

Rethinking African Development: A Critical Assessment of Recent Developments in the Telecommunications Sub-Sector in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT Technology infrastructure which comprises energy, transportation, communication, water supply and human capital is vital prerequisite for economic and industrial development and growth. The level of technological development of a nation is evaluated on the ability to acquire, adopt, adapt, imbibe, diffuse and innovate technology as well as technology infrastructure in place. African countries are classified as underdeveloped on the basis of the above criteria. One reason that is often adduced for the poor state of economic, industrial and technological development in Nigeria is the excessive involvement of the public sector in virtually every aspect of development – health, education, industrialization and provision of technological infrastructure. Government involvement is often characterized by inefficiency, poor performance and poor accountability. Focusing critically but exclusively on the telecommunications sub-sector, the paper examined the performance of public - private sectors in provision of this technological infrastructure. The paper argued that telecommunications sub-sector which hitherto remained poor, inefficient, inaccessible and grossly underdeveloped has witnessed significant improvement with private sector involvement. The paper therefore recommended that in as much as the role of private sector is welcomed in the telecommunications sub-sector the consumers must be protected against undue exploitation and arbitrarily price increases through periodic monitoring of these operators.