Ties and Dependency Syndrome in Contemporary International Relations: Some Critical Issues,” paper for Africa Conference, University of Texas at Austin, USA, March 2017.