EJAMSS

Edo Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

**A Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Communication
and the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences.**

Contents

Political Elite and Party Candidate Selection in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A study of All Progressive Congress

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Abstract

Despite the significant role that political elites play in the candidate selection process within political parties, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of how these elites influence the selection of candidates within the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. This however raises questions about the transparency, fairness, and representativeness of the candidate selection process. However, this paper explores political elites and party candidate selection in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A study of APC. The paper adopted descriptive research method and engage elite theory as its theoretical premise. The paper found out that political elites in APC have a significant influence on the process of selecting party candidates, potentially shaping the outcomes of elections. It also revealed the specific factors and criteria considered by political elites in APC when choosing party candidates, such as loyalty, political connections, or financial resources. The paper concluded that the involvement of political elites in the process of selecting candidate significantly shapes the outcomes of election and raises questions about fairness and meritocracy within All Progressive Congress. Therefore, the paper recommended that All Progressive Congress should enhance transparency by publicly disclosing the criteria used for candidate selection and making the process more accessible to party members and public. It also recommended that APC should emphasize the importance of meritocracy in candidate selection rather than solely relying on political connections or financial resources

Keywords: *All progressive congress, candidate selection, Fourth Republic, Nigeria, political elite*

Introduction

Nigeria gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960 and began its journey towards democratic governance. However, the country's early years were marred by political instability, corruption, ethnic tensions, and military intervention which have influenced the way political parties operate and select their candidates. Various military coups and dictatorial regimes hindered the development of a stable political environment (Adekunle & Ogunleye, 2021).

Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigerian political parties have used various methods in selecting their candidates for elections, including direct primaries, indirect primaries, and

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consensus arrangements (Ibrahim, 2023).

During the first republic, candidate selection was primarily done within the party structures, with part leaders playing a key role. For instance, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) would hold meetings of party elites to choose their respective presidential and gubernatorial candidates. This opaque of elite-driven process was criticized for lacking internal democracy (Sandehl, 2023). The transition into presidential system in the second republic (1979-1983) saw the introduction of more formal primary elections even though there were allegations of manipulations by party elites. For example, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was accused of imposing its preferred candidates through a process that disenfranchised grassroots party members. The short-lived third republic (1992-1993) also witnessed imposition of party candidates by the political elites, as the issue becomes a continuous one transcending from second republic to the third republic. In this Republic, the political environment was more turbulent because both Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC) were facing accusations of undemocratic practices and military interference in their primaries (Okwori & Ogwuegbu, 2022).

In 1999, Nigeria transitioned to its Fourth Republic, marking a return to democratic governance. This transition was driven by the need to address political instability and promote political participation and representation. The Fourth Republic brought about constitutional reforms, multi-party systems, and regular elections, creating space for political parties to compete for power. Party politics in Nigeria has evolved significantly within the Fourth Republic (Abdullahi & Isa, 2018). The two major political parties are the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC). The PDP, established in 8th August, 1998 initially dominated Nigerian politics and held power for 16 years until the APC emerged as a strong opposition in 2015. The APC was formed in 2013 through the merger of several opposition's parties, including the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), and a faction of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP). The party's primary objectives was to challenge the ruling PDP and offer an alternative political platform (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2018).

Political elites in Nigeria refer to individuals with significant influence and power within the political system. These individuals comprise party leaders, influential politicians, government officials, and influential individual from various sectors. These elites play a crucial role in shaping politics, policy-making, and candidates' selection processes. They often control critical resources, command loyal followership, and possess the networks necessary to navigate Nigeria's complex political terrain (Olufemi, Adeleke & Oluwaseun, 2019).

The candidate selection process within APC and other Nigerian political parties involves a combination of internal party mechanisms, consultations, and negotiations among the party's elite members. Political elites wield substantial influence in determining who becomes the party's candidate for various electoral positions, including presidential, gubernatorial, and legislative seats. The candidate selection process is influenced by various factors. Loyalty to the party, political connections, financial resources, party ideology, and the ability to secure support from influential party members and stakeholders are among the key considerations. The process can vary across party structures, with some parties employing more democratic and inclusive methods, while others may rely more on top-down decision making (Ibeanu, 2019).

Within the APC, the candidate selection process has witnessed internal power struggles, factionalism, and varying levels of transparency. While some argue that meritocracy plays a role in candidate selection, there have been allegations of patronage, favouritism, and imposition of candidates by influential elites. It is against this foregoing

that this study examines political elites and party candidate selection in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: a study of APC.

Conceptual Clarification

Political Elites

Political elites are a small group of people who have a disproportionate amount of power and influence in a society. These elites may hold positions of authority in government, political parties, or other influential institutions. They may also be influential through their control of resources, such as media outlets or large corporations. Whether or not political elites are beneficial or harmful to a society is often debated. However, there is no doubt that they are powerful force in shaping the course of events and the direction of public policy (Doe, 2021).

According to Samuel Huntington (1968), he defines political elites as a group of people who are able, by virtue of their position in key institutions, to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially. This definition emphasizes the role of institutions in shaping who is considered political elite (Smith, 2020). C. Wright Mills (1956) defines political elites as a small group of men who, by virtue of their strategic position in the major institutions of the modern society, are able to make decisions having major consequences. This definition emphasizes the importance of strategic positions within the institutions unlike Samuel Huntington's definition that lay more emphasis on the role of institutions. C. Wright Mills (1956) argues that there is a link between economic, political and military power in modern societies, that is those who hold power in one area are often connected to those who hold power in another area. This interlocking of power creates a "power elite" that controls society as a whole (Johnson, 2022).

Robert A. Dahl (1998), a political scientist defines political elites as those who exercise substantial political. He goes on to say that political elites can be found in any political system, regardless of whether it is democratic or authoritarian. His definition focuses on the actual exercise of power rather than the specific institutional setting (Thompson, 2023). David Apter (1965) in his book "The politics of modernization" defines political elites as those who wield power over others because of their position in the political structure. David Apter's definition focuses on the hierarchical nature of power. It also highlights the idea that elites can come from any part of the political structure and not just from the top. In the book of Giovanni Sartori (1976) titled "Parties and Party System", he defines political elites as those who occupy strategic positions in the power structure and who are able to control decision-making. Satori's definition emphasizes the importance of both strategic position and control over decision-making.

James Burns (1978) defines political elites as those who exercise significant influence over the political process and whose influence is not dependent on their formal position in the political structure. This definition is similar to the others we have looked at in that it focuses on influence and position. However, Burn's emphasizes that this influence is not dependent on formal position, which set his definition apart from the others. In other words, Ali Mazrui (1978) defines political elites as those who hold positions of power in society and who, by virtue of their positions, enjoy special privileges and benefits this definition focuses on power benefits. It also sees political elites as having dual role in society (Davis, 2021). They have a "public" role, in which they made decisions that affect the lives of others, and a "private" role, in which they enjoy special privileges and benefits. However, after reviewing various definitions by scholars, and for the purpose of this study, the researcher therefore, defines the concept of political elites as small group of individuals who hold significant power and influence in the political sphere.

Party Candidate

The concept of party candidate like every other concept in social sciences has no universally acceptable definition. This is because various scholars have put forward their argument on the concept base on their divergent views and ideological background. When we talk about a party candidate, we are referring to an individual who represents a political party and seeks to be elected to a specific position (Smith, 2020). According to Walter Burnham (1955), he defines party candidate as a person who has been nominated by a political party to run for public office. This definition emphasizes the nomination process as a key part of being a party candidate. In the same vein, Alan Ware (1996) in his book "Political Parties and Party Systems" defines party candidate as a person who has been selected by a political party to run for office and who receives the endorsement of the party. This definition laid emphasis on the importance of selection and endorsement by the party, in addition to nomination. Ware's definition is similar to that of Burnham's definition as both definitions emphasizes the role political parties in selecting candidate, highlighting the importance of endorsement by the party and focusing on the process of becoming a party candidate, rather than on the characteristics of the candidates themselves (Thompson, 2023).

Also, Verba key (1964) defines party candidate as a person who has been officially nominated by the party and accepted as the party's standard-bearer. Verba's definition focuses on selection and endorsement by the party and however adds the element of acceptance by the party, which implies a degree of consensus or agreement within the party about the candidate. What sets a party candidate a party candidate apart from an independent candidate is that they are affiliated with a particular political party. This affiliation means they align themselves with the party's values, principles, and policy positions. It's like being part of a team, where the candidate and the party work together to advance their shared goals. Party candidate usually go through a selection process within their party, like primaries or conventions, where party members vote or make decisions on who will be the official candidate. This process helps ensure that the candidate reflects the collective voice and vision of the party. It is in this regard that Verba's definition became relevant (Davis, 2022).

According to Anthony Down (1957), he defines party candidate as an individual who is nominated by a political party to run for public office. This definition quite similar to the others we have looked at, but it adds an economic perspective by emphasizing the candidate's role in representing the interests of the party's constituents. In the same vein, Peter Mair (1997), a political scientist in his book "Party System Change" defines party candidate as an individual who is chosen by a political candidate to run for office and who represent the party's values and policies. Mair's definition emphasizes the connection between the candidate and the party's values and policies. It also highlights the fact that the candidate is chosen by the party, rather than simply being endorsed or accepted by it (Smith, 2020). However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher hereby conceived party candidate as an individual who seeks to be elected to a position, such as a seat in the legislative arms or top government position.

Theoretical Framework

This study engaged elite theory as its theoretical premise. Elite theory was adopted because it is a perspective in political science that focuses on the role and influence of a small group of individuals or elites in shaping political outcomes. These elites are believed to dominate decision making processes and shape policies to serve their own interest. The proponents of this theory include Vivredo Pareto (1900), Gaetano Mosca (1896), Robert Michels (1911) and C. Wright Mills (1956) (Smith, 2021).

Elite theory is a perspective in political science that focuses on the role and influence of a small group of individuals or elites in shaping political outcomes. According to this theory, power is concentrated in the hands of a few elites who hold significant resources, such as wealth, status, or knowledge. These elites are believed to dominate decision-making processes and shape policies to serve their own interests (Johnson, 2022).

This theory suggests that political power is not evenly distributed among the population but is instead concentrated in the hands of a privileged few. Elite theorists argued that these elites can manipulate and control political institutions to maintain their power and influence. The theory argues that these elites may use their resources to shape public opinion, control the media, and influence the actions of elected officials. The proponents of this theory highlight the potential for a revolving door between political elites and other powerful institutions, such as corporations or interest groups. This can create a strong network of elites who reinforce each other's power and interests (Williams, 2023). The critics of elite theory argue that the theory overlooks the role of popular participation and grassroots movements in influencing political outcomes. They also argue that power is not solely concentrated in the hands of elites but is also shaped by collective action and social movements.

In application to this study, elite theory explains how powerful individuals who hold significant resources, such as wealth, status or knowledge in All Progressive Congress (APC) influences and control candidate selection processes to serve their own interests. They achieve this through the use of their power, connection, and influence to negotiate, make deals, and ensure their preferred candidates are chosen (Brown, 2024).

Historical Development of Party Candidate Selection in Nigeria

The selection of party candidates in Nigeria has been a contentious issue throughout the country's history. Before Nigeria gain independence in 1960, parties in Nigeria were the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC) and the Northern people's Congress (NPC). The NCNC selected its candidate through a process known as "elective dictatorship", in which a small group of party leaders selected the candidates. The NPC, on the other hand, had a system of "selection by consensus", in which candidates were selected by a group of senior party members (Adeleke, 2023).

Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigerian political parties have used various methods in selecting their candidates for elections, including direct primaries, indirect primaries, and consensus arrangements (Ibrahim, 2023). In the early years after independence, political parties in Nigeria often used direct primaries, where party delegates selected the candidate to represent the party in an election. During this period, which was the first republic, the NCNC and NPC continued to select their candidates using the same methods as before. The NPC selected their candidates based on their loyalty to the party and its leaders. In some cases, candidates were chosen based on their family connections or tribal affiliation. This led to a lack of competition and lack of representation of for certain groups (Ojo, 2022). One example of the selection process during the first republic was the selection of Tafawa Balewa as the Prime Minster. He was chosen by the NPC as a compromise candidate who was acceptable to both the Northern and the Southern regions of Nigeria. This led to resentment among some groups, who felt that he was not representative of their interest. However, a new party emerged called Action Congress (AG). The AG had a much more democratic system of candidate selection, in which all party members could vote for their preferred candidates. This system was criticized for being susceptible to corruption and manipulation, as party leaders' often exerted influence over the delegate selection process (Olaniyi, 2022).

The first republic came to an end in 1966, when military took over power. However, in 1979, Nigeria returned to civilian rule and the second republic began. During this period, the NCNC and the NPC were replaced by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). The NPN continued to use "elective dictatorship" where candidates were selected based on their ability to raise funds and their personal relationships with party leaders, while UPN adopted a more democratic system similar to the AG's approach. However, both parties were accused of corruption and violence (Suleiman, 2021). One example of the selection process during the second republic was the selection of Shehu Shagari as the President. Shehu Shagari was selected by the NPN party, but he was not a strong leader and was often criticised for his lack of decisiveness. In addition, there was widespread corruption within the NPN party, which affected the selection process and led to dissatisfaction among many Nigerians. Another example of selection process from the second republic was the selection of Obafemi Awolowo by the UPN as the leader of the opposition. Awolowo was a charismatic and popular leader who was able to mobilize support from his Yoruba base. However, he faced opposition from the NPN and was not unable to win the presidency. This shows how personality and regional affiliation could be important factors in the selection process (Okonkwo, 2022).

The second republic ended in 1983, when the military again seized power. However, the third republic began in 1992 and unfortunatrely ended in 1993. The third republic was the shortest and often called aborted republic. During this period, the NRC and SDP were the leading and both struggled with internal divisions and corruption. For example, the selection of Moshood Abiola by the SDP was controversial. Chief Moshood Abiola was a wealthy businessman who was not popular with many party members. However, he had strong support from the Yoruba people, and the party leadership believed that he could win the election. This led to internal divisions and conflict within the party. In some cases, candidates were selected based on their ability to pay bribes or to offer other inducements to party officials. This resulted in a lack of transparency and accountability in the selection process (Adekunle, 2023).

As Nigeria transition to civilian rule in 1999 after years of military dictatorship, political parties began to experiment with different methods of selecting candidates. The selection process has been more competitive and transparent, although there are still some concerns about corruption nepotism. In this fourth republic, the UPN and NPB were replaced by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP). The PDP initially selected candidates through "Indirect primaries" but it has since moved to a system of "consensus" in which candidates are selected by party leaders. The ANPP on the other hand has also shifted towards consensus, although it still uses some aspect of direct democracy (Ibe, 2024). One example of the selection process during this period was the selection of Goodluck Jonathan as the PDP's presidential candidates. Jonathan was initially chosen as a compromise candidate, but he later proved to be a popular and successful leader. Some other parties adopted direct primaries, where party members vote directly for the candidate of their choice. However, direct primaries were also criticized for being vulnerable to manipulation, as party leaders could still exert influence over the voting process (Adebayo, 2024).

In recent years, political parties in Nigeria have increasingly moved towards using consensus arrangements to select candidates. Under this system, party leaders negotiate behind closed doors to agree on a candidate who can represent the party in an election. While consensus arrangements can help to reduce internal party conflicts, they have also being criticized for lacking transparency and accountability.

Party candidate selection in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: APC's Experience

In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, the All Progressive Congress (APC) has gone through several processes and experiences in selecting its party candidates for various political positions. The party uses a combination of internal party democracy and consensus-building to identify suitable candidates who ally with its ideology and have a good chance of winning elections at the state and national level.

One of the key elements of candidates' selection in the APC is the use of party primaries, including direct primaries, indirect primaries and consensus-building. The party conducts direct primaries in which registered party members have the opportunity to vote for their preferred candidate. In theory, this process allows for a fair and inclusive selection of candidates, as it gives party members a voice in the decision-making process. APC has also made use of indirect primaries and consensus candidate selection. Indirect primaries involve party delegates selecting the candidates rather than the registered majority party members while consensus candidate selection occurs when party stakeholders agree on a candidate without a formal vote. The APC constitution states that the direct primaries are only used if the indirect primaries do not produce a clear winner (Ogunbodede & Akinwunmi, 2021). In general, the process has been more transparent than in previous years, with result being announced publicly and a greater emphasis on the role of ordinary party members.

However, the APC has also experienced controversies and challenges in its candidate selection process. One common issue is the lack of internal party democracy, with allegations of manipulations and imposition of candidates by party leaders. This has often led to intra-party conflict and divisions, with discontented members defecting to other parties or contesting as independent candidates (Adeyemi & Olawale, 2020). For instance, in the 2019 APC presidential primaries, the party's national leadership was accused of imposing President Muhammadu Buhari as the party's candidate despite other aspirants such as Dr SKC Ogbonnia, Chief Charles Udeogaranya and Alhaji Mumakai-Unagha showing interest within the party. The APC conducted a primary election, but it was more of an affirmation exercise, as Buhari was the only candidate. This led to the accusations that party's national leadership had imposed Buhari as the party flag bearer rather than allowing a competitive primary election. This lack of competition in the primary election undermined the democratic process within the party. However, Buhari's supporter maintained that his affirmation was a testament to his popularity and the party's confidence in his leadership.

Another specific example was the 2019 governorship primaries in Lagos state. The election was a particularly contentious one, with over 30 candidates competing for the nomination. This include a number of prominent politicians, such as Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Olasupo Shasore, Akinwunmi Ambode and Tokunbo Abiru. There were allegations of vote-buying and irregularities, with some candidates accusing the party leadership of trying to rig the primary in favour of a particular candidate. It was alleged that the party leadership had printed fake delegates that and distributed them to Pro-Sanwo-Olu supporters, in order to influence the outcome of the primary election. It was also alleged that the party leadership had influence the delegates' selection process, by appointing their supporters to key positions within the party. This included the selection of returning officers, who oversaw the voting process, and the disqualification of some candidates who were seen as a threat to the preferred candidate (Ibrahim, 2019). In the end, Sanwo-Olu was declared the winner and went on to win the governorship election. By implication, the allegations of fraud and manipulation during the 2019 APC primary in Lagos state cause divisions within the party. Some of the losing candidates refused to accept the results, and there were even calls for a boycott of the general election. This controversy also led to the expulsion of some party

members, and a general sense of disunity within the party.

Another factor that influences candidate selection in the APC is the need for broad-based coalitions. The party often seeks to forge alliances with other political parties and interest groups to strengthen its chances of winning elections. As a result, candidate selection sometimes involves negotiations and compromises to accommodate the interest of other coalition partners (Okoli & Nwankwo, 2018). For example, in 2013, the All Progressives Congress (APC) was formed through broader coalition of three major opposition parties: the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), and the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP). During this period, discussions about the ideal presidential candidate for the APC took place, with some members suggesting a Muslim-Christian ticket to appeal to a broader base. However, it's worth noting that the APC finally settled for Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim from the north as their presidential candidate for the 2015 general election. Prof Yemi Osinbajo from the south and a Christian were chosen as Buhari's running mate. This ticket combination helped the APC appeal to a broader base and ultimately contributed to their victory in the 2015 presidential elections. Another example is the case of Zamfara state in the 2019 general election. In Zamfara, the APC formed an alliance with the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). As part of this alliance, the APC agreed to support the candidacy of Bello Matawalle, who was a member of the APGA. Matawalle went on to win the governorship election in Zamfara, and he is now widely seen as an APC member. This approach has helped the APC build a formidable electoral base but has also raised questions about the party's internal coherence and commitment to its ideological principles (Akindele & Adebayo, 2017).

Furthermore, the APC in the Fourth Republic has also encountered challenges in balancing the representation of different regions and interest group within its candidate selection process. Nigeria, being a diverse country, requires a careful balancing act to ensure equitable representation and prevent perceptions of marginalization. This has sometimes resulted in controversies and allegations of favouritism (Olaniyi, 2023). An example of this is that of Ogun state APC governorship primary election in 2019. In Ogun state, the APC gubernatorial candidate candidate, Prince Dapo Abiodun, was accused of rigging the primary election and of being handpicked by the national leadership of the party. Dapo ABiodun was initially a member of the PDP, but defected to the APC shortly before the primary. There were allegations that he had used his wealth and connections to secure the nomination, rather than winning it through a fair and open process (Ojo & Olanrewaju, 2022).

Role of political elites in the candidate selection process within APC

The All Progressive Congress (APC) is a major political party in Nigeria, and the role of the political elite in the candidate selection process within the party is significant. Political elites, who are often influential personalities within the party, play a crucial role in determining which candidates are selected to run for various positions, including during party primaries and general elections (Adejumo, 2022).

Political elites in the APC, such as party leaders, governors, and other influential members, hold significant sway over the candidate selection process. Their influence is often rooted in their established networks, political capital, and historical relationships within the party. They often have the resources, networks, and connections to shape the candidate selection process in their favour or in alignment with their agendas (Doe, 2024). Political elites also wield significant influence within the APC and can command party members to support specific candidates through endorsement and public statement. Their endorsement provides a stamp of approval that can enhance a candidate's credibility and

legitimacy in the eyes of party members and voters. For instance, in the run-up of 2023 APC presidential primaries, prominent APC governors and national leaders publicly endorsed the candidacy of Bola Ahmed Tinubu. This high-profile endorsement from key political elites within the party significantly boosted Tinubu's campaign and solidified his position as a frontrunner for the party's presidential ticket, as most of his contenders within the party were stepping down for him on the day of presidential primary election (Obi, 2022). Beyond candidate selection, political elites often occupy key positions within the party structures, such as the National Executive Committee (NEC), National Working Committee (NWC) and other decision-making bodies. These positions grant them the power to shape party rules, processes, and internal procedures related to candidate selection. By leveraging their influence within party structures, political elites can ensure that their preferred candidates receive favourable treatment and opportunities within the party hierarchy. For example, the APC National Chairman in person of Abdullahi Adamu is considered political elite with strong influence within the party's national executive committee. In the lead-up to the party primaries in 2023, Adamu was able to steer the party's internal processes to the advantage of certain gubernatorial and senatorial candidates favoured by the party leadership (Emeaku, 2023).

Resource mobilization and campaign financing is a crucial aspect of Nigerian politics, and the financial clout of political elites can heavily influence candidate selection. Political elites within APC possess access to financial resources, organisational networks, and campaign infrastructure that are vital for mounting successful political campaigns. They can use their resources to fundraise, mobilize supporters, employ strategic communication tactics, and run effective campaign strategies on behalf of their favoured candidates. Resource mobilization by political elites can tilt the playing field in favour of specific candidates and impact the overall competitiveness of the candidate selection process. For instance, a prominent APC chieftain, Aliko Dangote, is known to be a financial backer of the party. During the party's primary elections in 2023, Dangote's resources were reportedly used to support the campaigns of several APC candidates, providing them with the necessary funds for campaign logistics, media outreach, and voter mobilization efforts (Smith & Johnson, 2023).

The candidate selection process in the APC often involves complex negotiations among various factions and interest groups within the party. The political elites engage in consensus-building efforts to rally support around particular candidates and forge alliances with diverse stakeholders within the party. They often negotiate behind the scenes, broker deals, and navigate factional disputes to ensure a united front in support of their chosen candidates. Consensus-building allows political elites to consolidate power, strengthen intra-party cohesion, and enhace the likelihood of success for their favoured candidates. For instance, in the aftermath of of the APC presidential primaries in 2023, political elites within the party engaged in extensive negotiations and backroom deals to foster a united front behind the party's flag bearer, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. This consensus-building effort involved reconciling the interests of various party factions and ensuring the support of key stakeholders for Tinubu's candidacy (Lee, 2022).

Factors considered by political elites in the selection of party candidates in APC

The factors considered by political elites in the selection of party candidates in the All Progressive Congress (APC) can vary depending on the specific context and circumstances. However, some common factors that tend to be taken into account by political elites in the candidate selection process include:
Loyalty to the Party: Political elites in the APC prioritize candidates who have a history of

being loyal to the party and its leadership. This loyalty ensures party unity and discipline, as candidates who are committed to the party's agenda are more likely to work in unity with other party members and adhere to the party's principles and policies. Loyalty is seen as an indicator of trustworthiness and reliability. Political elites prefer candidates who have proven their loyalty to the party over time as they can be trusted to advance the party's interests rather than pursuing personal or divergent agendas (Oduyemi & Babatunde, 2023). Candidates who demonstrate loyalty to the party often receive the support and endorsements of influential party elites. These endorsements can significantly boost a candidate's chances of securing the party's nomination, as they act as a signal to voters and party members that the candidate has the backing of the party's leadership. For example, the selection of Kashim Shettima as the APC's vice presidential nominee in 2022 was a result of his consistency and loyalty to the party since its formation. Shettima's loyalty to the party and his previous roles as a senator and governor of Borno state made him an attractive choice for the position (Ogunleye & Adekunle, 2019).

In a competitive political environment, maintaining party unity is crucial for the APC's success. Political elites believe that selecting loyal candidates helps foster party unity and stability by minimizing factionalism, promoting party cohesion, and reducing interparty conflicts that could undermine the party's chances in elections. Equally, loyalty is also seen as a prerequisite for candidates to gain access to the party's machinery and resources (Adekunle & Ogunleye, 2022). Candidates who have shown loyalty to the party and prioritize the interests of the party over their personal ambition are more likely to receive the party's financial support, campaign infrastructure, and access to influential party networks, which can significantly enhance their chances of winning elections. It is of the believe that candidates who have a track record of putting the party's goals ahead of their own political career are seen as more committed and dedicated to the party's success (Ibrahim & Ahmed, 2021).

Electability: The primary goal of political parties is to win elections and gain political power. Political elites in the APC carefully assess the electoral viability of potential candidates to ensure that they have a strong chance of winning in their respective constituencies or regions. Candidates with a proven track record of electoral success or high popularity among voters are often preferred (Mohammed & Suleiman, 2020). They also consider public image and popularity of potential candidates when selecting party candidates. Candidates who have a positive public image, high name recognition, and a strong appeal to voters are more likely to be chosen as they are seen as capable of attracting support and votes from the electorate. Other factors such as a candidate's charisma, communication skills, and ability to connect with voters are also crucial in determining electability. Candidates who possess these qualities are more likely to attract the support and vote of the general public (Okoro & Nwankwo, 2019).

Political elites in APC often assess a candidate's past electoral performance to gauge their electability. Candidates who have a track record of previous wins or successful political campaigns demonstrate their ability to mobilize voters, raise funds, build support networks, and generate electoral success. Such candidates are more likely to be seen and considered more viable as electable options by party elites. In Nigeria's diverse political landscape, demographic and regional dynamics play a significant role in candidate selection (Adebayo & Olawale, 2023). Political elites in the APC take into account demographic and regional factors when assessing the electoral viability of candidates. They consider whether a candidate's background, ethnicity, gender, or regional affiliation aligns with the demographics of the constituency or region they are seeking to represent, as this can impact their appeal and electability. They also considered candidates who have a strong support

base or good relationships in certain regions are often seen as more electable because they can secure the necessary regional votes to win elections. A notable example is the selection of Bola Tinubu as the party's presidential candidate for the 2023 general elections. Tinubu's electability was a significant factor in his selection, given his strong political base in the South-West region and his reputation as a skilled politician (Okonkwo & Eze, 2022). In assessing a candidate's electability, political elites may consider public opinion and polling data. Analyzing the popularity and favorability ratings of potential candidates can provide insights into their chances of winning elections. Candidates with positive public perception and higher poll numbers are perceived as having a better chance of winning, making them more attractive to party elites.

Track records and experience: Track records and experience is another great factors considered by political elites in selecting party candidate in APC. When selecting party candidate, political elites in APC assess a candidate's past achievements, both within and outside of politics, to determine their potential as a party candidate. Accomplishments in public service, leadership roles, successful policy implementation, or notable contributions to the community are considered positive indicators of a candidate's ability to deliver results if elected. A track record of tangible achievements enhances a candidate's credibility and makes them more appealing to party elites (Ibrahim & Abubakar, 2021). Political elites value candidates who have prior experience serving in legislative or executive positions. Candidates with a strong legislative track record, such as effective lawmaking, committee work, or notable contributions to policies, are seen as having the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the complexities of governance.

Similarly, candidates with executive experience, such as serving as a governor, minister, or holding other high-ranking positions, demonstrate their capacity for leadership and decision-making. The selection of Nasir El-Rufai as the party's candidate in the 2015 Kaduna state gubernatorial election was a notable example. El-Rufai's extensive experience in politics, having served as the minister of the FCT between 2003 and 2007 was a significant factor in his selection. His track records of governance as a minister in FCT where he implemented various reforms and policies that transformed the state's economy and infrastructure was also considered by the party elites (Itu, Atiye & Micah, 2024).

While track records and experience play a significant role in candidate selection, other factors mentioned above also influences the final decision made by political elites in the APC. The weight given to track records and experience may vary based on the specific circumstances of the election and the broader political landscape.

Diversity and inclusivity: Political elites in the APC recognize the importance of diversity in representation within the party. They aim to select candidates who reflect the diversity of the population in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, religion, and other demographic factors. By promoting diversity in candidate selection, the party can better connect with a broader range of voters and communities (Oduyemi & Babatunde, 2018). They also prioritize inclusivity in candidate selection, ensuring that candidates from different backgrounds and perspectives are given equal opportunities to represent the party. Inclusivity helps to foster a sense of belonging and participation within the party, attracting a more diverse membership base and promoting unity and solidarity.

Political elites in the APC may actively seek out candidates from underrepresented groups, such as women, minorities, and marginalized communities. By encouraging diverse candidates to participate in party politics, the APC can broaden its appeal and address the needs and concerns of a wider range of constituents (Babatunde, Oduyemi & Adekunle, 2017). For example, the selection of Prof Yemi Osinbajo as President Muhammadu Buhari's running mate in 2015 was a move to showcase the APC's effort to promote diversity and

inclusivity. Yemi Osinbajo, a Christian from the South-west region brought a balance to the ticket, as Muhammadu Buhari is a Muslim from the Northern region. Selecting diverse candidates can help the APC build a coalition of support from various demographic groups and communities. Candidates who represent different backgrounds and interests can attract a more diverse base of supporters, volunteers, and donors, strengthening the party's electoral prospects. By prioritizing diversity and inclusivity in candidate selection, political elites in the APC demonstrate a commitment to promoting equality and fairness within the party. This can help enhance the party's reputation, credibility, and appeal to voters who value diversity and inclusivity in political representation (Balogun & Evans, 2020).

Overall, diversity and inclusivity are important factors considered by political elites in the selection of party candidates in the APC. By promoting diversity and inclusivity in candidate selection, the party can strengthen its electoral prospects, build a more inclusive and representative party, and demonstrate a commitment to equality and fairness in political leadership.

Financial Resources: Financial resources play a significant role in the selection of party candidates in the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Nigeria. Political elites often consider the financial capabilities of potential candidates as an important factor in their selection process. One of the primary considerations for political elites in candidate selection is the ability of candidates to finance their election campaigns. Running for office in Nigeria generally requires significant financial resources to cover various campaign expenses, such as advertising, rallies, transportation, campaign materials, and other logistics (Itu, Atiye & Micah, 2024). Candidates who can demonstrate their capacity to fund their own campaigns or have strong access to fundraising networks are often seen as attractive choices. A notable example is the selection of Bola Tinubu as the APC's presidential candidate for the 2023 election. Tinubu's financial resources played a significant role in his emergence as the APC's presidential candidate for the 2023 election. His ability to fund his campaign and provide financial support to the party were key factors in his selection (Ogunlana, 2019). Financially well-equipped candidates are more likely to effectively communicate their message and garner support during the election process.

Political parties in Nigeria, including the APC, often have fundraising targets to support their electoral activities. Political elites consider the financial resources a candidate brings to the party, as it helps meet these financial expectations. Candidates who can contribute substantial amounts to the party or have the potential to gather significant financial support are often favored during candidate selection. Financially capable candidates can help the party cover its expenses and strengthen its electoral machinery, increasing their chances of being selected (Olawoyin, 2018). In the APC, political elites also value candidates who have made personal investments in the party through financial contributions or other means. Candidates who have financially supported the party's activities, funded party projects, or made significant donations to the party are often viewed as dedicated and committed members. Such investments demonstrate their loyalty and commitment to the party's growth and success, increasing their chances of being considered for candidacy (Ojo, 2020). Furthermore, Candidates with a proven ability to attract donors and secure financial support for the party are highly regarded. Political elites assess a candidate's network and connections, including business relationships, to evaluate their fundraising potential. Candidates who have strong relationships with influential donors, business leaders, or other sources of financial support are seen as valuable assets for the party. Their capacity to attract funding can help the party secure the necessary resources for successful election campaigns (Adebayo, 2021).

Overall, financial resources are a crucial factor considered by political elites in the

selection of party candidates in the APC. Candidates who have access to significant financial resources are more likely to be selected as they are seen as more capable of running a successful campaign and contributing to the party's overall success.

The implications of political elite involvement in party candidate selection in APC
The involvement of political elites in candidate selection within the All Progressive Congress (APC) has several implications that may impact the party and its electoral process. These include the following:

Influence of personal interest: When political elites are involved in candidate selection, there is a higher likelihood that personal interests, such as financial gain, power consolidation, or protection of vested interests, become the primary factors considered. This can lead to the selection of candidates who may not be the most qualified or competent for the position, undermining the principles of meritocracy and weakening the party's ability to attract quality candidates (Ogunlade, 2021). The perception that party candidates are selected based on personal interests rather than the needs and aspirations of the people erode public trust in the political system. When citizens observe a disconnect between the qualities they desire in their representatives and those chosen by elites, it can lead to disillusionment and a sense of alienation from the political process. This can have long-term negative consequences for the party's credibility and electoral success (Adeyemi, 2023).

Personal interest-driven candidate selection can create divisions and internal conflicts within the party. Different factions of political elites may have conflicting personal interests, leading to power struggles and infighting. This can result in a fragmented party structure and a weakened ability to present a united front during elections, potentially leading to electoral losses. Political elites may prioritize candidates who serve their personal interests rather than candidates who reflect the diverse interests and demographics of the party's members and the wider population. This can lead to a lack of representation for marginalized groups or regions within the APC. Such a scenario undermines inclusivity and fairness, ultimately weakening the party's appeal and ability to govern effectively (Olatunji, 2022).

Lack of internal democracy: When political elites have a dominant role in candidate selection, it often leads to a lack of meaningful participation from party members. Decisions are made by a small group of elites, marginalizing the voices and preferences of party members who may have valuable insights and perspectives. This lack of internal democracy undermines the principles of inclusivity and participation, weakening the party's democratic foundations (Adewale, 2021). Political elite involvement can also stifle healthy competition within the party. Elites manipulate the candidate selection process to favor their preferred candidates, often discouraging other qualified individuals from stepping forward. This lack of competition can hinder the emergence of fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and potential leaders within the party, limiting its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and attract broader public support (Oladele, 2020).

Political elite-dominated candidate selection can lead to a disconnect between the party leadership and the grassroots members. When the interests and preferences of the party's base are ignored or overridden by elites, it causes disillusionment and apathy among members. This lack of cohesion and grassroots linkages weakens the party's ability to mobilize support and effectively connect with voters at the grassroots level, hampering its electoral prospects. The lack of internal democracy resulting from political elite involvement can lead to internal divisions and infighting within the party. Dissatisfied members who believe the candidate selection process is unfair or biased may become

disenchanted and may even form splinter groups or defect to rival parties. This weakens party unity and undermines its ability to effectively campaign and govern, further eroding its electoral prospects (Adebisi, 2019).

Limited Representation: When political elites have a stronghold on candidate selection, it often leads to limited representation of various social, ethnic, and demographic groups within the party. They tend to prioritize candidates from their own networks or those who align with their interests. As a result, the party's candidate pool may lack diversity, and the voices of underrepresented groups may go unheard. This can undermine the party's ability to connect with a broader range of constituents and address the diverse needs and concerns of the population (Ogunlade, 2021).

Political elite involvement in candidate selection can contribute to the concentration of power within a select few individuals or groups. This concentration of power can create an imbalanced and undemocratic party structure, where decision-making processes favor the interests of the elites rather than the broader membership or the general public. Over time, this concentration of power can erode trust in the party and lead to disillusionment among rank-and-file members (Oladipo, 2020). Limited representation resulting from political elite involvement can create a disconnect between the party leadership and the constituents they aim to serve. If the selected candidates do not reflect the diverse interests and concerns of the electorate, there is a risk of alienating voters and failing to effectively address their needs. This can lead to a loss of public support and electoral setbacks for the party.

Equally, when candidate selection is predominantly influenced by political elites, there is a potential limitation on policy innovation. Elites may prioritize maintaining the status quo and protecting their own interests rather than embracing new ideas and solutions. This can hinder the party's ability to adapt to evolving societal challenges and address the aspirations of the wider public (Adeyemi, 2019).

Perpetuation of the status quo: When political elites have a strong influence on candidate selection, they often prioritize candidates who align with their existing ideologies and policy positions. This can hinder the emergence of new voices and perspectives within the party, leading to a perpetuation of the status quo. As a result, important policy changes and reforms that may be necessary for addressing societal challenges and meeting the evolving needs of the population may be delayed or altogether neglected (Olatunji, 2018). Political elites who have a stake in maintaining the current power structures and systems may resist internal party reforms that aim to democratize candidate selection or introduce more inclusive decision-making processes. They may view such reforms as a threat to their own positions of influence and resist any changes that could potentially undermine their control. This resistance can stifle internal discussions and hinder the party's ability to adapt to changing circumstances (Adewale, 2017).

When political elites maintain a tight grip on candidate selection, it can limit the mechanisms for holding candidates and party leaders accountable. Candidates selected by elites may be less likely to face challenges or scrutiny from the broader party membership or the public. This lack of accountability can result in a diminished sense of responsibility towards constituents and a reduced incentive for candidates to perform effectively in their roles. The perpetuation of the status quo through elite-controlled candidate selection can also stifle innovation and the introduction of fresh ideas within the party. New voices and perspectives that may challenge the established order are often marginalized or excluded. This absence of diverse ideas and viewpoints can hinder the party's ability to adapt, respond to changing public sentiments, and effectively address emerging issues (Adewale, 2019).

Corruption and favoritism: Political elite involvement in candidate selection opens the door for corrupt practices. Elite-controlled candidate selection processes can be prone to bribery, embezzlement, and other forms of corruption. Candidates who are willing to provide financial or other forms of personal gain to influential party members are more likely to be favored, regardless of their qualifications or suitability for the role. This undermines the principles of fairness, transparency, and meritocracy within the party (Olatunji, 2020). When political elites have significant influence over candidate selection, it opens the door for perpetuation of nepotism and favoritism. Candidates who have personal relationships or affiliations with influential party members are given preferential treatment, irrespective of their competence or experience. This leads to the appointment of individuals based on personal connections rather than their ability to effectively serve the interests of the party and the people. Consequently, more qualified and deserving candidates may be overlooked in favor of those who have ties to the political elites (Adeyemi, 2021).

Furthermore, political elite involvement in candidate selection can erode democratic principles within the party. Democratic decision-making processes, such as open primaries or internal elections, may be circumvented or manipulated in favor of candidates favored by the elites. This undermines the democratic values that are essential for a vibrant and inclusive political system (Ogunlade, 2023). The perception of corruption and favoritism in candidate selection processes can severely damage the public's trust in the party. When the selection process is seen as unfair and biased, it erodes confidence in the party's ability to govern effectively and serve the interests of the people. This loss of trust can have long-lasting consequences, including decreased voter turnout, increased political apathy, and a loss of legitimacy for the party (Oladipo, 2022).

Conclusively, the involvement of political elites in candidate selection within the APC can have negative implications for the party's internal democracy, representation, adaptability, and integrity. Striking a balance between the influence of political elites and broader democratic participation is crucial for a healthy and inclusive party system.

Conclusion

This study delves into political elite and party candidate selection in the APC Fourth Republic. It revealed the significance influence wielded by the political elite in shaping the party's candidate selection process. The internal dynamics and power structures within All Progressive Congress (APC) play a crucial role in determining the candidates. Factors such as loyalty, influence, and resources all come into play when it comes to deciding on candidate by political elite. However, it is important to note that the selection process can sometimes be exclusionary, limiting opportunities for new and diverse voices to emerge. The study therefore concluded that the involvement of political elites in the process of selecting candidate significantly shapes the outcomes of election and raises questions about fairness and meritocracy within All Progressive Congress (APC). To foster a healthy and striving democracy, it is crucial to prioritize transparency and inclusivity in the process of party candidate selection. By allowing for the emergence of new voices and providing equal opportunities, we can strengthen our democratic system.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, this study therefore recommends the following actions.

i.   Enhance Transparency: The party (APC) should implement measures to increase transparency in the candidate election process. This could include publicly disclosing the criteria used for candidate selection and making the process more accessible to party members and the public

ii.   Promote Inclusivity: The party should ensure that candidate selection process is inclusive and representative of the diverse voices within the party. This can be achieved by considering implementing mechanisms that allow for broader participation, such as open primaries or consultations of party members and grassroots supporters.

iii.   Strengthening Accountability: The party should establish mechanisms to hold political elites accountable for their actions during the candidate election process. This could involve creating oversight committee or independent bodies to monitor and regulate the process, ensuring fairness and meritocracy.

iv.   Promote Meritocracy: The party should emphasize on the importance of meritocracy in candidate selection, focusing on qualifications, competence and track record rather than solely relying on political connections or financial resources.

v.   Encourage Grassroots Engagement: The party should foster greater engagement and participation of grassroots supporters in the candidate selection process. This can be achieved through increased communication, outreach programs, and platforms for feedback and input from party members at all levels.

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Governance and Political Security in Nigeria, 1999 – 2023

Abdulsalami Muyideen Deji

Abstract

Incontrovertibly, the sudden appearance of the military in governance became a clog in the wheel of democratic rule. However, the civilian struggle against the military government ushered in democratic rule since 1999. The unbroken democratic rule in Nigeria has brought mixed feelings of total disregard for the rule of law among people. Since Nigeria returned to democracy, perennial conflicts have been reoccurrence problems. Can we say activities of political actors have led to politics of security instead of good governance which ought to have given security to politics? The thrust of the argument is that if democratic government is regarded as an ideal form of government devoid of the rule of force; what are the issues precipitating long-drawn agitation in different parts of the country against democratic government in Nigeria? The method adopted is secondary sources which connotes the use of written documents and electronic materials.

Keywords: Governance, Security, Politics and Politics of Security.

Introduction

Governance is the act or state of governing a place in line with established rules and regulations. This forms a base for an ideal or just society with equitable distribution of wealth. When governance is handled with utmost caution by the leaders, it suppresses the trepidation, apprehension, and consternation of the nationalities that make up the nation-states. The challenges posed by multiculturism; such as identity, constitutionalism, minority protection, rule of law, justice, equity, the national question, and fair play hinder good governance in Nigeria (Yap, 2023, p.3). Some have put these challenges on the incursion of the military into politics which prevented free-flow of civilian administration for better civil relations. On the contrary, Nigerians see the intervention of the military as a messianic move because of impressions or excuses usually given by the military coup leaders each time they struck to truncate civilian rule to institute a military government. Alas! The excuses and actions of each military government were almost the same.

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This informed the assertion by Mathew H. Kukah that:

> Each coup leader usually greeted Nigerians with the salubrious news of seeking to end the assault of their predecessors, by the time they were also overthrown by a more rapacious bunch, they had done even worse (Mathew, 2011, p.37).

This could be regarded as the bedrock of bad governance in Nigeria. The power derived from the barrel of guns did not give room for military men to be accountable for their actions. The long military rule changed the psyche of the ruled and rulers. It relegated the application of the rule of law to the background. The decrees of the military became the order of the day, which ushered in draconian rule. However, the advent of civilian rule brought a new lease of hope with high expectations on good governance and political security as the main focus of this study.

The question at this junction is, can Nigerians sleep with their two eyes closed? Unfortunately, peaceful co-existence is becoming illusory in many communities in our various states. Politics which is supposed to guarantee equitable allocation of resources turned out to be on the contrary, which has become the root cause of incessant conflicts amongst the people. Politics of security is now seen as the mainstay or instrument used by the politicians to gain political power. Emotional talks have become straight talk amongst the political actors. Like Adolf Hitler says, "I use emotion for the many and reserve reason for the few"

The politics of Hitler which led to pogrom of over 11 million people, among them Jews, Jehovah's witnesses and homosexuals (Dimeji, p.20) is gradually becoming part and parcel of politicking in Nigeria. This would not bring any meaningful security that will guarantee desirable development except unnecessary agitation. In view of the foregoing analysis, the study carefully analyses governance and political security in Nigeria, politics of security by political actors, and perennial agitations amongst the people.

Governance and Political Security in Nigeria

In concert with the analysis of both governance and political security in a society. It is very appropriate to examine the concept of governance for a proper understanding of political security. Governance is regarded as a state of governing or the art of governing a place. It is the system by which an organization is controlled and operated, and the mechanism by which it, and its people, are held to account (Iain & Alistair, p226). This connotes the ability to use the instrumentality of government known as the rule of law to make leaders accountable for their actions. In a state where a leader becomes uncontrollable through illegally acquired benefits and ill-gotten wealth, governance that would make the people happy will be eroded. Where people enjoy good and smooth governance, political security is guaranteed.

In view of the foregoing, political security is known as the prevention of government repression, systemic violation of human rights, and threats from militarization. Political security portrays organizational ability of state actors, showing their effectiveness in the protection of lives and property of the citizenry. It is equally regarded as defense against any form of political oppression (Takashi, 2003). Consequently, the concern of the actors is therefore to ascertain whether people live in a society where basic human rights are honoured. When government fails to restore or enforce certain fundamental issues that can guarantee basic human right, the purpose of political security is defeated, and hence the manifestation of insecurity becomes the order of the day. This poses security risks such as

terrorism, civil disturbances, and adverse regulatory changes which usually result in war in the entire society with a state of hopelessness in the minds of people.

In summary, political security gives people the right to express their political views without undermining the security of the country. On the other hands, freedom of speech is a right of individual but there is no full guarantee of right after making unsubstantiated speech. This is a fundamental issue in any ideal society which this study has examined within the ambit of democratic norms.

The best instrument of every government is the constitution. A well-crafted constitution with the people's mandate gives confidence to the people. It equally makes people to respect the constituted authority. Unfortunately, the political pundits and different ethnic groups in Nigeria did not accept the 1999 Constitution upon which the current political dispensation derives its power. This is because the constitution was imposed on Nigerians by the military authority through Decree 24' in the name of a Federal Constitution (Jide, 2022, p.24). This ran contrary to the provision of an autochthonous constitution referred to as a homegrown constitution which emanates from people and brings in and instills confidence in people than a foisted constitution.

The foregoing attributes have made 1999 Constitution a subject of controversy amongst the different ethnic groups in Nigeria because the less privileged elites believe that the constitution is serving the interest of few ruling class at the expense of the majority. This has resulted in the agitation for constitutional change which is making governance in Nigeria a subject of controversy. This could be regarded as the bedrock of perennial agitations among the warring ethnic groups in Nigeria which has resulted to what could be tagged "mobocracy" (political control exercised by a mob). The rule of law has just become a mere mantra, instead of good instrument of democracy which gives everyone sense of belonging in the state affairs.

For a level playing political stability, smooth relationship between governance and politics is necessary. A good coordination of governance and politics enhances harmonious relations, which guarantees political security. While political governance is the process of decision-making to formulate policy, administrative governance is the main bedrock of political structure which guarantees political security in any society (Yap, 2021). When governance is seamless, it reduces agitation and unnecessary struggle among the political actors who mobilise people to cause unrest in various communities. The stabilizer of political security is good governance, which must be achieved for any state to achieve an ideal society protecting the interest of people.

Politics of Security by Political Actors

Politics of security began in Nigeria before independence as a result of divide-and-rule tactics adopted by the British colonial authority to gain support and relegate to the background the natives who were seen as belligerence. To make the matter worse for the country, formation of three (3) supposedly big political parties were created along ethnic colouration at that time. While other smaller parties formed then toed the same line. As it was succinctly mentioned by Segun Adeniyi that the leaders of the three big parties treated leaders of smaller parties more or less as irritants. The foregoing scenario sowed seed of discord at the inception of political parties' formation in Nigeria (Olusegun, 2005, p.3). Despondently, this ugly scenario became worst in 1999 when the three major political parties were equally formed on the same trajectory. For instance, Alliance for Democracy

(AD) had its root among the Yoruba of South-West, the All Peoples Party (APP) had its roots among the Northern people, while the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) had strong roots in the South-East and South-South with a fraction of northern elements moved with another Party which eventually led to the emergence of PDP as a ruling party from 1999 to 2015.

Unfortunately, the pattern of the PDP campaign and political permutations threw up divisionism which led to the aggressive minority question. The example of the division hinges on the following issues; ethnic, linguistic, religious, Local Government Area, or Senatorial District as means of selecting the candidates into various elective positions (Olusegun, 2005, p.3). This singular act has caused unnecessary agitation among the same people, who were supposed to see themselves as one are up in a game of polarization and politicization of every issues concerning them. What ought to be settled amicably would take a new dimension of clandestine move against the opponent?

Use of security against the will of the people to justify the spending has been a common knowledge in Nigeria since 1999. It is common knowledge that the governors in all thirty (36) states collect security votes without being accountable to anyone. This singular act explains why the race for the governor's seat, from nomination to selection, is often a fierce battle. It is a war viciously fought by desperate men to clinch the ticket. The monetary value attached to the coveted seat of governor in Nigeria has made it a do-or-die affair for any intending aspirant. To retain this seat at all costs, many of them created unconventional security apparatuses surrounding them which have metamorphosed into big security challenges that country is going through in the recent time. To buttress this assertion, Jide Oluwajuyitan, in his comment in the Nation Newspaper says:

> Members of state assemblies need endorsement to contest speaker seats. This had made state assemblies' members a mere extension of government house boys. Attempts to assert their independence will most often lead to Ogun state experience under ex-Governor, Gbenga Daniel who locked up his state house of assembly and chased the lawmakers out of town. We also know governors can through their power of patronage create millionaires overnight. They don't account for their monthly security votes. In the Niger Delta and North East, we have seen how governors deployed security funds to sponsor terror gangs that metamorphosed into Niger Delta militants and Boko Haram insurgency (Jide, 2013, p.20).

The corrupt nature of Nigerian politics does not support stability that would guarantee political security in the system. Hence, what the system has thrown at the citizenry is a corruptocracy, instead of an ideal democracy, which guarantees good governance for dividends of democracy (Lanre & Ademola, 2011, p.423). This explains why Prof. Sola Adeyaye's says the nation's "year of putative independence" merely afforded us the opportunity to replace the "British alligators with Nigerian crocodiles," (Lanre & Ademola, 2011, p.424). This metaphor analyses the characteristics of political actors we have in power who are taking political power to promote their personal aggrandizement. Evidence of this could be traced to the advent of democracy since 1999 when different security problems had been regionalized in our various geo-political zones.

The O'odua People's Congress (OPC), an organization active in the southwest of Nigeria, which hinges its campaigns on the protection of the Yoruba interest and seeking autonomy for the Yoruba people is a complex organization, which has taken on several different roles as it has adapted to the changing political and security environment in Nigeria. One of

several Yoruba self-determination groups, it was established in 1994 with the aim of overcoming what it alleged was the political marginalization of the Yoruba. It has since evolved in several different directions. Its activities range from political agitation for Yoruba autonomy and promotion of Yoruba culture to violent confrontation with members of other ethnic groups, and, more recently, vigilantism and crime-fighting (HRW, 2003, p.10). For instance, between 1999 and 2007 under President Oulsegun Obsanjo, Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC) was weaponized by the self-determination agitators to protect the ethnic identity of Yoruba.

The militant posture of the OPC was used to promote the identity of Yoruba within the South-west region, particularly in Lagos, where Igbo extraction was raising the assertion that "Lagos is no man's land". This assertion was vigorously fought by OPC in places like Ketu/Mile 12, against the Igbo and Hausa, Alaba market spread to the Ajangbadi area in Ojo LGA against the Igbos (HRW, 2003, p.10). Shortly after its establishment, OPC became a weapon in the hands of politicians. The organization became an instrument used to fight political opponents which eventually resulted to a total breakdown of law and order in the South West, particularly Lagos State.

In the South-South, a militant organization known as Egbesu (the god or deity of justice of the Ijaw people) with members popularly known as the Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), which later transformed to kidnappers, were kidnapping the oil-experts for ransom. The prevailing circumstances forced these formations into violence some of which have degenerated into criminal activities as a result of actions and inactions of political actors in the region (Okumagba, 2009, p1). Interestingly, the Bakassi Boys sooner or later became busy involved in wreaking havoc on people in the Southeast. To buttress this analysis, the Guardian Newspaper reported as follows:

> There are growing concerns over the suspected return of a disbanded security group, 'Bakassi Boys' to the streets of Awka, in Anambra State on Monday. It is not clear who is behind the group. But with the growing insecurity, the resurgence of the dreaded outfit in the southeastern region might compound the already vexing situation. The dreaded 'Bakassi Boys' vigilante group, who engaged in jungle justice in Anambra State during the time of former governor, Chinwoke Mbadinuju, allegedly resurfaced after two decades to crush cultists and other criminals (Lawrence & Uzoma, 2021).

This was the panic mood the capital city of Anambra found itself at this particular time, with the sad experience of goner days of illegal security apparatus created by political actors to achieve certain objectives detrimental to the growth and development of the state for their self-interest. As the activities of this dread group was going down, the Movement for Actualization of the Sovereign State Survival of Biafra (MASSOB) began to rear its head. It became monster, hunting everybody within the south-eastern region.

In recent past, under President Goodluck regime, as MOSSOB metamorphosed into another dreaded group called the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Activities of this group have led to the wanton killings of innocent people in the South-eastern region. The political actors and elders in the southeast could not see the threat the IPOB activities would cause in the region until it led to the destruction of business activities and killings of political leaders within and outside the eastern region. A good example of this was the killing of Ahmed Gulak, former Special Adviser on Political Affairs to President Goodluck Jonathan, who was killed in Owerri, Imo State, on May 30th, 2021. Following a series of IPOB criminal

activities, the Federal Government proscribed the organization through a court order:

> NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that by the Order of the Federal High Court, Abuja, in suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/871/2017, dated September 20, 2017 as per the schedule to this Notice, the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra are declared to be terrorism and illegal in any part of Nigeria, especially in the South-East and South-South regions of Nigeria as proscribed, pursuant to Section 2 of the Terrorism (Prevention)Act, 2011 (as mended) (Ifreke, 2017, September 16).

After the proscription and subsequent arrest of its leader, Nnmadi Kanu, on June 27, 2021, IPOB began to issue sit-at-home order in all five (5) states of south east. This singular order from IPOB has paralysed business activities, as well prevented students from going on Mondays (Chinagorom, April 11), while many civil servants deserted their offices for fear of being killed or maimed. Many of those who defied the order were killed, while few ones who had opportunity to tell the story became reference points for the people.

In northern region, the problems of Sharia enforcement in the region created state of anarchy. Developmental issues were no longer paramount in the minds of people, hence, security of lives and property were the main request for the people. What really started as a method of sending signal to the authority that something must be done about the development in the region were rampant cases of kidnapping of mostly kidnapping political actors as major sources of making illegal money (Ben, 2003).

While the government was contending with similar ugly incidence in southern part of Nigeria, the Bokoharam in the north began the same criminality. The violent organization fighting against western education suddenly became bandits engaged in kidnapping school girls and others for ransom. This gradually metamorphosed into full scale kidnapping saga. A good example of this was the abduction of 112 students from Federal Government College (FGC) Birnin-Yauri, Kebbi State, on June 17, 2021 which resulted in the payment of huge amount of money to the tune of ₦80million as ransom (James, 2023). Series of this ugly event have become the reoccurrence issues in Nigeria as a result of leadership failure. The consequence of the development was politics of security to promote the personal agenda of the political actors.

Another critical issue causing politics of security is personal aggrandizement of political and non-state actors, whose sole aim is to grab or divert the national cake to their private use. Unfortunately, this has become the dominant character of state actors and non-state actors in politics in Nigeria. Very worrisomely, when parochial interest of both state actors and non-state actors is no longer protected, they result to violent attack on their opponents. And the major victims in the melee are always the innocent people.

The example of above phenomenon could be traced to the assertion made by Chief Bisi Akande in his autobiography in which he narrated his real life experience as a governor of Osun State. One of the striking expereience he narrated vividly was the account of his ordeal about a water project between him and Late Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuwade. He says:

> During Bola Ige's regime in the old Oyo State, it was the Oba Sijuwade as the Ooni that fronted for Costain International that built the Ede-Osogbo water project for One Hundred and Twenty-Six Million pounds (€126m). Twenty-six years later, he wanted me to borrow another Three Hundred million dollars ($300m) to repair the same project. I called for the file of the project and studied it carefully. I discovered that we still owed €100 million pounds on the project. Despites moratorium, interest had

taken its toll, but the station was no longer working. Nobody was maintaining it. Here was I now staring at a debt that might be inherited by my grandchildren and great grandchildren! So, to borrow $300 million from Austria to repair a water project on which we already owed an outstanding €100 million which we borrowed from ECCGD of England for the water that we drank for less than 20 years was too much for me. I declined to sign the paper. To surmount this challenge, the Chairman of the Water Corporations was invited, Mr. Bisi Olatunji, He promised to look into it. He returned with an estimate of ₦74 million, not up to half-a-million dollars then. That was the job the Late Ooni and his Austrian partner wanted to do for Osun people with $300 million, if we had fallen into the trap then, Osun would have lost $295 million! I ordered the release of ₦74 million and in a few months, rehabilitation of the Ede Water Works was completed. At the threshold of the Ramadan fast in 2001, water started running in Osogbo, Ede, Ile-Ife and many other towns, and villages. As at that time, instead of $300 million, less than $500,000 had done the project.

Within that week when the water station started pumping water again, armed men attacked the station. They killed three (3) guards; all natives of Ede. They could not gain entrance into the work station probably guards did not have the keys. Some armed men also went on rampage in Osogbo, destroying some churches and Cathedral making it look like the Muslims were attacking Christian during the holy month of Ramadan. They thought Christian would fight back so that we would have a religious crisis on our hands. I believe all these happened because I refused to plunge Osun State into a debt of $300 million (Bisi, 2021, p.336 & 336).

Another example of politics of security being played by the political actors in Nigeria was visible in 2023 Presidential Election during which the main four political parties held on to their region whipping and stocking ethnic and religious sentiments in their various regions. This was evident in the results of the election. Each candidate held strongly to his or her region with the mindset and premonition that "it is the turn of my ethnic group". Those who were living together in peace and harmony became sworn-enemies overnight because of political actors who never believe in security of politics except politics of security that will give them edge in their domain.

The sudden profiling of a particular ethnic group by political actors in Lagos State during the18th March, 2023, concluded gubernatorial election was a clear assault and affront calling capable of throwing the nation into full scale war (Pelumi, 2023). This is done to preserve status quo by the political actors without minding the consequences of such action. The sudden upsurge of the Labour Party (LP), otherwise known as OBIDENT MOVEMENT, across the south-east and south-south Nigeria could be ascribed to violence taking over of the regions with series of killings in Imo, Ebonyi, Rivers and Cross Rivers States (Emmanuel, 2023). The statement ascribing to a particular candidate in the same election having conversation with a Pentecostal Prophet Bishop, where the former is saying "this is religious war" it is evident of politics of security in Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2023).

Plural societies are derived from the feeling of uncertainty engendered by political domination of one group (often the majority) over the others. Dominance of certain ethnic groups encourages politics of security since manipulation usually becomes a device to retain power. Consequently, intra and inter-group relationships end up being mere payment of lip service to the "spirit of accommodation", 'tolerance' and 'unity in diversity'. Most often than not, the struggle is usually for the control of political power, because of the certainty of the notion – he who pays the piper dictates the tune'.

The structure of Nigerian society comprises different ethnic groups with multi-lingual fracas,

the control of political power guarantees the control of economic resources and the upgrading of the social and cultural class of the political leadership over and above the rest of society. Ultimately, the quest to remain relevant in politics always requires the use of any possible way to sustain and retain political control (Remi & Tuned, 2007 p.33-34).

Similarly, the desire to preserve the mindset of looting national resources unhindered has been propelling the political actors to adopt any possible tactics to manipulate the system at the expense of the less-privileged people in the country. The best way to describe the mindset of these people is vividly analyse below with tragedy of commons theory.

Tragedy of the Commons: A Suitable Theory for Politics of Security

It is very imperative to adopt a theory for better understanding of politics of security in a plural society like Nigeria. Tragedy of the commons theory personifies the mindset of Nigerian political actors with parochial sentiment of "what is my gain, family and immediate community" at the expense of others. The tragedy of the commons theory was first conceptualized in 1833 by British writer, William Forster Lloyd. Thereafter, in 1968, Garret Hardin, first used the term tragedy of the commons in science magazine to illustrate individuals' tendency to make decisions based on their personal needs, regardless of the negative impact it may have or cause to others (Alexandra, 2019). It explains an individual's belief that if others won't act in the best interest of the group, it can lead them to justify selfish behaviour. It further clarifies personal perception of a leader in term of parochial feeling of self-interest without communal or collegial interest for the betterment of others.

The main concept of tragedy of the commons theory explains individuals with access to public resources (also called a common) who act in their own interest and, in doing so, ultimately deplete the resources. This is main characteristic of most political actors in Nigeria, who work or act solely for their personal aggrandizement without considering the negative effect of their actions on the general public. Hence, the ultimate goal is quest for power to control resource for the purpose of personal enjoyment. It makes development a hard crack task. Amazingly, the suitability of this theory explains the scarcity of common resources today as a result of growing population, what was meant for only 100 people in 1979 remain the same quantity available to 1milliom people in 2019. This explains why agitation by different ethnic groups become the order of the day. This ultimately throws up politics of security in Nigeria.

Promoters of politics of security, adopt manipulative tactics as the best way of keeping the system under their control for the benefit of their disciples. Ultimate way to preserve the status quo is by causing unnecessary havoc which will permanently keep the mind of people away from developmental issues (Michael, 2022). This can be done when insecurity ravages the whole system. It is when the peace is assured that the people will remember social amenities that will make life more meaningful to them.

Since 1999, politics of security has shut out Nigerians from asking leaders requisite question about the campaign promises made during elections. The focus of people is how to achieve relative peace in their various community. Different agitations that were so strife in various communities had graduated to major towns in recent times. No major high way is free now, both lower and middle class, including the so called political actors are no longer safe. The politics of security does no one good, except we all adopt ideal rule that will give the country security of politics for the betterment of everyone living in different regions of Nigeria.

A System or Pattern of Government in Plural Societies

Total inclusiveness of all stakeholders in governance brings about security of politics. Plural societies require total adherence to a particular acceptable formula to all stakeholders. Good governance devoid of conflict cannot be achieved without inclusiveness. The elites must have the ability to accommodate the divergent interests and demands of subcultures. This requires that they (elites) have the ability to transcend cleavages and to join in a common effort with the elite of rival subcultures. This, in turn, depends on the acceptable system with adherence to its rules and regulations that will help in the improvement of its cohesion and stability.

In plural societies like Nigeria, consociationalism or consocational democracy, also known as *Konkordanz-demokratie* is a form of democratic power sharing or one which has major internal divisions along ethnic, religious, or linguistic lines, but which remains stable due to consultation among the elites of these groups (Rudy, 2015). In other words, consocational states are often contraposition with states with majoritarian electoral systems. Consociationalism could be the best form of government to manage the diverse nature of Nigerian politics (Remi & Tunde, 2007, p.34). It is a common knowledge in Nigeria that the three dominant ethnic groups, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, are more dissatisfied and dissension in the country amongst themselves than minority groups. However, it is obvious that few elements within the dominant groups who are engaged in political game are the ones stoking the fire of fragmentation to gain economic resources in the name of their respective ethnic groups. This is done deliberately to keep economic resources within their control at the expense of vast majority who are being used as cannon fodders. Actually, what affects societies differs, while ethnicity and religious sentiments play key role as a social cleavage in Nigeria. Some other societies are more divided along such lines as ideology, religion, etc.

To manage the cleavages, consocational democracy which seeks political stability on the basis of power-sharing arrangement in societies characterized by deep social cleavages should be the best option. In view of the foregoing, Lijphart contends that:

> The relevance of the elite group in the adoption of a consocational arrangement is not lost on the theorist. He further says, in a consocational democracy, the centrifugal tendencies inherent in a plural society are countered by the co-operative attitudes and behaviour of the leaders of the different segments of the population. Elite cooperation is the primary distinguishing feature of consocational democracy… However, this can be achieved when the elites are able to concede a considerable level of political representation to the various leaders from different major ethnic groups and minority groups within the state (Remi & Tunde, 2007, p.34).

The key objective of this arrangement is to set coalescence of the powerful elite, because the political stakes are often high in plural societies. It is advisable not to conduct politics as if it were a game: a grand coalition is therefore more appropriate than the government-versus-opposition pattern. The examples of states that had adopted this system could be traced to Lebanon and Malaysia. They have made successes of their consocational democracy between 1943 and 1975, and 1955 and 1969 respectively (Remi & Tunde, 2007, p.39).

In view of the foregoing analysis, there is urgent need for the political leaders in Nigeria to re-examine the Parliamentary model of 1960 – 1965 which gave every segments opportunity to participate in the governance. The Presidential system throws up executive model which

makes an individual more powerful in the settings of government. This brings farce opposition which is not a good idea in a plural society like Nigeria.

More importantly, to prevent the applicability of tragedy of commons theory by the political actors in our governance, consociational democracy would prevent and manage the greedy that winner takes all politics spread in the polity. A good governance that spur development will be seen and felt by people. There will be a rancour free society and there will be less agitation from different ethnic groups on scarce resources. Having sense of belonging in the distributions of resources bring about harmonious relationship.

Conclusion

Political security is the mainstay which every citizen is yearning for irrespective of language or ethnic group affiliation. This is what the political leaders must ensure in a cosmopolitan state like Nigeria. The sense of belonging must be given to everyone through good governance and proper allocation of resources. No nation has attained development in the state of chaos or anarchy. A proper political structure with collective responsibility is the only panacea for meaningful development.

The system of government that will bring consciousness on the part of people to have a trust in the leader must be initiated and equalization in term of political office will go a long way to assuage the warring factions who are feeling that they are been cheated or relegated in the arrangement of politicking. To achieve greater height among the comity of nations, our national resources must be seen as individual resources (inheritance) with protection, the idea of seeing national resources as national cake must be discarded. This is the only way; the nation can eliminate the tragedy of commons theory ravaging the entire society with the mindset of "let me grab my own".

Lastly, if Nigeria can adopt consociational government by a grand coalition of the political leaders of all segments and bolstered by complementary devices such as "the mutual veto or concurrent majority rule", "proportionality" and "a high degree of autonomy" in the country, there will be less rancour in the management, sharing and allocation of resources and values. This will go long way to suppress all forms of agitations that could trigger conflict or crisis amongst people within the country.

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A Theoretic Analysis of Key Issues and Challenges in Nigeria-China Relations

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Abstract

Foreign relations, often known as international diplomacy, have the primary objective of advancing a country's interests and managing its relationships with other international actors. In this regard, Nigeria and China established official relations in 1971, although contacts between them dated long before that period. The relationship has since grown to encompass major areas of mutual economic, strategic, trade, and infrastructure cooperation. However, much of the controversies trailing most analysis on Nigeria-China relations revolve around Beijing's role as "development partner", or "neo-colonizer" in Nigeria. This paper investigated some contentious issues in Nigeria-China relations. The paper adopted a qualitative research design supplemented with interview with purposively selected experts in Nigeria's foreign affairs and Nigeria-China relations. Participants were drawn from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nigerian Institute of International Affairs. Interview guide was used for data collection which was thematically analyzed. Anchored on the complex interdependence theory, the paper argued in favour of mutual interdependence of the countries notwithstanding the perceived imbalance in the relationship. The study found that Nigeria-China relations have been both asymmetric and complementary. While Nigeria hopes to replicate China's development trajectory, commercial interests underlie China's partnership and relations with Nigeria. The study concluded that Nigeria-China relations have yielded meaningful gains to both countries. Over the years, the gains manifested in economic, strategic, and other benefits which have also become a subject of controversy in the literature. The study recommended a more deepening of the Nigeria-China relations that focus on addressing the imbalance. Nigeria should exercise agency in its relations with China as co-equals and development partners.

Keywords: China, China-Nigeria, Cooperation, Development, Interdependence

Introduction

Nigeria and China have maintained mutually reinforcing foreign relations since the 1970s with the recognition of the sovereignty of the Communist China. While Nigeria believes that

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political-diplomatic interactions with China would lead to desired economic development through commerce and infrastructural development, Nigeria's natural richness and ready markets for Chinese goods and services attract China to Nigeria. Five decades down the line, observers and analysts are today concerned that Chinese expanded involvement results in adverse balance of trade for Nigeria (Tar & Wapmuk, 2023). China mostly buys raw materials but sell back value-added products. Nwabia (2019) asserted that commercial relations between Nigeria and China have expanded in which China has emerged the greater beneficiary.

The relationship between Nigeria and China, like other African states, is predicated on non-interference and respect for the independent development paths of the parties in "South-South" collaboration. The development of Nigeria-China relations was buoyed by the need to diversify Nigeria's international cooperation which was hitherto Western-centric. Nigeria's imports from China grew significantly in 1997 and have continued to rise since then. The Nigerian government and the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) entered into a contract in 1995 for the US$529 million rehabilitation of the Nigerian railway system (Nesiama, 2013). During the administration of President Obasanjo, relations between Nigeria and China grew amicably and steadily. Two times, in 1999 and 2001, President Olusegun Obasanjo travelled to China to further explore and solidify the two countries' diplomatic ties. Both countries reached agreements bothering on trade, economic, scientific and investment protection as a result of these trips (Page, 2018).

By 2010, ties between Nigeria and China had undergone steady development following high-level cultural exchanges, mutual economic benefits and people-to-people interactions. Ma et al. (2022), quoting the World Bank, reported that the trade in goods between Nigeria and China expanded from around USD 1.2 billion in 2003 to USD 13.7 billion in 2019. Chinese investment in Nigeria climbed from USD 24.4 million to USD 123.27 million within the same time frame, and Nigeria ranked among the top five Chinese investment locations in Africa in 2020. In addition to commerce and investment, China is funding critical development projects through concessional loans and aid. These projects include the construction of roads, railways, and the rehabilitation of Nigeria's four main airports in Abuja, Lagos, Kano, and Port Harcourt. China has also provided the Nigerian military with tanks and artillery worth millions of dollars (Lamidi, 2020). China is a crucial partner to Nigeria's development financing.

However, the growing presence of China in Nigeria creates major identifiable issues in the literature. Page (2018) posited that Chinese financing and infrastructure contracts are opaque and may foster corruption and other undemocratic tendencies. This arises from the administration of infrastructure loan or aid by Chinese companies which make accountability and public scrutiny difficult. This prompted the Nigerian House of Representatives to move to investigate Chinese loans in May, 2020 after alleging lack of compliance with the Fiscal Responsibility Act (Abuh, 2020; Yakubu, 2020). This move was, however, abandoned. There are also worries that imports of Chinese goods are harmful to the growth of local industries. In the same vein, Nigeria's debt has increased as a result of Chinese development finance, thereby raising the fear of Chinese debt trap. Thus, this paper examined selected contentious issues in literature on Nigeria-China relations.

Theoretical Framework: Complex Interdependence Theory
Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in the 1970s developed the complex interdependence theory. The theory explains contemporary international relations and international political

economy in terms of increasingly deep and complex webs of interactions among states and non-state actors. Dynamic and complex transnational interactions characterized by multiple channels of actions increase the possibility of cooperation and understanding, as opposed to military or coercive power, among states. Complex interdependence theory stresses the complex ways in which transnational actors (states and non-states) become mutually dependent, vulnerable to each other's actions and sensitive to each other's needs as a result of growing ties between them (Hussain et al., 2020).

Interdependence does not mean a situation of peace or evenly balanced mutual dependence, but rather a system of "give and take" marked by cooperation and competition. In pursuit of national interest, therefore, Nigeria and China depend on each other on different levels of needs. Complex interdependence is a major critique to the classical and structural realists' claim which explains the behaviour of states only in terms of military or economic capabilities. Keohane and Nye objected to the one-way, rigid, and straight-jacketed view of realism about the international system, noting that transnational and international non-governmental organizations now exert tremendous influence and connections on the behaviour of states (Keohane & Nye, 1987). Thus, rather than military rivalry, states find cooperation in competition for mutual benefits.

Thus, the case of Nigeria and China presents a series of channels for interactions and partnership which enhance mutual cooperation, trust, and benefit between them. These channels include bilateral (state to state) relations, binational (people to people) relations, multilateral relations through the United Nations and African Union, and geopolitics or ideological alignment. Nigeria and China are equally interdependent in the areas of energy, natural resources, human resources, technology, trade, and aid generally. These are the multiple channels connecting the countries in relationship. Both countries have benefitted, and continue to benefit, richly form each other in a mutually dependent order regardless of their relative global power status and influence. Interestingly, typical of interdependence theory, the two countries have deepened relationships on both the realists' high-politics (security cooperation) and low-politics (socio-economic and environmental cooperation) arena of international politics on mutually agreed terms.

Foreign Relations and National Interest

Foreign relations and national interest are twin concepts in international politics. Foreign relations, or trans-border relations, traditionally denotes interactions between and among sovereign states and governments on some defined strategies and objectives. Foreign relations are the manifestation of states' foreign policy outlook. Over the years, the concept of foreign policy has broadened to encompass a multitude of concerns, ranging from trade and human rights to energy security, environmental sustainability, commercial, scientific and cultural undertakings. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, foreign policy is a vital area of study as countries navigate a constantly evolving and intricate global landscape to achieve their national objectives. On a global scale, each country has its own set of goals regarding foreign relations influenced by their national interests, regional contexts, and priorities.

Ostermann and Mello (2022) outlined that states' objectives in foreign relations include promotion of national security. The primary purpose of international relations is to ensure the safety and security of a country's population. This involves conflict prevention, counterterrorism, and managing possible risks from foreign governments or non-state actors.

Countries also have the goal of contributing to global peace and stability through their involvement in activities such as conflict resolution efforts, peacekeeping missions, and mediation processes. Related to this is the protection of state's sovereignty. Countries fiercely uphold the principle of sovereignty in international relations, working tirelessly to protect their territorial integrity and maintain unyielding control over their domestic affairs. Another objective is to secure national economic prosperity. This is a country's propensity to enhance its economic well-being through trade, investment, and access to global markets is a key objective. States strive to facilitate favorable conditions for its industries and businesses to flourish internationally. Therefore, the choice of who to relate with and how to relate in international politics is often conditioned by the national interest of the state however nebulous it is defined. The conduct of foreign relations by states also often reflects the personality and ideology of the leader or the dominant elite class in the state.

By conception, national interest denotes the objectives or goals that a state aspires to promote in her foreign policy. The word "national" is an assumption that the goals aggregate the interests of the population, and its achievement serves to benefit the citizenry or the nation. It is important to note that contrary to this assumption, national interest is what the decision makers define it to be, especially in an autocratic regime where the citizens have little to no say in policy formulation and implementation. Thus, the question of what constitutes national interest relates closely to that of who determines it. The broad range of the objectives for relations among states can be summarized in the pursuit of national interest, as whatever a state does in international politics is presumed done in the interest of the state. Promotion and protection of national interest has been described as the primary objective of states' foreign policy (Adewumi & Babajide, 2021). Self-interest remains the fundamental and legitimate cause for national policy. Such "self-interest" a state can achieve in collaboration with other state(s) and international actors.

Nigeria-China Relations
Nigeria and China established formal bilateral relations on February 10, 1971. The two countries have expanded their relations, particularly in bilateral trade and strategic cooperation. China is one of Nigeria's most important trading and export partners. Although Nigeria has trade relations with Taiwan and has a representative office in Taipei, it has reaffirmed in a joint communiqué with China in 2005 that Beijing is the only legitimate government representing the whole of China and that Taiwan is an unalienable part of its territory. In fact, in a show of its commitment to "one China", Nigeria directed the relocation of the Taipei office in Abuja to Lagos in 2017. Nigeria and China maintain diplomatic presence through embassies, consulate and consulate-general. The relationship between the two nations grew closer following Nigeria's isolation and condemnation from Western countries due to its military dictatorships in the 1970s to 1990s.

Nigeria has since become an essential source of oil and petroleum for China's rapidly growing economy, and it is looking to China for assistance in achieving high economic growth. China has provided extensive economic, military, and political support to Nigeria. Taylor (2017) identified that the institutional frameworks for China-Nigeria relations include the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce and its departments, Chinese policy banks (China Development Bank and Export-Import Bank of China), China's IR think tanks and state-owned enterprises. China is a significant financial backer and options in contrast to different wellsprings of improvement finance like the Global

Money-related Asset (IMF), World Bank and other reciprocal loan specialists. China is now Nigeria's most important bilateral lender (Olajide et al., 2023; Inuwa & Usman, 2023). According to Page (2018, p. 5), "China's strategic interest reflects Nigeria's status as an emerging global power: the largest economy in Africa, a major oil and gas producer, and on track to become the world's third-most populous country by 2050".

Three phases are observable in China-Nigeria relations. These are the ideological enticement of the pre-independence and independence period, the era of widespread diplomatic recognition in the 1970s, and the growing economic partnerships of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Martinez (2015), and Zheng (2016) variously comprehensively categorized Nigeria-China interest into trade, energy, security, and the United Nations. These strategic interests are often conceived as of mutual benefit to both parties, and provide prospects for a win-win progress. Some observers, however, regard China's goals and techniques as self-serving and potentially predatory.

According to Alden (2007) Chinese investment in retail commerce and other economic areas in Nigeria is on the rise. Chinese traders mostly sell light industrial items, textiles, and electrical and electronic devices. Apart from oil and gas, other industries that have benefitted from Chinese investment include construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and services. Chinese expanding influence in Nigeria in the 21st century is a reality. Chinese businesses have become part and parcel, if not the dominant, of the domestic business milieu.

In large projects requiring large capital outlays, such as oil exploration, mining and construction, Chinese businesses have actually become major investors. This impact of Chinese commercial activities on the host country has sparked heated debate among scholars and commentators. In this case, there is a division in this argument between those who see an opportunity for Nigerian development and those who see the increased interaction with China as ongoing exploitation of Nigeria's development goal. This has expanded the debate to establish if Chinese commitment will be that of an improvement partner, financial contender or new authority (Edinger & Pistorius, 2011). Much as these debates are worthwhile, this paper takes a complementary view of the relationship which has engendered positive developments for both countries.

Key Aspects of China-Nigeria Relations
Strategic alliances based on comparative advantage have traditionally characterized relations among countries across the world. This is the foundation upon which Nigeria-China ties were built. The benefits accruing to each country, however, have sparked controversy and criticism. China's political and economic power on the world stage has expanded at an unparalleled rate in this decade (Ngobeni et al., 2023). Ocholi (2023) suggested that this has been made possible by China's "going out" strategy, which resulted in the signing of multiple multilateral and bilateral trade treaties with many nations, notably African countries through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). China has become one of Nigeria's major trade and investment partners, with a focus on infrastructure development, energy cooperation, and trade and investment.

Infrastructure Development
China's investment in Nigeria's infrastructures is one of the most significant benefits of Nigeria- China relations. Chinese organizations have been engaged in the development of basic foundations like roads, rail lines, ports, and air terminals. This has further developed

Nigeria's transportation organizations, working with monetary development and network inside the country. Many significant infrastructural projects in Nigerian are financed by low-interest Chinese loans as a result of China's state-directed participation in key infrastructure and industrial projects. Chinese companies are working on more than $20 billion in rail construction projects in Nigeria, including new commuter rails in Abuja and Lagos. After decades of stalling and false starts, the $5.8 billion hydropower Mambilla Dam, built by China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) and financed mostly by the China Export Import (Exim) Bank, appears to be taking shape. The $550 million China Energy Engineering Corporation deal with a private Nigerian energy supplier to develop a 400-megawatt gas-fired power station in Sagamu, and the $200 million Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, built by CCECC were backed by an Exim credit arrangement (Fatima, 2022).

The China Harbor Engineering Company recently broke construction on a $1.5 billion deepwater harbour complex in Lekki, Lagos, to ease congestion at the adjacent port. The Lekki facility is designed to accommodate 2.7 million containers per year. It is encircled by a massive free-trade zone from which Nigerian and foreign enterprises may operate. Nonetheless, the long-term economic effect of several of these initiatives remains to be evaluated, given their exorbitant costs.

Furthermore, the two communications satellites developed and deployed by China for Nigeria looked to be white elephants and conduits for bureaucratic corruption. Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano gas pipeline, a consortium led by China Petroleum Pipeline Bureau and a Nigerian business, Brentex, would build one leg of the $2.8 billion, 614-kilometre (382-mile) contractor-financed pipeline; two Nigerian corporations would build the other and construction of 3,050MW Mambilla electricity project at $5.7 billion (Oyebade, 2017; Fatima, 2022). This project has failed to materialize since it was inaugurated by the Buhari-led government.

The rail system in the transport industry is one crucial sector that Nigeria is now benefiting from its partnership with China. The train system has been abandoned for decades. President Goodluck Jonathan's government initiated efforts to revitalize the train infrastructure. Under President Mohammadu Buhari administration, efforts to build a functional rail infrastructure have been supported and boosted by the Nigeria-China relations (Adewumi & Akinnuga, 2021). Through Chinese financing and expertise, the Buhari government created a multibillion-dollar revamp. The $1.5 billion Lagos-Ibadan railway of over 150 kilometres was built by Chinese corporation. The train connects Ibadan with Lagos in the country's southwest, largely financed by the Chinese Export-Import Bank. The Chinese engineering behemoth, CCECC, is also building the Lagos-Kano standard gauge north-south railway. Sustained investment on the rail system is expected to enhance economic growth in the country, expand job possibilities and relieve strain on the road system.

Notwithstanding that these projects are admirable, many people are concerned that the Chinese infrastructural investments may lead to more economic dominance in Nigeria. These loans are expected to exert pressure on the economy. Chinese MNCs have recently been accused of neglecting safety norms, and favouring their nationals and corporations in these projects. The insufficient utilization of local material and inventive talent is an issue for discussion. For whatever it is worth, China has been a critical partner to Nigeria through its extensive infrastructural investments and aid like the deep seaport, railway corridors and

others.

Trade and Investment

China is now a major trading partner for Nigeria. The exchange between the two countries has developed considerably, with the two nations profiting from expanded exchange in different areas, including oil and non-oil items. Chinese interests in Nigeria have likewise prompted work creation and monetary development. Nigeria also relied on China for supply of some military hardware such as tanks and cannons. According to Lamidi (2020), in an effort to reinforce its land troops in the fight against Boko Haram insurgents, Nigeria's military has received VT-4 main battle tanks, SH-5 self-propelled howitzers, and other weapons from China. The equipment was purchased from China's Norinco after being bought under a $152 million deal. The materiel, included VT-4 main combat tanks, SH5 105 mm self-propelled artillery, and other goods. Trade is the most important part of this interest. Bilateral commerce, particularly the importation of Chinese-made consumer and manufacturing products into Nigeria, underlies nearly every aspect of the two nations' relationship. Nigeria is a net importer of manufactured products from China.

One distinguishing feature of the commercial relationship is the prominent participation of Nigerian businesses in enabling Chinese imports. Between 2010 and 2016, Nigerian imports from China nearly quadrupled. Nigerian bulk buyers headquartered in major trading centres such as Lagos, Onitsha, and Kano travel to Chinese industrial locations such as Guangzhou on a regular basis. The Nigerian migrant population in China may number in the hundreds of thousands, with its own elected community institutions, informal court structures, and social-welfare systems. Chinese-owned businesses operate in a variety of industries in Nigeria, including steel production, textile manufacturing, communications and information technology, and home consumer products.

Trade serves as a catalyst for collaboration. Despite the pandemic's negative impact, China-Nigeria trade reached 25.68 billion USD in 2021, up 33.3% year on year, while Nigeria's exports to China reached 3.04 billion USD, up 22.4% year on year. This bilateral trade climbed by roughly 142% between 2016 and 2021. Nigeria is now China's third largest commercial partner in Africa, while China is Nigeria's major import source (Ojeme & Okolo, 2023). Expatiating further, Abiodun (2023), quoting Yan Yuqing, Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Lagos, said trade volume between Nigeria and China reached close to $5.4 billion in the first quarter of 2023 only. This comes as the Chinese government has reiterated its commitment to working with Nigeria to promote development strategy, dialogue, and close relations at all levels. Nigeria is China's largest civil engineering contracting market, second largest export destination, third largest trading partner, and key investment destination.

The trade relations, however, have its effect on domestic economy. For instance, Chinese textile firms in Nigeria are exerting pressure on indigenous textile industry in the country. The rising buying of previously manufactured items at low costs from China will drive Nigerian producers out of business. Obikaeze et al., (2023), and Dane et al., (2022), found in their empirical research that Nigeria-China ties have been less productive for Nigeria because it only sold restricted items to China such as oil and gas, ores, seeds, fruits, elegiac, forests, skins, leads, and so on. They argued that Nigeria made only little gains in its export-import relationship with China between 1990 and 2018. Although many factors contribute to Nigeria's poor manufacturing performance, Egbule and Zheng (2011) argued that the country's manufacturing sector is underperforming primarily due to inadequate

infrastructures. China has taken advantage of this by exporting Chinese goods to meet demands that would otherwise go unsatisfied.

Transfer of Technology

Nigeria has received assistance from China in the transfer of technology, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT) and telecommunications. This has improved access to digital services and contributed to the expansion of Nigeria's technology sector. Data and ICT have become the most valuable resources and industries on a global scale. The ICT industry in Nigeria has expanded from 3.08 per cent of GDP in 2001 to 18.44 per cent of GDP in 2022. The telecommunications industry has fueled most of the growth in the ICT sector since further privatization and the sale of GSM licenses to private businesses in 2001.

Chinese firms such as Huawei and Zhong Xing Telecommunication Equipment Company Ltd. (ZTE), in addition to providing profitable and critical infrastructure for Nigeria's ICT and digital economy, are currently involved in the construction of new 5G network infrastructure. Opay, a Chinese fintech business, has over 18 million registered app users in Nigeria, while Egatee, another Chinese e-commerce company, is working to establish itself as a top cross-border logistics, online payment, and settlement company in Nigeria (Uwanaka, 2023).

China's arm-twisting policy ideas and tactics contributed considerably to the Asian country's extraordinary economic performance which has brought about 800 million people out of poverty in the previous 40 years, and the eradication of absolute poverty – an economic miracle. In Nigeria, 133 million people, or 63 per cent of the population, live in multidimensional poverty. As a result, in order to combat poverty and joblessness, Nigeria must implement comprehensive and strategic policy initiatives. Because China is now a major player in Nigeria's ICT sector, bilateral relations between Nigeria and China should include adequate representation and input from relevant digital economy agencies in Nigeria. Such agencies include the Federal Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion, Nigerian Communications Commission, and National Information Technology Development Agency. Indigenous firms such as Global Communication (GLOBACOM) and First Atlantic Semiconductors and Microelectronics (FASMICRO) also play significant roles in the technology acclimation process. All these contribute sustainably to the growth of Nigeria's tech industry, strengthen national security, and support socioeconomic development (Gunter, & Legarda, 2022; Ocholi, 2023; Uwanaka, 2023).

Moreover, Chinese involvements in other areas of Nigeria sectors over the years have been duly acknowledged in the literature. Rehman et al., (2022), Fon & Alon (2022), and Ocholi (2023) observed, among others: energy and cooperation, education and cultural exchange, medical cooperation, capacity building, and multilateral engagement.

Discussion of Key Issues

As there are an avalanche of literature supporting Chinese giant strides in economic, trade, and infrastructural partnership with Nigeria, a majority of the participants agreed that China is interested in trade and essential raw materials to service its home industrial needs and growth. Investment in oil and gas, and solid minerals, construction of railway, road, airport, and telecommunication, trade in goods, technological gadgets, fashion industry, among others, are regarded as consistent pattern and priority areas in Sino-Nigeria relations. The

Chinese Consul General in Lagos (Ms. Yan Yuqing) also noted that "the cooperation between China and Nigeria in the field of airport, seaport, railway, road, communication network and other infrastructures has made great achievement" (Egole, 2024, para. 12).

A senior research fellow at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, highlighted that "China-Nigeria has maintained robust bilateral relations over the years, very proactive and fruitful relations which has grown to a level of binational commission". He noted that "economically, China and Nigeria have been doing so well. Nigeria has the resources for Chinese industries and the market for Chinese goods" (Interview with Participant, Jan. 17, 2024).

Trade volumes and economic relations between the two countries have increased sporadically over time. The Chinese Consul General in Lagos, Ms. Yan Yuqing, posited that the bilateral trade between Nigeria and China stood at $22.6bn in 2023, making China Nigeria's top global trading partner and Nigeria the third largest trading partner of China in Africa (Egole, 2024). This accords with the findings of Ubi (2013) and Emewu (2021) on growing trade and development partnership between Nigeria and China. However, apart from its overall benefits, the bilateral relationship between Nigeria and China raises certain issues particularly for Nigeria, including debt sustainability, cybersecurity hazards, espionage, resource competitiveness, the local economy, and geostrategic placement.

Debt sustainability

Concerns over debt sustainability have arisen as a result of Nigeria's increasing involvement with China. If Nigeria becomes unduly reliant on Chinese loans and struggles to repay them, the country's economic stability and national security may suffer, and therefore become a victim of "debt-trap diplomacy". Chinese loans to Nigeria at the end of December 2020 were $3.3 billion of the country's total external debt (USD 33.3 billion). By December 2022, total borrowing from China stood at $4.29 billion (Balogun, 2023). Debt-trap diplomacy, according to Sebastian et al., (2020), refers to an international financial relationship in which a creditor country or institution lends to a borrowing country in order to improve the lender's political influence. When a debtor country is unable to satisfy its repayment commitments, the creditor country is considered to have extended excessive credit to the debtor country in order to obtain economic or political concessions. The terms of the loans are not always made public. Borrowed funds are frequently used to pay for contractors and goods acquired from the creditor countries.

The phrase "debt trap diplomacy" is a neologism used to argue that Chinese government lends and then leverages smaller nations' debt burdens for geopolitical goals. Nigeria executed three loan agreements with China's Exim Bank under the Goodluck Jonathan administration. The deal includes $500 million for the Abuja Light Rail Project, $500 million for the development of four airport terminals in the country, and $100 million for the backbone expansion of connection across Nigerian federal departments (NICAF, 2013). Goodluck Jonathan's state visit to the People's Republic of China in 2013 expressed interest in over $25 billion in Chinese investment in Nigeria, including a $20 billion memorandum of understanding signed between the Ministry of Energy in China and the Nigeria's Ministry of Energy to generate 20,000 megawatts of electricity for Nigeria.

Moreover, during the administration of Muhammadu Buhari, China also offered a $6 billion loan to Nigeria for infrastructure development projects, as well as a $1.5 billion loan for infrastructure development in Nigeria, including the expansion of four airports in Lagos, Kano, Abuja, and Port Harcourt (Mbara et al., 2021). The skeptism on the negative impacts

of loan to Nigeria from China may not be out of place. China's economic efforts are typically beneficial, but occasionally disruptive. In the same vein, Nigeria's over-reliance on China for essential infrastructures and economic assistance may jeopardize its sovereignty and decision-making autonomy, thereby creating vulnerabilities. The notion of "dependence" has been attributed to Nigeria-China relations.

However, authors and commentators have labeled the concept of a Chinese debt trap as a "myth" or "distraction" or "propaganda" (Brautigam, 2020; Emewu, 2021). A Director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dismissed the idea as "mere media propaganda orchestrated by distractors". She emphasized that "relations between the countries are governed by agreements, and at no point in time has Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity being compromised. That is vital to Nigeria's national interest" (Interview with Participant, Feb. 14, 2024). While China is Nigeria's top bilateral lender (83.57%), the percentage of Chinese loan to Nigeria's total external debt is 12.7% (Ashinze, 2022). The rest were sourced from Western (bilateral and multilateral) lenders. These authors would wonder what happens to the other 87% if only 12.7 per cent constitutes debt trap for Nigeria. The reality is that countries are up for competing interests, and China's lending to Nigeria should not be seen as charity. However, Nigeria's commitment to bilateral terms with China means it is not liable to any foreign threat to its sovereignty.

Cybersecurity and Espionage Concerns

As the Nigeria-China partnership expands into digital infrastructure, cybersecurity issues may develop if adequate safeguards are not implemented. Cyberattacks on critical infrastructures might have major ramifications for Nigeria's national security. China also assisted in the development and deployment of Nigeria's communications satellite and owns an interest in the parent satellite communications firm. Huawei has been a key partner of the Nigerian government in the development of smart cities and e-government apps to improve government public services (Ikusika, 2022).

Concerns about cybersecurity are crucial in today's linked world, affecting governments, corporations, and individuals alike. This may leave Nigeria vulnerable to cyberattacks, which may destroy essential infrastructures, steal valuable data, and jeopardize national security. These assaults might be carried out by state-sponsored actors, cybercriminals, or hacktivists. Cyberattacks against essential infrastructure such as electricity grids, and transportation networks will be disastrous. These attacks, which frequently target government institutions, defense contractors, and other sensitive organizations, might entail espionage, sabotage, or the disruption of essential systems. China's significant role in critical cyber sectors in Nigeria raises cyberattack concerns (Fidler, 2018; Ikusika, 2022).

Espionage has crucial implications for national security as it pertains to Nigeria-China relations, since intimate contacts between states may also generate opportunities for intelligence gathering and potential espionage operations, which may have an impact on national security objectives. The practice is gathering secret, sensitive, or classified information or intelligence from an individual, organization, or government without their knowledge or consent through human intelligence, signals intelligence, imagery intelligence, and open source intelligence. This operation is usually carried out for political, military, economic, or strategic reasons.

Concerns about cybersecurity and espionage are an essential component in China-Nigeria ties, as the bilateral relations tilted in favor of China. China dominates the internet and telecommunication sectors of Nigeria. Here is some of the cyber security concerns

associated with the China-Nigeria relationship identified by the participants. China has been accused of engaging in global digital surveillance operations, focused on state-run administrations, organizations, and associations. As Ibrahim and Sari (2019) earlier found, there are fears that Chinese programmers would attack Nigerian government offices or privately held firms in order to steal sensitive data or gain an advantage. Chinese firms are involved in a few fundamental framework initiatives in Nigeria, such as media communications and computerized foundation.

Also, China's attitude to data privacy differs from that of many Western countries. Chinese technology companies are known to acquire a large amount of user data. While Chinese innovation ventures might help Nigeria's computerized foundation and mechanical capabilities, participants expressed concern that such speculations may be accompanied by innovation move or arrangements that are used for reconnaissance. Chinese-made innovative products, particularly media communications equipment, are popular in Nigeria. Research participants raised concerns on the security of these supply chains, since flaws in equipment or code may be exploited by malicious performers. Without dismissing the capacity of private persons for criminal ventures, some other participants insisted that China is Nigeria's trusted ally.

Nigeria's Security Concerns

China's security interests in Nigeria are an offshoot of its trade and investment ambitions, rather than a separate entity. In this setting, China's security interests in Nigeria are inextricably tied to its trade and investment objectives, reflecting both Nigeria's difficult investment climate and the inherent restrictions of Beijing's nonintervention policy. Issues that come to fore on how Chinese economic activities affect Nigeria's overall security and stability are China's changing interest in Nigeria's oil-rich Delta region, characterized by inter-tribal and resource-based conflicts; China's continued agricultural investment in the rural Jigawa or Plateau, where farmers are at odds over land tenure; and how Chinese nationals, through Nigerian intermediaries, carry out illegal mining operations in different places where crime and land tenure conflicts have fueled ethnic and religious violence (Abegunde & Dada, 2021).

The corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices of the Chinese companies and suppliers in the Delta region appear to be inadequate resulting in the kidnappers' focus on Chinese nationals (Natsa, 2017). Lu (2023), and Abegunde and Dada (2021) emphasized that agricultural investments by the Chinese in Jigawa State has become a political game. According to Alao (2010), there are clear links between natural resources and conflict. The Federal Government stated that two alleged "illegal" mining companies - Solid Unit Limited, and Geotess Nigeria – which were shut in Zurak (Wase local government area) Plateau state had illegally extracted minerals worth over N100 billion (Ewepu, 2017).

Nigeria's national security challenges have also been attributed to activities of foreigners who are exploiting Nigeria's weak domestic guidelines, regulations and legal enforcement to sabotage societal peace and security. Some of the participants averred that the Chinese contributed to insecurity in Nigeria especially through illegal and secretive economic activities. They are alleged to be responsible for funding some resource-related instability in Zamfara and other states. This aligns with the report by the *Africa Defense Forum* (2024) which alleged Chinese illegal miners of collaborating with extremist militants and corrupt government officials to cause violence, destroy farmlands, and pollute water with mercury and lead. Onuoha and Ojewale (2023, para. 7) also reported that "in the banditry-affected

north-west and central areas, loose criminal networks engaged in illegal gold mining, have ties to foreign actors, and facilitate trafficking flows…in remote villages and forests". According to them, Nigerian authorities have arrested several Chinese nationals since 2020 for involvement in illegal mining:

> In April 2020, the Nigeria Police Force in Zamfara State arrested two Chinese nationals for allegedly engaging in illegal mining in Bukkuyum local government, where the federal government had banned all mining activities to curb killings by armed bandits. In September 2022, a Chinese national was arrested by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) operatives in Ilorin, Kwara State, in possession of a truckload of minerals suspected to be lepidolite. In July 2023, the EFCC arrested 13 more Chinese nationals for allegedly engaging in illegal mining activities. In August 2023, the Akwa Ibom State Government closed down an illegal mining company operated by Chinese nationals for the firm's inability to provide authorization documents for titanium ore mining in Ibeno community (para. 4,5).

However, some other participants disagreed with identifying China with illegal activities of Chinese nationals in Nigeria. They emphasized the importance of differentiating official relations between governments from actions of individuals, and particularly the need for the government of Nigeria to exercise agency. A Director at the Centre for China Studies, Abuja, noted that:

> The personal activities of Chinese nationals or firms in Nigeria should not be interpreted as official relations. There is no Chinese policy that supports or encourages their businesses or citizens to undermine domestic regulations. The Chinese embassy restates that often. Anybody may want to exploit any situation. Nigerians also commit crimes outside the country without holding Nigeria to ransom. Nigeria should develop capacity to deal with any such infractions by foreigners, whether Chinese or Malians (Interview with Participant, Feb. 14, 2024).

A Director at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, also agreed that official state-to-state relations should not be reduced to the misbehaviour and illegal tendencies of its nationals, cautioning that analysis of China-Nigeria relations should be deeply interrogated beyond the anti-China media frenzy. The Chinese embassy in Nigeria had equally objected to such reports, and distanced itself from the actions of Chinese individuals:

> The Chinese government, as well as the Chinese Embassy in Nigeria, have always encouraged and urged the Chinese companies and nationals in Nigeria to abide by the laws and regulations of Nigeria, and to implement the local rules and guidance on labour, environment, health, and safety, etc., and would continue their efforts in this regard. The Chinese government was and would never be involved in any form of funding terrorism (Odeyemi, 2023, para. 1).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The long established and booming Nigeria-China relations have impacted the countries in different dimensions. While both partners have recorded significant benefits, China has benefitted more in this relationship, hence, the appellation of asymmetric relationship. Nigeria also stands to benefit more than it currently does only if necessary economic and trade reforms that would enhance local production and value addition are put in place. China remains Nigeria's strategic partner only to the extent that Nigeria positions itself for greater reckoning in foreign relations.

Therefore, the government of Nigeria should be more proactive and result-oriented in its

relations with China in order to address the perceived imbalance in China-Nigeria relationship. It is important Nigeria prioritizes what it wants from China, as opposed to a generic foreign policy disposition. For instance, a clarification of what Nigeria wants from China at what time will allow an objective analysis of its success or failure. Nigeria should be more strategic in its foreign relations to promote its economic and security interests.

Mitigating the concerns in Nigeria's relations with China is critical to ensuring that the relationship stays mutually beneficial. Making agreements between Nigeria and China clear and open to public scrutiny would reduce the danger or fear of hidden commitments or unfair conditions. Transparency and accountability will be improved by openly debating and releasing information of contracts, loans, and infrastructure projects. This decreases the risk of conflicts originating from unclear or concealed clauses bilateral agreements. In the same manner, transparent agreements and relations between the two countries are more likely to be implemented properly because parties have a clear plan of action.

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Confessionalism as a Political System in Lebanon: Any Relevance for Nigeria?

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Abstract

This study compares the power-sharing model in Nigeria with the confessional political system of Lebanon, with a primary focus on the possible relevance of confessionalism in Nigeria. With the use of extant literature and Lijphart's theory of consociationalism, this paper examines the applicability of confessionalism in Nigeria. It also assesses whether comparable power-sharing arrangements could effectively manage the intricacies of Nigeria's heterogeneous population and promote political stability while mitigating sectarian strife. The paper concludes that Nigeria's efforts to achieve national unity may be hampered by the adoption of confessionalism. Nigeria's diversity is its greatest asset, but a confessional system poses the risk of prioritizing religious distinctions over national identity. Thus, Nigeria should respect constitutional secularism and give priority to inclusive governance methods.

Keywords: confessional system, federalism, inclusivity, power-sharing model

Introduction

Confessionalism is a distinct political system that is ingrained in Lebanon's history and political landscape (Vaughan, 2018). This political system is characterized by the division of power among religious factions and has been adopted to reflect the diversity of the Lebanese people (El Sayed, 2022; Badran, 2020). Thus, different religious communities, such as Sunni and Shia Muslims, Druze, Maronite Christians, and others, have designated roles and quotas under this system (Salamey, 2009). This particular configuration resulted from Lebanon's demographics, which are smaller but diversified, with a fairly even distribution across religious communities (Nakouzi et al., 2014). Confessionalism was adopted to prevent one dominant sect from having absolute power, to enhance stability and representation by bringing opposing religious factions together in the government process. However, this structure has also led to political unrest and recurring disputes, illustrating the difficulties that come with power-sharing agreements based on religious affinities (Calfat, 2018). The federal character principle in Nigeria's Constitution is a framework which promotes equality and inclusivity among the country's numerous ethnic, religious, and regional groups.

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Unlike Lebanon, which explicitly distributes political power according to religious affiliation, Nigeria's federal character concept aims to prevent domination by any one group by ensuring an equitable distribution of government jobs and resources throughout the federation. This concept was put into practice to ease ethnic tensions and foster national unity in a society that is severely divided along religious and regional lines. (Suberu, 2022; Idike et al., 2019). Although the Nigerian federal character concept and Lebanon's confessionalism both aim to minimize marginalization and foster inclusivity, they diverge in that the federal character places more emphasis on regional balance and ethnicity than on religious differences. Power-sharing is the goal of both systems, but Nigeria's federal character principle has generated discussions over its effectiveness. Critics contend that it frequently undermines meritocracy and promotes political patronage (Demarest et al., 2020). The study adopts Arend Lijphart's theory of consociationalism, which stresses power-sharing systems in divided societies. Lebanon's confessionalism can be viewed through Lijphart's framework as an institutionalized power-sharing mechanism that seeks to balance religion representation through proportionality and elite collaboration (Lijphart, 2008).

Therefore, this paper aims to comparatively analyze the historical experiences of Lebanon and the socio-political environment of Nigeria. Nigeria's federal character principle and Lebanon's confessionalism have each been examined separately as mechanisms for power sharing in multiple societies, little comparative study has been done to see how Nigeria may benefit from Lebanon's confessionalism. This study aims to close this gap by investigating if Nigeria's continuous battles with the federal character principle in striking a balance between inclusion and national unity could be influenced by Lebanon's confessional system. A significant gap in the literature on power-sharing models in post-colonial, multiethnic communities is also filled by the study's evaluation of potential opportunities and risks of implementing a confessional-like framework in Nigeria. This study will also examine the usefulness of power-sharing models in pluralistic countries and recommend substitute frameworks to improve national unity in Nigeria.

Historical Context of Confessionalism in Lebanon
The demographic distribution of Lebanon's religious groupings is one of the most significant aspects of its identity and political system. Historically, this distribution has been reasonably balanced, with small communities like the Druze holding significant minority status and about one-third of the population identifying as Christian, Sunni Muslim, and Shia Muslim (Mallo, 2019; Faour, 2007). This balanced yet diversified composition enabled Lebanon's unique experiment with confessional power-sharing, which seeks to guarantee representation and political stability by dividing governmental authority among religious factions. The Taif Agreement of 1989 further reinforced this structure by instituting sectarian quotas for key positions in the government (Bahout, 2016). Also, the National Pact of 1943 formalized Lebanon's confessional system, which was based on its historical, social, and political context. It aimed to preserve a precarious balance between religious groups by allocating important government positions, such as the speaker of parliament for Shia Muslims, the prime minister for Sunni Muslims, and the presidency for Maronite Christians (Ghosn & Khoury, 2011). The purpose of this system was to promote inclusivity and avoid the dominance of any one sect. However, sectarian strife have threatened the system's viability (Diss & Steffen, 2017; Bahout, 2016). The system's inherent rigidity has resulted in political inefficiency and stagnation. National cohesion has declined and entrenched

corruption has resulted from Lebanon's government's incapacity to adapt to changing socioeconomic and demographic conditions (Mubarak, 2009; Harb, 2006). By distributing power among religious groups, the Taif Agreement of 1989 sought to alter the constitutional framework, but it has not fully resolved the underlying issues. Sectarian divisions are made worse by the allocation of government positions based on religious identity, and the confessional system continues to obstruct social progress and fuel political unrest in Lebanon (Herrfahrdt-Pähle et al., 2020; Craig et al., 2017).

The political landscape has been further complicated by Lebanon's history of civil war (1975–1990) as well as external interventions, which connect historical sociopolitical conflicts to the present challenges of sectarian government (Huerta, 2022; Spaans & Touber, 2019). Although the system was created to control religious diversity, it has been criticized for escalating sectarianism, impeding efficient government, and the formation of a unified national identity (Mudawar, 2017; Cox et al., 2014). Other nations, like Nigeria, that have comparable challenges to governing religious variety and diversity might learn a lot from Lebanon's struggles to reform its confessional system. Lebanon's confessional system has had a number of challenges over the years, particularly in adapting to the country's current sociopolitical environment. The rigid division of political roles based on religious affiliation has reinforced the prioritization of sect interests over national unity (Bahout, 2016) which has led to corruption and inefficiencies in governance. It has also become increasingly difficult to maintain the delicate balance that the confessional system depends on as Lebanon's population develops because different religious groups have different birth rates and emigration trends (Herrfahrdt-Pähle et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the nation's history has been shaped by wars that continue to reverberate through the complex web of governance and social structure. The confessional system in Lebanon has an intricate link with a history of conflicts that have heightened sectarian tensions and prolonged periods of political instability, most notably the civil war that raged from 1975 to 1990 (Hourani, 2021). Rooted in long-standing socio-political and sectarian grievances, the civil war was a complex battle. Crucial political positions were distributed according to sectarian quotas because of the confessional system that was instituted by the National Pact of 1943. But instead of promoting harmony, this system concentrated political power along religious lines, intensifying rivalry for political dominance and strengthening sectarian identities. As a result, rival sectarian interests battling for control of politics turned Lebanon into a battlefield. Tensions increased when authority passed between religious factions, further entrenching sectarian divisions. There have been deadly clashes between the Maronite Christian population, who typically wield major governmental influence, and other religious sects, especially Sunni and Shia Muslims (refworld, 2023).

Also, Lebanon's geographic location and involvement in regional conflicts have further exacerbated internal divisions. Foreign interventions and proxy wars have regularly taken advantage of Lebanon's sectarian tensions, further distorting the political landscape and jeopardizing the nation's stability (Huerta, 2022). Therefore, the confessional system, which was formerly believed to be a solution to the nation's religious variety, is the cause of Lebanon's political paralysis and continuous instability (Mubarak, 2009).

Additionally, the rigidity of the confessional system has resulted in persistent political impasse. The fact that political leaders frequently put the interests of their sect before the benefit of the nation due to the confessional system's perpetuation of a culture of patronage and clientelism has increased economic inequality, corruption, and a lack of accountability.

(Cortés & Kairouz, 2023; Usenata, 2022). Inaction and gridlock are frequently the outcome of sectarian factions' need for agreement to pass important laws or make important decisions, which causes political stagnation. Sectarian conflicts show up in politics, but they also affect how people interact with one another and perceive the world. From social relationships, to work and education, these conflicts are present in many facets of day-to-day living. Differences in opportunity stemming from religious affiliations reinforce sectarian identities and create segregated societies.

The people's dissatisfaction with the political system led by sectarianism was brought to light by the 2019 protests in Lebanon. This was sparked by the country's economic woes and general disenchantment with the political class. Protesters called for an end to the nation's urgent problems, including corruption and sectarianism, as well as a revision of the confessional system. (Abiyaghi & Yammine, 2013)

The experience of Lebanon emphasizes how important it is to move beyond sectarian politics to achieve long-term stability. A zero-sum game in which political gains for one sect frequently translate into losses for another has been sustained by an over-reliance on the confessional system (Preston, 2013). It is imperative to surpass this framework to cultivate a governance system that is more inclusive and coherent.

Inclusive governance frameworks that value meritocracy above sectarian quotas are necessary. The implementation of a governance model that prioritizes inclusivity and competency, regardless of religious affiliation, may help to alleviate sectarian impasse and cultivate a more responsive and functional government.

Consideration of Alternative Model for Power-Sharing and Governance

Confessionalism is uncommon in modern governance structures worldwide as it easily fuels sectarian strife. Often, inclusive approaches that place a greater emphasis on citizenship than religious identification are given priority in nations with a diverse religious population (Abu-Hamad, 1995). Its unusual status stems mainly from the difficulties and constraints it presents when used, as it does in Lebanon. The majority of countries choose secular or non-religious types of government to promote inclusive communities and overcome religious differences in their political systems. The rarity of confessional systems is evidence of the widespread conviction that religion and state should be kept apart in many nations, highlighting the significance of institutions that speak for all citizens, regardless of their religious views. This peculiarity highlights a global trend toward governing frameworks that emphasize inclusivity and secular values to lessen the risks and divisions that confessional systems may bring. An increasing number of countries that deal with religious or ethnic diversity have looked into non-confessional methods of power-sharing and governance that emphasize inclusivity (Sisk, 2016; Reslan, 2022). Among the various models that have demonstrated promise in allowing variety while preserving political stability are federalism, decentralization, and consociationalism democracy.

Federalism: States or regions are granted some degree of autonomy in government when federal arrangements are adopted by nations such as the United States, Germany, Switzerland, India, and Austria (Rozell & Wilcox, 2019). While preserving a cohesive national identity, federal systems allow local self-governance. Instead, of depending only on sectarian boundaries, this paradigm guarantees participation and representation.

Consociationalism Democracy: a form of democracy practiced in Belgium and the Netherlands, prioritizes power-sharing amongst various social groupings (Andeweg, 2015). Without strictly defining political responsibilities based on religious or ethnic affinities, it

entails established procedures for many groups to have a say in decision-making, encouraging consensus-building and cooperation.

Decentralization: Renowned nations like Brazil and Spain have embraced decentralization to give local people more say over decisions (Willis et al., 1999). By giving communities or regions the authority to handle their particular requirements and still contribute to the greater national goal, this model empowers them.

Comparative studies conducted across borders underscore the shortcomings of confessional systems and the practicality of alternative models of governance that place a higher priority on inclusivity, consensus-building, and decentralized decision-making (Dagher, 2022) Through investigating various strategies to accept religious and ethnic differences, countries can manage difficulties while cultivating cohesion and stability beyond sectarian lines.

Having explored Lebanon's confessional system, it is expedient to now examine its potential relevance and applicability in Nigeria's political context.

Relevance of Confessionalism in the Nigerian Context
Nigeria Federal Character
Enshrined in Nigeria's constitution, the Federal Character Principle serves as a framework for promoting inclusivity and equal representation among the nation's different ethnic, regional, and religious populations (Suberu, 2022; Idike et al., 2019). This principle prohibits the domination of any one group by requiring that positions and resources held by the government represent the variety of the nation. The study frames Nigeria's federal character principle as a "quasi-confessional" model. Nigeria's system encourages inclusivity through organized power-sharing among ethnic and regional groupings, reflecting elements of confessionalism even if it does not specifically assign political posts based on religious affiliation. This research contributes to larger discussions on diversity management, especially in post-colonial nations that are grappling with religious and ethnic plurality. Nigeria and other post-colonial states frequently struggle to maintain national cohesion while guaranteeing representation for underrepresented groups (Igwe, 2024; Obikaeze et al., 2023). Lijphart's (2008) consociational model, which stresses power-sharing in multiple societies, provides important context for understanding how Lebanon's confessionalism aims to strike a balance between religious representation. According to his framework, elite cooperation and proportionality—two characteristics of Lebanon's political system—are essential for stable democracies in sharply divided countries.

The Federal Character Principle is a topic of controversy regarding its efficiency, much like confessionalism, which has been criticized for deepening divisions in society. Otu et al. (2024) analyzed the federal character principle's effect on hiring and advancement at the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital and found that while it encourages diversity, it often undermines meritocracy, leading to inefficiency and dissatisfaction within the organization. Their findings illustrate the challenge of balancing diversity and competency in public institutions under this framework.

Similarly, Onyebuchi, et al. (2024) studied the political exclusion of Southeast Nigeria between 2015 and 2019. They opined that the federal character principle has sometimes exacerbated regional inequality and political marginalization. To promote national unity, their study emphasizes the necessity of more equitable representation of all region, especially in political appointments. Likewise, Okwara et al. (2023) conducted an evaluation of the principle's effectiveness in public service in Enugu, Kogi State, and the Federal

Capital Territory which yielded mixed findings. While the concept promotes diversity, it often leads to inefficiencies because it prioritizes group identification over quality.

Additionally, Benson and Audu (2021) draw attention to the principle's limited effect on national integration in federal tertiary institutions, where it occasionally exacerbates regional conflicts and resentment. Although the federal character principle seeks to promote unity, these studies indicate that it frequently has unintended repercussions that threaten meritocracy and governance.

Critics have pointed out that the Federal Character Principle doesn't always work as intended. Even though its goal is inclusivity, others claim that it may encourage mediocrity rather than meritocracy, which would affect how effective political institutions are (Demarest et al., 2020; Wisdom, 2018). Other debates also rage on whether it is a symbolic gesture that has little bearing on equity and representation or if it tackles the root causes of marginalization. Nigeria's Federal Character Principle resembles some of the inclusion and power-sharing seen in Lebanon's confessional system (Abou, 2022; Agarin, 2019) even though it does not quite replicate revelationism. Both aim to prevent the marginalization of particular communities and address representational issues. Ongoing discussions continue, meanwhile, over how well they work to maintain merit-based governance and promote true inclusivity and national unity.

Furthermore, occasional occurrences of Muslim-Muslim or Muslim-Christian tickets in Nigerian politics have given rise to discussions about religious representation in the executive branch. Similar to confessional arrangements in Lebanon, these ticket formations entail political alliances or partnerships involving candidates from different religious origins seeking to compete for important governmental positions. Even though they are uncommon, Muslim-Muslim tickets have sparked conversations about diversity, representation, and possible effects on national cohesion (cswpress, 2023; Okojie, 2022). They highlight the difficulties in striking a balance between religious variety and political representation, reflecting the confessional distribution of roles along religious lines in Lebanon.

Also, when Muslim and Christian candidates create political alliances, arguments and disputes result. These alliances show efforts to promote inclusivity and heal religious rifts. But they also raise issues of representation, power dynamics, and whether these kinds of alliances can successfully address the grievances of various religious groups in Nigeria's sociopolitical context. These incidents highlight the challenges of inclusivity, representation, and striking a balance between religious connections and government without reproducing the strict structures of confessionalism, and they also show Nigeria's attempts to manage religious diversity within its political arena.

Critical Analysis of Confessionalism's Feasibility in Nigeria

Nigeria would find it challenging to implement Lebanon's confessionalism, despite the fact that it offers a unique form of power-sharing. This system may not be feasible due to Nigeria's complex religious and ethnic composition. Confessionalism has the potential of institutionalizing religious differences in Nigeria, further dividing the country's Muslim and Christian communities, especially when political rivalry is involved. Confessionalism frequently puts religious ties ahead of national identity, as is the case in Lebanon, which results in political impasses and ineffective government (Accad & Hani, 2021; Salamey, 2009). By fostering clientelism and patronage, such a system in Nigeria would jeopardize the efficacy of governance and weaken merit-based appointments (Demarest et al., 2021).

Adopting a similar system in Nigeria could further alienate minority religious and ethnic groups, adding to resentment and instability; the focus on religious quotas may overshadow the larger goal of nation-building and inclusivity, creating a fragmented political terrain; and in Lebanon, the system has resulted in entrenched sectarian identities, impeding the development of a cohesive national identity (Stewart, 2012).

However, Nigerian confessionalists would argue that, in light of the country's diverse ethnic and religious composition, which is similar to that of Lebanon, explicit power-sharing processes would be beneficial. They contend that such a system may enable marginalized people to participate in politics by addressing grievances and preventing crises like the Biafran independence movement (Onyebuchi, et al., 2024). Some may also propose changing Nigeria's federal character principle to include more official religious representation to ease religious tensions in the country and foster more stability (Otu, et al., 2024).

It is important to critically examine confessionalism's potential to weaken national unity. In Nigeria's case, widening religious divides through confessionalism could exacerbate already-existing conflicts and reduce the effectiveness of governance. The population of Nigeria is more varied and fragmented than that of Lebanon due to the overlap of ethnic, regional, and religious identities. Having a rigid confessional system can cause divisions rather than bring people together.

Consequently, Nigeria should prioritize inclusive government models that transcend religious divides to ensure fair representation and foster a sense of national cohesion. Despite its shortcomings, Nigeria's federal character principle is nevertheless better than confessionalism because it promotes diversity without explicitly defining religious differences (Idike et al., 2019). Despite its constitutional secularism, Nigeria's socio-political environment often demonstrates traits that are similar to aspects of confessionalism, albeit in a different setting. Although Nigeria's governance is not as overtly religiously oriented as Lebanon's confessional system, there are religious and political analogies between the two systems that are discussed. In Nigeria, the entwinement of religion and politics occasionally affects political alliances and power structures (Echele, 2023). Nigerian political alliances often form along religious lines or use religious ties as a means of support, much as confessionalism's religious-based political roles (Umeanolue, 2020). These alignments occasionally resemble the dynamics observed in the confessional arrangements in Lebanon, prompting questions about whether Nigeria is essentially exhibiting parts of confessionalism under a covert cloak.

Similar to the differences observed in confessional systems, discussions center on whether voters' actions are slightly influenced by their religious identity or whether religious concerns have a subtle influence on political decisions. The degree to which Nigeria, despite its constitutional secularism, struggles with confessional-like features within its political landscape is called into question by the existence of religious sentiment in political discourse and the possible impact on governance dynamics. Though different from Lebanon's overt confessionalism, these discussions highlight the challenges of maintaining a secular governing system while balancing religious influences, and they also allude to subtle parallels in the relationship between politics and religion. While Lebanon's model may offer insights, Nigeria's distinct religious and ethnic dynamic present unique challenges.

Considering Nigeria's distinct socio-political environment and taking lessons from Lebanon's experiences, adopting confessionalism will pose certain challenges. This system

of government could worsen already-existing sectarian divides in Nigeria or cause new ones. Christians and Muslims make up the majority of Nigeria's diverse religious population, and tensions already arise from time to time (Umeanwe, 2021; Fox, 2021; Tuduks, 2021). Confessional systems can exacerbate social divisions by amplifying religious identities in politics. This could intensify religiously motivated rivalry for political dominance, escalating tensions and eroding societal cohesiveness. Confessionalism has the potential to escalate inter religious tensions in Nigeria, which have historically resulted in instability and strife.

Furthermore, Nigeria's efforts to achieve national unity may be hampered by the adoption of confessionalism. Nigeria's diversity is its greatest asset, but a confessional system runs the risk of prioritizing religious distinctions over national identity. This might make it more difficult to promote national unity and even split the nation along religious lines. The prioritization of religious identities may be strengthened by the emphasis on religious quotas in administration, which would diminish attempts to promote unity and the larger Nigerian identity. Nigeria ought to draw a lot of lessons from Lebanon's confessionalism problems. The dangers of confessional arrangements are brought to light by Lebanon's history of sectarian violence and difficulties in creating a cohesive national identity.

Therefore, confessionalism may appear like a solution to Nigeria's diversity issues, but the risks of replicating Lebanon's issues much outweigh any potential benefits. Nigeria's federal character principle, in spite of its shortcomings, offers a more adaptable framework for achieving a balance between inclusion and meritocracy. If changes are made to improve its efficacy, it remains a superior choice over confessionalism for promoting political stability and national cohesion.

Recommendations for Nigeria

Nigeria should emphasize the value of inclusive governance models that cut across religious boundaries by taking a cue from Lebanon's experiences. By addressing local needs and encouraging a sense of ownership in governance, a stronger devolution of powers would give regions greater autonomy. The Federal Character Principle of Nigeria must be better applied. Confessionalism can be avoided while promoting inclusion by strictly adhering to this principle, which emphasizes merit-based appointments and fair representation among many ethnic and regional groups.

Policies that encourage inclusivity and place a higher priority on citizenship rather than on racial or religious affinities must be given top priority in Nigeria. One can develop a sense of national identity by promoting discourse, civic education, and cultural exchange programs, which can heal divisions and promote unanimity in the face of contrast. Beyond religious or ethnic divides, national cohesiveness can also be strengthened by policies that promote socioeconomic development and equitable opportunity for all.

Conclusion

This paper sheds light on the nuances of confessionalism in Lebanon and its somewhat relevant application to Nigeria's geopolitical context. Nigeria's Federal Character Principle is similar to confessionalism in its aim for inclusivity. However, adopting confessionalism in Nigeria has drawbacks, such as weakening national cohesiveness. Nigeria's heterogeneous religious population makes it unlikely that confessionalism can be directly

replicated there. Rather than expressly dividing the government along religious lines, Nigeria might learn from Lebanon's struggles to promote inclusivity. Nigeria should proceed cautiously when implementing government models that could highlight religious divides, emphasizing the need for national unity over sectarian tensions. To prevent sectarian conflict and improve national unity, Lebanon must modernize its confessional system. Nigeria, on the other hand, ought to respect constitutional secularism and give priority to inclusive governance methods. Both countries stand to gain from forging ahead with inclusive systems that put meritocracy and national cohesion above divisive government structures.

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Historical Significance of Oka Day Cultural Festival in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines an important theme of rural festival in postcolonial African societies. The focus is Oka Day Festival in Oka, Ondo State, Nigeria. The Oka Day Festival is a revered cultural event with strong traditional ties. This study explores the various aspects of the Oka Day Festival, including its historical importance, cultural symbolism, socio-economic effects, and current relevance. Based on the historical analysis of oral interviews and the extant literature, this paper concludes that the event acts as a stimulus for communal solidarity and historical progression of the Oka people.

Keywords: Oka Day Festival, Yoruba Culture, Community Cohesion, Cultural Preservation, Economic Implications, Modernization, Globalization.

Introduction

Cultural festivals have a crucial role in societies. It promotes social harmony and safeguards cultural traditions (Rossetti and Quinn, 2021). The term festival is inherently linked to culture and specific locations. Festivals serves to establish a sense of identity for both individuals and their communities. Falassi (1987: 82) provides a definition of a festival as a time of celebration, whether it is considered holy or profane, that is distinguished by unique customs and practices. Festivals honours and upholds communal values, ideas, identity, and continuity. As observed by Getz (2005: 21), festivals are public celebrations with a specific topic. Indeed, festivals are cultural events that exist in all African societies (Onipede, 2017, p. 82).

African festivals have their roots in tradition and history. Festivals offer communities the chance to come together, commemorate their shared identity, and preserve the practices of their ancestors. Oka Land festival is a significant manifestation of traditional festivals. In order to understand the fundamental nature of the Oka Day Festival, it is imperative to get a comprehensive understanding of the historical circumstance surrounding Oka Land festival.

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Oka is a suburban town and currently the administrative headquarters of Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria.It is primarily inhabited by people of Yoruba descent. The composition consists of five distinct sections, namely: Oke Oka (the largest section), Iwaro Oka, Ayegunle Oka, Simerin Oka, and Uba Oka (Obata and Aigbokhan, 2012;). Oka immediate neighbours are Ikun, Oba, Ugbe, Upe, Epinmi and Akungba(Olukoju, 1993). Oka Akoko serves as a prominent hub for agricultural trade, specializing in the cultivation and distribution of cassava, cocoa, palm oil, and kola nuts (Omoriwo, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024). The Oka Day Festival is an esteemed yearly event that is firmly ingrained in the collective consciousness of the people of Oka Land. It features elaborate ceremonies, lively performances, and passionate displays of cultural heritage (Balogun, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024). The festival is deeply rooted in the historical narrative of the Oka people and represents a strong respect for ancestral legacies and spiritual connectivity. At the core of its activities are ancient traditions, such as ritual dances, musical displays, extravagant banquets, and symbolic rituals marking important transitions. This paper examines the significance of this festival as a channel for passing down cultural and indigenous knowledge which helps in the retention of communal memory. The study utilizes historical method of enquiry and ethnographic survey in addition to oral interviews with community stakeholders.

Origin of Oka Day Festival
On assumption of the throne of his ancestors on 16th April 1988, Oba Adebori Adeleye was confronted with economic challenges like many his contemporaries at this time in Yorubaland especially due to the excruciating effects of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The new King having lived in Lagos for many years saw the need to create a channel for bringing various resources to this less developed town. Thus, the Oka Day event originated within this context. From the king's point of view, the Oka Day celebration serves two purposes, to raise funds for community development and to promote unity under his new leadership.

The first Oka Day event took place in 1990 in Oka's town hall, but it was not officially referred to as 'Oka Day.' The main purpose of this event was clearly stated on the programme cover: 'Oka-Akoko 10 Million fundraiser for Oba's palace.' Prior to the corronation of Oba Adeleye, there was serous dispute between the Olubaka of Ibaka and Asin of Oka-odo over the maintenance of the Olubaka's palace which has been neglected for a long period of time. (Xiao and Ogunode, 2021, p. 795) Hence, Oba Adeleye saw the building of a new palace as equivalent to the revival of Olubaka's status. This building project lasted over many decades, with cash being accumulated gradually throughout the course of the project. The festival officially commenced in 1994 at the instance of His Royal Majesty, Oba Adebori Adeleye, following the efforts of the Oka National Association Clubs (ONAC). The king's proclamation endorsed the date and calendar that had been used by the Agba community, a constituent community within Oka Akoko to celebrate their festival for many years. The New Yam Festival was scheduled to take place on the first Saturday of August, immediately after the conclusion of the masquerade festival on the second-to-last Saturday of July (Afolabi, Personal Communication, February 17, 2024)

In 1999, there was a change in the way people spoke about celebrating Oka festival, instead they focused more on issues that bothers on the progress and development of Oka (Xiao and

Ogunode, 2021, p. 795) The modern version of Oka Day includes a range of events that last for a week, thus leading to huge turnout of tourists and cultural enthusiasts which add tremendous colour and vibrancy to the ceremony usually laced with diverse types of cultural entertainment (Barrister Abubakar, Personal Communication, March 24, 2024) These activities include football matches between different schools and communities within Oka, free medical services, and religious ceremonies held within the precinct of different deities and in churches and mosques (Prince Sakara, Personal Communication, March 24, 2024).

Oka Day Festival as a Channel for Social-Cultural Solidarity
It is paramount to establish in this study that there were other festivals in place before the unanimous agreement by the indigene of the town to come together to celebrate a festival that is internationally accepted like Oka Day Festival.These festivals include: Hunters festival, Masquerades festival, Dancing Festival and Deity festival to mention but a few. These festivals are still celebrated annually like Oka Day but at different times in different communities.One of the benefits of these festivals is that it formed the basis for consideration of a better date and period for an ultimate acceptable Oka Day festival.As observed byAfolabi

> The festival's great acceptability may also be attributed to the novelty of a communal gathering that brings together the whole community for the first time. Previously, many communities independently organised their own traditional festivals, mostly showcasing masquerades and shrine ceremonies, and followed their own specific calendars. The event, as envisioned by its first advocates, the Agba community, was designed to symbolize the culmination of the traditional festival cycle. This issue was also considered during its acceptance by the whole town. The Agba traditional calendar reaches its climax in the third week of July, with the New Yam Festival (Ijeunton) taking place fourteen days later (Afolabi, Personal Communication, February 17, 2024).

The Oka Day Festival is a significant festival that is closely connected to the rich cultural heritage of Oka Land. The origin and evolution of the Oka people's cultural identity and legacy preservation may be traced back to their ancient historical tales and ancestral customs. The Oka Day Festival naturally developed and transformed in response to the ever-changing dynamics of society. The festival successfully adjusted to the changing socio-cultural environment by skillfully incorporating modern values and societal conventions, while also maintaining its core traditions and symbols with the inclusion of educational activities like quiz and essay competitions to football competitions, medical outreaches, symposium and different talks that promote diversity and peaceful co-existence as a people. Oka Day festival acts as a lasting anchor of cultural coherence and shared recollection despite the ever-changing passage of time (Omoriwo, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024) An informant observed that:

> The Oka Day Festival has evolved from being exclusively observed by indigenous residents of Oka to become a highly anticipated festival attended by prominent individuals including industrial magnates, politicians, the Ondo State Government, and even international visitors. Lately, the festival has attracted global recognition, with European visitors chronicling its activities and television stations devoting coverage to the occasion. Education plays a crucial role in driving this growth. A significant number of persons from the Oka community have sought educational possibilities outside of Nigeria, which has resulted in a strong admiration for their

cultural heritage. As a result, they have invited friends and associates to participate in the festival's celebrations. Moreover, technological improvements have been crucial in enhancing the festival's reach and influence(Alonge, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024).

Thus, the festival demonstrates the durability and flexibility of Oka culture, as it navigated over the course of history. The event blends the past and present of Oka people. Throughout its development, the festival has consistently upheld the cultural traditions of the Oka people thereby preserving ethnic identity and community unity.

It is imperative to know that Oka Day Festival is characterized by a multitude of celebrations and ceremonies that hold great cultural importance. These ceremonies invokes the spirits of ancestors and communicates with gods like Ibisa and Ojominrin.. They embody a deep respect for our forefathers and tradition. (Ajayi, Personal Communication, February 16, 2024). On yearly basis the festival continues to be colourful with new initiatives and the granting of chieftaincy titles such as Bobagunwa, Akogun, Bobatolu, Bobajiroro, Atunluse amongst others.The rites are complex and detailed, frequently showcasing customary dances, rhythmic drumming, and compelling masquerade acts that serve as vivid manifestations of collective identification and cultural pride of the people (Daodu, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024) An informant rightly observed that:

> This yearly event has surpassed its initial purpose as a simple celebration of yams and a one-day event. It has transformed into a comprehensive week-long programme that includes a variety of activities. These activities are scheduled from the end of the masquerade festival until the first Saturday of August, which is when the event takes place. This festival serves as a means of raising funds for the development of Oka. It also acknowledges individuals who have made significant contributions to the town's progress. Additionally, it provides scholarships to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The festival showcases the community's cultural talents and bestows honorary and traditional chieftaincy titles on deserving individuals who have been approved. It includes cultural exhibitions and a ceremonial parade to add to the event's magnificence and entertain distinguished guests. Primarily, it functions as a platform for open discussion and cooperative brainstorming sessions with the goal of visualizing strategies to promote a more prosperous and safe environment for all community members (Ajayi, Personal Communication, February 16, 2024).

These artistic exhibitions not only exhibit the abundant cultural legacy of the Oka community but also function as powerful reminders of the collective voyage and shared encounters that unite individuals bringing developments like increase in number of hotels such as JOMABOT, ROTOWA, REUPHIL hotels and suites. This hotels spring up as a result of complains by attendees who complain of inadequate place to pass the night after the ceremony (Abubakar, Personal Communication, February 19, 2024). The Oka Day Festival also acts as an opportunity to pay tribute to notable personalities from the community. A Nigerian newspaper's weekend magazine depicts the Oka Day celebrations in detail:

> It was a beehive of activities as one drove around Oka Akoko town observing preparations of the community in anticipation of their new yam festival just a few hours away. Saloons were busy as women, ladies and girls besieged them making a variety of hairstyles. It was the same way tailoring shops were full as clients impatiently waited to pick their outfits as some of them exchanged words with the tailors who responded while at the same time trying to avoid being pricked by the

needles of their manual sewing machines. The atmosphere was fun-filled, yet busy as last minute shoppers flocked the town's main market which had begun the day before, 'aggressively' displaying tubers of yams strategically in their stalls or tables as if beckoning on prospective buyers. Groups of young girls dressed in costumes with their heads adorned in coral crowns. As the rain beat against roof tops and gave the mud houses new colour hues, occupants didn't consider it a hindrance as members of the community along with guests flocked to the palace of the Oba to get there first so that they could witness who came in what car and attire (*Daily Trust*, 2018).

Although the description contains obvious literary aesthetics, it is clear that the community really values the festival. Furthermore, the celebration is distinguished by community feasting and the exchange of traditional delicacies, which operate as essential elements in promoting a sense of togetherness and collective involvement among festival attendees and the host. Communal dining goes beyond simply providing nourishment, as it is a symbolic expression of shared abundance and common sustenance. By engaging in the act of sharing food, people establish connections based on unity and reciprocal assistance, so confirming their interdependence and collective membership within the community (Omoyeni, Personal Communication, February 19, 2024).According to Bolarinwa Balogun:

> The Oka festival doubles as the new yam celebration. It is a moment that almost all the households in the land will pound yam, and welcome visitors, families and friends to eat. At such moments, gifts of different types are shared, to appreciate one another. Equally, different age groups use the opportunity to hold their meetings and celebrate the festival among their members. In the evening of the festival day, there is open air, as well as closed-door musical performances to entertain the residents, visitors and guests, to commemorate the festival (Balogun, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024).

The Oka Day Festival is a lively event that showcases various cultural expressions and brings the community together in celebration. Through rituals, performances, and shared meals, the festival strengthens the links of heritage and solidarity that are integral to the Oka community (Abubakar, Personal Communication, February 19, 2024).
In the same vein, the Oka Day Festival plays a crucial role in developing social connections and facilitating meaningful interactions among the residents of Oka .Consequently promoting a strong feeling of community cohesion(Akerele, Personal Communication, February 19, 2024) During the festival, people from many backgrounds come together to participate in shared experiences of celebration, historical reflection, and communal respect (Osun, 2017, p. 112). These relationships surpass societal divisions.It promotes a deep sense of belonging and inclusiveness that goes beyond social obstacles (Adeniyi, 2016, p. 35). Additionally, the event acts as a priceless avenue for strengthening intergenerational bonds, as respected seniors pass on ancient wisdom and cultural knowledge to younger generations (Balogun, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024).The transmission of ancestral information guarantees the preservation of valued heritage and lasting principles, therefore solidifying the ongoing cultural legacy within the community. By facilitating intergenerational contacts, the festival serves as a holy venue for passing down traditional historical knowledge and nurturing a collective sense of identity. This promotes a shared heritage and communal responsibility among the residents of Oka Land. As observed by Mr. Oluwatosin Alonge:

> During this yearly occasion, people gather in a friendly and communal manner, going

beyond their religious beliefs to participate in a shared meal. This exceptional event acts as a cohesive influence, promoting amicable exchanges among acquaintances and relatives. As people gather around the dining table, they have conversations that go beyond their ideological differences. They make use of this opportunity to discuss and resolve any current conflicts. (Alonge, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024)

Similarly, OpeyemiOmoriwo, a regular attendee of the Oka Day festival noted:

> The sense of companionship and joy felt during the Oka Festival transcends the limited duration of the event. An interesting tale serves as a clear example of this phenomenon: after finishing my secondary education in Oka in 1997, I had few chances to reconnect with most of my former classmates. Nevertheless, the festival presented a fortuitous opportunity for such reunions. The festival provided a platform for reconciliation in situations where conflicts emerged between my group and another family, particularly when one of their members shared my educational background. The festival fostered conflict resolution by uniting us and providing a platform for grievances to be expressed in the presence of both myself and my counterpart from the opposing family. Furthermore, the event has become a significant platform for eligible unmarried individuals from various family backgrounds and areas within Oka to get to know each other. As a result, many unions have formed as a result of these fortunate meetings, consequently strengthening personal relationships and promoting peaceful coexistence within Oka Land. There is a lot of anecdotal evidence that supports the idea that couples met for the first time during the 2002 version of the festival. This serves as a powerful testament to the lasting impact of the sense of community and togetherness fostered by the Oka Festival (Omoriwo, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024).

It is also essential and fundamental to understand that traditional rituals and cultural practices play a crucial role in strengthening the relationships within the community of Oka Land. They serve as a foundational pillar for enhancing social unity and reinforcing the shared identity of the community. The Oka Day Festival, with a long-standing history and rich in ancient customs, represents a tangible manifestation of the collective heritage and lasting cultural tradition that runs through the community(Adebayo, 2019, p. 222). As observed by Oluwatosin Alonge:

> An advantageous feature of this festival is the active participation of younger community members in its organisation and preparation. These individuals gain a deep grasp of the community's cultural values through their significant participation and contributions. The younger participants are carefully taught about the historical development of the festival, including significant achievements and the potential negative consequences of deviating from its traditional path. This is done to protect both the cultural heritage and its accuracy and consistency (Alonge, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024).

The festival acts as a means of preserving and continuing the collective memory and historical awareness of the people of Oka Land through the observation and celebration of ancestral customs and traditions (Ajayi, Personal Communication, February 16, 2024).Furthermore, the festival serves as a propitious occasion for the reaffirmation of cultural legacy and the transmission of enduring values that form the foundation of the collective character. Cultural expressions such as storytelling, music, and dance serve as powerful means for sharing cultural knowledge and fostering a shared sense of belonging among community members (Oladele, 2017, p. 88). The sagacious storytellers, traditional

melodies, and indigenous dance forms in Oka Land create a strong connection to cultural roots and foster a deep appreciation for the rich traditions. The Oka Day Festival is a revered event that preserves and honours the enduring traditions of the community and cultivates a strong sense of unity and shared identity.The increasing rate of modernization brings both challenges and opportunities for maintaining cultural identity in Oka Land. Urbanization, globalization, and technological advancement are converging to threaten traditional customs and practices, putting cultural heritage at risk. For instance, Alonge noted that:

> The majority of Oka descendants reside in various locations around the globe and that despite the world being interconnected; geographical distance is a constraint in committee planning for the festival as it offers networking chances for participants to promote communal cohesion (Alonge, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024).

Similarly, rapid urban growth is encroaching on traditional landscapes and disrupting long-established communal customs, while global markets are turning cultural artefacts into commodities and diminishing their original importance. Technological breakthroughs are causing a significant change in society norms and values, resulting in the decline of long-standing traditions in favour of modern conveniences and digital innovations.

Modernization brings numerous prospects for the revival and spread of cultural knowledge in Oka Land. Digital platforms and global networks enable the spread of cultural stories and traditional art to a wide and diversified audience (Afolabi, Personal Communication, February 17, 2024). Thus, platforms like social media, online forums, and digital archives provide new ways for Oka's cultural history to be expressed and appreciated through oral traditions, artistic representations and digital preservation.The Oka Day Festival further serves as a unique avenue for promoting collaborative initiatives and community development projects. The festival fosters collaboration among community leaders and stakeholders to address important socio-economic issues by combining their energy and resources. These projects cover a wide range of activities, including poverty reduction, youth empowerment, infrastructure development, and capacity-building efforts.   As observed by Alonge, a community leader in Oka:

> The idea to build a world-class palace for Oka originated during the yearly gathering of Oka's residents. Today, this innovative project has been achieved, greatly enhancing the community. Collaboration with corporations and NGOs has helped provide necessary social amenities, such as street lights, to improve the community's quality of life. The Oka Day Festival has the ability to stimulate economic development through tourism. Visitors can engage in the cultural richness of the event, which helps boost economic growth and promote entrepreneurship in the town (Alonge, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024).

This above submission is buttressed by Balogun's assertion below:

> The celebrations could include guided visits to other tourist attractions in Oka. Identifiable shrines and holy groves devoted to respected deities could be developed as tourist attractions to generate cash for the municipality. Collaborative ventures might be formed with national museums or a local museum could be founded to curate and display Oka's cultural and traditional artefacts. Partnerships could be established with local artisans, such as sculptors and blacksmiths, to create Oka's historical artefacts using native materials. These artisanal objects could be shown and sold during the celebrations to promote native workmanship and bolster local economic growth (Balogun, Personal Communication, February 12, 2024).

As illustrated above, the festival also acts as a central point for creating important relationships and alliances with other stakeholders, therefore enhancing the effectiveness of

community-led projects. Working together with government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and private sector groups allows for possibilities to gather resources, share expertise, and enhance capabilities. By forming strategic partnerships with other stakeholders, the community can have access to expertise, financing, and technical help necessary for carrying out innovative projects and historically relevant social engineering.

Conclusion

This paper unveil Oka Day Festival as a cohesive cultural event connecting differences and fostering strong relationships that go beyond time and space. The event reinforces the importance of tradition in strengthening the social cohesion of the community by celebrating cultural heritage and communal identity. This study highlights the importance of Oka Day Festival as a social mechanism to sustain shared memories and promote community unity in Oka society. By carefully examining the historical origins, cultural symbols, and social consequences, we uncover the complex web of tradition that unites the community of Oka Land in their collective weakness and strength. Hence, the paper reveals the impact of Oka Day festival on building communal unity, safeguarding cultural heritage, and supporting sustainable community development in Ondo State, Nigeria.

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Interview with Dr. BolarinwaOlutayoBalogun, an Academia and indigent of Oka, on 12th February, 2024.

Interview with Dr. OpeyemiOmoriwo, a medical professional and an indigent of Oka, on 12th February, 2024.

Interview with Mr. Alonge Tosin Abayomi , a public servant and an indigent of Oka, on 12th February, 2024.

Interview with Mr. Danjuma Ajayi, a political analyst and Oka Youth Leader, on 16th February, 2024.

Interview with Mr. Daodu Emmanuel a federal civil servant and indigent of Oka, on 12th February, 2024.

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Flexible Work Schedules and Productivity: Insights from Lagos State Civil Service

Ayanda Abraham

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between flexible work schedules and employee productivity, focusing on the Lagos State civil service. Motivated by the removal of fuel subsidies and rising commuting costs, the Lagos State government introduced a flexible work schedule to enhance efficiency and mitigate economic challenges. Using a qualitative research design, the study synthesizes secondary data from academic literature, policy documents, and reports to explore the policy's design, implementation, and impact. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides the theoretical framework, emphasizing how motivators such as autonomy and reduced stress enhance productivity, while addressing hygiene factors like commuting costs to prevent dissatisfaction. The findings reveal that the flexible work schedule has contributed to improved employee morale, reduced commuting stress, and enhanced productivity, particularly for roles amenable to hybrid or telecommuting arrangements. However, challenges such as coordination difficulties and infrastructural gaps were identified, indicating areas for policy refinement. This research addresses a significant gap in understanding flexible work policies in developing contexts and offers practical recommendations for optimizing public service delivery in Lagos State.

Introduction

The Lagos State civil service, as the administrative backbone of the state, plays a pivotal role in delivering public services and ensuring the effective implementation of government policies. Over the years, the productivity of civil servants has been a recurring subject of concern, particularly in the face of evolving economic, social, and infrastructural challenges. To address these issues, the Lagos State government recently introduced a flexible work schedule as part of its strategy to mitigate economic hardships and enhance productivity within the civil service. This initiative represents a significant policy shift, aimed at alleviating the effects of the removal of fuel subsidies, rising commuting costs, and increasing demands for efficient public service delivery.

The introduction of flexible work schedules aligns with global trends emphasizing employee-centered policies as a means of improving morale, reducing stress, and enhancing

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performance. However, the effectiveness of such policies is contingent on various factors, including organizational culture, job roles, and the adaptability of employees and managers to new workflows. While existing studies acknowledge the potential benefits of flexible work schedules, their impact on productivity in a developing context, particularly within Nigeria's public sector, remains underexplored. Additionally, there is limited empirical analysis of how such policies address the unique challenges faced by civil servants, including traffic congestion, resource constraints, and the broader socioeconomic realities of urban governance in Lagos State.

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the relationship between work schedules and productivity, focusing specifically on the new flexible work schedule implemented for Lagos State civil servants. The research relies on secondary data, synthesizing information from academic literature, policy documents, and reports relevant to workplace flexibility, employee productivity, and public sector management. Data was drawn from scholarly articles, government publications, and media reports. Peer-reviewed journal articles and books accessed through databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate provided theoretical and conceptual insights into work schedules and productivity, with sources selected from 2015 onwards to ensure relevance. Lagos State government reports, including memos, press releases, and strategy papers, were analyzed to understand the policy's design, implementation, and intended outcomes. Additionally, comparative case studies and global best practices were incorporated to contextualize Lagos State's approach within broader trends.

The analysis employed a thematic approach, identifying recurring patterns and insights within the collected data. Themes such as work-life balance, employee morale, and operational efficiency were central to the analysis, guided by objectives to explore the conceptual underpinnings of flexible work schedules, evaluate the features and implementation strategies of Lagos State's policy, and identify its challenges and limitations. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provided a theoretical lens to assess how flexible schedules serve as motivators for public servants in Lagos State. Despite the richness of secondary data, this approach is not without limitations. The reliance on publicly available documents and literature introduces potential biases, and the lack of primary data from Lagos State civil servants leaves gaps in understanding the lived experiences of those affected by the policy. Addressing these limitations in future studies through surveys, interviews, or focus groups could provide a more comprehensive perspective on the policy's impact and implementation dynamics.

This study seeks to examine the nexus between work schedules and productivity, with a specific focus on the new flexible work schedule implemented for Lagos State civil servants. By analyzing key productivity indicators such as attendance, work output, and service delivery, this paper aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and its sustainability. The study contributes to existing literature by addressing a significant gap in understanding how flexible work arrangements can be tailored to optimize public service delivery in a developing economy. This research provides practical recommendations for policymakers and public administrators seeking to navigate the complexities of modern governance while prioritizing employee welfare and organizational efficiency.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the relationship between work schedules and productivity, focusing specifically on the new flexible work schedule implemented for Lagos State civil servants. The research relies on secondary data, synthesizing information from academic literature, policy documents, and reports relevant to workplace flexibility, employee productivity, and public sector management. Data was drawn from scholarly articles, government publications, and media reports. Peer-reviewed journal articles and books accessed through databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate provided theoretical and conceptual insights into work schedules and productivity, with sources selected from 2015 onwards to ensure relevance. Lagos State government reports, including memos, press releases, and strategy papers, were analyzed to understand the policy's design, implementation, and intended outcomes. Additionally, comparative case studies and global best practices were incorporated to contextualize Lagos State's approach within broader trends.

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Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which posits that workplace motivation is influenced by two categories of factors: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators, such as recognition, autonomy, and opportunities for personal growth, drive job satisfaction and enhance productivity. Hygiene factors, including working conditions, salary, and job security, prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily motivate employees. This framework is particularly relevant in analyzing how flexible work schedules address motivators by offering autonomy and reducing workplace stress, thereby fostering a more engaged and productive workforce. Hygiene factors such as reduced commuting costs also play a significant role in alleviating dissatisfaction, particularly in the context of Lagos State, where urban challenges like traffic congestion and high commuting expenses directly impact civil servants' experiences.

By applying Herzberg's theory, this study establishes a clear link between flexible work policies and employee productivity within the Lagos State civil service. Flexible schedules directly align with motivators by empowering employees with autonomy and reducing stress, creating an environment conducive to higher job satisfaction and enhanced performance. Additionally, the theory provides a lens to understand how alleviating negative externalities—such as long commuting hours through telecommuting or hybrid models—can address hygiene factors, ensuring that employees remain engaged and productive. This

theoretical grounding allows the study to critically evaluate the effectiveness of Lagos State's flexible work policy while situating its findings within broader organizational behavior literature.

Conceptual Review

The concept of work schedules has undergone significant transformation in recent decades, shaped by evolving organizational needs and the demands of a diverse workforce. Work schedules refer to the allocation of time within which employees are required to perform their assigned duties (Mas & Pallais, 2017). Consequently, Choudhary (2016) defines work schedules as structured frameworks that determine how, where, and when employees engage in their responsibilities. Nwekpa et al. (2020) similarly describe them as mechanisms designed to balance organizational goals with employee preferences, often encompassing traditional, flexible, and remote working arrangements. In line with this, Kelliher (2024) emphasizes flexibility as a critical aspect, noting that work schedules increasingly adapt to technological advancements and societal changes. Additionally, Ciarniene et al. (2018) highlight the significance of work schedules in mitigating workplace stress, stating that well-structured arrangements promote job satisfaction and reduce burnout. These definitions collectively underscore the dynamic nature of work schedules and their importance in fostering employee well-being and organizational efficiency.

Productivity, often regarded as the measure of efficiency in converting inputs into outputs (Sickles & Zelenyuk, 2019), is another central concept in this discourse. Accordingly, Drucker (2018) asserts that productivity transcends mere time spent at work, emphasizing quality and focused effort as critical determinants. Consequently, Saidin et al. (2022) describe productivity as the extent to which an individual achieves performance standards within a given role, underscoring its multi-dimensional nature. More importantly, from the purview of the public sector, Holzer (2018) defines productivity as the effective delivery of services that meet societal expectations while optimizing resources. Moreover, Gunter and Gopp (2022) identify productivity as a combination of output quality, timeliness, and innovation, particularly relevant in knowledge and resource-driven environments. Finally, De Loecker and Syverson (2021) expand the concept by linking it to organizational and economic performance, emphasizing the systemic interplay of individual efforts within broader institutional frameworks. These definitions as posited by Gidwani and Dangayach (2017) highlight the complexity of productivity and its dependence on both individual capabilities and structural support systems.

Having defined both concepts of work schedule and productivity, it is important to mention that the relationship between both concepts has been explored in various studies, demonstrating the significant impact of scheduling arrangements on employee output. For instance, Berkery et al. (2017) found that flexible work schedules enhanced employee engagement and reduced absenteeism in large European organizations. In a study on the Nigerian public sector, Austin et al. (2020) revealed that civil servants with adaptable schedules reported higher job satisfaction and performance compared to those on rigid schedules. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Kuppachi (2023) highlighted the benefits of remote and hybrid work models in improving focus and reducing workplace distractions. These findings provide compelling evidence that new work schedules, when thoughtfully implemented, can drive productivity gains, particularly in urban settings like Lagos State. The unique challenges faced by Lagos State civil servants—ranging from traffic congestion

to limited work-life balance—underscore the need for innovative scheduling solutions. Flexible work arrangements, such as staggered shifts or remote work, have shown promise in addressing these issues. For instance, studies by Choudhary (2016) and Omondi (3016) demonstrated that adaptive schedules not only alleviated stress but also improved public service delivery. However, the rigidity of traditional schedules often impedes such progress, as noted by Varo tsis (2022), who observed that fixed working hours frequently contribute to employee fatigue and reduced morale.

Essentially, this conceptual framework highlights the intricate interplay between work schedules and productivity, emphasizing the potential of new scheduling models to enhance employee performance and organizational outcomes. By incorporating multiple perspectives, it becomes clear that adaptive work schedules are vital for addressing the unique challenges of productivity. This discussion sets the foundation for further investigation into how innovative scheduling practices can optimize public service delivery in one of Nigeria's most dynamic urban environments.

Types of Work Schedules

Work schedules are a critical component of organizational structure, shaping not only the work environment but also employee performance, satisfaction, and overall productivity. Thus, as businesses and institutions continue to evolve, so too have the types of work schedules available to employees (Hashmi et al., 2023). These schedules can be broadly categorized into three main types: traditional work schedules, flexible work schedules, and hybrid work schedules. Each type offers distinct advantages and challenges, and understanding their nuances is essential for determining which model best suits the needs of both employers and employees in a given context (Govender et al., 2018).

Traditional work schedules are characterized by fixed working hours and locations, with employees adhering to a predetermined routine, often from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Kelliher et al., 2019). This model, which has been the norm in many organizations for decades, provides a sense of stability and predictability. It facilitates easier supervision and coordination, as employees are expected to be physically present during set hours (Khateeb, 2021). Accordingly, Messenger (2018) posits that this structure is advantageous for roles that require constant interaction or collaboration. However, it often lacks the flexibility needed to accommodate personal circumstances or rapidly changing work environments (Schneider & Harknett, 2019). Hence, in urban settings like Lagos State, where traffic congestion and long commuting hours are common, the traditional schedule can lead to employee fatigue, absenteeism, and decreased overall morale, thereby reducing productivity (Austin et al., 2020).

Flexible work schedules, on the other hand, offer employees greater autonomy over their working hours (Timms et al., 2015). This category encompasses a variety of arrangements, such as compressed workweeks, flextime, and telecommuting. In compressed workweeks, employees work longer hours over fewer days, while flextime allows for varied start and end times within a defined range of hours. Telecommuting, increasingly popular in the post-pandemic era, enables employees to work remotely, often from the comfort of their homes (Orishede & Ndudi, 2020). Sequentially, Omondi (2016) highlights that such flexible schedules have been shown to improve work-life balance, reduce commuting stress, and enhance job satisfaction, which in turn, boost productivity. However, flexible schedules present challenges as well. The lack of physical presence in a central office can make

coordination more difficult, and some employees may struggle with accountability, as there is less direct supervision (Spreitzer et al., 2017). As Weideman and Hofmeyr (2020) mentioned that without proper structure and communication, flexible arrangements may lead to feelings of isolation or disengagement.

Hybrid work schedules combine elements of both traditional and flexible schedules, allowing employees to alternate between fixed hours at a physical location and flexible arrangements, such as remote work (Best, 2021). This model as described by Wheatley et al, (2024) aims to strike a balance between the predictability of traditional work schedules and the flexibility of more modern approaches. Accordingly Haque (2023) posit that hybrid work schedules have proven effective in fostering productivity by accommodating individual preferences while maintaining organizational control. This model can be especially beneficial for knowledge-driven sectors where collaboration is essential but employees also benefit from the autonomy of flexible schedules. However, the challenge of implementing hybrid models lies in ensuring consistency across teams, managing communication effectively, and maintaining a cohesive organizational culture (Williams & Shaw, 2024).

Overall, the various types of work schedules each offer distinct advantages and present unique challenges. Traditional schedules provide stability but lack flexibility, while flexible schedules enhance work-life balance but may lead to coordination issues (Kossek et al., 2015). Hybrid work schedules offer a compromise, combining the best elements of both traditional and flexible models, though they require careful management to ensure consistency (Sampat et al., 2022). Inherently, for organizations like those in Lagos State, where urban challenges such as traffic congestion and long commutes can impact employee well-being, exploring these different work schedule models can help optimize productivity, improve job satisfaction, and ultimately enhance public service delivery.

The Nexus between Work Schedule and Productivity
The relationship between work schedules and productivity is influenced by a variety of factors, such as organizational culture, the nature of job roles, employee motivation, and the broader work environment (Davidescu et al., 2020). Hence, in recent years, there has been growing recognition of the significant impact that work schedule arrangements can have on employee output (Cvetkoska & Dimovska, 2021). Traditional work schedules, while still widely used, are increasingly being challenged by more flexible models that cater to the diverse needs of employees (Messenger, 2018). Flexible work schedules, including options like flextime, compressed workweeks, and telecommuting, have been linked to improved productivity (Kossek et al., 2015). One reason for this is as opined by Weideman and Hofmeyr (2020) is that flexible schedules reduce stress by allowing employees to manage their work-life balance better, which, in turn, enhances job satisfaction and overall performance.

Based on the foregoing, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory offers a useful framework for understanding how flexible work schedules can boost productivity. According to Herzberg (1959) cited in Filtvedt (2016), motivators such as autonomy, recognition, and opportunities for growth are key drivers of job satisfaction and performance. Flexible work schedules, which grant employees greater control over when and where they work, align with Herzberg's motivators (Ogachi, 2024), thereby establishing a nexus, as employees who feel trusted to manage their time are more likely to be engaged and committed to their tasks

(Spreitzer et al., 2017). Thus studies like Kelliher and Anderson (2018) and Omondi (2016) demonstrate that organizations offering flexible schedules report higher employee retention and productivity, particularly when these schedules cater to personal needs and preferences. For instance, employees who can avoid peak-hour commuting or align their work hours with their most productive hours often experience reduced burnout and greater focus, leading to enhanced output (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020).

On the other hand, rigid schedules, typically characterized by fixed hours and a standardized approach, can constrain creativity and adaptability, particularly in roles that require problem-solving or high levels of interpersonal interaction (Angelici & Profeta, 2024). When employees are confined to rigid schedules, they may struggle to think creatively or adjust to changing circumstances, which can hinder their productivity (Preenan et al., 2017). Thus Maslach et al. (2017) note that rigid schedules often contribute to workplace burnout, particularly in jobs that demand high emotional labor or extensive customer interaction (Abid & Barech, 2017). Essentially, employees who feel micromanaged or restricted by their schedules may experience dissatisfaction, leading to disengagement and reduced performance (Aslam et al., 2018).

However, it is important to recognize that flexibility, while beneficial, must be carefully managed to avoid unintended consequences. For example, when employees are given too much autonomy without adequate structure, there is a risk of poor time management, lack of accountability, and diminished supervision, which could ultimately affect productivity (Kossek et al., 2015). Based on this Nordback et al. (2017) highlight that flexible work schedules are most effective when there is a clear understanding of expectations and outcomes, alongside regular communication and oversight. Without these elements, the advantages of flexibility can be undermined, leading to issues such as decreased coordination and inefficiencies. In the context of public service, such as in Lagos State's civil service, these challenges are amplified by the bureaucratic structures and resource constraints inherent in government organizations (Onuorah & Bosso, 2024). Additionally, civil servants, whose roles vary widely across departments and job functions, may experience different levels of effectiveness based on the type of schedule they follow. While some roles may benefit from the autonomy provided by flexible arrangements, others that require a more structured approach may face difficulties.

Fundamentally, the relationship between work schedules and productivity is multifaceted and dependent on numerous factors, including organizational culture, job roles, and employee motivation (McCollough, 2023). While flexible work schedules have the potential to enhance productivity by reducing stress, increasing job satisfaction, and offering greater autonomy, they must be implemented with care to avoid potential pitfalls such as poor time management and lack of supervision (Austin et al., 2020). In public service environments, particularly in Lagos State, the dynamics of bureaucratic structures and resource limitations complicate the straightforward application of flexible schedules. To maximize the benefits of flexible work arrangements, it is essential to balance autonomy with adequate support and oversight, while considering the diverse roles and unique challenges of civil servants (Kim et al., 2021). This careful balance can help ensure that productivity gains are realized and sustained over time (Spreitzer et al., 2017).

Impact of Work Schedules on Productivity

The impact of work schedules on productivity is a complex and multifaceted issue that can manifest in both positive and negative ways, depending on the nature of the schedule, the work environment, and the individual needs of employees (Kazekami, 2020; McCollough, 2023). Work schedules play a crucial role in shaping not only the daily operations of an organization but also the overall performance, motivation, and well-being of its workforce (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017). Understanding the full spectrum of these impacts is essential for developing work schedules that optimize productivity while maintaining a healthy and sustainable work-life balance for employees.

One of the most significant positive impacts of flexible work schedules is the enhancement of work-life balance. Flexible schedules, such as flextime, compressed workweeks, or remote work options, allow employees to manage their personal and professional responsibilities better (Orishede & Ndudi, 2020). By reducing the time spent commuting or giving employees the flexibility to schedule work around their peak productivity hours, flexible schedules help mitigate stress and reduce burnout (White, 2017). Studies like Pragathi and Reddy (2023) have shown that employees who have more control over their working hours tend to report lower levels of stress and absenteeism, which ultimately contributes to higher productivity. For instance, another study conducted by Angayarkanni et al. (2024) found that employees with flexible schedules experienced improved health outcomes and greater satisfaction, leading to higher engagement and performance levels.

Another positive impact is increased morale and job satisfaction. As Austin et al. (2020) obsreves that when employees feel trusted and empowered to manage their schedules, they are more likely to experience higher levels of motivation and engagement. Accordingly, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory as explained earlier notes that motivators such as autonomy and recognition play a crucial role in fostering job satisfaction. Flexible work arrangements are directly aligned with these motivators, as they offer employees a sense of control over their work environment and personal time (Lee et al., 2022). Research by Austin et al. (2020) supports this, noting that organizations that provide flexible work options tend to have more engaged employees, which in turn leads to improved productivity and retention rate. Inherently, employees who feel they have the flexibility to balance their personal lives with professional demands are often more committed to their work and exhibit higher levels of performance (Bhatt &Patel, 2024).

Moreover, flexible work schedules allow employees to optimize their focus by aligning their work hours with their natural productivity peaks. Some individuals are more alert and efficient in the mornings, while others may perform better in the afternoon or evening (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). Flexible schedules allow employees to tailor their work hours to match their most productive times, which can result in more efficient task completion and higher-quality output (Messenger, 2018). This customization of work hours significantly improves both individual and team performance while also enhancing work flow (Yidizhan et al., 2023).

However, the implementation of flexible work schedules is not without its challenges, and these can sometimes result in negative impacts on productivity. One of the main drawbacks is coordination challenges. When employees are working on flexible schedules, particularly in roles that require frequent collaboration or real-time decision-making, it can become difficult to ensure that everyone is on the same page. This can lead to delays in communication, misaligned priorities, and slower decision-making processes (Spreitzer et

al., 2017). For example, research by Franken et al. (2021) suggests that flexible schedules can result in communication breakdowns when teams are not physically present at the same time, which can disrupt workflow and hinder collaboration.

Another potential negative impact is reduced supervision. In environments where employees are working remotely or on flexible hours, there may be less oversight, which can lead to issues with time management, accountability, and meeting deadlines (Kossek et al., 2015). While autonomy is often beneficial, too much freedom can lead to procrastination and a lack of discipline, especially in roles that require constant supervision or close monitoring. Accordingly, Bal and Izak (2021) noted that without the proper infrastructure for remote work, such as regular check-ins and performance tracking, employees may struggle to stay on task, reducing overall productivity.

Additionally, flexible work schedules may inadvertently create inequalities within an organization. Not all roles or employees may benefit equally from flexible work arrangements (Gratton, 2021). For example, positions that require physical presence or customer interaction may not be suited for flexible scheduling, leading to perceptions of favoritism or inequity among employees (Rubery et al., 2016). This can foster resentment and impact team dynamics, ultimately affecting productivity. Correspondingly, research by Okla (2015) highlights that in some cases, employees who are unable to take advantage of flexible schedules may feel excluded or undervalued, which can harm morale and productivity across the organization.

Inherently, the impact of work schedules on productivity is far-reaching and multifaceted, encompassing both positive and negative effects. Flexible schedules can lead to enhanced work-life balance, increased morale, and improved focus, all of which contribute to higher productivity. However, they also pose challenges, such as coordination difficulties, reduced supervision, and potential inequalities, which can hinder productivity if not properly managed. The Lagos State civil service's implementation of a new flexible schedule provides an intriguing case study that highlights the need for a careful, context-specific approach to work schedule design. By balancing flexibility with accountability and ensuring that the diverse needs of employees are met, organizations can maximize the positive impacts of work schedules on productivity while minimizing potential drawbacks (Kossek et al., 2015).

Overview of the New Work Schedule in Lagos State
In the face of mounting economic challenges affecting both the government and its citizens, Lagos State has taken a significant step by introducing a new work schedule for its civil servants. This strategic policy shift is a response to economic pressures such as the removal of fuel subsidies, rising inflation, and increasing commuting costs, which have placed a strain on both the workforce and public service delivery (Titi, 2024). By restructuring the work schedule, the Lagos State government aims to enhance operational efficiency, reduce the financial burden on civil servants, and align public sector productivity with the demands of a rapidly evolving economic landscape (David, 2024).
The new work schedule was introduced with the overarching goal of fostering a more flexible and adaptive working environment within the civil service. Recognizing the diverse needs of different sectors and job roles, the policy was rolled out in phases, beginning with administrative and technical staff in ministries and government agencies (Ayodele, 2024). These sectors were prioritized due to their susceptibility to disruptions caused by

commuting challenges and the feasibility of implementing flexible work arrangements in their roles. For instance, administrative tasks and technical operations that do not require a constant physical presence lend themselves well to hybrid models of work. As a result, the initial phase focused on adopting staggered work hours, compressed workweeks, and, in some cases, remote working options (Ayomikunle, 2024).

One notable feature of the new schedule is its emphasis on reducing commuting stress. Lagos, being one of the most densely populated cities in Nigeria, faces significant traffic congestion, which not only affects employee well-being but also impacts productivity. By allowing civil servants to work from home on specific days or adopt flexible hours that avoid peak traffic periods, the policy seeks to minimize commuting times and associated costs (Titi, 2024). This measure aligns with global trends where governments and organizations increasingly leverage flexible work arrangements to enhance employee satisfaction and efficiency (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Different studies has discussed in earlier sections has shown that such policies can significantly improve workforce morale and performance while reducing operational costs for the government.

The implementation of the new schedule also reflects a broader commitment to innovation and modernization within Lagos State's public sector. By integrating technology to support remote work, the government aims to equip civil servants with tools that ensure seamless communication and task completion, regardless of their physical location (Ayomikun, 2024). This approach not only promotes adaptability but also positions Lagos State as a forward-thinking administrative hub capable of navigating the challenges of a globalized economy. For example, online task management systems and virtual meeting platforms have been introduced to ensure continuity and accountability, even as employees work remotely (Opeyemi, 2024).

However, the rollout of the new work schedule has not been without its challenges. Issues such as disparities in technological access, resistance to change from some quarters of the workforce, and the need for clear guidelines on performance monitoring have emerged as areas requiring attention (Titi, 2024). Additionally, the varied nature of civil service roles, ranging from fieldwork to desk-based tasks, necessitates a tailored approach to ensure that all sectors benefit equitably from the new arrangements. These challenges underscore the importance of ongoing dialogue, capacity-building initiatives, and periodic evaluations to refine and sustain the policy (Ayodele, 2024).

Essentially, the introduction of the new work schedule in Lagos State represents a bold and innovative response to the economic and logistical challenges facing civil servants and the government at large. By prioritizing flexibility, reducing commuting stress, and leveraging technology, the policy aims to enhance productivity and adapt public service delivery to the realities of modern economic demands. While challenges remain, the phased approach and targeted interventions provide a strong foundation for the policy's success (Monsurudeen, 2024). If effectively managed and continuously improved, the new schedule has the potential to serve as a model for other states in Nigeria and beyond, demonstrating the value of flexible work policies in addressing contemporary governance challenges.

Key features of the new work schedule
The new work schedule introduced by the Lagos State government incorporates a range of features aimed at addressing the challenges faced by civil servants while enhancing overall productivity and work-life balance. This initiative as fore mentioned reflects the state's

commitment to modernizing its workforce policies to align with global best practices and the evolving needs of its employees. The features of this schedule as explained earlier are designed to mitigate the pressures of commuting, leverage technological advancements, and foster a more adaptable work environment, particularly in the face of economic and infrastructural challenges.

A central feature of the new work schedule is the introduction of flexible working hours, allowing employees to adjust their starting and finishing times within a defined window. This approach provides civil servants with the autonomy to choose work hours that align with their personal routines and peak productivity periods (Titi, 2024). In Lagos, where traffic congestion is a persistent challenge, this flexibility significantly reduces the stress associated with daily commuting. For example, employees can opt to begin their workday earlier or later than the traditional hours, provided they complete the required number of hours. This not only improves morale but also contributes to smoother traffic flows across the city, benefiting the wider population. This corresponds with studies like by Abid and Barech (2017) and Austin et al. (2020) that supports the notion that flexible schedules enhance employee satisfaction and reduce burnout, leading to better organizational outcomes.

Another key component is the hybrid work model, which allows certain departments to combine in-office and remote work arrangements. Civil servants in roles involving digital tasks or minimal need for in-person interactions are permitted to work remotely for part of the week (Davidd, 2024). This model draws from global trends influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which underscored the viability of remote work in many sectors. For example, administrative staff tasked with data management or report writing can accomplish these duties from home, reducing their commuting burden and allowing them to focus on tasks without the distractions of a traditional office environment (Wheatley et al., 2024). The use of digital communication tools such as virtual meeting platforms and cloud-based collaboration systems ensures that employees remain connected and productive, regardless of location (Haque, 2023).

The policy also includes reduced working hours on certain days through a compressed workweek model. Civil servants in eligible roles can complete their weekly hours over a shorter number of days, often four, by working longer hours each day (Ayomikunle, 2024). This approach helps to reduce the frequency of commuting, saving employees both time and money. The compressed workweek model has been particularly effective in minimizing stress associated with travel, especially for workers who reside in distant suburbs or areas with limited access to reliable transportation (Doss, 2024). Additionally, fewer commuting days align with environmental sustainability goals by reducing fuel consumption and vehicle emissions, a consideration that is increasingly important in urban planning and governance (Tao et al., 2024).

Furthermore, for roles that do not require direct public interaction or reliance on office infrastructure, the government has implemented telecommuting as a viable option (Ayodele, 2024). Telecommuting empowers employees to perform their duties entirely from home, leveraging advancements in technology to maintain productivity. This feature is particularly beneficial for roles involving research, writing, or data analysis, where uninterrupted focus is essential (Yasmin & Tanaka, 2022). By allowing employees to work from home full-time or on designated days, telecommuting promotes a better work-life balance and enables individuals to manage personal responsibilities more effectively

(Hossain et al., 2024) . The introduction of this option reflects Lagos State's recognition of the changing dynamics of work and the potential of technology to redefine traditional employment structures.

These key features underscore the state government's efforts to balance employee welfare with organizational efficiency. The focus on flexibility, adaptability, and technology-driven solutions ensures that the policy addresses the specific needs of civil servants while also aligning with broader goals of economic resilience and sustainable governance (Titi, 2024). The phased implementation of these features also allows for continuous evaluation and refinement, ensuring that the schedule remains responsive to both operational demands and employee feedback.

Conclusively, the new work schedule represents a forward-thinking approach to workforce management in Lagos State. By integrating flexible hours, hybrid models, compressed workweeks, and telecommuting, the policy not only alleviates the challenges posed by commuting and economic pressures but also positions the state as a leader in innovative public sector reforms. It is important to note that these measures have the potential to transform the civil service, making it more efficient, adaptable, and attuned to the realities of modern governance. As Lagos State continues to refine and expand the implementation of this schedule, it sets a precedent for other regions and states seeking to modernize their public sector operations and enhance employee productivity.

Implications of the New Work Schedule

The introduction of a new work schedule by Lagos State represents a pivotal shift in public administration with far-reaching implications for civil service operations, employee productivity, and broader organizational efficiency. By integrating flexible hours, hybrid models, and telecommuting, the policy challenges traditional approaches to public service delivery, which have historically been defined by rigid structures, fixed working hours, and hierarchical oversight (Atoum, 2024). This transformative approach reflects a recognition of the need to modernize public administration in the country to address the economic, social, and technological changes shaping governance in the contemporary era.

A significant implication of the policy lies in its potential to redefine employee engagement and productivity within the public sector. While flexible work arrangements have long been embraced in the private sector for their role in enhancing morale, reducing stress, and improving work-life balance, public institutions have been slower to adopt similar measures (Lindquist, 2022). By implementing this policy, Lagos State aligns itself with global best practices, positioning its civil service as a leader in innovative governance within Nigeria. This reform not only addresses immediate economic pressures but also underscores the government's understanding that flexibility and autonomy can be instrumental in boosting employee motivation and organizational performance (Opeyemi, 2024). If effectively implemented, the policy could serve as a model for other states and institutions in Nigeria facing similar challenges. It provides a compelling template for addressing the inefficiencies, low morale, and rigid bureaucracy that have long characterized public service in the country (Monsurudeen, 2024).

However, this innovative policy introduces complexities that must be carefully managed to ensure its success. Challenges such as maintaining coordination, ensuring accountability, and promoting inclusivity across diverse civil service roles will be critical considerations (Franken et al., 2021). Employees in roles that require physical presence,

such as frontline services, may not fully benefit from flexible or remote work arrangements, potentially leading to disparities within the workforce (Kaduk et al., 2019). These challenges highlight the need for a comprehensive framework that ensures equity while preserving the policy's core objectives. In addition, the effectiveness of the initiative will depend on robust supervisory mechanisms and adequate technological infrastructure to mitigate potential drawbacks, such as poor time management, reduced accountability, or inefficiencies in remote collaboration (Groen et al., 2018). Without these safeguards, the policy's potential benefits could be undermined, leaving gaps in its execution and reducing its overall impact.

Beyond its direct effects on employee productivity and cost efficiency, the policy also aligns with broader societal and environmental objectives. By reducing reliance on daily commuting and encouraging remote work, Lagos State addresses urban challenges such as traffic congestion and high carbon emissions, contributing to sustainable urban development (Titi, 2024). These outcomes reflect the policy's multifaceted value, offering benefits that extend beyond organizational goals to include environmental and societal advancements.

In essence, the new work schedule represents a bold and forward-thinking approach to modernizing public administration in Lagos State. It prioritizes employee well-being and operational efficiency while adapting to global trends in workplace dynamics. However, the success of the initiative will rely heavily on its ability to navigate the complexities of implementation and provide equitable access to its benefits. The insights gained from this initiative have the potential to redefine how public institutions in Nigeria can adapt to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving world, setting a new standard for governance in the process.

Summary

This study has critically examined the introduction of a new work schedule in the Lagos State civil service, focusing on its implications for employee productivity. The literature review explored the various types of work schedules, including traditional, flexible, and hybrid models, alongside their distinct advantages and challenges. It highlighted the global shift towards flexibility in workplace arrangements and situated Lagos State's initiative within this broader trend.

The findings reveal that the new work schedule, which incorporates features such as flexible working hours, hybrid models, and telecommuting, holds significant promise for enhancing productivity. Key benefits include improved work-life balance, reduced commuting stress, and increased employee morale. However, the study also identified critical challenges, such as coordination difficulties, supervision gaps, and infrastructural limitations, which could hinder the policy's effectiveness if not adequately addressed.

The analysis contextualized the policy within Lagos State's economic realities, particularly the rising costs of transportation following the removal of fuel subsidies. By reducing financial burdens on employees and fostering a more adaptive public service environment, the policy aims to enhance both individual and organizational performance. Furthermore, the study underscored the potential for Lagos State's approach to serve as a model for other public institutions seeking to modernize their operations and align with global best practices. Essentially, the study demonstrates the transformative potential of well-designed work schedule reforms for improving public sector productivity. However, the findings also highlight the importance of addressing structural and administrative challenges to ensure the policy achieves its intended goals. By offering insights

Conclusion

The adoption of a new work schedule by the Lagos State civil service marks a significant step towards modernizing public sector management in Nigeria. By introducing flexible working hours, hybrid models, and telecommuting options, the policy seeks to address the dual challenges of economic hardship and productivity in one of Africa's most dynamic urban centers. The findings reveal that this shift has had a predominantly positive impact on employee morale, attendance, and task completion, particularly for roles that benefit from flexibility and autonomy.

However, the success of this policy is not without limitations. Challenges such as coordination difficulties, inadequate supervision, and infrastructural gaps underscore the need for a more structured approach to implementation. Moreover, the disparity in how different departments and roles adapt to the schedule highlights the importance of tailoring work arrangements to the specific needs of employees and the nature of their tasks.

In conclusion, while the new work schedule demonstrates promise as a tool for improving productivity and employee satisfaction, its long-term effectiveness will depend on addressing its operational challenges. As Lagos State continues to refine this policy, lessons learned can serve as a valuable blueprint for other regions seeking to enhance public service delivery through innovative workplace strategies.

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Sustainable Development Strategies in Post-Conflict Economies

Zephaniah Osuyi Edo, Frank Adogbeji Enakemu & Amanda Olowoniyi Funke

Abstract

Post-conflict economies face significant obstacles to sustainable development. Some of these challenges include political instability, social fragmentation, economic volatility, and environmental degradation. The impact of conflict not only devastates infrastructure but also erodes social capital and human resources, creating enduring obstacles to peace and development. Leveraging on sustainable development strategies designed to tackle challenges faced by economies recovering from conflict and on the postulations of the Resilience Theory and the Sustainable Livelihood Approach, this study examines case studies with a view to identifying successful solutions that have helped regions recover and thrive after conflicts. The work found out that, fortification of institutions, encouragement of social cohesiveness, diversification of the economy, and the restoration of the environment are usually top priorities geared at ensuring sustainable development in post-conflict regions and that inclusive and flexible development policies are usually a must for the success of any sustainable development initiative. Consequently, the study recommends that to restore and maintain economies emerging from conflict, integrated social, economic, and environmental initiatives should be embraced.

Keywords Post-conflict economies, Sustainable development, Resilience theory, Sustainable livelihoods approach

Introduction

Post conflict economies are faced with the prodigious task of restoring social cohesion, reconstructing their economies and promoting sustainable development. The overwhelming outcomes of war leave with it an extensive destruction of infrastructure, displacement of people, and loss of human lives. Attempts at rebuilding communities after conflict often concentrate on physical reconstruction and transitory public assistance, rather than an enduring sustainable development. Nonetheless, sustainable development is crucial to guaranteeing that post-conflict nations can discontinue the series of violence and deprivation.

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Adopting the appropriate sustainable development strategy is necessary in rebuilding infrastructure and social amenities, promoting social cohesion through dialogue and settlement efforts, stimulating economic growth and decreasing poverty in post-conflict nations.

This study examines the sustainable development strategies utilized in the post-conflict nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. Although each of these nations has been confronted with major development challenges after their conflict, yet they have made remarkable advancement in encouraging sustainable development.

While Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Bosnia post-conflict reconstruction endeavours have been tailored towards supporting economic growth, decreasing poverty, and enhancing social cohesion. Rwanda has utilised the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) and Vision 2020. Sierra Leone on the other hand has adopted the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and Agenda for Prosperity strategy, while Bosnia and Herzegovina utilised the Reform Agenda and Socio-Economic Development Strategy (European Commission, 2019; World Bank, 2011 & UNDP,2013).

Global development efforts face a distinct obstacle in post-conflict economies. This is so because as these economies rise from the ashes of violent conflict, they encounter several challenges that impede immediate prosperity for them. In addition to inflicting profound wounds on social fabric and human capital, the physical scars left on infrastructure and institutions by battle are immense. Stiglitz (2018) argues that in addition to the obvious devastation, conflicts have far-reaching consequences for economic growth, stability, and poverty alleviation. Consequently, there is the need to understand specific difficulties post-conflict economies have with the view of proposing workable solutions that are effective and efficient in producing sustainable development in post-conflict economies, particularly in the area of economy and environment.

Thus, the following questions becomes pertinent; what are the environmental, social, economic, and political encounters faced by national economies in the aftermath of conflicts? What approaches and guidelines would foster sustainable growth and development in post-conflict nations? Which of the post-conflict rebuilding initiatives are most efficient in the selected study areas?

Literature Review

According to the Brundtland Commission, sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED 1987). The United Nations Development Program (2018), aver that the concept of sustainable development in the context of post-conflict societies is encapsulated in the protection of the environment, social inclusiveness, economic growth and peace building among others as recovery from conflict extend beyond physical rebuilding (UNDP, 2018). It involves social reforms, reconciliation, and the construction of new institutions (Burgess & Fonseca, 2020; Barakat, 2021).

Post-Conflict Contexts and Challenges

A large number of societies emerging from the throes of armed conflict tend to have a host of complex problems in the post-conflict period that make transition into sustainable development quite challenging. Reconstructive and recovery operations are faced with different challenges on various fronts: political, social, economic, and even environmental (Sovacool et al., 2018; Sharma et al., 2028). Indeed, a strategy for promoting sustainable development in post-conflict economies can be devised only after fully understanding the backdrop and nature of such challenges.

Political and Social Landscape

Social and political instability, fragility, and breakdown of governance institutions are often

the hallmark features prevalent in societies that have just gone through a conflict. Peace building and reconciliation efforts is a daunting task on account of the general distrust, long-encrusted grudges, and broken social ties that come with conflict (Touray, 2023). In a situation where armed groups and competitive factions emerge, the political tension increases and inhibits lesser chances of establishing inclusive and effective administrative systems. According to Jewett et al, (2021), problems of legitimacy and the breakdown of state institutions weaken the rule of law, which in turn exacerbates the violent cycle and diminishes the likelihood of sustainable development projects (Manyena et al. 2015).

Economic Conditions

Conflict results in widespread devastation, pauperization, and stagnation of economic growth, which has profound and lasting impact on the economy. Armed conflict results in acute humanitarian crises and long-term socio-economic dislocation since it disrupts productive activity, destroys infrastructure that is crucial, and displaces populations (Touray, 2023). Massive funding and concerted efforts geared at addressing systemic inequality, promote inclusive growth, and build sturdy economic institutions are needed for war torn countries' recovery (Roy, 2018). However, Hairam et al., (2023) avers that the presence of illicit economies, such as the drug trade or illegal resource extraction, further complicates economic recovery and fuels conflict dynamics, perpetuating instability and hindering sustainable development.

Environmental Degradation

Although essential to sustainable development programs, environmental dimensions of post-conflict transition often get overlooked. Ecological degradation, deforestation, and pollution from conflicts leave populations more prone to disasters and less capable of recovering from them (Barakat, 2021). Where fighting groups depend upon natural resource exploitation to finance the conflict, the consequences of ecological degradation and resource depletion are magnified (Asirvatham, 2024). The unified approach which considers restoration of the environment, management of natural resources, and conflict-sensitive programming will hopefully address environmental concerns, promote sustainable lifestyles, and prevent environmental hazards in post-conflict situations (United Nations Environment Programme, 2013).

The post-conflict situation and challenges in societies that have emerged from prolonged violence are complex and interlinked. Such formidable challenges to sustainable development as political unrest, economic collapse, and environmental deterioration require holistic and situation-appropriate responses. Addressing the root causes of violence, promoting inclusive governance, and enhancing resilience are some of the ways to achieve sustained peace and prosperity in post-conflict communities.

Empirically, there are studies that have shown how sustainable development strategies can advance adaptability and cohesion in post conflict environment. For instance, Roy (2018) in a study on the financial causes of civil wars contends that addressing economic injustice and inequitable distribution of resources forms part of the core activities in the rebuilding process. Conversely, Touray (2023), using an analysis of data from 1960 to 1999 revealed that countries with heavy dependence on the exportation of natural resources were more prone to civil conflicts, as natural resource availability and frequency of conflict go hand in glove. The finding affirms that sustainable development strategies for post-conflict states should be directed toward economic diversification away from natural resource exports.

Besley and Persson (2011) attempts to explain the role of institutions in post-war reconstruction. They found that the rule of law and the quality of governance structures of an institution determine the likelihood of achieving sustainable development. A country with strong institutions is more capable of implementing development programs that are sustainable, along with overcoming the many barriers that come up after a conflict. These

considerations show that rebuilding institutions is one of the key strategies for sustained development in post-conflict countries.

Similarly, Muggah and Krause (2019) in an empirical study on urban insecurity and violence in conflict-affected cities identified the interconnectedness of political instability, economic deprivation, and social exclusion in perpetuating urban violence by drawing on data from various cities such as Mogadishu, Kabul, and Baghdad. The results highlighted the multifaceted approach toward the view of sustainable development, considering the social and political dimensions, in addition to the economic and environmental ones.

World Bank (2018) examined how environmental degradation impacted recovery processes in the aftermath of a conflict. The study revealed that environmental degradation in the forms of water shortage, land degradation, and deforestation may exacerbate conflict processes. Thus, the study concluded that sustainable management of resources and environmental rehabilitation are integral components of recovery plans subsequent to a conflict.

Macid, Mursal, and Zaki (2023) in an empirical study on post conflict recovery strategies in Azerbaijani economy assert that post conflict economies can become the growth epicenter in the economic development of a nation. The study revealed that the "Smart villages" technique can add to sustainable development of post conflict region along with ensuring modernised agriculture, food security and agro-industrial factories. Macid et al., further argues that the implementation plans for restoration of economic and infrastructure is crucial in successful rebuilding of post conflict economies.

According to the (ILO) International Labour Organisation (2010) in post conflict situation employment is a key contributing factor to achieving short term stability, enduring peace, socio-economic advancement and reintegration. This is because having a source of livelihood provides people with the means of recovery and survival, a better option than social conflict. The absence of these further endemic poverty, increases vulnerabilities and is a major threat to peace efforts and the coping tactics adopted. Furthermore, the ILO aver that while international efforts play great role in post conflict economic recovery, the strategies of the Local Economic Recovery (LER) team is invaluable, particularly when it is streamlined within the gender context of the society. However, the ILO ignores the fact that the concept of gender varies globally.

Subačienė, Krutova, and Nesterenko, (2023) in a study on the' Determinants of sustainable development in the post-war recovery of Ukraine' argue that the enactment of modern practices of interaction between the nation, business and society should be adopted.

Similarly, Labaran, Muhammed, and Shehu (2023) highlights the critical need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to promote both political stability and financial development, which are fundamental to sustainable development. The findings of this study suggest that the restoration of political stability and economic growth is essential to achieving sustainable development in the aftermath of conflict. Nevertheless, the connection of these variables highlights the need for a complex and tailored approach.

Conversely, Manpaa, Liberty, & Abdullahi (2023) in a study on post-conflict societies in North-East Nigeria aver that drawing up a strategy for development of post conflict economic societies is an essential and calculated stage of recuperating from the conflict and a basic step in analysing the economic, physical and social devastations of the conflict. However, this is dependent on the cooperation of all actors involved in the development process.

Collectively, these empirical studies reveal the complexity of sustainable development in war-recovering economies. They stress that effective development interventions in nations post-conflict have to incorporate political, economic, social, and environmental concerns. On the other hand, having empirical evidence enables decision-

makers to make informed decisions and adjust their response to varied situations.

Theoretical Framework
Resilience Theory
The Resilience theory is attributed to Norman Germezy (1992), it elucidates the complexity that influence a community or a people's response to an adversity. The theory holds that facing an adversity is not as important as how one deals with the adversity. In line with this work, a nation's experience of conflict is not as pertinent as how it deals with the conflict in the interest of sustainable development. Expatiating on this theory, Béné et al. (2012) emphasises the capacities of adaptiveness, social capital, and institutional robustness in successfully navigating the complexity of post-conflict reconstruction. It goes further to state that a society that has lived through a conflict is much better off to resist shocks and rebound from disturbances for sustainable development (Manyena et al., 2015; Asirvatham, 2024). However, resilience theory ignores the cultural variations in resilience strategies and overlooks systemic and power disparities that impact resilience (World Bank, 2018).

Sustainable Livelihood Approach
The Sustainable Livelihood Approach examine the livelihood of people in a community to draw up strategies for disaster risk and poverty reduction (Carney,1998). This approach highlights the interlinked and impactful nature of economic, social, and environmental factors on post-conflict resilience and livelihood opportunities. The three principles of this approach are ecological sustainability, social cohesiveness, and economic recovery (Jewett, et al., 2021; Hariram et al. 2023). However, this approach suffers from over simplification and does not fully unravel the environmental sustainability of livelihood (Carney, 1998).

Case Studies
Case Study 1: Rwanda
Following the genocide in 1994, Rwanda presents a very good case study of post-conflict healing and sustainable development. The country was socially, politically, and economically decimated after the 800,000 lives that were lost in the genocide (Reyntjens, 2018). Strengthening social bonds and fostering reconciliation have formed vital parts of the recovery process in Rwanda. The initiation of development programmes by the administration in the state has been one of the ways the administration in the state has managed to steer the nation towards sustainable development path. For instance, the Gacaca Courts were established with the objective of truth-telling, justice, and healing at the community level (Ingelaere, 2018). Several indicators of human development show improvement due to Rwanda's investment in health and education (UNDP, 2021).

The Rwandan government has given priority to economic diversification and growth in strategic areas, including agriculture, technology, and tourism. The government's long-term development goals, as outlined in Vision 2020 and Vision 2050, include poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth (Republic of Rwanda, 2020). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global development programs have provided financial and in-kind supports to Rwanda's efforts.

Case Study 2: Sierra Leone
Sierra Leone experience from 1991 to 2002, offers yet another example of how nations strategically pursue sustainable development at having experienced national or regional conflict. From 1991 to 2002, Sierra Leone was engulfed in a terrible civil conflict that brought about immense economic damage, human rights abuses, and extensive brutality (Richards, 2016).

After the war, Sierra Leone started rebuilding by focusing on restoring institutions,

consolidating the country, and developing the economy. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to address past atrocities and promote healing and reconciliation (Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2004). However, progress has been hampered by challenges such as corruption, poor governance, and infrastructure limitations (Menzel, 2020).

Diamond mining in particular has been a development engine for the economy of Sierra Leone. According to (Le Billion 2015), the natural wealth has been distributed unfairly; there has also been a lack of transparency concerning the unfair distribution. Economic diversification and sustainable development initiatives have faced retrogression due to chronic poverty and inequality. (World Bank, 2020).

Case Study 3: Bosnia and Herzegovina

The rebuilding of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war it experienced is a perfect example of how hard it will be to achieve sustainable development within a fractured country. During the Bosnian War in the 1990s, there was huge population relocation, devastation of infrastructure, and ethnic cleansing (Bougarel et al., 2019). Since the signing of the Dayton Agreement in 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina has come a long way in repairing its institutions and reestablishing stability. However, ingrained ethnic rivalries and poor government have blocked reconciliation and long-term prosperity (Nikolic-Ristanovic, 2017).

The economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina is suffering from high unemployment, corruption, and dependence on foreign aid. Ongoing impediments to investment and growth have thus far thwarted this country's transition to a market economy (International Monetary Fund, 2020). Efforts to promote sustainable development have been hindered by political gridlock and a lack of consensus on key reforms (European Union, 2021).

Best Practices and Lessons Learned
Institutional Rebuilding

Reconstructing institutions is paramount for the attainment of stability and provision of a foundation for sustainable growth in countries that have experienced violence (World Bank, 2018). One of the most important lessons learned is the importance of designing and implementing institutional reforms through inclusive and participatory processes (Brinkerhoff, 2011). The situation in Rwanda remain a valid example on how a nation can strategically steer itself back on the path of sustainable development after ethnic-fueled crises. The country's concentration on decentralization and community participation in decision-making in order to ensure local ownership of development projects and rebuild confidence in Rwanda has been very effective not just in birthing development, but in sustaining it (Asirvatham, 2024).

Economic Policies and Programs

Building post conflict economies often require the initiation of conducive economic policies and programs that help revitalize post-conflict economies and contribute toward sustainable development (Makdisi & Soto, 2023). It is prudent to ensure diversity and innovation to minimize exposure to volatile industries such as agriculture and natural resources (Johnson, 2023). Sierra Leone has been a good example of the government in developing countries taking serious steps to increase economic growth and enhance employment opportunities by attracting international investment into industries such as tourism and telecommunications (UNDP, 2019).

Social Cohesion and Inclusion

Reconciliations of trust and peace in post-conflict cultures involve the encouragement of social cohesion and participation. According to Nititunga (2023), one of the important

lessons learned was addressing inequality and discrimination—a root cause of social unrest (Fiedler & Rohles, 2021). Reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been done around the interethnic dialogue and reconciliation; however, there are still a lot of obstacles to be overcome if the country hopes to resolve long-standing ethnic differences that continue to bedevil the sustainable development efforts of the country (UNDP, 2020).

Environmental Restoration and Management

Development in post-conflict settings can never be accomplished without first restoring and subsequently managing the environment. According to UNEP (2021), it is recommended that environmental concerns be integrated into broader development planning processes (Makdisi & Soto, 2023). In post-conflict Liberia, for example, the government has been working with international partners to develop policies and programs for reforestation and sustainable land management that have contributed simultaneously toward environmental and socio-economic goals (UNEP, 2018).

Methodology

A qualitative research design was adopted for this study, given that the focus is on qualitative data. Qualitative research is best suited for studies involving complex social phenomena and nuances of various stakeholders' perceptions. The data sources were pre-selected based on the reliability and applicability to the research. Academic papers, government publications, international organization reports, and other related documents were used.

Analysis of Findings

The findings from various case studies and empirical research that were analyzed show useful insights into strategies and challenges of sustainable development in post-conflict economies. This section presents some key findings and discusses implications for policy and practice. One key observation is the crucial support for the rebuilding of institutions in post-conflict contexts, as addressed and used in the case of Rwanda to achieve good governance and to build institutional capacity for an enabling environment towards sustainable development (Smith, 2018). In addition, setting up transparent and accountable institutions promotes trust among citizens, which attracts investment and allows for economic growth. According to Jones (2016), rebuilding institutions requires time and even prolonged international support to ensure that stability will prevail (Lund, 2019).

Another important area is economic policy and programs. The experience of Sierra Leone shows that the diversification of the economy and investments in infrastructure create conditions for economic growth and job creation (Kaplan, 2017). Most sustainable development strategies in these contexts focus on agriculture, tourism, and renewable energy as ways to tap into the local resources for a more inclusive growth (Sachs 2015). Additionally, focused interventions related to microfinance initiatives and vocational training programs have also been successful in empowering marginalized communities to become entrepreneurial (UNDP, 2020).

Social cohesion and inclusion are important parts of sustainable development for post-conflict societies. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, efforts toward reconciliation and coming to terms with the war have been at the heart of the recovery process of this country (Bieber, 2018). According to Roig (2019), a resilient community is one that consciously strives for openness, truthfulness, and fairness even in the face of challenges. In fact, uniting people from various ethnic groups is hard for any community to do, much more when hate and hostility dominate the scenes (Paffenholz, 2017).

The reinstatement of environmental regulations after a conflict is paramount. In fact, sustainable development in the aftermath of conflict is very difficult due to the aftereffects of pollution, deforestation, and land degradation that characterized the conflict (Bromley, 2016). Conca and Wallace (2019) raise these and other issues that call for an integrated approach of peacebuilding with natural resource management. It is possible to reduce environmental damage and contribute to economic recovery and resilience through locally adapted land-use planning, reforestation efforts, and renewable energy (UNEP, 2018).

Finally, the research findings reveal that political, economic, social, and environmental factors often interact in a complex way during post-conflict economic recovery. According to Pinker (2020), policies for sustainable development should be sensitive to the context so that long-term resilience and stability are promoted and the causes of conflicts tackled at their very source. By taking stock of what has worked and what hasn't, policymakers and practitioners can help communities hard hit by conflicts build resilience for the future.

Conclusion

A study on sustainable development techniques in post-conflict economies shows that the setting creates complex problems to be resolved in several ways. The economies of such countries have been adversely affected due to political turmoil, social breakdown, and economic disturbance among others which result in the breakdown of social cohesion and degradation of the environment. These notwithstanding, rebuilding of institutions is a necessity for achieving sustainable development in post-conflict contexts. Well-established institutions and good governance allow for stability, promotion of the rule of law, and facilitation of economic growth. As highlighted by Hariram et al. (2023), Institutions are crucial to the setting of norms, protection of property rights, and the promotion of responsibility, making sustainable development possible. According to UNDP (2019), for development initiatives to become culturally sensitive and sustainable, they must be nationally owned and their decision-making processes must be inclusive.

But, of course, without economic policies and programs, no sustainable development is possible, and repair of damaged economies is unimaginable. High unemployment, disruption of supply chains, and collapse of infrastructure are common economic legacies from post conflict economies. Hence, to get the economy going again and make people's lives more secure, we need targeted interventions in infrastructure investments, job creation initiatives, and assistance to small and medium businesses. Proactive government initiatives, when assisted by international aid, can have impressive poverty reduction along with the revival of the economy, as witnessed in Rwanda (World Bank, 2018).

Social cohesion and inclusiveness are needed when building resilient communities in post-conflict situations. Healing current societal wounds, encouraging mutual understanding, and strengthening social bonds are indispensable for reaching long-term stability and prosperity. The experience of Sierra Leone teaches that the way to mend or restore the divisions and the lost trust in society could be facilitated by inclusive government systems, truth and reconciliation processes, and community discussion (Roy, 2018; UNEP, 2018).

Sustainable development in post-conflict economies is complex and demanding; thus, it requires coordinated, well-rounded strategies. Building resilient societies – a battle against war and a conquest for perpetual peace, prosperity, and progress – implies not only looking for the root causes of conflict and advocating for inclusive development but also safeguarding the environment. The recovery of conflict-ridden economy requires strong

international cooperation and alliances that allow sustainable development.

Recommendations

1. In their efforts at restoring, post-conflict economies, governments should embrace integrated social, economic and environmental initiatives.
2. Conflict and political stakeholders, should employ multiplicity of approaches in their efforts at fostering sustainable growth and development in post-conflict nations.
3. Effective post-conflict rebuilding initiatives that cater for the wellbeing of all parties involved as opposed to ineffective initiatives that promotes sectorial empowerments should be used in rebuilding post-conflict economies.
4. **The** international community should develop more effective and impactful development initiatives in post-conflict situations by utilizing the knowledge and resources of governments, civil society organizations, and international institutions.

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Corporate Governance and Taxation in Nigeria: A Public Policy Perspective

Godwin Ohiokha & Ozekhome G. Igechi

Abstract

The paper examines the relationship between corporate governance and taxation in Nigeria, emphasizing public policy implications. It highlights how these two critical components of economic development relate and impact tax compliance, business transparency, and economic growth. The research aims to explore how corporate governance influences tax behaviour among Nigerian firms and the effectiveness of tax policies in mitigating tax evasion. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative approach, leveraging on thematic analysis with secondary data sources. It underscores the challenges of weak governance and inefficient tax administration, which foster tax avoidance and hinder revenue generation. Findings indicate that despite reforms, issues like poor enforcement, regulatory capture, and corruption persist, weakening the governance framework. This, in turn, exacerbates tax compliance challenges due to Nigeria's over-reliance on oil revenues and a low tax-to-GDP ratio. Recommendations include strengthening enforcement mechanisms, enhancing transparency, and fostering ethical corporate practices. The paper advocates for an integrated policy framework that aligns governance standards with tax compliance requirements, urging greater stakeholder engagement. Addressing these issues could enhance tax revenue, boost investor confidence, and contribute to sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

Keywords: Corporate Governance, Development, Economic Growth, Public Policy, Taxation.

Introduction

Corporate governance and taxation are two critical pillars of economic development, particularly in emerging economies like Nigeria. Effective corporate governance structures ensure that companies are managed in ways that promote accountability, transparency, and fairness. In contrast, taxation serves as a vital tool for governments to generate revenue for public goods and services. In Nigeria, the intersection between corporate governance and taxation presents unique challenges and opportunities for public policy. The interplay between these two elements can influence a company's tax compliance behavior, the ease of doing business, and overall economic growth (OECD, 2022).

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Corporate governance in Nigeria has evolved, particularly with the introduction of the 2018 Nigerian Code of Corporate Governance, which emphasizes principles such as accountability, transparency, and ethical leadership. Despite these efforts, issues of weak enforcement, regulatory capture, and corrupt practices persist, undermining the effectiveness of governance mechanisms (Obiyo & Leni, 2021). These governance shortcomings often have a direct bearing on corporate taxation, as poor governance structures can enable aggressive tax avoidance and evasion practices.

Taxation in Nigeria is similarly complex, with a tax-to-GDP ratio of 6%, which is one of the lowest in Africa (OECD, 2022). The country's over-reliance on oil revenues has limited the effectiveness of broader tax administration, leading to a narrow tax base and challenges in ensuring tax compliance. The government has introduced several tax reforms, such as the Finance Acts (2019, 2020, and 2021), to enhance revenue mobilization and close tax loopholes, but their impact has been mixed (PwC, 2022).

From a public policy perspective, understanding the relationship between corporate governance and taxation is essential for creating policies that not only improve tax compliance but also enhance the overall business environment. Effective corporate governance can encourage voluntary tax compliance, reduce the costs of enforcement, and promote sustainable economic growth. Therefore, a deeper analysis of corporate governance practices in Nigeria and their influence on taxation is crucial for developing effective public policies that address these challenges. It is in this context that this paper examines corporate governance and taxation in Nigeria within the public policy purview. The paper is conceptual in nature and deploys secondary sources of data in its methodology.

Corporate governance and taxation are critical drivers of economic sustainability and public sector efficiency in any country. However, in Nigeria, these areas are marred by a range of challenges that undermine the effectiveness of both corporate operations and public revenue generation. Weak corporate governance frameworks, coupled with inconsistent tax policies, have led to significant inefficiencies in tax collection, widespread tax evasion, and aggressive tax avoidance strategies by corporations (Okoye et al., 2022). These issues are compounded by Nigeria's dependence on oil revenues and a narrow tax base, resulting in fiscal vulnerability and reduced capacity to fund public services.

One of the major challenges facing corporate governance in Nigeria is the weak enforcement of regulations, despite the existence of governance codes such as the Nigerian Code of Corporate Governance (2018). Many firms fail to comply fully with these guidelines, leading to issues such as opaque financial reporting, unethical practices, and a lack of accountability (Olayinka & Ibrahim, 2021). These governance shortcomings not only reduce investor confidence but also create opportunities for corporations to engage in tax evasion and avoidance, further straining the country's revenue system.

From a taxation perspective, Nigeria's tax-to-GDP ratio remains significantly low, at approximately 6% compared to the African average of 17% (OECD, 2022). This low ratio indicates a substantial gap in the country's tax revenue potential, partly due to weak tax administration, high levels of informality, and insufficient corporate tax compliance. The introduction of recent reforms such as the Finance Acts (2019–2021) has aimed to close tax loopholes and increase tax revenue. However, poor governance and a lack of transparency within corporations have hindered the full realization of these reforms (PwC Nigeria, 2022). The intersection of weak corporate governance and an inefficient tax system presents a

significant public policy challenge. Without strong governance mechanisms, tax policies remain difficult to enforce, and corporations can exploit loopholes to minimize their tax burdens. This creates a vicious cycle, where inadequate tax revenue limits the government's ability to invest in public goods, ultimately stunting economic growth.

Addressing these problems requires a coordinated effort to strengthen corporate governance and reform the tax system, ensuring that corporations contribute fairly to national development. It is in this context that this paper examines corporate governance and taxation within Nigeria's public policy frontier. The general objective of this study is to investigate corporate governance and taxation within Nigeria's public policy space. Specific objectives include, to; examine the impact of corporate governance practices on tax compliance among Nigerian firms and; to analyze the effectiveness of Nigeria's tax policies in curbing corporate tax evasion. Thus the following questions are apt; How do corporate governance practices influence tax compliance among Nigerian firms? How effective are Nigeria's recent tax policies in reducing corporate tax evasion? The paper is divided into six sections. Section one is introduction. Section two addresses conceptual and theoretical issues. Section three engages methodological issues. Section analyses the core issues while section five is the concluding segment. Finally, section six proffer feasible recommendations.

Literature Review

Conceptual review
Corporate Governance
Corporate governance refers to the system of rules, practices, and processes by which a company is directed and controlled. It involves balancing the interests of various stakeholders, including shareholders, management, customers, suppliers, financiers, government, and the community. Good corporate governance ensures accountability, fairness, and transparency in a company's relationship with its stakeholders. It typically includes practices like board composition, audit procedures, risk management, and the rights of shareholders (Larcker & Tayan, 2021). In emerging economies like Nigeria, corporate governance is crucial for fostering trust and improving business performance in an environment often characterized by weak institutions and regulatory frameworks.

Taxation
Taxation is the process by which governments impose financial charges or levies on individuals, businesses, and other entities to generate revenue for public expenditures. Taxes are essential for funding public services such as infrastructure, education, healthcare, and defense. Taxation systems vary by country and can include direct taxes like income and corporate taxes, as well as indirect taxes like VAT (Value Added Tax) and excise duties (OECD, 2022). In Nigeria, the tax system has undergone significant reforms in recent years to increase revenue mobilization, although challenges like tax evasion, avoidance, and a narrow tax base persist (PwC Nigeria, 2022).

Public Policy
Public policy refers to a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities set by governmental entities or their representatives to address specific issues within a society. Public policies are intended to influence economic, social, or environmental outcomes by shaping the behavior of individuals, businesses, and other entities. In the context of governance and taxation, public policy plays a critical role in creating an environment that fosters transparency, accountability, and economic growth (Dye, 2020). Effective public policies are essential for ensuring that corporate governance mechanisms and tax systems function efficiently to promote sustainable development.

Theoretical Review

This study deploys Stakeholder theory to illuminate the discourse as it concern corporate governance and taxation in Nigeria.

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory is a framework for analyzing and guiding the management of a business by recognizing that various groups—beyond just shareholders—have a vested interest in the performance and outcomes of a company. Introduced by R. Edward Freeman in his 1984 book *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, stakeholder theory posits that an organization's success depends not only on maximizing shareholder value but also on balancing the interests of all stakeholders who can affect or are affected by the company's operations.

Stakeholders are typically classified into internal and external groups. Internal stakeholders include employees, managers, and shareholders, while external stakeholders include customers, suppliers, creditors, government, and the wider community. Stakeholder theory emphasizes the need for management to consider these diverse groups' interests and build relationships based on trust and mutual benefit (Freeman, 1984).

In contrast to the shareholder primacy model, which focuses on maximizing financial returns for investors, stakeholder theory argues for a broader ethical responsibility of companies. It suggests that companies should act in ways that benefit all stakeholders, leading to long-term sustainability and success. For example, maintaining good relations with employees ensures productivity, while meeting customer expectations fosters loyalty, and complying with government regulations minimizes legal risks.

In practice, stakeholder theory has been widely applied in corporate governance, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and sustainability initiatives. It has reshaped how companies approach their social, environmental, and economic impacts. By addressing the needs and concerns of various stakeholders, companies can enhance their reputation, minimize conflicts, and achieve sustainable growth (Jones et al., 2018).

Applying Stakeholder Theory to Corporate Governance and Taxation in Nigeria: A Public *Policy Perspective*

Stakeholder theory provides a valuable lens through which to examine the relationship between corporate governance and taxation in Nigeria. According to this theory, a company's success is not solely dependent on maximizing shareholder value but on balancing the interests of all stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, government, and the wider community (Freeman, 1984). In the context of corporate governance and taxation, this approach highlights the importance of fair and transparent governance practices that align with the interests of diverse stakeholders, rather than solely prioritizing short-term financial gains through tax minimization strategies.

1. Corporate Governance and Stakeholder Interests

In the Nigerian context, weak corporate governance practices—such as poor transparency, accountability, and oversight—have often led to unethical practices, including tax evasion and avoidance. According to stakeholder theory, companies should act in the interests of all stakeholders, including the government and the public, who rely on tax revenues to fund public goods and services (Jones et al., 2018). Thus, when companies engage in tax avoidance, they not only undermine public revenues but also damage their relationships with critical stakeholders, such as the government, the community, and even customers who expect ethical behavior.

By applying stakeholder theory, corporate governance frameworks in Nigeria can be improved to ensure that companies prioritize the long-term interests of all stakeholders. This involves implementing governance practices that promote transparency, fair financial

reporting, and ethical compliance with tax regulations. Effective governance will encourage corporations to meet their tax obligations, contributing to public funds and supporting national development.

2. Taxation as a Stakeholder Responsibility

Taxation is a crucial mechanism through which companies contribute to the public welfare, directly aligning with stakeholder theory's emphasis on balancing multiple stakeholder interests. According to this theory, companies should recognize their obligation to contribute to society by paying taxes, which in turn fund infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other public services that benefit the community and improve the business environment (Schneider & Scherer, 2019).

In Nigeria, the government is a key stakeholder, relying on corporate tax revenues for public expenditure. However, the country has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios globally, partly due to corporate tax evasion and avoidance (OECD, 2022). Stakeholder theory suggests that companies should take a more socially responsible approach by complying with tax laws and contributing their fair share. By doing so, they can foster positive relationships with the government and the community, leading to a more stable and supportive operating environment.

3. Public Policy and Stakeholder Engagement

From a public policy perspective, stakeholder theory emphasizes the need for policies that balance corporate interests with broader societal concerns. This means developing regulations that not only promote business growth but also ensure corporations fulfill their societal obligations, such as paying taxes. In Nigeria, recent tax reforms, such as the Finance Acts (2019–2021), aim to close tax loopholes and improve corporate tax compliance (PwC Nigeria, 2022). However, the success of these reforms depends on how well they align with the interests of all stakeholders, including corporations, the government, and the public.

Effective public policies grounded in stakeholder theory can ensure that corporations are incentivized to comply with tax regulations while maintaining profitable operations. For example, policies that enhance corporate governance standards, encourage voluntary tax compliance, and promote transparency can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes for all stakeholders. Corporations would benefit from a stable regulatory environment, while the government would secure much-needed tax revenue to fund public goods.

Applying stakeholder theory to the relationship between corporate governance and taxation in Nigeria highlights the need for balanced, transparent governance practices that address the interests of all stakeholders. This includes not only maximizing shareholder returns but also fulfilling tax obligations to support public services and development. By fostering stronger corporate governance frameworks and effective tax policies, Nigeria can create a more equitable and sustainable economic environment that benefits corporations, the government, and society at large.

Taxation Theories and Principles

Taxation theories and principles provide the foundation for understanding how governments levy taxes and justify their tax systems. These theories offer different perspectives on the fairness, equity, and efficiency of taxation. Two key principles in tax theory are the **Benefit Principle** and the **Ability-to-Pay Principle**, both of which aim to guide tax policies and ensure equitable revenue generation.

1. Benefit Principle

The **Benefit Principle** of taxation asserts that individuals should be taxed according to the benefits they receive from public goods and services. Under this principle, the amount of tax paid by an individual or corporation is proportional to the level of benefits they derive from government spending. This concept is based on the idea that public goods, such as

infrastructure, education, and national defense, provide direct or indirect benefits to taxpayers, who should contribute toward the cost of providing those goods (Musgrave & Musgrave, 2017).

For example, businesses that rely heavily on public infrastructure, such as roads and utilities, would be expected to pay higher taxes, reflecting their greater use of these public resources. Similarly, individuals who use public services, such as healthcare and education, would contribute in proportion to the benefits they receive. The Benefit Principle is often applied to specific taxes, such as tolls, user fees, or excise taxes, where a clear link exists between the tax and the service provided (Stiglitz & Rosengard, 2015).

Critics of the Benefit Principle argue that it can be difficult to measure the exact benefits received by individuals or corporations, especially for non-excludable public goods like national defense or clean air. Furthermore, the principle might not account for the needs of lower-income individuals who may benefit less from public services but are less able to pay higher taxes.

2. Ability-to-Pay Principle

The **Ability-to-Pay Principle** is grounded in the concept of tax equity and argues that taxes should be levied according to an individual's or entity's capacity to bear the tax burden. This principle advocates for progressive taxation, where those with higher incomes or greater wealth pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes, while those with lower incomes pay less (Rosen & Gayer, 2021). The rationale behind this principle is that individuals or entities with greater financial resources are more capable of contributing to government revenues without significantly affecting their standard of living.

The Ability-to-Pay Principle is often reflected in personal income tax systems that include progressive tax rates, where tax rates increase as income rises. This principle promotes social justice by redistributing wealth and ensuring that the tax system reduces inequalities. It also recognizes that lower-income individuals may need more public services but lack the financial capacity to contribute proportionately (Gruber, 2019).

While the Ability-to-Pay Principle is widely supported for its emphasis on fairness, it can also face challenges. Critics argue that it may discourage productivity and economic growth by penalizing high earners with higher taxes. There are also concerns about the complexity and administrative burden of implementing progressive taxation systems, as they require careful income tracking and enforcement to prevent tax avoidance and evasion.

Both the Benefit Principle and the Ability-to-Pay Principle offer important perspectives on the fairness and efficiency of taxation systems. The Benefit Principle emphasizes a direct link between taxes and the services provided, making it suitable for specific taxes like user fees and tolls. On the other hand, the Ability-to-Pay Principle highlights the importance of equity and social justice, advocating for progressive taxation to reduce income inequality. In practice, most modern tax systems incorporate elements of both principles to achieve a balance between fairness, efficiency, and revenue generation.

Linking Corporate Governance and Taxation

Corporate governance and taxation are closely linked, as effective governance structures within companies significantly influence tax policies and practices. Good corporate governance can ensure that companies meet their tax obligations responsibly, while poor governance may facilitate unethical practices such as tax evasion and avoidance. Below are two key aspects that highlight this relationship.

1. How Effective Corporate Governance Can Impact Taxation Policies and Practices

Effective corporate governance can significantly influence taxation policies and practices by promoting ethical and responsible financial behavior within organizations. Corporate governance involves a system of checks and balances that ensures businesses comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including tax laws (Larcker & Tayan, 2021). Companies

with strong governance frameworks, including independent boards, clear financial oversight, and robust audit mechanisms, are more likely to comply with taxation policies and avoid aggressive tax strategies.

When companies adhere to good governance principles, they reduce the likelihood of tax evasion and avoidance, which helps to improve the overall tax compliance rate in a country. This not only increases tax revenues but also strengthens the legitimacy of the tax system, creating a more stable business environment (Desai & Dharmapala, 2006). For example, governance frameworks that emphasize the role of boards in overseeing financial decisions can prevent the adoption of risky tax minimization schemes that harm both the corporation's long-term reputation and the public interest (Zeng, 2020).

Moreover, effective corporate governance can support the formulation of better tax policies. When corporations operate transparently and engage constructively with tax authorities, they contribute to creating a more predictable and consistent tax policy environment. This benefits not only the companies but also the government by allowing for better tax planning and revenue forecasting (Hanlon & Heitzman, 2010).

2. The Role of Transparency, Accountability, and Ethical Behaviour in Tax Compliance

Transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior are foundational elements of corporate governance, and they play a critical role in enhancing tax compliance. Transparency in financial reporting ensures that corporations accurately disclose their income, expenses, and tax liabilities, making it difficult for them to conceal taxable income or engage in aggressive tax avoidance practices (OECD, 2021). Publicly available and clear financial information allows tax authorities to assess corporate tax liabilities more accurately and effectively, reducing the opportunities for tax evasion.

Accountability in corporate governance, particularly through the board of directors and audit committees, ensures that senior management is held responsible for the company's tax strategies and compliance with tax laws (Huseynov & Klamm, 2012). Companies that emphasize accountability in their governance structures are more likely to adopt tax practices that comply with legal requirements and avoid reputational risks associated with unethical tax behavior. This, in turn, fosters a culture of tax compliance and discourages the use of aggressive tax avoidance schemes.

Ethical behavior, which is often promoted by corporate governance codes and standards, is another important factor in tax compliance. Ethical companies are more likely to view paying taxes as a civic duty rather than simply a cost to minimize (Taylor, 2020). When corporations prioritize ethical behavior, they recognize the broader societal impacts of tax avoidance, such as reduced public resources for infrastructure, education, and healthcare. This encourages them to fulfill their tax obligations in a way that supports societal development and long-term economic stability (Olatunji & Adekoya, 2021).

In the end, corporate governance structures that emphasize transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior create an environment in which companies are more likely to comply with tax laws, contribute fairly to public revenues, and engage constructively with tax authorities. This promotes a more efficient and equitable taxation system.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative research anchored on secondary data. The analysis is done under themes as the researchers explored corporate governance and taxation in Nigeria by analyzing works from journals, magazines books, policy papers and working papers.

Current State of Corporate Governance in Nigeria

Corporate governance in Nigeria has evolved significantly over the years, influenced by various historical, economic, and political factors. This evolution has shaped the current regulatory landscape and practices that guide corporate governance in the country.

1. Historical Background and Evolution of Corporate Governance in Nigeria

The concept of corporate governance in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial era when the British introduced modern business practices. However, it was not until the 1990s that corporate governance gained prominence in Nigeria, particularly following a series of financial scandals and corporate failures that highlighted the need for stronger governance frameworks.

One of the major catalysts for change was the collapse of several banks and public companies in the early 2000s, which eroded public trust in the corporate sector. In response, the Nigerian government established various reforms aimed at improving corporate governance standards. The 2003 report of the Nigerian Corporate Governance Codes, led by the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), marked a significant milestone in outlining best practices for corporate governance in Nigeria.

In 2011, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued the SEC Code of Corporate Governance, which aimed to strengthen the governance practices of publicly listed companies. This code provided guidelines on board composition, responsibilities, accountability, and the protection of shareholder rights. The need for a robust corporate governance framework was further emphasized by the global financial crisis of 2008, which underscored the importance of transparency and accountability in business operations (Iyiola & Sulaimon, 2021).

Over the years, Nigeria has witnessed ongoing developments in corporate governance, including the establishment of various committees and initiatives focused on enhancing governance practices across different sectors. Despite these advancements, challenges such as weak enforcement mechanisms, lack of compliance, and inadequate investor protection continue to hinder the effectiveness of corporate governance in Nigeria (Okafor & Nwanji, 2022).

2. Regulatory Frameworks Governing Corporate Governance

Nigeria's corporate governance landscape is shaped by several regulatory frameworks that provide guidelines and standards for corporate behavior. Key regulations include the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) and the SEC Code of Corporate Governance.

Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA): Originally enacted in 1990 and amended in 2020, CAMA serves as the principal legislation governing corporate activities in Nigeria. The Act establishes the legal framework for the registration, management, and regulation of companies. It sets out the responsibilities of directors, the rights of shareholders, and the requirements for financial reporting and accountability. Notably, the 2020 amendments introduced provisions aimed at enhancing corporate governance practices, such as allowing for the establishment of companies by a single person and increasing the threshold for the audit exemption (Ogunbiyi & Kanu, 2021).

SEC Code of Corporate Governance: Issued in 2011 and revised in 2021, the SEC Code outlines best practices for corporate governance for publicly listed companies in Nigeria. The Code emphasizes the importance of an effective board structure, the role of independent directors, and the need for transparency and accountability in corporate decision-making. It also addresses issues related to risk management, executive remuneration, and the protection of minority shareholders (SEC Nigeria, 2021). The SEC has the authority to enforce compliance with the Code and impose sanctions on companies that fail to adhere to its provisions.

In addition to these key frameworks, various sector-specific guidelines and codes have been developed to address governance issues in specific industries, such as banking and insurance. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) have their own corporate governance codes that apply to their respective sectors, reinforcing the overall governance framework in Nigeria.

The current state of corporate governance in Nigeria reflects a complex interplay of historical developments and regulatory efforts. While significant progress has been made through the establishment of frameworks like CAMA and the SEC Code of Corporate Governance, challenges remain in ensuring compliance and enforcement. Strengthening corporate governance practices is essential for fostering investor confidence, enhancing corporate performance, and promoting sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

Challenges in Corporate Governance in Nigeria

Corporate governance in Nigeria faces significant challenges that hinder its effectiveness and undermine public trust in corporations. Key issues include weak enforcement mechanisms, corruption and ethical concerns, and the overall impact of weak corporate governance on the economy.

1. Weak Enforcement Mechanisms

One of the most pressing challenges in corporate governance in Nigeria is the weak enforcement of existing regulations and standards. Despite the establishment of frameworks such as the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) and the SEC Code of Corporate Governance, enforcement remains inadequate due to several factors. Regulatory agencies, such as the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), often lack the necessary resources, personnel, and technical expertise to effectively monitor compliance and investigate violations (Iyiola & Sulaimon, 2021).

Moreover, there are often inconsistencies in the application of regulations, leading to selective enforcement. This inconsistency can create an environment where companies can flout governance standards without facing significant consequences. As a result, many firms prioritize profit maximization over ethical behavior and compliance, perpetuating a culture of impunity (Okafor & Nwanji, 2022). Without robust enforcement mechanisms, stakeholders may lack confidence in the integrity of corporate governance, leading to reduced investment and economic growth.

2. Corruption and Ethical Concerns

Corruption remains a pervasive issue in Nigeria, significantly impacting corporate governance. The intertwining of corporate interests and corrupt practices can lead to unethical decision-making and a lack of accountability among corporate leaders. Bribery and corruption often compromise the integrity of business operations, making it difficult for companies to adhere to governance standards (Uche, 2020).

Furthermore, the presence of nepotism and favoritism in corporate structures can undermine meritocracy and result in poor leadership choices. When governance is influenced by corrupt practices, it becomes challenging to foster a culture of transparency and accountability. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of whistleblower protections and inadequate mechanisms for reporting unethical behavior, which discourages individuals from speaking out against corruption (Olatunji & Adekoya, 2021).

3. The Impact of Weak Corporate Governance on the Economy

The challenges associated with weak corporate governance have far-reaching implications for Nigeria's economy. Poor governance practices can lead to mismanagement of resources, decreased investor confidence, and increased capital flight. When companies engage in unethical practices, they not only harm their reputation but also deter potential investors who seek a stable and transparent business environment (Hanlon & Heitzman, 2010).

Additionally, weak corporate governance can contribute to economic instability. For instance, the financial crises of the early 2000s in Nigeria, characterized by the collapse of several banks, highlighted the detrimental effects of poor governance on the broader economy (Iyiola & Sulaimon, 2021). These crises resulted in significant job losses, reduced access to credit, and a decline in public trust in financial institutions.

Furthermore, weak corporate governance can exacerbate income inequality and social unrest, as the misallocation of resources and corporate irresponsibility can widen the gap between the wealthy and the underprivileged (Uche, 2020). Consequently, addressing the challenges of corporate governance in Nigeria is crucial for fostering a more equitable and sustainable economic environment.

The challenges in corporate governance in Nigeria—weak enforcement mechanisms, corruption, and ethical concerns—pose significant obstacles to achieving effective governance. These issues not only undermine corporate accountability but also have detrimental effects on the economy as a whole. Strengthening corporate governance practices and enhancing regulatory frameworks are essential steps toward promoting transparency, accountability, and sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

Taxation Policies and Practices in Nigeria

Taxation in Nigeria is a critical component of the country's fiscal policy, aimed at generating revenue for government expenditure and promoting economic development. The Nigerian tax system comprises various types of taxes, along with several key regulatory bodies responsible for tax administration and compliance.

1. Types of Taxes

Nigeria employs a variety of taxes that can be categorized into direct and indirect taxes:

Corporate Income Tax (CIT): This is a direct tax levied on the profits of companies operating in Nigeria. The standard CIT rate is 30% for companies, while smaller companies with a turnover of less than ₦25 million are subject to a reduced rate of 20% under certain conditions. Certain sectors, such as the oil and gas industry, are subjected to different tax regimes, including the Petroleum Profits Tax (PPT) (Federal Inland Revenue Service [FIRS], 2021).

Value Added Tax (VAT): VAT is an indirect tax levied on the consumption of goods and services. The standard VAT rate in Nigeria is 7.5%, which was increased from 5% in 2020. VAT is collected at each stage of the production and distribution process and is ultimately borne by the final consumer. Exemptions exist for certain goods and services, such as basic food items and medical services (FIRS, 2021).

Personal Income Tax (PIT): This tax is imposed on the income of individuals, including salaries, wages, and other earnings. The PIT operates on a graduated rate structure, ranging from 7% to 24%, depending on the income level. Each state in Nigeria has its own regulations governing personal income tax collection (Ogunbiyi & Kanu, 2021).

Capital Gains Tax (CGT): This tax applies to the profit earned from the sale of assets, such as property or shares. The CGT rate is currently set at 10% of the net gains made from such transactions (FIRS, 2021).

Excise Duties: These are taxes imposed on specific goods manufactured within the country, such as alcoholic beverages and tobacco products. The rates vary depending on the type of product and are aimed at regulating consumption while generating revenue for the government (Olatunji & Adekoya, 2021).

Other Taxes: Other taxes include the Stamp Duty, which is levied on legal documents and transactions; the Withholding Tax, which is deducted at source from payments for goods and services; and various state-level taxes such as business premises fees and motor vehicle registration fees.

2. Key Regulatory Bodies

Several regulatory bodies are responsible for tax administration and enforcement in Nigeria:

Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS): The FIRS is the primary agency responsible for the assessment, collection, and administration of federal taxes, including Corporate Income Tax, Value Added Tax, and Withholding Tax. Established by the FIRS (Establishment) Act of 2007, the agency aims to ensure compliance with tax laws and improve the revenue generation capacity of the federal government. The FIRS has made significant strides in digitizing tax processes and enhancing taxpayer education to improve compliance (FIRS, 2021).

State Boards of Internal Revenue: Each state in Nigeria has its own Board of Internal Revenue, which is responsible for collecting and administering state taxes, such as Personal Income Tax and various local taxes. These boards operate under the authority of the state government and are tasked with enforcing tax laws, conducting assessments, and ensuring compliance among residents and businesses within their jurisdiction. The effectiveness of these boards varies significantly across states, often influenced by local governance and capacity (Ogunbiyi & Kanu, 2021).

Joint Tax Board (JTB): The JTB comprises representatives from the FIRS and the various State Boards of Internal Revenue. It serves as a coordinating body to harmonize tax policies and practices between federal and state levels, ensuring consistency and efficiency in tax administration across Nigeria (Olatunji & Adekoya, 2021). Taxation policies and practices in Nigeria are shaped by a diverse range of taxes and regulatory bodies that aim to generate revenue and promote economic development. The effective functioning of these tax systems and agencies is crucial for enhancing compliance, improving revenue generation, and ensuring the overall stability of the Nigerian economy.

Challenges in the Nigerian Tax System

The Nigerian tax system faces numerous challenges that hinder effective tax collection and compliance. These challenges include tax evasion and avoidance, issues related to the informal economy, and inadequate administrative capacity compounded by corruption. Addressing these issues is critical for enhancing revenue generation and ensuring a more equitable tax system.

1. Tax Evasion and Avoidance

Tax evasion and avoidance remain significant challenges in Nigeria, undermining the government's ability to collect revenues effectively. Tax evasion refers to the illegal practice of not reporting income or underreporting income to reduce tax liabilities, while tax avoidance involves using legal means to minimize tax payments, often through loopholes in tax laws (Olatunji & Adekoya, 2021).

Factors contributing to tax evasion and avoidance include the complexity of the tax system, lack of awareness among taxpayers, and the perceived inequities in the tax system. Many businesses, particularly large corporations, engage in aggressive tax planning strategies to reduce their tax burden, often using offshore accounts and shell companies (FIRS, 2021). This not only results in significant revenue losses for the government but also creates an uneven playing field for compliant businesses.

Moreover, inadequate enforcement mechanisms and a lack of political will to prosecute tax offenders exacerbate the problem. Many companies and individuals view tax compliance as optional, leading to widespread non-compliance with tax obligations (Iyiola & Sulaimon, 2021).

2. Informal Economy and Tax Compliance

The informal economy is a significant aspect of Nigeria's economic landscape, contributing to challenges in tax compliance. It encompasses a wide range of unregistered businesses and

workers who operate outside the formal tax system. Estimates suggest that the informal sector accounts for over 50% of Nigeria's GDP, yet it remains largely untaxed (NBS, 2020).

The characteristics of the informal economy—such as its lack of regulation, absence of formal records, and often transient nature—pose significant hurdles for tax authorities seeking to collect revenue. Informal businesses are typically small-scale, operate on low profit margins, and may not possess the capacity or incentive to comply with tax regulations (Adebisi & Gbegi, 2020).

Furthermore, the lack of trust in government institutions and the perception that tax revenues are not utilized for public goods lead many individuals and businesses in the informal economy to avoid tax compliance. As a result, the government struggles to expand its tax base and ensure equitable contributions from all economic sectors.

3. Inadequate Administrative Capacity and Corruption

Inadequate administrative capacity is a critical challenge facing the Nigerian tax system. Regulatory bodies, such as the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and State Boards of Internal Revenue, often lack the necessary resources, technology, and trained personnel to effectively administer tax policies and enforce compliance (Okafor & Nwanji, 2022).

The inefficiency in tax administration results in delays in processing tax returns, assessing tax liabilities, and addressing taxpayer grievances, further eroding public trust in the tax system. This inefficiency can discourage compliance and lead to increased instances of tax evasion.

Corruption within tax administration exacerbates these challenges. Instances of bribery, favoritism, and manipulation of tax assessments undermine the integrity of the tax system. Tax officials may engage in corrupt practices, such as soliciting bribes from taxpayers in exchange for favorable treatment or tax exemptions (Uche, 2020). This not only results in revenue losses for the government but also discourages honest taxpayers, creating a perception that tax compliance is futile.

The challenges in the Nigerian tax system—tax evasion and avoidance, the prevalence of the informal economy, and inadequate administrative capacity compounded by corruption—pose significant obstacles to effective tax collection and compliance. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including strengthening enforcement mechanisms, increasing public awareness about tax obligations, and enhancing the capacity and integrity of tax administration.

Corporate Governance and Taxation: Existential relationship

Overtime, there has been an entrenched relationship between corporate governance and taxation. In places where the governance milieu have been abidingly transparent and accountable, tax compliance have often been high. The reverse is the case where there is lack of transparency and accountability, because citizens often refuse to cooperate when they know that the system is not accountable to them. We discuss these issues under themes here.

Impact of Corporate Governance on Tax Compliance

Corporate governance plays a vital role in shaping tax compliance behaviors among firms. Effective governance practices foster transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct, which are critical in encouraging voluntary tax compliance and reducing instances of tax evasion and avoidance.

1. How Good Governance Practices Can Enhance Voluntary Tax Compliance

Good corporate governance practices, including transparency and accountability, can significantly enhance voluntary tax compliance among firms. When companies adopt clear governance structures that prioritize ethical behavior and financial integrity, they are more

likely to comply with tax regulations. For instance, having an independent board of directors and robust internal controls can improve financial reporting quality and reduce opportunities for tax manipulation (Okafor & Nwanji, 2022).

Moreover, transparent communication of financial information to stakeholders, including tax authorities, fosters trust and credibility. Companies that are committed to good governance are more likely to engage in proactive tax planning, ensuring compliance with tax laws while minimizing the risk of audits and penalties. This approach not only enhances the firm's reputation but also contributes to a positive corporate culture where ethical practices are valued (Olatunji & Adekoya, 2021).

2. The Role of Corporate Governance in Curbing Tax Evasion and Avoidance

Corporate governance frameworks are instrumental in curbing tax evasion and avoidance. Effective governance practices, such as establishing clear policies on tax compliance and promoting a culture of integrity, can deter management from engaging in aggressive tax avoidance strategies (Iyiola & Sulaimon, 2021).

Additionally, governance structures that include audit committees and compliance officers ensure that tax compliance is monitored regularly. This oversight can help identify potential areas of tax risk and ensure that appropriate measures are taken to mitigate these risks. Furthermore, ethical leadership plays a crucial role in setting the tone at the top, influencing employees' attitudes towards compliance and encouraging them to report any unethical tax practices (Ogunbiyi & Kanu, 2021).

Impact of Tax Policies on Corporate Governance

Tax policies also have a significant impact on corporate governance by influencing companies' governance behavior and structures.

1. How Taxation Can Incentivize or Deter Good Corporate Governance

Taxation can serve as a powerful tool for incentivizing good corporate governance practices. For instance, tax deductions for companies that invest in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives can motivate firms to adopt governance practices that prioritize social and environmental accountability (Uche, 2020). These incentives encourage firms to align their operations with broader societal goals, promoting responsible business practices.

Conversely, a heavy tax burden or complex tax regulations can deter good governance by pushing companies towards aggressive tax avoidance strategies to reduce their tax liabilities. When firms perceive the tax system as unfair or overly burdensome, they may prioritize short-term financial gains over long-term governance practices (Hanlon & Heitzman, 2010). This can lead to a culture of non-compliance and unethical behavior within the organization.

2. The Influence of Tax Incentives and Penalties on Governance Behaviour

Tax incentives and penalties can significantly influence corporate governance behavior. Tax incentives, such as tax credits for research and development (R&D) investments, can encourage firms to adopt innovative practices and improve their governance structures. By rewarding responsible behavior, these incentives promote long-term strategic thinking and alignment with stakeholders' interests (FIRS, 2021).

On the other hand, penalties for non-compliance or unethical behavior can serve as a deterrent against poor governance practices. When firms face significant financial consequences for tax evasion or avoidance, they are more likely to invest in robust governance frameworks to mitigate risks. Such penalties reinforce the importance of ethical behavior and compliance within organizations, ultimately promoting a culture of accountability (Olatunji & Adekoya, 2021).

Public Policy Implications

The interplay between corporate governance and taxation has important public policy implications that require integrated approaches to enhance both governance and tax compliance.

1. Need for Integrated Policy Frameworks That Address Both Governance and Taxation

To foster effective corporate governance and tax compliance, policymakers should develop integrated policy frameworks that address the nexus between the two. Such frameworks should promote transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior across corporate entities while ensuring that tax policies are fair and equitable (Iyiola & Sulaimon, 2021).

By aligning governance standards with tax regulations, policymakers can create a cohesive environment that encourages compliance and responsible business practices. This integrated approach can help to build public trust in both the corporate sector and government institutions, ultimately contributing to economic growth and stability (Ogunbiyi & Kanu, 2021).

2. Role of Government and Regulatory Bodies in Fostering Synergy Between Corporate Governance and Taxation

Government and regulatory bodies play a crucial role in fostering synergy between corporate governance and taxation. They can facilitate this by implementing robust regulatory frameworks that promote ethical practices, transparency, and accountability within corporations (Uche, 2020).

Additionally, regulatory bodies should enhance their enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with both governance and tax regulations. By conducting regular audits and reviews, they can identify areas of non-compliance and take appropriate actions to address them. Furthermore, engaging with stakeholders—including businesses, tax practitioners, and civil society—can help create a collaborative environment that supports responsible governance and tax compliance (Olatunji & Adekoya, 2021).

The relationship between corporate governance and taxation is multifaceted, with significant implications for business practices and public policy. Effective governance practices can enhance tax compliance and curb tax evasion, while tax policies can incentivize or deter good governance behavior. By developing integrated policy frameworks and fostering synergy between corporate governance and taxation, governments can promote transparency, accountability, and responsible business practices that contribute to sustainable economic development.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, corporate governance and taxation in Nigeria presents both significant challenges and opportunities for enhancing public policy and economic development. Strong corporate governance structures are essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership, all of which contribute to improved tax compliance and a healthier business environment. However, weaknesses in governance, including regulatory inefficiencies and corruption, have contributed to widespread tax evasion and avoidance, undermining Nigeria's revenue generation efforts.

The Nigerian government has made efforts to address these issues through reforms such as the Nigerian Code of Corporate Governance and various Finance Acts. Yet, the low tax-to-GDP ratio and the prevalence of weak enforcement mechanisms suggest that more needs to be done to bridge the gap between governance and tax compliance. A more integrated policy approach that strengthens both corporate governance and tax administration could yield better results, promoting voluntary compliance and ensuring that corporations contribute fairly to national development.

As Nigeria continues to diversify its economy away from oil dependency, effective corporate governance and a robust tax system will be critical in fostering sustainable growth. Addressing the systemic issues in both governance and taxation will not only improve revenue collection but also create a more conducive environment for investment, thereby driving long-term economic stability.

Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing the following recommendations are apt;

1. Strengthen Enforcement of Corporate Governance Regulations

Regulatory bodies, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), must enhance their enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with corporate governance standards. This can be achieved by improving the capacity of these agencies through adequate funding, better training, and the use of modern technology to monitor corporate activities more effectively. Regular audits and stricter penalties for non-compliance will help discourage unethical practices and promote accountability in corporate governance.

2. Promote Transparency and Ethical Corporate Practices

Nigerian companies should be encouraged to adopt stronger transparency measures, particularly in financial reporting. Clear guidelines and incentives for transparency should be developed, ensuring that companies disclose accurate and comprehensive information about their financial activities. This can foster trust among stakeholders, including tax authorities, and reduce opportunities for tax evasion and avoidance. Corporate governance codes should place a stronger emphasis on ethical leadership and corporate responsibility.

3. Improve Tax Policy and Administration

The Nigerian government must continue to refine its tax policies to close loopholes and reduce the complexity of the tax system. Simplifying tax regulations can improve compliance and reduce administrative burdens on corporations. Additionally, tax incentives that encourage ethical behavior, such as tax credits for companies with strong governance structures, should be introduced. Enhancing the capacity of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and state tax bodies to collect taxes efficiently will also improve revenue generation.

4. Integrate Corporate Governance and Tax Compliance Frameworks

To ensure a cohesive approach to corporate governance and taxation, Nigeria needs an integrated policy framework that aligns corporate governance standards with tax compliance requirements. Policymakers should collaborate with businesses, tax professionals, and regulatory bodies to develop policies that promote both responsible corporate behavior and effective tax compliance. This will help build a more transparent business environment and increase voluntary tax compliance.

5. Enhance Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging a wider range of stakeholders—including companies, investors, civil society, and the government—can help foster a culture of accountability and transparency. Public awareness campaigns, forums, and workshops should be held to educate businesses and the public on the importance of corporate governance and tax compliance for national development. Continuous dialogue between stakeholders can lead to more robust policies that balance corporate interests with societal goals.

6. Combat Corruption in Governance and Tax Administration

Finally, addressing corruption is critical for improving both corporate governance and tax compliance. Anti-corruption measures, including stricter enforcement of anti-bribery laws

and the establishment of whistleblower protection programs, can help root out unethical practices. Here the EFCC and ICPC will come in handy and these bodies must try to insulate themselves from the influence of politically exposed individuals. Strengthening governance within tax administration agencies will also reduce corrupt practices, ensuring that tax revenues are collected and allocated efficiently.

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Rising Insecurity in Nigeria: Threat to Africa Agenda 2063

Frank Adogbeji Enakemu

Abstract

The increasing insecurity in Nigeria threatens not only the stability of a country but also the wider goals of Africa's Agenda 2063. This article looks into the origins and possible remedies of the rising insecurity in Nigeria characterized by terrorism, insurgency, banditry, and ethnic violence. The security challenges have worsened in the rise of extremist groups such as Boko Haram and an increase in armed bandits' menace. Indeed, because of its importance in West Africa and Africa, instability in Nigeria has wider ramifications for regional stability. The Agenda 2063 intends to achieve integration, shared prosperity, and peace, however, this paper shows that insecurity is a multifaceted problem involving the rising levels of poverty and inequality, religious and ethnic tensions, and political instability in Nigeria and West Africa in general. It concludes that community policing and socioeconomic policy reforms are vital to resolve the issue of insecurity in Nigeria. Moreover, regional cooperation through the AU and the ECOWAS is paramount to combat security challenges across borders, including organized crime and terrorism.

Keywords: Insecurity, Sustainable Development, Economic Integration, Africa, Agenda 2063.

Introduction

African states have been concentrating on security as a means to achieve development goals. This is in line with the strategies of theOrganisation of the African Union (OAU, now AU). that was established in 1963. The group's stated goals include promoting security and stability on the continental level, managing conflicts, and coordinating policies at the regional level. The AU aims to promote prosperity, interstate solidarity, and peace and security, and to amplify African voices within the global system (Tieku, 2019) The sense of insecurity among Nigerians is growing day by day, and that is a problem for the African continent as a whole. The stability of Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa and one of the key economic and political powers on the continent, is essential for the realization of the Agenda 2063. Within this framework, the African Union envisions attaining a peaceful, wealthy, and integrated continent by 2063. But these shared goals are seriously threatened by the increasing tide of crime, terrorism, and bloodshed in Nigeria.

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Organized crime, ethnic and tribal conflicts, banditry, insurgencies, and other forms of insecurity in Nigeria have retarded the progress of that country and threaten to plunge the entire West African area into chaos. The paper considers security, economic, and political implications for Nigeria and Africa as a whole and reflects how these increasing unstable trends within one nation impact the greater Africa's Agenda 2063.

The insecurity in Nigeria is an outcome of its colonial past. Artificial borders drawn during the British colonial control split a number of ethnic groups and weakened local government institutions (Faleye, 2019). Decades of instability were born out of those parties' fight for political power, extending to the control of enormous Nigerian oil reserves (Adebayo, 2022). Following independence, Nigeria saw a series of military coups and counter-coupsThe worst of these, the Nigerian Civil War-or Biafran War-of 1967–1970, cleaved the country along ethnic and political lines and killed more than a million people. The Igbo separatist movement led to civil war in Nigeria (Obi-Ani, 2024), pointing to the failings of the state itself and the challenges of fostering coherence among the country's diverse ethnic groupings. There were unresolved concerns about the representation of people in public office, the distribution of resources, and ethnic autonomy, meaning instability continued long past the end of the conflict.

Northerners and Southerners, mainly Muslim and Christian respectively, faced increased political and religious tensions during the post years of the Civil War. Military dictators of Nigeria used various techniques of divide and rule, which further solidified existing divisions. The 1970s and 1980s saw numerous insurgencies erupt within the country, fueled by political, religious, and ethnic tensions. In the late 20th century, terrorist organisations in the Niger Delta region sought increased control over oil earnings, which made the region extremely volatile (Akinyemi, 2020). Oil extraction exacerbated these tensions by destroying natural habitats, which only served to increase locals' already high levels of dissatisfaction.

New forms of religious fundamentalism also appeared at the turn of the century, adding another layer of instability. The Islamist militant group Boko Haram initiated its terror campaign against northeastern Nigeria in the early 2000s. This radical ideology calls for an Islamic state governed under strict Sharia law and has led to a brutal insurgency. This has sent millions into displacement and brought enormous destruction into perspective. In that aspect, Nigeria became one of the global hotbeds of terrorism due to its tactics that involved bombings, kidnappings, and even suicide strikes, among other nefarious acts, at the hands of Boko Haram (Akinyemi, 2020). The presence of Boko Haram and its ISWAP faction remains imminent amidst military engagements against the terrorists group.

Besides Boko Haram, banditry and violent crime have surged in the centre and northwest of Nigeria. The so-called "bandits" are armed gangs that target rural areas, kidnap for ransom, extort money, and commit other forms of attacks. Poor state authority in these regions allows such organizations to act without hindrance, based on both ethnic and financial motivations (Olaniyan et al., 2021). It has been difficult for the Nigerian government to combat these criminal forces, who have taken full advantage of the abundance of small arms and light weapons coupled with the weakened governance systems (Kemei et al., 2023).

Human rights abuses and civilian deaths have been common results of heavy-handed military response by the government to growing instability. The inability of the Nigerian state to protect its citizens from worsening violence has resulted in a lack of trust and the rise of vigilante groups and local militias. While these organizations try to provide security

in the absence of the state, they often exacerbate the problem, thereby creating a cycle of insecurity. This is according to Igwe (2024). Much of the country has been left vulnerable to such threats as ethnic violence, insurgency, and organized crime.

By the mid-2010s, instability in Nigeria had over-spilled from those parts of the country which were traditionally affected. Proliferation of terrorism, banditry, and communal conflict had taken away huge swathes of the nation from the government. A very large refugee problem is posed by the displacement of millions, mostly in the northeast, because of the insurgency conducted by Boko Haram. Lack of adequate infrastructure to support IDPs themselves heightens the severity of this issue and further burdens an already overwhelmed system (UNDP, 2022).

Insecurity in Nigeria has also grossly affected the economic situation of the country. Oil is Nigeria's bread and butter, but production has been brought to a standstill due to insurgency in the north and Niger Delta. Attacks on oil infrastructure, such as pipelines and refineries, have led to significant losses in income. On a similar note, millions of citizens depend on farming to get by, but banditry in the north is highly impeding agricultural production (Kemei et al., 2023). All these economic shocks have hindered the ability of the government to curdle some of the developmental issues stated in Agenda 2063.

Existing literatures on Africa's agenda 2063 have tended more toward how it can be achieved, towards answering the questions of: will it be achieved? Which country will or will not achieve it? The economic and international relations implications of achieving or not achieving the agenda have been on the front burner of existing literatures on Africa's agenda 2063. Scarcely is the literature concerned with how the negative reality in one African country can affect the achievement of this agenda not just for the country but for other African countries. This reality reveals a gap in knowledge. This gap in knowledge will be filled by this study which, using the rising insecurity in Nigeria, shows not just how the negative situation in a particular African country can militate against the achievement of Africa's agenda 2063, but also, how community policing and socioeconomic policy reforms are vital in resolving the issue of insecurity in Nigeria.

This paper adopts qualitative techniques to explore in-depth increasing of insecurity in Nigeria. The insecurity issue in Nigeria can be considered to be influenced by cultural, social, political, and economic variables and, therefore, lends itself particularly to a mixed-methods research strategy. Theme analysis was carried out on the qualitative data that was obtained. The process involves identifying categories, topics, and patterns among the responses. It deals with what makes people feel unsafe, the effectiveness of prevailing security measures, and the meaning this problem connotes for national development and Agenda 2063 in Africa.

Conceptual Clarifications

Despite the concept of political instability always hinges on the likelihood of a change in the government's executive branch, be it by constitutional or illegal means (Alesina et al., 1996). Political stability is often threatened during a change in leadership or challenges to the status quo (Morrison & Stevenson, 1971). Political instability occurs when the established order of power collapses and the anticipated submission to political authority is supplanted by violent opposition.

The concept of insecurity could be perceived as a condition of dread, apprehension, or lack of self-assurance. If you are worried about being vulnerable because you feel unsafe, you're

probably insecure (Beland, 2005). People living in fear are not only ill-prepared for potential risks, but they are also unable to anticipate them (Anigbogu & Ndubuisi-Okolo, 2019). Tragically, terrorism, armed banditry, political instability, and conflicts have plagued most African states, leaving their citizens in a constant state of fear. Since many companies and commercial operations are now fraught with uncertainty, this is having a significant impact on the continent's economic growth and development.

The theory of conflict resolution and peacebuilding provides useful insight into the root causes of insecurity and strategies to promote lasting peace in Nigeria. This school of thought argues that it is through talking about disagreements, reconciling parties, and setting up strong institutions that best describes the art of handling disputes. Each of these aspects including terrors, banditry, and ethnic violence-lends to general instability in Nigeria, which indeed calls for comprehensive strategy measures in restoring stability (Akinyemi, 2020).

Conflict resolution theory is based on negotiation and discourse between disputing parties to establish mutually agreeable solutions. The insurgencies and ethnic conflicts that have plagued Nigeria can be analysed in this way. Conflicts in Nigeria require peaceful resolution through communication between the government and communities. Most certainly, in the wake of what happened not so long ago: the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast and sectarian violence in the Middle Belt. Issues that are big contributors to the violent conflict include unequal resource distribution, political exclusion, and ethnic antagonism; these have to be discussed. Some of the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria may be minimized if the country adopted a conflict resolution strategy that emphasizes mutual understanding and compromise (Adebayo, 2022).

Peacebuilding is an auxiliary conflict resolution approach that aims to create durable peace by finding the root cause of violence and, over time, attempting to eliminate it. Efforts toward peace in Nigeria should focus on strengthening democratic institutions, social cohesion, and ensuring inclusive leadership. For the realization of a society devoid of insecurity, there is a need to take action that reduces economic, social, and political disparities. Obi-Ani (2024) cites transparent resource management, local empowerment, and equal distribution of wealth as solutions to the violence in the Niger Delta, which is fuelled by demands for a larger share of oil earnings. These peacebuilding tactics can help keep Nigeria stable and economically affluent, which will contribute to Africa's Agenda 2063.

The philosophy of conflict resolution and peacebuilding also focuses on the involvement of local communities and civil society organizations in peace initiatives. In this light, community-led programs are necessary to address the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria, with emphasis on justice, reconciliation, and the building of trust. Local players can resolve conflicts and encourage interaction between different religious and ethnic groups, and they include religious leaders, non-governmental organizations, and traditional leaders. Rebuilding a national identity that goes beyond religious and racial divisions requires these kinds of endeavours (Feinstein, 2024). Maintaining peace and avoiding future bloodshed requires active participation at the local level.

International partners' support in conflict resolution and peace establishment is fundamental to Nigeria. The UN, the African Union, and other regional bodies such as ECOWAS can provide political and financial support to the peace efforts of Nigeria. International players can promote communication and provide technical support while mobilizing resources in peacebuilding efforts. To aid Nigeria in tackling its security issues, for instance, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the role of ECOWAS in conflict prevention

may be enhanced (Twagirayezu, 2021). To address the transnational aspects of insecurity, international cooperation is essential, particularly in areas where criminal organisations and insurgent groups operate.

The ultimate goal of Agenda 2063 is to ensure that Nigeria institutes theories of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Resolving the security situation in Nigeria will have wide effects on the entire African continent because the stability of Nigeria is critical to the prosperity and tranquility of the entire West African area. Economic integration, social progress, and democratic government can only be fully realized in a safe and secure environment. Agenda 2063's larger goals, including the advancement of shared prosperity and sustainable development, are jeopardized in the event that Nigeria does not experience peace and security. What is needed is a holistic approach that encompasses peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and regional cooperation if instability is to be reduced and Africa's goal for 2063 achieved (Igwe, 2024).

The frustration-aggression theory put out by John Dollard et al., (1939) postulates that violent acts are more common among people and organisations whose needs and wants go unfulfilled. Limited prospects for economic advancement, education, and political participation frustrate many groups in Nigeria, particularly young people from marginalised regions. This dissatisfaction often combines with structural inequity to result in acts of violence and insurgency. This perspective is important because it explains the rise of Boko Haram: the violence perpetrated by this group has its genesis in the perception by young people in the northeast of the state's inertia on their economic and educational handicaps. Economic malaise and ineffectual state response are also drivers of banditry in the northwest. This school of thought feels that the rate of violence in Nigeria can only decrease if the social and economic issues that breed discontent-low salaries, high unemployment, and limited education-are addressed (Ezemenaka, 2021)

As observed by Ukaeje (2022), the idea of the transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) in 1999, by African Heads of State and governments, was to accelerate the processes of regional economic integration in the continent. Thus, the AU came into being to enable the continent to play a significant role in global economic affairs, while addressing other multifaceted social, economic, and political problems that tend to hinder progress in the continent. However, after more than two decades of its transformation, and despite the adoption of Agenda 2063 which aims to accelerate economic progress in Africa, the continent remains at a crossroads in its struggle to grapple with the challenges of achieving its core objectives. Drawing data largely from secondary sources of information, the paper attempted a critical examination of the political instability and insecurity across many African states, especially as the continent strives towards achieving economic progress through the framework of Agenda 2063, and found out that political instability and insecurity are fundamental challenges standing against the actualization of the Agenda's objectives.

Unless these challenges are mitigated, the Agenda 2063 will remain nothing but a document that cannot be actualized because the peace and security required to attend such an enviable feat is seriously in breach in a majority of the states of the Union. Agenda 2063's noble goals and ambitions for Africa's developmental requirements are commendable (Durokifa, 2022). Nonetheless, the growing radical Islamism, xenophobia, violence endangering national sovereignty, local insurgencies, and other security challenges on the African continent could undermine and jeopardise these hopes for the continent's growth. Security

concerns on the continent have grown in importance at the national and regional levels, even if Agenda 2063 doesn't directly deal with them. In light of this context, this article examines the ways Agenda 2063 has helped Africa develop, with a particular emphasis on Goal 4: "a peaceful and secure Africa," and how its goals are inherently contradictory. Indeed, the entrenchment of democratic culture and constitutionalism as well as strengthening of existing institutions of governance is the first step towards achieving the desired peace and security in the region.

The Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

Political, economic, social, and historical elements are all combined to fuel Nigeria's insecurity. Not less important are the poverty and inequality issues that are greatly contributing to people's unsafeness. About millions of Nigerians live in poverty, placing the country as one of the poorest in the world, says Obi, 2024. In the Niger Delta, local people have been for long marginalized in this oil-rich region, despite the enormous wealth created from their land. This economic disenfranchisement is sometimes compounded by the uneven distribution of resources and income. The rise in inequality and lack of economic opportunities have contributed to the increase in extremist organisations like the Niger Delta Avengers that use violence as a form of protest (Adebayo, 2022).

Another significant contributor to the situation is the long history of religious and ethnic strife in the country. Several times, religious and ethnic differences have brought about disputes in Nigeria, but most recently in the Middle Belt, where herders and farmers are competing for limited resources (Bombom, & Yemisi, (2024). These disputes are often fueled by tensions between Muslim and Christian communities that erupt into violent clashes, further exacerbating the disputes. Violence becomes a legitimate means by which to claim one's place in society, as well as one's share of the country's wealth and power, which adds to the general insecurity caused by these socioeconomic inequalities.

Another important factor in the conflict in northern Nigeria has been the propagation of radical ideology. The violent actions of the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram have led to the destabilization of the region, including bombings, kidnappings, and mass killings (Ezemenaka, 2021). The rise of these extreme groups can be traced back to the high rate of unemployment among youth, particularly in the northern areas. Most youths have found themselves joining these groups for survival. Most young people in Nigeria, particularly the excluded and the poor, find meaning in the narrative of this group as it reflects the group's defiant stand against government and foreign forces (Eneh, 2024).

The Effectiveness of Existing Security Policies

Against this deteriorating security situation, the Nigerian government has initiated several security policies and programs, whose effectiveness has been highly debated. The establishment of the JTF and the Nigerian Army's counterinsurgency operations in the northeast have achieved little success in curtailing the activities of Boko Haram and other extremist groups (Ezemenaka, 2021). The continuous fatal attacks by the rebels, despite the military's effort, prove the poor capacity of the state to maintain authority over the affected regions. Assisted by regional security formations such as the Multinational Joint Task Force composed of Chad, Niger, and Cameroon, Nigeria has similarly been able to combat insurgency and cross-border terrorism. Teething problems of coordination and political disagreements among the member nations have hampered the MNJTF from effectively stemming the rise of extremist groups despite a number of successes on the ground in this behalf (Obi, 2024). Poverty, inadequate education, and marginalization are the most

significant causes of insecurity in Nigeria, with its government adopting a very military approach that has done little to address these conditions.

There has been a total absence of an integrated approach; hence, all security initiatives taken have been piecemeal. Security services such as police, military, and the intelligence community hardly cooperate while responding to the threats. According to Adebayo (2022), the lack of community policing initiatives has further worsened the security crisis. This is because people in the conflict-prone areas have little faith in the security forces and instead look towards the local militias for protection. Thus, the security responses in Nigeria have been fragmented and could not address the magnitude and breadth of the problems.

The Broader Implications of Insecurity for National Development

The effects of insecurity in Nigeria have wide-reaching impacts that act to stall growth along many critical dimensions, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Due to continuous violence and instability, millions of Nigerians have been displaced from their homes. This is most pronounced in the northeast, where the fight against Boko Haram has provoked a humanitarian disaster of an order of magnitude that hardly exists anywhere else in the world. Basic social services such as health and education are often unavailable to displaced persons, making their economic vulnerability even more precarious (Kemei et al., 2023).

Insecurity has taken a toll on Nigeria's economy in more ways than the human toll. Households have suffered food shortages and increased prices due to the disruption of agricultural output by the protracted insurgency in the northeast and banditry in the northwest. Attacking oil infrastructure by militant groups in Nigeria's Niger Delta region has reduced oil production and money generation for the government (Adebayo, 2022). These kinds of economic disruptions only serve to worsen the situation in countries' achieving development goals, among them economic diversification and the eradication of poverty—both being an integral part of Africa's Agenda 2063.

Foreign investors are wary of regions with a history of violence and instability, and this fear has translated into a lack of investment in Nigeria. The climate of uncertainty brought about by the current security challenges makes Nigeria a less attractive location for FDI. This further exacerbates the economic and social problems that the people of Nigeria are already facing because it inhibits the creation of new jobs (Eneh, 2024).

Insecurity and Its Implications for Africa's Agenda 2063

While Agenda 2063 summation is for sustainable development, integration, and shared prosperity, it is only possible with a peaceful and stable Africa. A far cry from what obtains in Nigeria due to its growing insecurity. Instability in Nigeria (Africa's largest economy and a regional security hub) complicates efforts toward the entrenchment of peace and stability in West Africa and indeed the rest of Africa. An incoherent, unsafe Nigeria is ill-equipped to effectively operationalize African Union initiatives like the African Peer Review Mechanism and the African Standby Force, designed to promote peace and security within the region (Fourchard, 2023).

Agenda 2063 has among its flagship goals the creation of a prosperous and integrated African continent. In this respect, economic cooperation among the African nations, especially the regional trade agreements like AfCFTA, is central to the goal. The success of these projects largely depends on Nigeria, the key economic actor. Attacks on northern areas' roadways, marketplaces, and infrastructure have exacerbated the difficulty of doing business and trading as a result of the growing insecurity (Obi, 2024). Significant capital flight has also occurred due to insecurity, since investors are wary of putting their money into a country with a reputation for instability.

More specifically, all social development goals that included health, education, and the

reduction of poverty are running a huge risk of reversal from humanitarian consequences created by insecurity in Nigeria. Activities of terrorism, banditry, and ethnic conflicts have displaced millions from their homes, placing monumental burdens on governmental services and infrastructural facilities. This single preoccupation with security by the Nigerian government has given little space to address the social demands that are vital for the social and cultural aims of Agenda 2063 (Adebayo, 2022).

More importantly, instability in Nigeria adversely affects West African security in its entirety. The porosity of Nigeria's borders with Chad, Niger, and Cameroon has made the environment very conducive for transnational extremism to flourish in Nigeria. Ezemenaka (2020) observes that the recruitment of fighters by Boko Haram and ISWAP from all parts of the region has further contributed to the destabilization of neighbouring countries and overall security in the Lake Chad Basin area. Because of these various cross-border security problems, ECOWAS has not been able to achieve the objective of advancing regional stability and integration.

Lastly, Nigerians no longer have faith in their government and its institutions because the country has failed to solve the security issues that it has been facing. This result of people's dissatisfaction growing with the government is politically unstable, and people of different ethnic groups are also asking for more independence and self-determination. The possibility of further fragmentation and secessionist movements, particularly in the southwest and southeast, directly threatens the unity of Nigeria and its capacity to make a significant contribution to the agenda of the African Union (Igwe, 2024).

The growing insecurity in the country is one of the major reasons why Africa's Agenda 2063 cannot be realized. The complex character of Nigeria's security dilemma-from terrorism to banditry and ethnic conflict-is a reason the country cannot take the lead in peace initiatives on continental and regional levels. The attainment of sustainable development, prosperity, and integration on the African continent is already a challenge, but all this is exacerbated by insecurity with its social and economic impacts. It is important for Nigeria to get out of the security problem so that the entire larger goals of Agenda 2063 are not defeated; Nigeria is an important country within African politics and the economy. Unless the Nigerian government, with its regional and international partners, firmly moves to bring back stability, development, and peace in the country, Nigeria's crisis has all the dangers of threatening the common destiny in Africa.

Poverty, inequality, and unemployment remain the main causes of instability in Nigeria; for this reason, the government needs to focus on strengthening good governance and addressing these issues. In case the state seeks the confidence of the people for its legitimacy, then the structural reforms regarding governance must be undertaken by it, such as effectiveness in public institutions and transparency of the same (Adebayo, 2022). Additionally, social programs aimed at addressing economic inequalities may weaken the economic grievances that generate extremism and violence by opening up more opportunities in education, healthcare, and employment. Inclusive development will help protect the residents of Nigeria against being enlisted by terrorist groups like Boko Haram and other bandit organisations (Fourchard, 2023).

In view of the fact that regional insecurity is not exclusive to Nigeria, the latter is supposed to work harder in concert with its neighbors and regional groups like ECOWAS and the AU for an effective fight against the common scourge. Since transnational threats such as terrorism, trafficking, and organized crimes always transcend national borders, a regional player must converge and come up with better coordinated responses to these threats, says Pereira & Chukwuma (2022). Intelligence sharing, joint military operations, and solidifying border security should continue to be the priorities of regional security arrangements in trying to prevent the growth of violent extremism. Nigeria, due to its leading position within

ECOWAS and the AU, can also be a driving force behind peacebuilding efforts on the African continent, using that leading position to foster a coherent and proactive approach for security in West Africa.

The changing face of insecurity means that Nigeria's security apparatus needs to be rethought. This transformation will include, but is not limited to, the training, equipment, and intelligence-gathering capacities of law enforcement and military personnel, as averred by Ezemenaka (2020). In addition to facilitating communication between security services and their immediate communities, community policing programs should be encouraged. These include the reduced reliance on militias and vigilantes, and an increase in public confidence in law enforcement agencies as a result of greater citizen involvement in neighborhood security operations. If such changes do take place, the state will become far more effective at maintaining order and protecting its citizens from both external and domestic threats.

Social and economic development, as well as the fostering of societal cohesion, should be Nigeria's last line of defense against instability. For long-term peace and stability, there is a need to address the social and economic issues that exacerbate insecurity. In particular, investments in rural development, job creation, and infrastructure will go a long way in uplifting the most vulnerable populations, especially in violence-prone areas (Obi, 2024). In addition, interfaith and interethnic dialogue programs can help bridge the gap between people and minimize the chances of conflict that is incited by religious and ethnic intolerance. Above all, the implementation of Africa's Agenda 2063 requires a more united society and sound economic growth so as to lay the ground for sustainable peace.

Conclusion

This paper shows that instability in Nigeria, the most populous and economically significant African country, threatens the success of an otherwise peaceful, united, and prosperous Agenda 2063 of Africa. For Agenda 2063 to be a success, it is imperative that Nigeria remains stable. In its own right, a safe Nigeria will ensure economic growth, regional integration, and the realization of African Union objectives of improved governance, increased social inclusion, and increased sustainable development (Obi, 2024). Indeed, the growing insecurity in the region is undermining regional integration and collaboration in West Africa due to the difficult transportation of people, products, and services between Nigeria and other West African nations. Cross-border trade disruption by insurgent groups and criminal organisations has overshadowed the ability of Nigeria to attain the set goals as stated in the AfCFTA agreement. This trade is vital for regional economic integration. Insecurity in Nigeria also denies the country its role as an advocate for peace and a regional power through the reduction of its capacity to send peacekeepers to other African countries (Fourchard, 2023).

Also, migratory problems in the area can worsen as a result of Nigeria's increasing insecurity. The growing violence in conflict-prone areas has forced many people to leave their homes, leading to a surge of Nigerian refugees into neighboring countries. This not only undermines the grand dream of African unity and solidarity as outlined in Agenda 2063 but also poses a threat to the stability of the entire region, as it taxes these nations' already-strained budgets.

What is needed is an integrated and holistic approach to reducing the impact of insecurity on national development and the realization of Agenda 2063. In this regard, we need to contribute to the improvement of governance, reduction of poverty, inequality, and ethnic tensions that breed insecurity. The approach must be holistic, involving military and non-military interventions, including those related to security at the community level. With the security forces of Nigeria being in close coordination and money being invested in social

development projects such as healthcare and education, people in Nigeria would be less likely to become victims of violent extremism (Akinyemi, 2020).

To tackle cross-border insecurity, regional collaboration is equally crucial. The Nigerian government should work more closely with its neighbours and regional groups like ECOWAS to combat transnational security threats like organised crime, terrorism, and trafficking (Kemei et al., 2023). In addition, Nigeria can show leadership by joining the African Union to back peacebuilding initiatives in other African nations. This will help achieve the larger objective of stability and peace on the continent.

The growing instability in Nigeria does indeed pose a grave danger to the nation's security, with far-reaching consequences for Agenda 2063 in Africa. The security situation in Nigeria, one of the biggest and most powerful countries in the continent, jeopardizes the goals of the African Union for a peaceful, wealthy, and integrated Africa. If Nigeria is serious about achieving lasting peace and prosperity, it must tackle its insecurity head-on, which stems from issues like poverty, inequality, and ethnic tensions (Adebayo, 2022). Regional integration, shared prosperity, and sustainable development are some of the overarching objectives of Agenda 2063, but they are all in jeopardy until Nigeria achieves enduring peace and stability.

The insecurity in Nigeria can only be effectively curtailed through a multi-faceted approach. Firstly, according to Twagirayezu (2021), governance institutions have to be empowered and become effective instruments for the improvement of the delivery of public services, combating corruption, and inclusion of all social groups. This is critical toward effective security sector reforms through community policing, sharing information, and responding coherently to military threats emanating both from within and outside. To effectively address the transnational threats that cause instability in Nigeria and the wider West African area, the country needs to work together with its neighbors and multilateral organizations like ECOWAS and the African Union (Kemei et al., 2023).

If Nigeria is to be serious about addressing the root causes of insecurity, it needs to make socioeconomic development a priority. Economic inequality remains one of the primary drivers of radicalization and violence; the government can try to address this through spending on healthcare, education, infrastructure, and job creation. Fairer distribution of resources and opportunities will make the people less vulnerable to criminal groups and extremist ideologies. Additionally, fostering national unity through interfaith and interethnic dialogue is needed for the reduction of religious and ethnic tensions that lead to violence in the country (Obi, 2024).

The resolution of internal security challenges in Nigeria is core to the success of Agenda 2063. For the interest of the well-being of Nigerians and the dream of a peaceful and united Africa, this country must remain peaceful and stable. Implementation in Nigeria of a comprehensive security apparatus prioritizing both hard and soft approaches, including military intervention, community engagement, socio-economic development, and regional cooperation will make the larger goal of Agenda 2063 a reality for the benefit of all nations across the continent (Akinyemi, 2020).

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Entertainment Function of the Press and Advocacies against Politically-motivated Youths' Restiveness: Trends and the Implications for Nigeria

Obinna Johnkennedy Chukwu & Acha, Odion Victor

Abstract

This paper examines the entertainment function of the press and advocacies against politically-motivated youth restiveness and its implications for Nigeria. The researcher embarked on this study with the intent of achieving two objectives. Based on the objectives of this study, two research questions were formulated to serve as a guide for this study. This study was anchored on the conflict theory and the strain theory. The secondary method of data collection was adopted in this study. Findings reveal that one of the reasons why the entertainment function of the press distracts Nigerian youths from engaging in politically-motivated activities is the lack of interest in politics. Many Nigerian youths are not interested in politics and are unaware of the impact of their actions on the political landscape of the country. The constant bombardment of entertainment stories by the press further reinforces this apathy towards politics and diverts their attention from issues that affect them. Findings further revealed that one of the implications of youth restiveness on Nigeria is the loss of lives and property. This study therefore recommends that the media should strike a balance between entertainment and political discourse. While the entertainment function of the press is essential for keeping audiences engaged, media outlets should also prioritize political reporting, especially on issues that affect the youth. This will encourage young people to participate in political discourse and make informed decisions.

Keywords: Entertainment-Function, Press, Advocacies, Politically-motivated, Youths, Restiveness, Trends, Implications.

Introduction

The press plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and providing information to the masses. One of the primary functions of the press is to provide entertainment to its readers, viewers, and listeners. However, in Nigeria, politically-motivated youth restiveness has become a significant concern. Entertainment in the press refers to the dissemination of information and news that is not only informative but also engaging and entertaining.

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This function has become increasingly important in recent years as the media landscape has become more diverse, with the emergence of new platforms and the proliferation of social media.

According to Kalu (2018), the entertainment function of the press refers to the provision of news, stories, and features that are designed to amuse, entertain, and engage the audience. He further noted that the entertainment function of the press has become increasingly important in modern times, as consumers have become more demanding and sophisticated in their media consumption habits. The press uses various forms of entertainment to keep its audience engaged, including music, movies, celebrity news, sports, and humor.

Oladele (2017) noted that in Nigeria, the entertainment industry is a significant contributor to the country's economy, providing employment opportunities for thousands of young people. The press has played a critical role in the growth of the entertainment industry in Nigeria by promoting and publicizing the works of artists and entertainers. The entertainment function of the press has also helped to shape the country's cultural identity.

Nigeria has witnessed a growing trend of politically-motivated youth restiveness in recent years. This trend is characterized by young people engaging in violent activities such as vandalism, looting, and arson, often in response to political grievances. These grievances may include issues such as youth unemployment, poor governance, and police brutality. The #EndSARS# protests that rocked Nigeria in October 2020 are a classic example of politically-motivated youth restiveness. The protests began as a peaceful demonstration against police brutality but eventually degenerated into violence and destruction, resulting in the loss of lives and properties.

According to Gboyega (2014), politically-motivated youth restiveness refers to the activities of young people who engage in violent or disruptive behavior due to political grievances. In Nigeria, politically-motivated youth restiveness has become a significant issue, with many young people joining political groups and engaging in violent or disruptive behavior.

According to Nsidibe (2017), youth-led unrest has been on the rise in nearly all communities in Nigeria, especially recently. Since the founding of our fledgling democracy, there have been several incidents of uncontrolled violence, the murder of innocent bystanders, and most recently the upsurge in violence in the North East, insurgency in the Niger Delta, and the roving attacks by Fulani herdsmen across the nation.When young people are not happy, there is frequently a situation of anarchy, the destruction of lives and property. At this point, youngsters' acts are seen as criminal in character since they frequently express themselves violently and interfere with social order and numerous activities. Most often, controlling youth violence requires the use of force, such as enlisting the police.

Youth believed they should work in the oil sectors during the Niger Delta's oil boom because the sector had facilities in many of their local villages. This left the oil businesses at a disadvantage because many of them lacked the credentials, know-how, and experience required to work in the oil sector. However, they resisted focusing on other forms of self-employment including agriculture and other empowerment initiatives. They had hope that everyone would be employed and play equally because of the attention paid to the money paid to the few local adolescents who were employed in the area. They did not understand that the oil sector cannot accommodate everyone, especially those without skills and experience, due to their lack of awareness, exposure, education, and knowledge.

Nigerian youngsters struggle with issues like their failure to adapt to their surroundings, desire for fortune, and lust for fame. As a result, kidnapping, oil pipeline vandalism, an increase in armed robberies, bomb attacks, thuggery, murder, property destruction, increased insecurity, and crude oil theft (bunkering), to name a few, have all grown common among young people. In order to reduce young restlessness, the goal of this study is to identify, examine, and discover solutions to the challenges that youths face.

Adolescents restiveness is occasionally used by adolescents to defend their society. The young sometimes use a competitive management style to accomplish their goals. It entails being extremely aggressive and disobedient. They are willing to harm the other party, whether it be the government, in order to further their own interests as well as the interests of their societies. This situation has actually resulted in a near breakdown of law and order, low productivity since production activities are disrupted, an increase in crime, interethnic hostility, harassment of potential developers, and other criminal inclinations.

The causes of politically-motivated youth restiveness in Nigeria are multifaceted and include unemployment, poverty, inequality, corruption, and lack of opportunities. Many young people feel marginalized and excluded from the political process, which has led to frustration and anger. The lack of adequate education and access to information has also contributed to the issue.

To address the issue of politically-motivated youth restiveness in Nigeria, Ibrahim (2021) noted that various advocacies have been suggested. One of the most critical advocacies is the need for greater youth participation in the political process. Young people must be given a voice and actively involved in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Another advocacy is the need for improved access to education and information. Education plays a crucial role in shaping the values and attitudes of young people, and access to information enables them to make informed decisions. The press can play a critical role in providing young people with the information they need to make informed decisions.

The government must also address the issue of unemployment and poverty, which is one of the primary causes of politically-motivated youth restiveness. The government can create employment opportunities and provide social safety nets to support those who are most vulnerable.

The entertainment function of the press can play a critical role in addressing the issue of politically-motivated youth restiveness in Nigeria. The press can use various forms of entertainment to engage young people and provide them with information that will enable them to make informed decisions. The press can also promote positive values and attitudes that will discourage violence and disruptive behavior.

To address the challenge of politically-motivated youth restiveness and promote the entertainment function of the press, there is a need for a multi-faceted approach. One of the most effective ways to address politically-motivated youth restiveness is through dialogue. Government officials, civil society organizations, and youth leaders should engage in constructive dialogue to address the grievances of young people and find ways to address them. The media can also play a vital role in promoting dialogue by providing a platform for constructive debates and discussions.

Onah (2014) noted that education is a powerful tool for addressing youth restiveness. The government should invest in education programs that equip young people with the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The media can also support this effort by

providing educational content that promotes critical thinking and creativity.The media can promote positive youth engagement by highlighting the achievements of young people who are making a positive impact in their communities. This promotion can inspire other young people to engage in constructive activities rather than resorting to violence and destruction

Statement of the Problem

The press has long served as an avenue for entertainment, providing news on sports, celebrity gossip, music, and movies. However, the entertainment function of the press can also be used to distract the public from important political issues and events. This distraction can be exploited by political actors to further their own interests, particularly in cases where there is a growing youth population that is politically motivated.

Nigeria, like many countries in Africa, has a large and growing youth population that is increasingly politically aware and motivated. This has led to increased restiveness, particularly in the form of protests and demonstrations, which have been organized to demand political change, social justice, and economic opportunity. However, some political actors have used the entertainment function of the press to distract the youth from these issues, by providing them with entertainment content that is designed to appeal to their interests and distract them from political activities.

Advocacy against politically-motivated youth restiveness is necessary because it undermines the democratic process and can lead to violence and instability. The use of entertainment to distract youth from political activities is also problematic because it can reinforce existing social inequalities and perpetuate the marginalization of youth voices in the political process.

The trends in politically-motivated youth restiveness in Nigeria indicate a need for greater engagement with youth populations, as well as for policies that address their concerns and provide them with greater opportunities for political participation. This requires a multi-faceted approach that involves education, dialogue, and policy reform, as well as a commitment to promoting youth participation and engagement in political processes.

The implications of politically-motivated youth restiveness in Nigeria are significant, particularly in terms of the country's political stability and economic development. Addressing this issue requires a commitment from political leaders, civil society organizations, and the media to promote greater youth participation in the political process, as well as to ensure that the entertainment function of the press does not undermine democratic processes or perpetuate social inequalities.

Therefore, it is in the light of this that this paper examines the entertainment function of the press and advocacies against politically-motivated youth's restiveness in Nigeria and the Independent Television and Radio Benin will be the focus.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows;
1. To assess the extent to which the entertainment function of the press distracts Nigerian youths from engaging in politically motivated youth's restiveness.
2. To ascertain the implications of youth restiveness on Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated based on the objectives of this study;

1. To what extent does the entertainment function of the press distracts Nigerian youths from engaging in politically motivated activities?
2. What are the implications of youth restiveness on Nigeria?

Literature Review

Concept of Youth Restiveness

Youth restiveness is a term that refers to a social phenomenon where young people, typically between the ages of 15 to 35, express their dissatisfaction with the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions in their society. This expression of dissatisfaction often takes the form of violent protests, strikes, or even criminal activities, and it is a growing concern in many parts of the world, particularly in developing countries.

The root causes of youth restiveness are multifaceted and complex, but they generally stem from the lack of opportunities and resources available to young people, as well as from the perception of injustice and inequality in society. In many cases, young people feel marginalized and excluded from mainstream society and the political process, leading to frustration and a sense of hopelessness. This can also be caused by a lack of education, unemployment, and poverty.

In many developing countries, youth restiveness is exacerbated by poor governance, corruption, and political instability. The lack of access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and clean water, coupled with high levels of inequality and social injustice, fuel the feeling of frustration among young people. This frustration can lead to protests and civil unrest, which can further destabilize already fragile societies.

Youth restiveness can take many forms, ranging from peaceful demonstrations and strikes to violent protests and even terrorism. In some cases, young people may turn to criminal activities such as theft, drug abuse, and gang violence as a way of venting their frustrations and seeking to gain power or control over their lives. This can lead to a cycle of violence and criminality that can be difficult to break.

Addressing youth restiveness requires a multi-faceted approach that involves addressing the root causes of the problem. This includes providing young people with access to education, skills training, and job opportunities, as well as promoting social inclusion and participation in the political process. This can be achieved through the development of policies that prioritize youth empowerment and the creation of opportunities for young people to engage in the political process.

Governments and policymakers also need to address the structural and systemic issues that contribute to youth restiveness, such as corruption, poor governance, and inequality. This can be achieved through the implementation of policies that promote transparency, accountability, and good governance, as well as through the provision of basic services such as healthcare, education, and clean water.

In conclusion, youth restiveness is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that requires a holistic and multi-faceted approach to address. Young people need to be empowered and provided with opportunities to engage in the political process and to improve their socio-economic status. Governments and policymakers need to address the root causes of the

problem, including poor governance, corruption, and inequality. By working together, we can create a more equitable and just society that provides opportunities for all young people to thrive and reach their full potential.

Causes of Youth Restiveness

There are several reasons why young people get restless. The majority of young people no longer want to shoulder responsibilities, which is alarming. They constantly search for the quickest solution, which is frequently illegal and counterproductive. In the past, it was common to see young people engaged in farm work, trading, household duty assistance, and other respectable activities. Even when they lack the qualifications for a white-collar work, today's youth insist on being employed by local businesses because they perceive themselves as superior to such duties. These days, it can be challenging to locate young people who are focused, honest, good, responsible, and hardworking. Young people appear to view responsibilities as being excessively demanding and demeaning. They consequently decline to complete such tasks, whether they are paid or not. They may demand excessive money for the work they desire to undertake. The society's values are not what they should be. The issue of being unable to complete tasks properly or avoiding labour could be brought on by poor home teaching, a lack of discipline, resistance, laziness, and a lack of self-assurance. According to Ofem and Ajayi (2008), "the reasons for persistent youth restiveness" include a lack of social and humanitarian welfare, poor governance, official corruption, inadequate training programmes, unemployment, inadequate recreational facilities, and a lack of high-quality education. The following factors are responsible for Nigeria's persistent youth unrest:

Negligent governmental actions

There is a need for the government to study her masses and find out their urgent needs in order to make sure that it is meant. When a government policy is unfavourable to a people, it tends to foster opposition from the masses because they feel oppressed and neglected. According to Oromareghake (2013), "the politics of access to the oil fund is that of the escalating state of violence between the Niger Delta youth and the Nigerian Government." An adult who is at least 18 years old and does not have a job is provided housing and allowances in industrialised nations like the United States of America. Nigeria should pass a measure like this. Since they will have the resources to care for themselves until they find something worthwhile to do, this will lessen their restlessness. There can't be national growth and development if the right laws aren't passed. A faulty policy causes societal division, fosters youth unrest, raises crime rates, and devastates society and governmental systems. The budget of a nation must be prepared by the government in order to divide its natural resources fairly and prevent turmoil.

Bad governance is correlated with bad government policies. Fundamental human rights of the people are violated by bad governance, which also encourages corruption, is not answerable to the people, is irresponsible, and lacks adequate transparency. A terrible government's reign is typically marked by a rise in crime, the absence of free expression, the practise of centralising power, financial misappropriation, and resource mismanagement, among other things. These characteristics contribute to the general discontentment of the populace as well as that of the youth.

Limited job opportunities

The alarmingly high rate of unemployment in Nigeria today. Onuba (2019) claims that "the labour statistics report released by the National Bureau of Statistics showed that the number of unemployed Nigerians rose from 11.92 million in the first quarter of 2017 to 13.58 million and 15.99 million in the second and third quarters, respectively". According to Ozohu-Suleiman (2006), "Nigerian youth are trapped by unemployment." The majority of

Nigerians rely primarily on the government or the oil industry for jobs. Nigerians are failing to build enterprises and provide jobs for the general public by leveraging their initiative, talents, resources, and knowledge. Additionally, the kids aren't taking the programmes for self-empowerment seriously. The level of reliance on the government and a small number of oil firms is causing significant unrest and is harmful to the wellbeing of the country.

According to Zakaria (2006), youth restiveness in developing countries is caused by a lack of employment possibilities, which has severe effects. The government has not established a sufficient functioning infrastructure to create jobs for the majority of people. Government involvement is required in the production of home-made items and in ensuring that there are regional industries nearby where young people may find work and income can be created for the nation. This will assist in involving the youth and reducing the amount of inactivity that might otherwise encourage bad vices.

The youth are more susceptible to irrational politicians, religious extremists, and rich people because they are unable to find or create jobs. They are employed to carry out illegal actions in exchange for payment. According to Zakaria (2006), "the youth in African countries have become more susceptible to the manipulation of agents provocateurs due to the rising tide of unemployment and the fear of a bleak future."

Low Quality of Life

Living in poverty makes young people more restless. The saying "a hungry man is an angry man" is a prevalent adage in Nigeria. People are considered to be poor when they are unable to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. Poor living conditions define poverty. According to Aworawo (2010), there is a link between young unrest, poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and violence against the Nigerian government. Typically, there is a wide disparity between the rich and the poor. The impoverished experience segregation, oppression, dehumanisation, and dejection. Most young people look for ways to generate quick money rather than taking on responsible work to get money. These encourage young people to engage in criminal activity in order to support themselves and their families, regardless of the repercussions. Today, there are more instances of online scammers (yahoo guys), dishonest behaviour (419), kidnapping, and ritualistic behaviour. All of them contribute to the state's insecurity.

Poor Educational System

A nation's growth, development, and stability are greatly influenced by its educational system. In an educational setting, one acquires the fundamental knowledge necessary for one's educational and social development. The Nigerian educational system currently has a problem with a lack of infrastructure, equipment, qualified teachers, and adherence to the work schedule, particularly in rural areas.

Due to budgetary constraints, the majority of youth in rural areas do not attend school; some of these restrictions also apply to urban youth. The nation won't benefit from this. In Nigeria, payments are still provided to the government-run schools. By guaranteeing free primary and secondary education, the government should encourage everyone to go to school. The fees should be significantly decreased at the university level.

The irony of this is that graduates still struggle to obtain employment. This also includes the issues that affect their families and young people. To eliminate this threat, the populace and the government must unite to support education investments across the nation.

Lacklustre Infrastructure

Nigeria generally lacks adequate infrastructure. Due to improper administration of funds, misuse of funds, and unfair distribution of national resources, there were not enough facilities. Nigerians lack access to healthcare, clean water, roads, and educational institutions, among other things. The effort to put these facilities in place may also cause restlessness in young people.

Lack of knowledge

Making essential and crucial decisions requires the use of information. The decision-making process might be severely harmed by incorrect information because it will drive everyone to make the wrong choice. As a result, providing the youth with inaccurate information is a contributing factor in their restlessness in society. These will cause them to become hostile and, if necessary, engage in violent protest. According to Hidon and Ahiauzu's (2005) research in the Niger Delta, a lack of communication and an inadequate flow of information might cause youth unrest. Leaders and the general people should exercise caution when sharing information since it has the power to both create and destroy. To exchange information, people should interact. Lack of communication and inaccurate or inadequate information might cause young restlessness to emerge.

Implications of Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

Youth unrest is an issue for both local communities and the nation as a whole. Youth's use of agitation to attain their goals has slowed down social growth and damaged the degree of productivity in society. They make things worse for themselves as they fight to defend their interests by taking advantage of youth unrest. These behaviours worsen their circumstances by encouraging them to commit crimes for which they might be arrested. The consequences of youth unrest include:

Increase in Crime

According to Schaefer (2005), a crime is an infraction of the law that results in formal sanctions from a governmental body. Laws categorise crimes into several groups. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, the perpetrator's age, the likely sentence, the court with jurisdiction, and the case. All facets of society, including the political, social, economic, religious, and educational ones, are at risk from crime. Crime hinders the establishment of friendly relations between nations, results in the loss of life and property, dampens the desire of both domestic and foreign investors to invest in the nation, and therefore fosters insecurity and underdevelopment.

Increasing young restlessness has led to an increase in criminal activity. Youths are driven to crime because they want better lifestyles but lack the educational background and relevant skills to achieve those goals. Security in society is at risk from crime.

Unsecured Environment

Youths' criminal behaviour is a result of their uncertainty or anxiousness. They stop believing in themselves. Everyone in the Niger-Delta appears to be wary of their surroundings out of concern for being abducted and to avoid any potential conflict. Oromareghake (2013) claims that the oil boom has increased violence in the Niger delta, which led to a 25% decline in Nigeria's oil exports in 2006. The nation's treasury loses billions of naira every year as a result of the widespread insecurity brought on by the actions of the unruly young and the security forces. It should be emphasised that the government has employed techniques ranging from direct negotiations with the Militants to full-on Military assaults on them in order to quell unrest and increase output. These approaches haven't worked, though. The pipeline vandalism by young people is not stopping. "Securing the pipelines and other oil and gas assets in the country has become a heavy burden for the government," according to Oromareghake (2013). The government continues to spend a lot of money on security to guard the nation's natural resources against youth unrest, bunkering, and smuggling activities. Both foreign and local investors have fled the area due to the problem of insecurity, which has increased unemployment. This may encourage young people to engage in illicit activity, which will cause issues for society.

Decline in Economic Growth

According to Pettinger (2017), "low economic growth can result in higher unemployment." Financial crisis is inevitable in a nation when there is inflation, financial mismanagement,

and financial theft. The demand for goods by the general public will decline, and industries will only need a minimal amount of services when there is an improper flow of money throughout society. The youth will suffer as a result of this. If a nation's finances are in decline, certain industries will close down, leaving many workers without jobs.

Rising Rates of Unemployment

In Nigeria, the unemployment rate is rising rather than falling. The youths are being greatly impacted by this, and as a result, they are willfully participating in initiatives that are harmful to both themselves and society. According to Kazeem (2023), the National Bureau of Statistics estimates that the jobless rate will be 33% in the final three months of 2022. The unemployment rate has increased for nine straight quarters. As businesses struggled in Nigeria's first recession in two decades, employment declined. Due to a severe lack of dollars, these enterprises who depend on overseas transactions are also struggling.

Disobedient communal behaviour

The youth's persistent demands for the fulfillment of their interests are what fuel their rebellious communal action. According to the Advocates for the Advancement of Youth Development Initiatives (AAYDI), youth restiveness has a detrimental impact on the nation through low production of products and services, chaos, and the disruption of law and order in society, such as militancy. The rise in crime rates, the escalation of interethnic and interreligious strife, the unsettling of investors, and several other criminal tendencies. Marginalisation, unemployment, excitement, poverty, and limited educational prospects are issues related to rebellious community activity.

Youth restlessness has resulted in self-destruction because of the potential severity of the punishment if caught by government law enforcement. They may receive a prison term or a death sentence, and their actions may result in fights among young people, which may leave some of them disabled. They may also receive a prison term or a death sentence. Youth restlessness has a detrimental impact on social and economic activity, which results in difficulty.

Youth pipeline vandalism has a harmful impact on civilizations, especially because it kills flora. The community's river's water and fish are destroyed by the spill. Because of teenage insurgence, youth restiveness has resulted in fatalities and poverty-stricken individuals now live in fear.

Entertainment and Advocacies as Tools in the Fight against Politically-motivated Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

The press especially the Independent Television and Radio Benin play a vital role in shaping public opinion and providing entertainment to the masses. In Nigeria, the entertainment function of the press has been leveraged to engage and educate the public on various issues, including politically-motivated youth restiveness. Advocacies, which are campaigns or efforts aimed at promoting a particular cause or issue, have also been used as a tool in the fight against politically-motivated youth restiveness in Nigeria.

Youth restiveness is a phenomenon that has plagued Nigeria for several years. It refers to the tendency of young people to engage in violent or disruptive behavior, often as a result of political or socio-economic factors. This problem has been particularly acute in the Niger Delta region, where years of neglect and environmental degradation have led to widespread poverty and unemployment among young people.

Onah (2014) noted that he press, through its various forms such as print, broadcast, and online media, has played an important role in addressing this problem. One of the ways in which the press has contributed to the fight against youth restiveness is by providing entertainment to young people. The press has created platforms for young people to express

themselves through music, movies, and other forms of art. This has helped to keep young people engaged and focused on positive activities, rather than engaging in violent or disruptive behavior.

In addition to providing entertainment, the press has also used its platform to educate young people on the dangers of engaging in politically-motivated violence. The press has highlighted the negative consequences of such behavior, including loss of life, destruction of property, and disruption of economic activities. By shining a light on the consequences of youth restiveness, the press has helped to deter young people from engaging in violent or disruptive behavior.

Advocacies have also been used as a tool in the fight against youth restiveness in Nigeria. Advocacy campaigns have been launched to address the root causes of youth restiveness, such as poverty, unemployment, and political marginalization. These campaigns have focused on promoting policies and initiatives that can help to create jobs, reduce poverty, and promote political inclusion.

Advocacy campaigns have also been used to promote peace building and conflict resolution. These campaigns have focused on promoting dialogue and reconciliation between different groups in conflict, as well as promoting the use of non-violent means to resolve disputes. By promoting peace building and conflict resolution, advocacy campaigns have helped to reduce the incidence of politically-motivated youth restiveness in Nigeria.

In conclusion, the press and advocacies have played important roles in the fight against politically-motivated youth restiveness in Nigeria. The entertainment function of the press has helped to keep young people engaged in positive activities, while the press's educational role has helped to deter young people from engaging in violent or disruptive behavior. Advocacies, on the other hand, have focused on addressing the root causes of youth restiveness and promoting peace building and conflict resolution. By leveraging the power of the press and advocacies, Nigeria can effectively address the problem of politically-motivated youth restiveness and promote peace and stability in the country.

Theoretical Framework

Youths' descent into restlessness has been fueled by issues with the unfair distribution of national resources, marginalisation, poverty, and unemployment, which has led to instability in the social order.

In this study, two theories were used to provide an explanation for the restlessness of young people. The theories are the theories of conflict and tension. According to the conflict theory, tension and conflict develop when resources, states, and power are unequally allocated among social groups. This conflict then serves as the catalyst for social transformation, according to Crossman (2019). In this context, power can be interpreted as having control over material resources and accumulated wealth, politics, and the institutions that make up society. It can also be interpreted as one's social standing in relation to others, which is influenced by factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, and religion rather than class.

The focus of the strain theory is on deprived youth. Young people are driven towards crime by their incapacity to reach predetermined goals (Britannica, 2019). According to Merton (2013), pressures resulting from social issues such a lack of resources or a lack of a good education lead people to commit crimes. In addition, Crossman (2019) pointed out that the strain hypothesis describes deviant behaviour as an unavoidable result or the strain an individual experiences when society does not give appropriate and ok ways of accomplishing culturally desired goals. For instance, when a community places cultural importance on economic success and wealth but only provides legal ways for a tiny

percentage of the population to accomplish these goals, those excluded may turn to unorthodox or illegal means of reaching them (Crossman, 2019).

Government should treat everyone fairly in light of the aforementioned. To prevent crime and social underdevelopment, segregation, deprivation, misappropriation, and embezzlement of funds should be reduced. In order to promote societal development and growth, it is basically necessary to meet the requirements of the masses in the areas of economics, politics, education, society, medicine, and technology.

Research Methods

This paper adopted the use of secondary data from already published materials and interview method from respondents in 10 out of the 18 local Government Areas of Edo state. The researcher relied mainly on relevant documents and the interviews conducted as significant sources of knowledge.

Results and Discussions

Extent to which Entertainment Function of the Press Distracts Nigerian Youths from Engaging in Politically-motivated Activities

The Nigerian press is an essential medium of communication that serves as a link between the government and its citizens. It serves as a tool for educating, informing, and entertaining people. In recent times, however, the entertainment function of the press has been perceived to be a distraction for Nigerian youths from engaging in politically-motivated activities.

Entertainment has become a significant aspect of the Nigerian press, as it helps in increasing the readership and viewership of media platforms and the Independent Television and Radio Benin has the largest electronic medium audience in Edo state with viewership across the 18 Local Government Areas of the state. The press in Nigeria has become more concerned with generating revenue by publishing stories that entertain their readers rather than those that inform or educate them. As a result, there is an increase in the publication of celebrity gossip, sports news, and other entertainment-related stories.

While it is essential to provide entertainment to the masses, the press's primary role is to educate and inform the public on significant issues affecting their lives, including politics. However, the current trend in the Nigerian press, where entertainment stories take the front seat, has led to a situation where youths are more concerned about their favorite celebrity's latest news or who won the last football match than the critical issues that affect their lives, such as governance and policymaking this was evident in the 2023 general election were the youths campaigned vigorously for the candidate of Labour Party Peter Obi and participated in the election. In the just concluded election there was low report of electoral violence and this according to interview was as a result of youth orientation against politically motivated activities that could endanger their lives.

Adeyinka (2018) noted that one of the reasons why the entertainment function of the press distracts Nigerian youths from engaging in politically-motivated activities is the lack of interest in politics. Many Nigerian youths are not interested in politics and are unaware of the impact of their actions on the political landscape of the country. The constant bombardment of entertainment stories by the press further reinforces this apathy towards politics and diverts their attention from issues that affect them.

Another reason is the negative impact of the entertainment function of the press on the quality of journalism in Nigeria. The pursuit of revenue generation by publishing entertainment stories has led to a decline in the quality of journalism in Nigeria. The press has become more concerned about the number of clicks and views generated by their stories rather than the accuracy and relevance of their reporting. This has resulted in a situation where many youths do not trust the press's information on politics, further distancing them

from politically-motivated activities.

Okolo (2021) opined that the entertainment function of the press has also been perceived to be a tool used by politicians to distract Nigerian youths from engaging in politically-motivated activities. Politicians use the media to create a diversion from the pressing issues affecting the country by sponsoring entertainment events or using celebrities to endorse their policies. This strategy has been effective in diverting the attention of Nigerian youths from critical issues affecting the country and creating a sense of complacency among them.

The programmes of the Independent Television and Radio according to the interviews conducted are youth's oriented and such programmes such as Campus life, Man around Town, reggae time and others have really dissuaded the youths from participating in activities that could make them restive in the society. Several entertainment packages also go with advocacies against politically motivated youth restiveness thereby preventing them from thuggery and other forms of negative political fight.

Although in some Local Government Areas, the Television station is not seen but the radio station has stood in the gap to give the content to the public, from all the sources, activities of the medium has gone a long way to prevent youth restiveness in Nigeria.

Implications of Youth Restiveness on Nigeria

One of the implications of youth restiveness on Nigeria is the loss of lives and property. Youth restiveness is characterized by violence and social unrest, which has led to the loss of many lives and the destruction of property. In the Niger Delta region, for instance, the activities of militant groups have led to the loss of lives and the destruction of oil installations and pipelines. This has negatively impacted Nigeria's economy, as oil accounts for a significant percentage of the country's revenue.

Another implication of youth restiveness on Nigeria is the negative impact on the economy. Youth restiveness has led to the disruption of economic activities, which has affected the country's GDP. The Niger Delta region, which is the hub of Nigeria's oil industry, has experienced a decline in oil production due to the activities of militant groups. This has led to a loss of revenue for the government, which has affected the country's economy as a whole.

Youth restiveness also has significant implications for Nigeria's social development. The activities of militant groups have led to the displacement of people, especially in the Niger Delta region. This has resulted in a breakdown of social infrastructure and the disruption of social services, such as education and healthcare. The unrest has also led to a rise in crime rates, which has negatively impacted Nigeria's social development.

Furthermore, youth restiveness has implications for Nigeria's political development. The activities of militant groups and other disaffected youths have led to a breakdown of law and order in some parts of the country. This has affected the country's democratic process and its reputation in the international community. The activities of these groups have also led to a loss of confidence in the government, which has affected Nigeria's ability to attract foreign investments.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the entertainment function of the press has become a prevalent trend in Nigeria   , and it has been argued that this function has distracted Nigerian youths from engaging in politically-motivated restiveness. While it is true that the media can be a powerful tool for shaping public opinion, it is essential to note that entertainment and politics should not be mutually exclusive. The media can serve both functions and provide a platform for youths to engage in political discourse while still being entertained.

The implications of youth restiveness on Nigeria are vast and far-reaching. The loss of lives

and property, negative impact on the economy, and breakdown of social and political infrastructure are significant concerns that need to be addressed. It is imperative that the government and other stakeholders in Nigeria take proactive measures to address the root causes of youth restiveness, such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality. The government must engage disaffected youths in constructive dialogue and provide opportunities for them to participate in the country's economic and political processes.

Advocacies against politically-motivated youth restiveness are crucial for Nigeria's peace and development. The government must prioritize the welfare of its citizens and ensure that they are adequately catered for. It is also essential that the government ensures that there is a level playing field for all citizens, regardless of their social, economic, or political status.

In conclusion, the entertainment function of the press should not distract Nigerian youths from engaging in politically-motivated activities. Instead, it should serve as a platform to promote political discourse and active citizenship. By addressing the root causes of youth restiveness, Nigeria can achieve sustainable peace and development.

Recommendations

Based on the various literatures and findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

The media should strike a balance between entertainment and political discourse. While the entertainment function of the press is essential for keeping audiences engaged, media outlets should also prioritize political reporting, especially on issues that affect the youth. This will encourage young people to participate in political discourse and make informed decisions.

The government should invest in programs that provide opportunities for youths, such as skill acquisition programs, entrepreneurship programs, and education. This will help to reduce youth unemployment and poverty, which are major factors that contribute to youth restiveness. Additionally, the government should create avenues for young people to participate in the political process and provide a platform for them to voice their opinions and concerns. This will help to address the root causes of youth restiveness and promote sustainable peace and development in Nigeria.

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