Journal of Political Discourse

Academic Journal domiciled in the Department of Political Science, Federal University Gusau- Nigeria.

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RADICALIZATION MITIGATION AS COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY IN NIGERIA: EXAMINING THE PROS AND CONS

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Abstract
The study interrogated the pros and cons of counter-terrorism in Nigeria. This analysis of the literature has shown that the military's leadership was changed, it was cleaned up, and the branch was freed of its pervasive corruption as the first action of each succeeding government. Within a few months, the army had liberated hundreds of Boko Haram prisoners and driven the terrorist organization out of the majority of its strongholds. Refugees who had to flee the violence are returning home. The group nonetheless keeps sending suicide bombers into towns and cities. One of the infamous Chibok girls has been found, but the other four are still missing. Thus, since 2009, terrorist attacks on Nigerians have trended in Figure 1.1. 3,421 terrorist attacks were reported across the nation. According to the graph, the number was highest in 2014 and the lowest in 2009. The study concludes that neither the prevention of radicalization nor its occurrence has had a materially negative impact on Nigeria's efforts to combat terrorism. It was noted that there are currently implemented measures, including legal restrictions, multilateral initiatives, and international cooperation. The study found that these counterterrorism definitions' requirements are not being met by these measures, and they are also failing to achieve their intended objectives. As a result, it suggested fresh approaches to handle the problems mentioned earlier. The goal of this study was to evaluate terrorism and counterterrorism in order to suggest strategies for doing so while also bolstering national security. According to the study, there have been political, economic, and social changes in Nigeria over the years that have in some way or another led to acts that have been classified as terrorism. As a result, some of Nigeria's most important strategies are briefly discussed below considering their pros and cons.

Keywords: Radicalization, Mitigation, Counterterrorism, Strategy, Pros and Cons

Introduction
Since democracy was restored in Nigeria, there has been a rise in conflict and violent crime. Armed robbery, abduction, drug and weapon smuggling, human trafficking, and fighting are all examples of violence and criminality. The fact that domestic terrorists are now posing these dangers instead of foreign-focused organisations like Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, or Jama'ah-e-Islami is of special concern. Acts of violence by armed non-state actors, primarily made up of gangs of teenagers radicalised as foot soldiers, have seriously weakened Nigeria's internal security. In order to further the process, seek recruitment, and radicalise young Nigerians, these violent organisations take advantage of their weaknesses. Many people think that the majority of the group's supporters are jobless adolescents living in unfriendly circumstances and experiencing economic, social, and political challenges. Recent terrorist profiles,

however, reveal that they are not the traditional underprivileged and illiterate teenagers that the public has been led to assume. Instead, they are the result of years of political targets and setbacks that breed resentment and contempt for individuals who are seen as being responsible for these circumstances. One of the biggest dangers to international terrorism in the globe today is the radicalization of youth; Youth who are socially excluded and disenchanted resort to extremism for identity, acceptance, and meaning (Bizina, 2014; Ochoga, 2019; Ochoga, 2021).

Although youth exposure to extremism and violence may be related to their social and economic situations, comprehending rebellion necessitates knowledge of how youth participate in such actions. Designing and creating countermeasures against terrorism requires an understanding of how individuals are persuaded to join armed or terrorist organisations, as these organisations cannot exist without their members. Solving the issue requires an understanding of the processes by which people get radicalised and join terrorist groups. So it's crucial to understand what leads someone to accept terrorism. Studies on job trends are a better addition to these profiles. Numerous sources have been identified as the root of radicalization in Nigeria; as a result, a literary pyramid has been established. In contrast to how counterterrorism is mitigated, Bizin (2014); Ochoga (2019), Ochoga (2021) et al. have mostly concentrated on the causes of terrorism. Based on this knowledge gap, this study seeks to examine the relevant topics and learn more about counterterrorism and radicalization in Nigeria.

Research Problem

The research problematique of the study is that, political marginalisation, or perceived political marginalisation, of ethnic or religious groups increases the likelihood of young people becoming radicalised and becoming violent extremists. Due to the fact that the marginalisation of ethnic minorities in Nigeria, notably in the Niger Delta, is commonly cited as a contributing reason to the youth violence in the area, this is the case. Occasionally, violent extremist groups, like the Ibos in Nigeria, would use political exclusion as justification. However, it's also possible for terrorist organisations to establish themselves and thrive in highly democratic countries (eg leftwing terrorism in Germany in the 1970s, the Provisional IRA in Britain, ETA in Spain).

Some studies vary between internal and international terrorism as well as source and target nations (Windsor, 2003, and Schmid, 2006). Violent extremism has long been seen to be fueled by poor government. The underlying rationale is that democratic institutions and procedures assist in addressing the underlying issues that have contributed to the recent rise of youth, promoting the amicable resolution of differences and offering avenues for involvement in policymaking (Windsor, 2003). Schmid (2006) argues that State weakness encourages revolt, whereas misuse of authority and the accumulation of excessive power strengthens opposition and provides openings for terrorist organisations. For this, he offers two explanations. He believes that proponents of political violence find a larger audience when unpopular regimes cannot be overthrown through the democratic method.

Desperate individuals are prepared to die and kill for what they and others think is a good cause when systemic socioeconomic injustices are left unchecked. The negative link between civil freedoms and terrorism is demonstrated by various econometric research, including those by Krueger and Laitin (2008) and Lee (2005), and is consistent with Schmid's theorem. According to Dowd and Lind (2015), the use of repressive measures to quell rebellion results in violent outcomes and that modern violence in sub-Saharan Africa is a result of historical grievances with states that have not addressed alienation and insecurity that have grown over

time. Others, though, are in disagreement. This study will be guided by the following set of question:

i. What are the pros and cons of radicalization mitigation as a strategy for countering terrorism?

Conceptual Review

(i) Radicalization

Representatives, journalists, academics, and security professionals frequently utilise the idea of radicalization while reporting on terrorism and violent extremism. It is vital to make clear how certain talks are interpreted and applied to this research before moving on to other discussions. Other users don't all agree on a single definition for the words. The phrases "radicalization" and "de-radicalization," as Schmid (2013) correctly notes, are frequently used. However, what exactly is "radicalization," what causes it, and how can radicalization be called radical, violent extremism? To find out if it exists, a search is necessary. It's also a depressing experience if you're a terrorist (Schmid, 2013, p.1). For example, Ashour (2009, p. 4) argues that Radicalization is a relative phase of change in which a group experiences ideological and/or behavioural shifts that result in a rejection of democratic ideals (such as the legitimacy of peaceful power transitions and ideological and political pluralism), demands for revolutionary sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and cultural changes, and possibly the use of violence, or an upsurge in the levels of violence, to further political objectives. For Sodipo (2013, p. 4),

Radicalization is the process through which a person or organisation rejects the status quo, goes against contemporary ideas of the freedom of thought and speech, and adopts radical political, social, or religious goals that encourage violent ideologies. It's a procedure with a purpose, which includes carrying out terroristic deeds. Usually, a person's self-definition changes to signal the beginning of it. These shifts are reinforced by grievances, which frequently stem from individual or collective worries about regional problems and global events. According to Schmid (2013, p5), radicalization is described as a process that occurs on an individual or group level when one or both political actors and groups with divergent interests reject customary modes of communication, accommodation, and tolerance, typically in a political environment. Both sides of the disagreement are firmly dedicated to using combative conflict resolution strategies. This may include (i) coercion and (non-violent) coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism, or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes. On the rebel side, the process typically involves ideological socialization from a mainstream or status quo-oriented position to a radical or extremist one, a binary worldview, and the adoption of an alternative focus for political mobilization outside the dominant political framework. This is because the old system is no longer perceived as adequate or legitimate. Although there is disagreement among academics on the meaning of the phrase, experts concur that this is a radicalization process. The causes of a person or group becoming radicalised are still up for dispute among specialists. Though there are numerous causes of radicalization, not all of them have been shown to exist. In other words, experts argue that a complex interplay of convergent and reinforcing elements rather than a single factor causes people or groups to become radicalized (Evans & Neumann, 2009; Kirby, 2007; Ferrero, 2005).

As a result, research on the causes of radicalization has come to the conclusion that the complex interaction of elements at the personal, external, and societal levels might be a deciding factor in one's ability to become radicalised (Danish Institute for International Studies, 2008). External elements manifest independently of the person. People's environments are shaped and constrained by them, yet they have limited control over them. Political, economic, and cultural aspects make up external forces. Social factors refer to

mechanisms that place individuals in relation to others and can therefore include both in-groups and out-groups. Beutel (2007) identified four interrelated steps in the radicalization process: ii) religious inquiry in which individuals seek to understand issues from a religious perspective; iii) aligning frameworks in which new ideas, often of a radical nature, make sense to them and iv) socialization, which internalizes radical ideas so that people join extremist groups (Beutel, 2007).

While this process cannot fully explain the plight of all radicalized individuals and Islamic groups, it sheds light on how young people in the West and elsewhere in the world are radicalized. When someone becomes radicalised, they begin to hold extreme opinions and, in certain situations, join terrorist organisations or commit terroristic crimes. It can be driven by a variety of things, such as ideas, religious convictions, political ideologies, and biases towards certain racial or ethnic groups. Radicalizers are recruiting and persuading susceptible individuals online. On social media, private messaging services, gaming platforms, and forums, they upload extreme and frequently violent photos, messages, speeches, and films to do this. They deliberately propagate bogus news that has been made to prey on people's anxieties and vulnerabilities as one of their many recruitment strategies. They'll also try to embellish news reports, such as those regarding unemployment or homelessness, in order to create their own narrative (Esposito and John 1997).

(ii) Understanding the Notion of Counter-Terrorism

The protection of liberal democracy and the rule of law should be the first priority of any anti-terrorism strategy, according to Wilkinson (1977, p1), who places this objective above any attempts to eradicate terrorism and political violence. The phrase "offensive measures taken to counter terrorist acts, including the gathering of information and threat analysis in support of those measures" is used to define counterterrorism according to Elledge (2021, p8), a counterterrorism operation is much more than just a raid or rescue. Intelligence gathering, force planning, interagency coordination, and special logistical requirements. are all ongoing processes.

Contrary to anti-terrorism, which is defensive, counter-terrorism typically adopts an offensive stance. The DOD uses anti-terrorism as a defensive tactic to reduce the vulnerability of its personnel, dependents, facilities, and equipment to terrorist acts. It is a preventative measure used to thwart terrorist attacks or lessen their effects. Both counterterrorism and antiterrorism measures—the terms are frequently used interchangeably—are put in place to address the threat of terrorism. Elledge's definition (2021), which incorporates all essential elements of counterterrorism, is used for this study. The foundation for developing successful counter-terrorism policies when it comes to counter-terrorism strategies is a thorough understanding of the seriousness of the terrorist threat.

Three anti-terrorism tactics have emerged over time (Makinda, 2006, p. 9). The standard approach depends on gathering information, carrying out investigations, making arrests, and filing charges. This does not deal with the fundamental causes of terrorism. However, it was successful in keeping terrorism under control in a number of nations, including Germany, Italy, and India (Makinda, 2006). In the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, some contend that this strategy was a failure. However, they omit to mention that the attacks' success was facilitated by the US intelligence agencies' failure to share information. The US carried out significant countermeasures before the attacks were fully investigated.

According to the institutional approach, institutions can reduce the likelihood of terrorism because they have control over the behavior of actors, including governments and terrorists. These institutions include traditional and religious ones, as well as the executive, legislative, and judicial branches and the laws, procedures, and standards that control them. Without

institutions, there won't be any sense of safety, justice, or order. Policymakers must develop strategies for promoting these institutions that restrict the use of violence and offer protection from all forms of abuse if they are to encourage people to use their abilities for positive purposes. Potential terrorists can have their mindsets altered by these institutions.

This view point implies that the development and social justice approaches both emphasize increased public participation in the management of their economic, political, cultural, and social affairs. Equitable distribution of wealth, income, social benefits, and necessities like secure housing, access to clean water, and healthcare can reduce the likelihood of terrorism. They will assist in facilitating empowerment while also removing factors that contribute to political unrest. This study concludes that none of these tactics can be effective on their own. By combining their efforts, they will create counterterrorism strategies that are very successful. The next section examines young people's pathological radicalization into violent extremism.

Interrogating Counter-Terrorism Measures in Nigeria

This section deductively discussed some existing counter-terrorism measures in Nigeria which include intelligence gathering, force planning, inter-agency coordination, and special logistical needs. Legal measures, multilateral efforts, and international cooperation are some of the counterterrorism measures implemented in Nigeria so far:

(i) Legal Measures:

This study reveals that the EFCC Act deals with cases of persons who fund terrorism and the punishment for such act is life imprisonment. Similarly, cases of terrorism are being treated under the Criminal Code. Suspects are charged for kidnapping, treason and treasonable felony, sedition, subversive activities and membership of unlawful society by the police. Ralph Uwazuruike, the leader of MASSOB whose men have been carrying out terrorist activities in the South Eastern part of the country is being charged under the Criminal Code. If Nigeria had anti-terrorism law, Uwazuruike would have been properly charged under that law. Some of the suspects are however charged under both the EFCC and the Criminal Code Act for offences that are purely terrorism, as a result of the confusion caused by the absence of appropriate anti-terrorism law.

The bodies involved in the fight against terrorism are the Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police, DSS, EFCC, the National Intelligence Agency, the Immigration and Customs Services. All existing laws deal with various aspects of terrorism, with the EFCC, the police and DSS prosecuting the aspects each feels fall under its jurisdiction. An arrangement of this nature does not convey the gravity of the offence and encourages inter-agency rivalry which could render coordination less effective.

The punishment for funding terrorism is life in prison under the EFCC Act. Likewise, the Criminal Code governs how cases of terrorism are handled. The police accuse suspects of kidnapping, treason and treasonable felonies, sedition, subversive activities, and membership in an illegal organization. Under the Criminal Code, charges are being brought against Ralph Uwazuruike, the leader of MASSOB, whose followers have been engaged in terrorist activity in the country's South Eastern region. Uwazuruike would have been charged in accordance with Nigeria's anti-terrorism law. However, due to the confusion brought on by the lack of an effective anti-terrorism law, some of the suspects are accused of crimes that fall under both the purview of the EFCC and the Criminal Code Act.

Armed Forces, Nigeria Police, DSS, EFCC, National Intelligence Agency, Immigration and Customs Services, and National Security Service are the organizations actively engaged in the fight against terrorism. All currently enacted laws address various facets of terrorism,

with the EFCC, the police, and the DSS each prosecuting facets they deem to be within their purview. This kind of arrangement fails to convey the seriousness of the offense and promotes rivalry between agencies, which may reduce the efficiency of coordination.

(ii) **Multi-Lateral Efforts:**

This study is of the view that it is important to remember that most of Nigeria's anti-terrorist efforts are based on and situated within UN and AU resolutions. Among them are the UN Resolutions 1267 (1999), 1371 of 2001, and 1373 (2001) on measures against the Taliban, terrorism financing, and terrorist activities, as well as other Resolutions on Individuals and Entities Associated with Al-Qaeda and Taliban; the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Money Laundering; the 2002 Plan of Action of the AU, which established the African Centre for the Research and Study on Terrorism; and the International Civil Aviation Organization Regulations. Nigeria has performed its duties under these multilateral agreements and made arrests in accordance with some UN Resolutions.

(iii) International Cooperation

The study reveals that Nigeria was the driving force behind the formation of the WAISEC, which only convened twice in 2003 and 2004 to discuss tactics for combating terrorism and other transnational crimes in the sub-region. An MOU was signed to improve security and intelligence cooperation, and the fight against terrorism was a top priority when Nigeria hosted the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services in Africa in 2005. In order to encourage the sharing of anti-terrorist intelligence, Nigeria has also taken advantage of its participation in the Trans-Sahara Defense Chiefs conference.

Pros of Countering Terrorism in Nigeria

There are obstacles the nation must overcome in order to prevent and combat terrorism. The challenges of terrorism and counterterrorism were highlighted during this chapter's section.

i) Inadequate security.

Security organizations are ill-equipped to monitor important infrastructure, such as pipelines, seaports, airports, and installations (Nwolise 2006; Ochoga 2020). In addition, security infrastructure at these ports falls short of international standards. Attacks like the bomb explosions at the Murtala Mohammed and Aminu Kano international airports, the Kaduna refinery, and pipeline vandalism have occurred as a result of inadequate security at these strategic locations. These incidents demonstrate the inadequate security at these strategic locations.

(ii) Slow Reaction to Agitations

Government's failure to act quickly enough to quell public dissent could result in acts that compromise national security and make things more difficult for security agencies. One reason for the Niger Delta crisis, in the view of this study, is that different governments have not responded to the agitation of Niger Delta residents over a number of years regarding their low level of development, unemployment, and poverty, among other issues (Adejo, 2020). The people's discontent is being expressed through actions that are dangerous to national security.

(iii)Insufficient Information

In the fight against terrorism, accurate intelligence is essential. People are frequently hesitant to share information either out of concern for intimidation or in support of terrorists. Since the militants are viewed as upholding justice in the Niger Delta and other section of the

country, the locals won't provide security personnel with any information. Security agencies are unable to stop terrorist activities due to inadequate information.

(iv) Lack of Sufficiently Trained Personnel

Law and order maintenance is the responsibility of the police, and crime detection and prevention through intelligence gathering and investigations is the responsibility of the intelligence community. None of these organizations have the specialized training needed to combat terrorism, especially in a hostile environment like that of Boko Haram and its off-shots –the violent headers, and armed bandits (Department of State Services, 2016). The deployment of Operation Flush to that area assumes that the police, whose official duty is to uphold law and order, lack the necessary training to handle the situation. The Army was sent to Odi in Bayelsa State for the same reason, where they used the greatest amount of force. However, Wardlaw (1982, p. 7) stated that "the army is unsuited, in terms of both training and doctrine, for an internal security role. It won't be necessary to send in the Army to provide internal security if the police receive the necessary training. An untrained security agent would find it challenging to pursue terrorists through creeks and uncleared waterways. The way the militants behave demonstrates that they have received professional training, not just basic training. Therefore, there is a problem that needs immediate attention: a lack of sufficient trained manpower.

(v)Issues with Technology

This study is of the view that the characteristics of terrorism have changed and been amplified as a result of technological advancements in communication and transportation. Terrorists can quickly and physically attack their targets. The use of the internet for these purposes includes communication, member recruitment, intelligence gathering, fund raising, organization, coordination of activities, and the dissemination of propaganda. Since the introduction of cell phones in Nigeria, communication has gotten much easier, and militants are taking advantage of this. It is now more difficult for security agencies to track down and penetrate the terrorist network.

(vii) Misappropriation of Funds

Despite the insufficient funding, corruption and the misuse of funds intended for defense and counterterrorism are a serious problem. Evidently, the Dansuke Gate account of corruption in the defense industry comes to mind. Whereas Col. The administration of President Buhari detained Sambo Dansuke for years after he diverted money intended for counterterrorism to political causes.

The Cons of Counter-terrorism in Nigeria

The foundation for creating counterterrorism measures is an awareness of how serious the threat of terrorism is. Over the years, conflicting ideas about the success and failure of counterterrorism have developed in Nigeria. Ochoga(2020) asserts that relies on intelligence gathering, investigations, arrests, and prosecution as a starting point. This does not always address the underlying causes of terrorism. He thinks that there is a complex surrounding terrorism as a result of the events of September 11, 2001. Ochoga(2020) and other academics with similar ideologies ignore the fact that the attacks were made possible in part by the US Intelligence Agencies' failure to share information, which led to the attacks being possible. Before the attacks had a chance to be thoroughly investigated, the US took extensive counter measures. As a result, Nigeria must consider the effects of both non-military and military counterterrorism strategies.

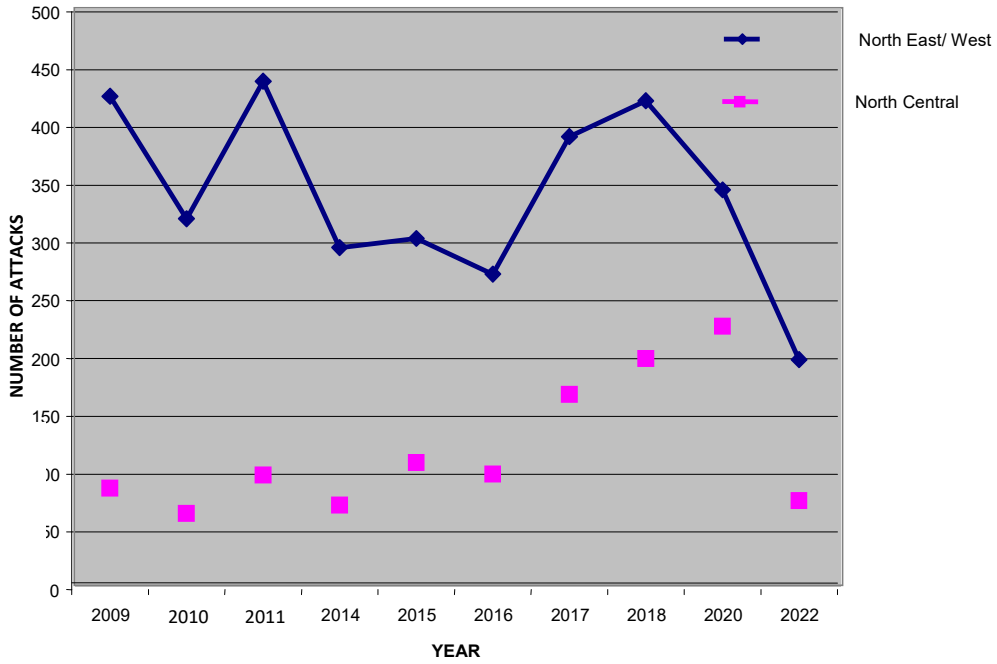
With the understanding that institutions can lessen the likelihood of terrorism because they control the behavior of actors, including governments and terrorists, Nigeria has used this approach over the years. These institutions include traditional and religious institutions as well as the executive, legislative, and judicial bodies, as well as the laws, practices, and standards that govern them. There won't be any sense of order, security, or justice without institutions. This suggests that the Anti-terrorism Act's passage, the Nigerian National Security Strategy's review, and various poverty-reduction, youth, and women empowerment programs are institutional counterterrorism approaches. Therefore, despite the success of these initiatives, the challenge for policymakers is to come up with ways to support these institutions to reduce the use of violence and provide protection from all forms of abuse so that people can use their abilities for useful purposes. These institutions have the power to change the mindset of potential terrorists.

In order to promote social justice and human development, Nigeria's successive governments established institutional measures as a counterterrorism mechanism in addition to suppression tactics. The Nigerian Government's Trade-moni, Anchor Borrowers Scheme, Sure-P, Em-Power, as well as other poverty reduction and economic empowerment programmes, which began in 2009, were all designed to increase the people's involvement in the management of their economic, political, cultural, and social affairs. The likelihood of terrorism can be decreased through the equitable distribution of wealth, income, social benefits, and basic necessities like safe shelter, clean water, and medical facilities. These initiatives aimed to promote empowerment while also removing the factors that lead to political unrest. But according to this study, none of these strategies can be successful on their own. All of them working together will result in very effective counterterrorism measures.

Answering the Research Question and Discussion of Findings

This analysis of the literature has shown that the military's leadership was changed, it was cleaned up, and the branch was freed of its pervasive corruption as the first action of each succeeding government. Within a few months, the army had liberated hundreds of Boko Haram prisoners and driven the terrorist organization out of the majority of its strongholds. Refugees who had to flee the violence are returning home. The group nonetheless keeps sending suicide bombers into towns and cities. One of the infamous Chibok girls has been found, but the other four are still missing. Thus, since 2009, terrorist attacks on Nigerians have trended in Figure 1.1. 3,421 terrorist attacks were reported across the nation. According to the graph, the number was highest in 2014 and the lowest in 2009. Terrorist attacks increased steadily from 20.6% in 2009 to 36.6% in 2014 to 65.9% in 2022. Many of these attacks were targeted at Nigerian interests within the nation.

Figure 1.1: Terrorist Attacks against Nigeria since 2009



Source: Wukari International Studies Group (2023), and constructed by the author

The battle against terrorism has not yet been won, despite the many victories the Nigerian government has achieved. According to this study, radicalization has significantly affected Nigeria's counterterrorism strategy since 2009. The information in table 4.1 has demonstrated the terrorists' ongoing tenacity in Nigeria. This suggests that the military counterterrorism strategies used by the Nigerian government have not produced any notable results. This submission is consistent with studies by Ochoga (2022), Eze (2019), Uba (2015), and others. Even though the nation chose a de-radicalization strategy at one point by granting amnesty to the terrorists, the move had little impact. In other words, counterterrorism strategies such suppression and de-radicalization have proven to be ineffective in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria. Therefore, this study believes that there are underlying causes for the resilience of terrorist groups in Nigeria and the recruitment of new members, which renders counterterrorism ineffective. This study's perspective differs from that of Ochoga (2022), Eze(2022), and Uba's (2022) studies. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis stating that; radicalization has no significant impact on counterterrorism strategy in Nigeria.

Thus, this study holds that multiculturalism has emerged as a potent force shaping social order, especially in heterogeneous societies, throughout the world. It does this by examining the counterproductive effects of counterterrorism's efforts to de-radicalize and radicalize less in Nigeria. On the one hand, it is a common belief that effective management of the racial and cultural diversity that define multicultural societies will create the conditions for understanding, cooperation, integration, and the eradication of racism. The pursuit of social justice, the acceptance of identities, and the appreciation of diversity will all be encouraged by this development, which will also boost economic growth and have a positive effect on nation-building. These qualities demonstrate that multiculturalism is a policy that tends to encourage equality, justice, and social cohesion among the various ethnic and cultural groups residing in a location. However, multiculturalism has also been held responsible by some for a number of real or imagined social ills, including ethnic enclaves, youth violence, nepotism, and favoritism. The argument that multiculturalism has failed to address the fundamental

issues of social, economic, and political exclusion, possibly leading to social isolation, was also advanced. The most common justifications for the wrongdoing connected to multiculturalism's practices center on the fact that it promotes prejudice, injustice, and discrimination—which frequently manifest as expressions of cultural differences and ultimately cause alienation—and that these behaviors are often expressed in ways that are unfair and discriminatory.

These divergent points of view provide the framework for talking about the potential for multiculturalism to breed terrorism. Multiculturalism's importance and its detractors were discussed in this study. It is crucial to remember that the policy frameworks put in place to manage multicultural groups in societies are the root of the multiculturalism problems. The Boko Haram insurgency that plagues the northeast served as a case study for diagnosing Nigeria's multicultural experiences. Since there are many factors contributing to Boko Haram, it is reasonable to claim that the federal character principle, which was intended to address Nigeria's multiculturalism, was politicized in order to foster ethnic and religious sentiments. This, in turn, led to structural issues that contributed to youth involvement in Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria. The structural issues resulting from this were manifested as corruption, marginalization, and discrimination, among other things. This submission is rooted in the ideological metaphor of the Relative Deprivation Theory. The manifestations of injustice, deprivations, illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty are the long-term effects of these issues. Therefore, making the claim that structural issues in Nigeria were caused by the methods used to address the multicultural identity is appropriate. As a result, it is possible to connect the structural issues brought on by national policies designed to manage the country's multicultural identity with the causes of terrorism.

Conclusion

The study concludes that neither the prevention of radicalization nor its occurrence has had a materially negative impact on Nigeria's efforts to combat terrorism. It was noted that there are currently implemented measures, including legal restrictions, multilateral initiatives, and international cooperation. The study found that these counterterrorism definitions' requirements are not being met by these measures, and they are also failing to achieve their intended objectives. As a result, it suggested fresh approaches to handle the problems mentioned earlier. The goal of this study was to evaluate terrorism and counterterrorism in order to suggest strategies for doing so while also bolstering national security. According to the study, there have been political, economic, and social changes in Nigeria over the years that have in some way or another led to acts that have been classified as terrorism. As a result, some of Nigeria's most important strategies are briefly discussed below considering their pros and cons.

Discussion Strategy: Discussion is essential for resolving problems that lead to conflict, violence, and terror. The "Dutch Option" is this. Democracies that permit opposing viewpoints are more in need of this tactic. People who feel oppressed and dominated, as well as "dissidents," "terrorists," and other groups, should be given the chance to express their opinions. In order to reach out to terrorists in various situations, Nigeria has occasionally used this de-radicalization strategy. The plan for freeing terrorists who have been detained and arrested includes the Nigerian government offering them scholarships for higher education abroad. However, the tactic was pointless because it only strengthened their fortitude.

Monitoring Strategy: The Nigerian government has improved security monitoring at airports, seaports, and land borders to better identify terrorists and their operational equipment. To

perform their duties more effectively, the security officers at these ports and borders received the necessary training and monitoring equipment. Those who employ terrorist tactics as well as organizations are trained to keep an eye out for pertinent information. But Nigerian terrorism continues to thrive.

Building an international coalition to combat terrorism was necessary.The fight against terrorism is seen as having a crucial role for international cooperation. This was carried out in Nigeria in order to ratify all international terrorism treaties, particularly extradition treaties. Coordination was shown in the areas of shared intelligence gathering and information sharing on studies and findings related to counterterrorism. Even though a military multilateral task force for the Lake Chad region was established, Nigerian terrorism persists.

Resource Strategy: In 2004, 2014, and 2019, the Nigerian government chose a human strategy to combat terrorism. The government believed that ensuring justice in the distribution of their national resources, including political positions, would reduce terrorism and overall insecurity. This national policy goal was to prevent groups from turning to terrorism as a form of protest against political dominance. The government recognized the need for justice in the distribution of resources among the various regions of the nation, especially in reducing poverty. As a result, the nation has had a number of poverty reduction programs since 2009, but terrorism in Nigeria persists. Therefore, the political angle as a recipe for fostering and providing resistance to terrorism in Nigeria needs to be examined. Both the suppression and de-radicalization mitigation strategies have filed to yield significant impact in counterterrorism in Nigeria. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis that; radicalization has no significant impact on counterterrorism strategy in Nigeria.

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PARTY POLITICS AND INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT IN THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN NIGERIA, 1999-2022

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Abstract
Undoubtedly, intra-party conflicts weaken democracy. This conflict within political parties in Nigeria especially the People's Democratic Party (PDP) points to the desperation by politicians to win elections at all costs and the winner-takes-all syndrome of Nigerian politics. It has become such a worrisome attribute of political life in Nigeria because the political and economic environment of Nigeria views politics to be largely grounded on winner-takes-it-all and the loser-it-all. This paper explained how the struggle for political positions among the contending groups within the PDP increases its intra-party conflicts leading to factionalization and cross-carpeting of members. The findings show that the struggle for political positions in the PDP leads to factionalization and conflicts. The study relied on documentary methods whereby books, journal articles, newspapers and policy documents were helpful, data were analyzed through content analysis. The study held that to prevent conflicts, zoning/equitable distribution of elective and appointive positions should be upheld in the PDP.

Keywords: *party, politics, conflict, faction,* Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria is a creation of colonialism. It is also a diverse and multi-ethnic society plagued by numerous cleavages and centrifugal tendencies (Mbah, 2007: 187). It is usually difficult to achieve and maintain cordial relationships between groups in a homogeneous society and even more so in post-colonial, plural and emergent nation-state such as Nigeria. As a post-colonial State, the structures of its leadership and level of economic development have proved incapable of welding the multi-ethnic society into virile nation-state.

This is because political parties are no longer driven by ideology but by economics of State power (Mbah, 2017). The political and economic environment of Nigeria view political parties to be largely grounded on winners takes it all. Therefore, politics in Nigeria is the politics of winner takes all and loser loses all. The desperation by political gladiators to win elections at all costs and the winner-takes-all nature of Nigeria's democratic system triggers off the intra-party conflict within political parties in a multi-ethnic country such as Nigeria and consequently, weakens Nigerian democratic system. Contemporary world and modern democracy exist within the compass of political parties. Although parties may differ in organizational structure, ideologies, size, functions and goal, but they remain the major means of aggregating and mobilizing the various interests and resources for consolidation of

democracy and nation building. As political parties and candidates struggle for political positions and power, conflicts arise within and among them.

According to Abba & Babalola, (2017) defined party politics as the politics involving people through political parties and expressed through the channel or thoughtful ideal of political parties as against national interest. In the same vein, Azeez (2009), sees party politics as activities of political parties in a democratic setting to influence and control the machinery of government through democratic institutions. Hence political elites employ all means at their disposal including unconstitutional and undemocratic means to capture political power particularly through varied means of election misconduct and political manipulations (Chibuike & Ernest, 2015).

Intra-party conflict often arises when party members are embroiled in the pursuit of incompatible political goals especially in the selection of candidates for both elective and appointive positions. Intra-party conflict as a social phenomenon has both functional and impaired consequences depending on how the leadership of the party understands and react to the conflict. This is why Momodu & Matudi (2013) argued that functional conflicts spawn creativity, positive growth and development, common agreement and good relationship between groups and individuals. While on the other hand, they posited that dysfunctional conflicts breed disagreement, prevent progress and development, impact decision making process, engender hostility and hatred between groups or individuals.

Consequently, this study therefore, seeks to explain how intra-party conflicts in the People's Democratic Party fuel factionalization within the party from 1999 to 2022.

Literature Review on Struggle for Political positions and Factionalization

The lack of internal party democracy among political parties in the selection of candidates denies a level playing field for all party members, this has created a situation whereby political elites struggle for State power at all costs to accumulate wealth and to influence decision-making structures of the State to their gain. This led to Hobbesian character of struggle for State power among groups or party members, this undermines the basic tenets of democracy leading to intra-party conflict and the attendant factionalization and defection of members to other political parties or formation of new ones.

The political parties in Nigeria are not guided by their own party's constitution to allow resolutions be reached amicably. Their interaction with their members is not based on dialogue, mutuality and cooperation. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) has suffered intra-party conflicts leading to division, breakdown of party activities, factionalization within the party, defection of party members and overheating the polity as a result of not only power or leadership struggle among party members which negates democratic principles and party's constitution (Oladesu, 2017). This scenario, as Olaniyan (2009) argued, is borne out of the notion that party politics is about the struggle for State power between and among the political gladiators.

It was the struggle for positions within the PDP that resulted in a crisis that led to the formation of N-PDP in 2013 by Sen. Abubakar Bukola Saraki's group who insisted that power must not return to South in 2015. Again, the ongoing crisis in the PDP following the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the party presidential standard bearer for the 2023 general elections which was orchestrated by the G-5 governors of the party led by Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers state who are insisting on equitable distribution of positions within the PDP, arguing that the party presidential candidate for the 2023 general elections and the national chairman must not come from the same region of the country in pursuance of the principle of equity, justice and fairness as enshrined in the PDP constitution (2017 as amended) and demanded for Ayu resignation as the party national chairman.

Consequently, the blunt refusal of Senator Iyorchia Ayu who is also from the north to resign and relinquish his position as the PDP national chairman to the south after the

emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the party presidential standard bearer for the 2023 general elections, does not only contravene the provision of the PDP constitution on power sharing, but also reflects the authoritarian character of the party national chairman leading to the current crisis in the party that has constituted a bottleneck for the PDP and continue to jeopardize the party chances of winning the 2023 presidential election.

Similarly, Article 13 section 1(h) of the PDP constitution (2009 as amended), also mandated the party national chairman to ensure strict compliance with the provisions of the party constitution and do all other things that shall promote the growth and welfare of the party (p. 50). Therefore, a bridge or non-adherence to the provisions of party constitution could engender party indiscipline leading to intra-party conflict as witnessed in the PDP. This is because, to be excluded in politics, means isolation from power and political prosperity, and to be included in politics means political prosperity and wealth. Therefore, it could be argued that the trigger of party politics and the intra-party conflict in the PDP is the struggle for political positions among the contendinggroups in the PDP which impinged on internal party democracy that increased its intra-party conflict leading to the division and defection of party members to other political parties or formation of new ones.

Attempt to explain the nexus between party politics and intra-party conflict based on the factors such as favoritism that is promoting one's kith and kin; unequal sharing of state resources (leaders getting a lion's share of resources), and centralize authority (power concentrated at the top) Nwafor & Unaji, 2016). Mbah (2011) argued that defection of party members from opposition political parties to the party in government is the explanatory variable to the importance of acquiring political power in Nigeria. Dudley, cited in Mbah (2011) stated that:

> *…the easiest way to wealth and power is through politics. Politics means wealth and wealth means politics. To get politics, there is always a price …. To be a member of the Governing Party means open avenue to government patronage, contract deals and the rest. But once, having known the profitability of having power, the party (and the individual members) naturally uses the same governmental machinery to stay in power. The leadership becomes a self-recruiting oligarchy- and no self-recruiting oligarchy has been known to tolerate opposition to itself (11-12).*

Scholars such as Shale & Matlosa (2008) enumerated factors responsible for intra-party conflicts to include favoritism (that is advancing a person's social group and relatives at the expense of others); uneven distribution of state resources (leader's constituency gets a lion's share); absence of orderly meetings and centralization of authority (that is concentration of power at the centre). Shale & Matlosa (2008) may be right in their arguments about causes of intra-party conflict because, when members or group within a party are favoured at the expense of other members, it breeds the feeling of alienation leading to intra-party conflict. However, they did not talk about how the absence of internal party democracy could trigger conflict within a party.

Eboh & Anichie (2015) argued that the problem of internal democracy has remained in Nigerian democracy because political parties in the country at all levels are hijacked by powerful elites and political godfathers who impose their political patriots as candidates for elections which often result to conflict within a party. Eboh & Anichie (2015) position is sacrosanct because the domination and control of party structures by powerful members of the party could promote intra-party conflict. Although, Eboh &Anichie (2015), in their study, were not elaborate enough to explain how paucity of party ideology can promote intra-party conflict. Momodu & Matudi (2013) to their view, identified causes of conflict within a political party to include, politics of god-fatherism, absence of internal party democracy,

imposition of candidates, partiality, oppression within a party, and battle for supremacy among party members. This is true because imposition of candidates creates a feeling of alienation and dissatisfaction among other candidates leading to conflict within political parties. But Momodu &Matudi (2013) did not see the poverty of political ideology as one of the causes of intra party conflict.

Basiru (2019) argues that in a democratizing society, a weak party system, prolonged military dictatorship and the neo-patrimonial character of the post-colonial states are the drivers of internal party crisis. Notwithstanding Basiru (2019) near excellence argument, he ignored how the conduct of party primaries engenders intra-party conflict. For Aniche & Egboh (2015), the imposition and substitution of a candidate by powerful members of a political party causes intra-party conflict. Adekeye & Abdulrauf (2017, cited in Abba & Babalola, 2017) looked at the causes of internal party crisis from the process of candidate selection and conduct of party primaries. Of course, the process of candidates' selection for elective positions especially conduct of invalid party primaries and not allowing level playing field for all candidates and members can cause intra-party conflict. Though Adekeye & Abdulrauf (2017) did not explain how personalization of political parties and politics of godfatherism lead to intra-party conflict. Kura (2011) on his part sees candidate selection, party campaign and funding as drivers of intra party conflict. This position is correct because funding of parties means domination and control of party's structures and machinery by the funders which contribute to intra-party conflict.

Other scholars such as Aleyomi (2013), Chukwumerije (2011), Ojukwu &Olaifa (2011), have also identified the reasons for intra-party conflict to include poverty of ideology, absence of internal party democracy, incumbency factor, goal incompatibility, god-fatherism, politics of self-interest, selection of candidate and conduct of primaries, party funding, executive arrogance etc. but the aforementioned scholars did not pay attention to how lack of party institutionalization which is supposed to promote peaceful contest necessary for democratic practice, a principle which assumes credibility, autonomy, party supremacy, and the right to question the incumbents, promote internal party democracy and encourage a united party system which allows party members to articulate their common interests and harmonize their different interests, is also responsible for intra-party conflict.

Abba & Babalola (2017) enumerated party conventions, the imposition of candidate, god-fatherism, party primaries, and absence of internal democracy as factors responsible for intra-party conflict. They further added that in Nigeria, the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) which authorizes political parties to oversee names of candidates that should come out on the ballot without prejudice to INEC's explicit powers to reject candidates that emerged through invalid primaries also induces intra party conflict. However, Abba & Babalola (2017) did not see party congresses and zoning of political offices as reasons for an internal party crisis.

In the same vein, Labaran Maku APGA National Secretary and a former minister of information and communication, quoted in Abba & Babalola (2017) argued that imposition of candidate and gross abuse of procedures and law guiding selection of candidate for general elections are reasons for internal party crisis. The challenge of Internal democracy and Nigerian Political Parties include lack of political ideology, politics of god-fatherism, the imposition of candidates, absence of internal democracy, corruption, and selfishness. But Sule & Yahaya (2019) in their view, ignored the conduct of party primaries and conventions as reasons for intra party conflicts.

Nwafor & Unaji (2016) in their study attributed the reasons for intra-party conflicts to the Hobbesian nature of politics in which battle for the control of state power seems to be a 'do or die' affair, party organizational and operational defects, party indiscipline, lack of party supremacy, the incumbency factor, paucity of party ideology, monetization of politics, and cult of personality which leads to emergence of cabals and politics of god-fatherism.Similarly, Odigwe (2015) in her study of Nigerian political party and internal

democracy, found out that politics of favoritism, selfishness, lack of transparency in party primaries, exclusion of party members in decision making, the dearth of internal democracy, and politics of god-fatherism are causes of intra-party conflicts. But she did not make an effort to explain how the lack of party supremacy could breeds party impunity leading to an intra-party conflicts. In his view, factors such as intra-party conflict include personalization of political party, god-fatherism, monetization of primary elections, the influence and power of incumbency, and imposition of candidates.

Furthermore, Eboh &Aniche (2015) asserts that the imposition of candidates and party executives, the conduct of party primaries, incumbency factor, and authoritarian character of Nigerian political parties which reflect the authoritarian character of the post-colonial states, deepens the crisis of internal democracy leading to internal party crisis in Nigeria.Collaborating this line of argument, Aleyomi (2013) reiterated that the process of nomination and imposition of candidates intensify intra party conflict. Others factors responsible for intra-party conflicts as advanced by scholars such as Ojukwu &Olaifa (2011), Aleyomi (2013), is the conventions of political parties that permit zoning arrangement of their offices. Therefore, what this means is that party convention which permits zoning of political offices does not only deny eligible individuals their constitutional rights to contest for any elective position but also does not allow for wider participation which is a fundamental tenet of any democratic arrangement.

This partly explains why (Ojougboh (2015, cited in Aleyori, 2013) argued that the action which sabotaged the common trust that guided the PDP from its inception by some caucus PDP member and former President Geoduck Jonathan who rejected the zoning arrangement in the PDP's constitution and contested in the 2011 general elections, contributed to the intra-party conflicts in the party which eventually led to its defeat in the 2015 General Elections. Mbah &Nwangwu (2014) in their study of political party's dynamics and development in Nigeria, identified struggle for succession, dispute over issues of party leadership nd representation as factors responsible for intra-party conflict.

The article focuses mainly on party politics and intra-party conflict in the People's Democratic Party (PDP), it is obvious that scholars did not adequately explain how the struggle for political positions among the contending groups within political parties could increase intra-party conflict leading to factionalization and defection of party members or formation of new ones.

Methodology

The study adopted secondary sources for data collection through rapid review of available reports of development from national dailies, books and review of literature on published journals articles on struggles for political positions and intra-party conflicts in Nigeria. This enabled us to gather information necessary to carry out this research, this because most information required are what has already happened within the party. The participants in our interview were party members and PDP youth leaders/and party stakeholders. The KII were conducted in other to have an in-depth grasp of how the struggle for political position induce party conflicts in the PDP in Nigeria. The key informant interview conducted show that struggle for political position in the PDP induce conflicts and factionalization within the party.. Data were collected between January and June, 20222. The final manuscript was subjected to check by the co-authors in order to improve the reliability and validity of qualitative interpretations.

Theoretical Perspective

This study adopts the proposition from social conflict theory. The theory sees social life as a competition and focuses on the distribution of resources and power which are not evenly endowed by nature. Proponents of this theory view society as a gathering of people of diverse

needs and interests with limited resources to meet their needs. This creates inequality that generates social conflict and social change. Karl Marx is considered the father of social conflict theory.

Social conflict theory basically looks at struggles for power and control in society as a major causal factor of conflict. Conflict occurs when two or more actors oppose each other in social interaction, reciprocally exerting social powers in an effort to attain scarce or incompatible goals and prevent the opponent from attaining them. The quest for dominance and power becomes the currency rather than consensus. Based on this premise, governments at local, state and federal levels have not been able to address the contending issues between herdsmen and farmers or assist them in reaching some consensus.

The major proponents of this theory include: Max (1818-1883); Weber (1864-1920); among others (Nte, 2016). Hornby (1995); Odoh-Alan (2012); and Sears (2008) Conflict approach is one of the major theoretical approach in sociological thought. In general, the conflict perspective assumes that social life is shaped by groups and individuals who struggle or compete with one another over various resources and rewards. It draws attention to power differentials, such as class conflict and generally contrast historically dominant, ideologies, it is therefore a macro level analysis of society. Karl Marx is the father of the social conflict theory, which is a component of the four paradigms of sociology. Certain conflict theories set out to highlight the ideological aspects inherent on traditional thought (cited in Nte, 2016).

According to Nte (2016) this theory claims that society is in a state of perpetual conflict due to competition for limited resources. It holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. Conflict theory has been used to explain a wide range of social phenomenon, including wars and revolution, wealth and poverty, discrimination and domestic violence. It ascribes most of the fundamental developments in human history, such as democracy and the coin/rights to capitalistic attempts to control the masses rather than to a desire for social order. The theory revolves around concepts of social inequality on the discussion of resource and focuses on the conflict that exist between classes. The traditional definition of conflict is struggle over values and scarce resources in which the aim of the opponent is to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rival Coser (1995).

In interfacing the theory to our subject, it becomes imperative to appreciate that the persistence in the People's Democratic Party is consequent upon the struggles for power and control in the party and subsequently the State as a result, this becomes the major causal factor of conflict. Conflict usually occurs when two or more actors oppose each other in social interaction, reciprocally exerting social powers in an effort to attain scarce, limitedand most often incompatible goals trying to prevent the opponent from attaining them. The quest for dominance and power becomes the currency rather than consensus.

Findings and Discussion

This section of the study analysed how **t**he struggle for political positions among the contending groups within the PDP arising from the desperate quest for power and make certain political decisions intensified intra-party conflicts in the party.Therefore, the most important dimensions of the factors that intensified intra-party conflict in the PDP between the periods under review are the persistent and intense struggle for political positions within the party such as presidential position, the PDP national chairmanship positions,struggle for governorshippositions, and the struggle for NASS leadership positions among others.

For instance, it was the struggle for presidential position that resulted in the crisis which led to the factionalization and formation of New-PDP in August 31, 2013 when some disgruntled members of the PDP stormed out of the venue of the party special national convention and announced formation of splinter group known as the N-PDP. The disgruntled members of the PDP (N-PDP) led by former Vice president Alhaji Atiku Abubakar include

Mr. Rotimi Amechi, former governor of Rivers state, Alhaji Murtala Nyako, former governor of Adamawa state, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, former governor of Kano state, Alhaji Abdulfatah Ahmed, former governor of Kwara state, Alhaji Sule Lamido, former governor of Jigawa state, Alhaji Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, former governor of Sokoto State, Alhaji Banbagida Aliyu, former governor of Niger State and Alhaji Abubakar Kawu Baraje, former acting national chairman of the PDP among others (Ibrahim & Yahaya, 2015).

The group was against President Jonathan's second term ambition and argued that it was still the turn of the North to produce the next president of Nigeria in the 2015 general elections following the demise of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in May 2010, and insisted that power must not return to the South. But the PDP insisted on fielding former President Goodluck Jonathan as the party's presidential standard bearer for the 2015 general elections having completed Yar'Adua's tenure. This, coupled with the inability of the PDP national leadership under Alhaji Bamaga Tukur to resolve or manage the crisis arising from the party's special national convention on 31 August, 2013 led to the defection of the N-PDP members including five (5) out of the seven (7) aggrieved PDP governors, some Senators and members of the House of Representative to the then opposition All Progressive Congress (APC) in November 2013. The peak of the intra-party conflict in the PDP was the defection of the then Speaker of the House of Representative Alhaji Aminu Waziri Tambuwal to the APC in 2014 which eventually resulted in the defeat of the PDP in the 2015 general elections (Ibrahim & Yahaya, 2015).

Similarly, the struggle for the PDP national chairmanship position following the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the party presidential standard bearer for the 2023 general elections led to division in the party and formation of the factional PDP known as 'the Integrity Group' led by the G-5 governors of the party headed by Nyesom Wike, former governor of Rivers state. Others of the 'Integrity Group' include Mr. Samuel Ortom, former governor of Benue state, Senator Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, former governor of Enugu state, Mr. Okeazie Ikpeazu, former governor of Abia state; Mr. Seyi Makinde, governor of Oyo state; Olusegun Mimiko, former governor of Ondo state; Ayodele Peter Fayose, former governor of Ekiti state, Jonah David Jang, former governor of plateau state, Donald Duke, former governor of Cross River state; and Chief Bode George, member of PDP Board of Trustees.

The 'Integrity Group', in pursuance to the policy of the rotation and zoning of Party and Public elective offices based on the principle of equity, justice and fairness enshrined in Article 7 section 3(c) of the PDP constitution (2017 as amended), insisted on Iyorcha Ayu's resignation as the PDP national chairman to give way for a party member of Southern extraction to take over the national chairmanship of the PDP following the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar who is also from the North as the party presidential standard bearer for the 2023 general elections. The group argued that the party presidential candidate for the 2023 general elections and the national chairman must not come from the same region of the country (North) in pursuance of the principle of equity, justice and fairness enshrined in the PDP constitution (2017 as amended).

The tenacity of intra-party conflict in the PDP and the consequent factionalization and defection of its members to other political parties is a height of the perpetual clandestine struggle for power and positions within the party, which stem from desperate desire to acquire State power for accumulation of wealth. In our KII with a stakeholder of PDP in Nasarawa State, what is your reason for defecting from the PDP to the APC? "His response was that he won the popular State assembly primary election in his constituency (Awe State constituency) but because I have no strong god-farter in Abuja my name was changed in 2011 elections therefore, I have lost interest in the party.

Table 1 showing Factional members of the New-PDP (N-PDP)

S/N	Name	Political Designation	Role/Position in the N- PDP
1	Atiku Abubakar	Former Vice President (1999-2007)	Party Leader, Interim
2	Abubakar Kawu Baraje	Former acting National Chairman of the PDP	Party Chairman, Interim
3	Olagunsoye Oyinlola	Former Governor of Osun State and National Secretary of the PDP	Party Secretary, Interim
4	Rotimi Amechi	Former Governor of Rivers State	Lead Member
5	Rabiu Kwankwaso	Former Governor of Kano State	Lead Member
6	Sule Lamido	Former Governor of Jigawa State	Lead Member
7	Murtala Nyako	Former Governor of Adamawa State	Lead Member
8	Aliyu Wamakko	Former Governor of Sokoto State	Lead Member
9	Babangida Aliyu	Former Governor of Niger State	Lead Member
10	Abdulfatah Ahmed	Former Governor of Kwara State	Lead Member
11	Sen. Bukola Saraki	Former Governor of Kwara State	Lead Member
12	Sen. Dino Melaye	Former Senator Kogi West	Lead Member

Source: Okoli & Ali, (2014, P.62)

The table above shows names of the disgruntled members of the PDP (N-PDP) who were dissatisfied with the outcome of the PDP special national convention organized on 31 August 2013 at Eagle Square Abuja that produced former president GoodLuck Jonathan as the Party's presidential standard bearer for the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. The group which was a product of the internal conflict in the PDP had insisted that power must not return to the South in 2015 following the death of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in May 2010, whose tenure was completed by former president GoodLuck Jonathan.

The inability of the PDP national leadership under Alhaji Bamaga Tukur to harmonize divergence interests of members and resolve the crisis, resulted in the defection of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar to APC in 2013, but now back to the PDP; Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso to APC but now in NNPP, Rotimi Amechi, Murtala Nyako, Aliyu Wamakko, and Abdulfatah Ahmed to APC. Others disgruntled PDP members who defected to the APC but now back to the PDP include, Senator Bukola Saraki, former Senate President, Alhaji Waziri Aminu Tambuwal, former Speaker House of Representative, and now Senate member of 10th Assembly and Senator Dino Melaye, former Senator Kogi West.

Table 2 showing Members of the Factional PDP Integrity Group

S/N	Name	Political Designation	State	Geo-Political Zone
1	Nyeson Wike	Former Governor	Rivers	South-South
2	Samuel Ortom	Former Governor	Benue	North-Central
3	Seyi Makinde	Present Governor	Oyo	South-West
4	Okeazie Ikpeazu	Former Governor	Abia	South-East
5	Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi	Former Governor	Enugu	South-East
6	Olusegun Mimiko	Former Governor	Ondo	South-West
7	Ayo Fayose	Former Governor	Ekiti	South-West
8	Donald Duke	Former Governor	Cross River	South-South
9	Chief Bode George	Member PDP BoT	Lagos	South-West
10	David Jonah Jang	Former Governor	Plateau	North-Central

Source: compiled by the researcher with data from field work (2022)

From the table above, all factional members of the 'PDP Integrity Group', with the exception of former governor Samuel Ortom of Benue state and David Jonah Jang of Plateau state who are from the North-central, are from the South. Therefore, of the above Ten (10) members of the factional PDP known as the 'Integrity Group' led by the G-5 PDP governors spearheaded by former governor Nyisom Wike of Rivers state, eight (8) are from the South. This explains why the 'integrity group' insisted on Iyorcha Ayu's resignation as the PDP national chairman for equitable distribution of power in the party following the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the PDP presidential standard-bearer for the 2023 general elections.

However, the blunt refusal of Senator Iyorchia Ayu to resign and relinquish his position as the PDP national chairman to the South and the failure of the party national leadership to manage the crisis arising from the 2022 convention of the PDP especially after the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the party presidential standard bearer for the 2023 general elections, intensified intra-party conflict in the PDP that led to anti-party activities by some members of the 'integrity group' which threatened the PDP chances of winning the 2023 presidential election.

Conclusion

The historic years of politicians who participate in politics based on internal party democracy and ideological coherence of political parties no longer survive in the current democratic dispensation of Nigeria's Fourth Republic which started on 29th May, 1999. Presently, those who survive are class of politicians with desperate quest to capture state power to make certain decisions for their personal gains. This has led to unhealthy struggle for political positions within political parties including the PDP leading to intra-party conflict. Intra-party conflict is a backdrop to the sustainability of democratic growth and development. A party that sees no harm or overlooks intra-party conflict within it is often besieged with lawlessness and instability which can cripple the survival of the party. Intra-party conflict always yields disastrous results because it is a serious impediment to sustainable democratic development particularly in the developing countries like Nigeria. The more political parties in a country or nation continue to wallow in intra-party conflict, the more it constitutes a threat to its democratic development.

From the foregoing conclusion and on the strength of the findings, this paper recommended among other things, equitable distribution of both elective and appointive political positions within political parties especially the PDP to prevent intense or unhealthy struggle for positions leading to factionalization and defection of party members.

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UNEMPLOYMENT AMID EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA: AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW

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Abstract
This study is conducted to analytically examine the employment opportunities in agricultural sector in Katsina State as well as the challenges faced by the citizens of the State, especially youth, in grabbing the opportunities. By utilizing content analysis method where published academic writings were reviewed, the study found that Katsina State has an available farmland area of about one million, six hundred and forty thousand hectares (1,640,000 ha) with an identifid *Fadama* land area of thirty six thousand, one hundred and thirty-nine thousand hectares (36,139 ha). And that the suitability of the land for farming also makes it possible and suitable for rearing livestock such as sheep, cattle, camels, goats, and paultry. In addition, there existed several irrigation sites distributed all over the State and more areas are reported to have been being developed for dry farming to serve as complement to rain-fed agricutlrue. However, the high level of insecurity in the form of armed banditry affecting the State, especially the rural areas where the agricultural activities takeplace, makes it impossible for many unemployed people to take the opportunity of engaging into the agricultural sector. Thus, it is recommended among other recommendations that government should device means that ensure the end of armed banditry activities or at least render it ineffective for people to be able to utilize the available farmland and be self-employed

Keywords: Unemployment, Employment Opportunities, Agriculture, farmland, and Insecurity

Introduction

Since unemployment is a social problem that leads to poverty and undermines a stable and expanding economic system. It is a global phenomenon and crises that every government attempts to address as unemployed youth account for 60% of Africa's jobless population (Ademike, 2021). According to Falade and Babatunde (2020), it is a circumstance in which a person or a government is unable to possess or provide a wage service, rendering the productive class unproductive. They further stated that Nigeria's high rate of political and socioeconomic crimes is what led to the country's current high unemployment rate. According to Adelowokan, Maku, Babasanya, and Adesoya (2019), economic development and growth, which were predicted to encourage a decline in the unemployment rate, have instead led to even worse social and economic consequences. According to them, the government's inability to address Nigeria's persistently high unemployment rate by taking into account the number of graduates produced annually by all postsecondary institutions across the nation exacerbates the vulnerability-causing circumstances (Adelowokan, Maku, Babasanya, & Adesoya, 2019). According to Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa (2012), Nigeria's high unemployment rate is one of the major socioeconomic issues the nation faces, given the country's expanding workforce and thousands of new graduates each year. There are not enough jobs available to accommodate the growing number of young people without jobs. Abubakar (2021) claims that the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria has hindered young people's ability to make significant

contributions to the country's development. The national unemployment rate in Nigeria conceals notable differences in the unemployment rates of the various states.

Despite Nigeria's abundant natural resources and green landscape, the nation is confronted with the pressing issues of unemployment and poverty. Approximately 70% of the population lives on less than 0.7 US$ per day, and the youth unemployment rate hovers around 90% (Abang & Ayamba, 2021). Abang and Ayamba argue that the development of agriculture serves as a crucial tool in addressing the challenges of unemployment among Nigerians. Etale, Suwari, and Adaka (2021) suggest that a country that effectively enhances its agricultural sector can overcome significant obstacles it faces. They note that Nigeria, a third world nation in Sub-Saharan Africa, possesses substantial agricultural potential with a land area of around 98 million hectares, 72.4% of which is arable and 27.6% non-arable. Considering the pivotal role of agriculture in the advancement of humanity and its contribution to providing livelihoods, the sustainable agriculture is a paramount concern for governments globally. Adeola and Oluwafemi (2014) emphasized the necessity for governments at all levels to prioritize enhancement of agriculture. They highlighted various initiatives in Nigeria such as the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), Green Revolution, and Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), aimed at boosting agricultural productivity. Nonetheless, these efforts have not yielded significant outcomes. Manyong, Ikpi, Olayemi, Yusuf, and Idachaba (2003) underscored the importance of identifying and addressing the constraints and obstacles hindering the success of agricultural programmes through strategic investments in the sector.

Katsina State, situated in the North Western region of Nigeria, boasts a population of 9,300,382 by the year 2023 as projected by the National Population Commission (City Population, 2024). This Nigerian State is positioned entirely within the tropical zone, experiencing a distinct division between rainy and dry seasons spanning from May to October and November to April, respectively. Encompassing a total land area of 24,192 square kilometers, Katsina State allocates 67% of this expanse, equivalent to 1.60 million hectares, for agricultural purposes. The primary factors influencing agricultural productivity in the State include the availability of suitable land and an adequate water supply, facilitating year-round cultivation of diverse crops and livestock (Katsina Investment Promotion Agency, 2023).

The agricultural commodities produced in the State offer a substantial foundation of raw materials for a diverse array of sectors including oil and flour processing, textile production, and dairy manufacturing. This assertion is grounded on the recognition that the State is renowned for its significant cultivation of guinea corn, millet, groundnut, beans, maize, wheat, rice, and notably, serves as the leading contributor to cotton production nationwide (Katsina State Investor's Handbook I, 2016). Despite the presence of arable land in Katsina State, which is deemed sufficient to sustain a comfortable livelihood for its inhabitants and even facilitate exports to other states and neighboring countries such as Niger Republic, and 61 bodies of water that are suitable for irrigation (the majority of which has a combined water surface area of 558Cum situated at Jibia, Sabke and Gwaigwaye (Katsina State Government, 2016), there persists a pronounced unemployment rate within the State. As highlighted by Ladan (2019), this dilemma is particularly evident among numerous young individuals, notably recent graduates from institutions of higher learning, who eagerly await opportunities for employment by the state government - an entity that stands as the predominant employer in the State, primarily due to the scarcity of industrial enterprises. This is the foundation for the study's exploration of the myriad covered opportunities for self-employment that exist for Katsina State's teaming youth.

Conceptual Clarification

Unemployment, especially among the youth, is a global issue that affects both advanced and less advanced nations alike. However, according to Adebinpe, Adetunji, Nwachukwu and Hieu (2021), while the advanced nations are in the position to take the threat posed by the menance of unemployment seriously and restructuring their social and educational security systems to abate its growth and avoid the eminent catastrophic retrenchments, less advanced nations seem not to be doing enough about the issue. Adamu (2023) defines unemployment as a condition whereby individuals who are willing and capable to work are unable to get a suitable job that would sustain their lives. Based on this definition, it is obvious that once an individual is engaged in doing anything that brings in income to sustain one's life that person is said to be employed. However, to Abdulrahman and Abdulyakeen (2021), Unemployment is not only limited to a situation where those who are willing and able to work cannot find a job, but also include those employed but are either placed in a lower position or are paid less than what persons with their skills and qualifications earn. Unemployment, as indicated by Ibrahim and Ojetola (2022), is one of the major economic and social challenges of this decade across the globe and specifically in the African continent. The long spells of which can posed a serious longterm effects for its victims such as social exclusion and reduced earnings.

Okoye and Obi (2022) defined unemployment as a term refering to people who are employable, and at the same time seeking a job, but are unable to find one. However, Oseni and Oseni (2015) argued that not all people who are willing and capable of working but are unable to find one are considered unemployed rather, only those who fall within the category and are between the age of 15 and 64. This means that those who are either blow the age of 15 or above the age of 64 cannot be regarded as unemployed. To Okoye and Obi, in less developed nations and especially Nigeria, the issue of unemployment is a very serious one as it occupied a central place in economic discuss. This assertion was earlier indicated by National Bureau of Statistics as that unemployment is one of the most critical problems Nigeria is facing. And in spite of all the efforts by the previous administration at reducing the level of unemployment, the rate is still increasing (National Bureau of Statistics , 2010). The National Bureau of Statistics reported that the only percentage of those who ae eligible to work and are fully employed is only 36.75% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). United Nations reported that during the previous Common Country Analysis (CCA) in 2016, the unemployment rate stood at 14.2% which subsequently increased to 23.1% in 2018, when the labour force survey ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic was conducted. The rate of unemployment for people between the ages of 15 and 24 has increased from 36.5% in 2018 from 25.2$ in 2016 (United Nations, 2022).

According to Egunjobi (2014), the problem of unemployment in Nigeria is recently deep and widespread, that cut across all aspects of age groups, educational strata, and geographical entities. Unemployment has been classified as one of the serious hindrances of social development. Apart from it representing a lot of waste of a country's human resources, it generates welfare loss in terms of lower income and well-being of the citizens. In addition to the economic waste it brings to the nation and constitutes political unrest for the country, it increases the rate of poverty as well (Adamu, 2023). Ibrahim and Ojetola (2022) observed that unemployment in Nigeria is resultant of various factor – one of which is the population growth. The increase in the population resulted in an overwhelming increase in the ablebodied population thereby giving birth to an increase in the size of the working age population. They also indicated that lack of employable skills resulting from inappropriate school curricula form part of the major factors that increase the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

Methodology

This research utilized exclusively secondary data derived directly from published academic journals, online articles, newspaper sources, and other pertinent documents relevant to the subject under investigation. In the selection of the documents required for this research, the researchers confined their focus to those pertaining to the dimensions of employment and unemployment, particularly within the context of Nigeria and specifically Katsina State, as well as those emphasizing the identification of opportunities within the agricultural sector.

Enpirical Review of Literature

Various studies, such as those mentioned below, have been conducted to examine the level of unemployment in Nigeia in genral and Katsina State in particular. The researcher, however, has not encountered any literature focusing on the exploration of concealed job opportunities for individuals in Katsina State in the agricultural secotr; thus, this has served as the rationale behind this investigation. Adelowokan, Maku, Babasanya, and Adesoya (2019) delved into the nexus among unemployment, poverty, and economic development in Nigeria spanning from 1985 to 2015. Their findings revealed the absence of a sustained correlation between unemployment, poverty, and economic advancement in the country. Nyong (2013) conducted a study titled "Unemployment Convergence among the 36 States in Nigeria" with the objective of scrutinizing the distinctions and resemblances in poverty levels across the federating states. The research ultimately posited that 30 out of the 36 states exhibit unemployment rates aligning with structuralist theory, as they remain stationary with intermittent breaks. Falade and Babatunde (2020) conducted an examination into the impacts of government expenditure on both unemployment and poverty within Nigeria spanning from 1980 to 2017. The outcomes of the investigation suggest that poverty is deeply rooted in Nigeria and displays notable variations in the consequences of distinct elements of public expenditure on unemployment. A scrutiny carried out by Nwagwu (2014) sought to explore the relationship between unemployment, poverty, and the insecurity of lives and properties in Nigeria. The primary objective of the research was to determine whether the escalating trend of violence in Nigeria stems from unemployment, with the results indicating a direct association between unemployment, poverty, and security challenges in the nation.

Osinubi (2005) conducted a study aimed at examining the interplay between unemployment, poverty, and economic growth in Nigeria; as well as proposing strategies for fostering growth that leads to a reduction in unemployment and poverty within the country. In a similar vein, Siyan, Adegoriola, and Adolphus (2016) undertook a research endeavor to explore the impact of unemployment and inflation on poverty levels in Nigeria spanning from 1980 to 2014. The findings indicated a bidirectional relationship between unemployment and the prevalence of poverty, along with a unidirectional relationship between the unemployment rate and inflation rate. Emmanuel (2018) carried out a study titled 'Unemployment, poverty, and corruption in Nigeria' with the purpose of investigating how unemployment and poverty contribute to corruption in Nigeria during the period from 2006 to 2016. The results of this investigation demonstrated a positive correlation between unemployment, poverty, and corruption. Lawal, Usman, and Muhammad (2023) investigate how the unorganized sector helps Katsina State, Nigeria, lower unemployment and boost economic growth. The obtained result showed that unemployment in the study area and the informal sector are positively correlated. Emeh (2012) looks into the strategies for addressing youth unemployment in Nigeria's Lagos State. The findings of which demonstrated that youth unemployment is concerning, that youth empowerment and development can reduce youth unemployment, that high unemployment exists in Lagos State as a result of the migration of people seeking better opportunities across the nation, and that the state government of Lagos State has implemented numerous youth empowerment and development initiatives to address youth unemployment in the State.

Muhammad and David (2019) investigate the nature of the connection between the twin issues of poverty and unemployment in Niger State, Nigeria, Andow and Umaru (2019) found that the Nasiru El-Rufai administration in Kaduna State was aiming to address poverty and unemployment as two socioeconomic issues. In a similar vein, Olotu, Salami, and Akeremale (2015) found that the number of graduates produced each year and the Nigerian labor market's inability to provide gainful employment have caused the country's unemployment rate to rise to an alarming level over the past ten years. The relationship between public debt, poverty, and unemployment in Nigeria was examined by Okoye and Obi (2022). Egunjobi (2014) sought to ascertain the nature of the connection between unemployment and poverty from 1977 to 2010. Odeh and Okoye (2014) investigated the dynamics between youth unemployment in Nigeria and policies aimed at reducing poverty. Ademike (2021) looked at how unemployment, poverty, and insecurity interacted in Nigeria and how unemployment and poverty responded to the start of the country's conflict. Okorie and Anowor (2017) investigated the connection between poverty incidence and unemployment rates in Nigeria. The aforementioned makes it clear that, despite the best efforts of researchers, no studies have been done to investigate the range of employment options available to Nigerians, particularly those in Katsina State.

To fill this gap, the study employs an opportuity cost theory/comparative advantage theory which is an economic theory that refutes the idea of having it all when resources are limited. The term opportunity cost was first developed by Professor Friedrich von Wieser (1914) who was a member of the Austrian School of Economics. Other proponent of the theory include David Ricardo and Heckscher-Ohlin. Opportunity cost, as suggested by these scholars, represents the value that is relinquished by the government, corporation, or individual when opting for one alternative over another, whether it involves a financial loss or the expenditure of time and effort (Caldwell, 2024). This implies that the framework is established on the premise that governments, corporate entities, and individuals encounter diverse demands that cannot all be met simultaneously due to limited resources; consequently, in prioritizing the most esteemed ones, others must be sacrificed, which are identified as opportunity costs. This theoretical framework offers a solution to various governments when it comes to determining which among their numerous initiatives should be prioritized for implementation and which should be deferred temporarily.Katsina State benefits from a significant amount of farmlands, accounting for 67% of the State's landmass, equivalent to 1.60 million hectares, coupled with sufficient water supply to support year-round cultivation of a variety of crops and livestock (Katsina Investment Promotion Agency, 2023). Therefore, it is recommended that the government prioritize agriculture during resource allocation by providing modern farming methods and cutting-edge agricultural technologies. Involvement in agricultural pursuits by the government, often perceived as activities for rural and uneducated individuals, has the potential to attract the interest of the youth in the State, enlightening them about the inherent benefits within their reach. This initiative would not only offer employment opportunities to unemployed youth and migrants but also generate revenue for the government to address unmet needs.

Impact of Unemployment on Nigerian Economic Growth and Development

The level of economic growth and development of any nation is by and large dependent upon the degree to which the various potentials of its youth are utilized and harnassed by the government (Abubakar, 2021). Abubakar argued that youth are the engineers for positive changes in both urban and rural areas; their vigour, energy, character, inventiveness, and orientation define the pace of development of any socieity. according to him, however, in Nigeria, the increasing level of unemployment has contributed in no small measure in undermining effort of youth to meaningfully contribute to natonal development (Abubakar, 2021). Adelowokan, Maku, Babasanya and Adesoya (2019) emphasized that a

high rate of unemployment is considered one of the most critical economic problems facing Nigeria. This is because, while the workforce of the country's economy continues to grow day-in-day-out, the labour market does not increase to the degree of absorbing the rising number of unemployed youth. And a considerable number of those who were lucky to be in the labour market are underemployed who are underpaid even though the work longer hours and engage in hazardous jobs. This situation, as outlined by Tello and Alimi (2016), leads to a number of economic challenges that resulted in the increase in the number of poor people in the country. Similarly, Nyong (2013) argued that the high level of unemployment in Nigeria is the major factor that behind the promotion and propogation of not only high rate of poverty, but also insecurity and different forms of crime among youth includng kidnapping and armed robbery.

Unemployment, as reflected by the labour market, is the broadest indicator of economic activities (Nwagwu, 2014). According to him, the Nigerian Youth Empowerment Action Plan (NIYEAP) showed that within the period of 2009 to 2011, the number of unemployed youth seeking for jobs was within the region of 13 million. The results of this rapid growth of youth unemployment are grave and manifested in youth militancy and restiveness such as Movement for Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra, Niger Delta Avengers, Oduduwa People's Congress, Boko Haram, and many others (Nwagwu, 2014). Emmanuel (2018) emphasizes on the impact of unemployment on the nation's economy where he indicated that unemployment causes frustration, extreme anxiety, sadness, and relience upon friends and family members. He further explaind that this precarious condition has left the youth in a vicious cycle of poverty that continue to erodes their confidence and bright future. This bad experience can easily indoctrinated them into illigal activities that always brought the nation down to its knees (Emmanuel, 2018). Lawal, Usman and Muhammad (2023), explained that as a result of the increasing unemployment rate in Nigeria, there have been adverse effects on both the economy and the socieity. according to them, the consequences of unemployment in the countries include an increase in the rural-urban migration, reduction in the national ouput of both goods and services, increase in the number of dependent people, high level of poverty, and high rate of crimes leading to current insecurity in the country (Lawal, Usman, & Muhammad, 2023).

In spite of the fact that various programmes and policies targeted at reducing the level of unemployment in Nigeria were implemented to provide viable solutions to the menace, the level of unemployment in the counry is still on the increased (Nyong, 2013). Of the most notable policies implemented to address the problem of unemployment in Nigeria as stated by Hussaini (2014), and Onah and Olise (2019), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) which was established in 1986 with the main aim of creating employment opportunities for the Nigerian youth; the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NEEDS) established in 2003, the Small and Medium Scale Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), and the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) in 2016 which was made up of four sub-programme all targeting, in one way or the other, at creating employment opportunities - Government Enterprise Empowerment Programme (GEEP), Home Grown School Feed (HGSF) programme, Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), and N-Power Programme (Onah & Olise, 2019). According to Siyan, Adegoriola and Adolphus (2016), situation in Nigeria is disturbing as the various economic policies brought about by the government were unable to reduce the rate of unemployment that lead to a sustained economic growth and development. They further argued that the persistent high rate of unemployment in Nigeria is traceable to the governmental policy error that is mainly cuased by the failure of the government to alter and fine tune the received economic doctrine to suite the Nigerian context and complexity.

Employment Opportunities and Challenges in Katsina State

Nigeria possesses vast expanses of fertile land, leading to agriculture emerging as a critical sector in the economy, presenting significant opportunities for employment, ensuring food security, and contributing to poverty alleviation. According to a report by the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (2024), while subsistence farming traditionally dominated the sector, the introduction of enhanced seed varieties, modern agricultural techniques, and more accurate weather predictions has resulted in a steady increase in agricultural productivity. Additionally, agriculture not only contributes 25% to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but also employs 48% of the country's workforce (Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, 2024). However, in spite of this God-given opportunity for Nigerians to get gainful employment, various youth and other able-bodied remain unemployed and underemployed in other sectors of which contributions towards the development of the nation remain shrouded. as put forward by Abubakar (2021), instead of developing the agricultural sector that is capable of employing more than half of the citizens especially the rural dwellers, the successive governments in Nigeria resort to coming up with various programmes which are targeted at providing employment opportunities to the citizenries. According to him, most of these programmes failed to acheved their set objecties; in some cases, the unemployment level seemed to be increasing instead of decreasing (Abubakar, 2021).

Located between the longitude $6^{0}52$, $9^{0}20$ E, and latitudes $11^{0}8$, $13^{0}22$N and cover a large land area of within the region of twenty-four thousand one hundered and ninety-four square kilometres, Katsina State has two major seasons – wet and dry seasons (Gambo, Zahran, & Sidahmed, 2016). The State is an extention of the tropical grassland alias Sudan Savannah and Arid Zone in the North; as a result it is blessed with fair rainfall with the rainy season longer in the southern part as it lasts for up to six (6) months, while in the northern part of the State, it normally lasts for around five months (Katsina State Investor's Handbook I, 2016). As reported by KTARDA (2014), Katsina State has an available farmland area of about one million, six hundred and forty thousand hectares (1,640,000 ha) with an identifid *Fadama* land area of thirty six thousand, one hundred and thirty-nine thousand hectares (36,139 ha). The suitability of the land for farming also makes it possible and suitable for rearing livestock such as sheep, cattle, camels, goats, and paultry. In addition, there existed several irrigation site distributed all over the State and more areas are reported to have been being developed for dry farming to serve as complement to rain-fed agricutlrue. This is made possible due to the existence of certain major dams in the State that include Jibia, Zobe, Sabke, Daberan, Ajiwa, Mairuwa, Gangara, Raddawa, and Ruwan Sanyi dams (Katsina State Investor's Handbook I, 2016).

The fertile land the State is endowed with make it suitable for the production of various food and cash crops that are always marketable in both local and international markets. These include maize, sorghum, rice, sugar cane, beans, soyabeans, cotton, cassava, fruits, vegetables, fodder crops, groundnut, potatos, and millet (Wudil & Haruna, 2021). Regarding the livestock production, the State as indicated by Wudil and Haruna (2021) has the capability, due to its favourable weither condition, of excelling in aminal rearing such as cattle, sheep, goats, and camel; thus, becomes one of the leading supplies of live animals and animals related products in Nigeria. It is reported that there are various trunk-A roads in the breadth and length of the State that ensures easy access to alll parts of the State (Katsina State Investor's Handbook I, 2016). Therefore, all agricultural production areas in the State are sufficiently connected with road networks; and in addition cover other parts of the country as well as neighbouring Niger Republic. This will make it easier for the produced goods to reach the available market where they are needed for local consumption and for exportion. There exist various local markets in the State – of which are international due to their location and facility exchange and trade. These markets where the agricultural produce can readily be

sold include Katsina-Dubai International Market, Katsina Central Market, Mai'adua International Market, Jibia International Market, Charanchi Market, Yar'Gamji Market, Dutsinma Market, Kafur Market, Bakori Market, Yargoje Market, Dandume Market, Rimaye Market, Dayi Market, Kankara Market, and Sheme Market (Katsina State Investor's Handbook I, 2016).

According to IFAD-CBARDP (2013), there are various other income earning activities available for people in the State which include trading; crafts work such as mat and basket weaving, blacksmithing, and wood carving; fishing and hunting. In spite of all the agricultrual opportunities at the disposal of youth to grab, majority of the youth in the State remain unemployed and underemployed in other economic sectors (Ibrahim & Ojetola, 2022). The issue is associated with lack of working capital as indicated by Ladan and Bakiyawa (2011). according to them, many youth are interested in developing themselves informally in the agricultural sector yet, they have no farms and the needed capital to start operating. This is because the applying for loan from financial institutions such as banks requires a lot of procedures that are diffiuclt for many of the youth. And even if the loan is granted, the interest rate is invariably high for them to pay. Nevertheless, according to other recently conducted studies such as that of Ladan and Matawalli (2020), job opportunities as presented by the agricultural sector in the State is at its lowest ebb due to high level of insecurity, notably rural banditry. Rural banditry which is, as described by Okoli and Ugwu (2019), an incidence of armed robbery or allied violent crimes, which include kidnapping, cattle rustling as well as village or market raids by making use of force or threat to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill has negatively affected farming activities in Katsina State. Therefore, if the current effort of the Government of Katsina State of establishing State's own security personnel to counter armed bandit activities is successful, youth will get more opportunities to get involved deeply into the agricultural sector in the State.

Conclusion

The paper examined the level of unemployment among people, especially youth, in Katsina State amid the existence of various employment opportunities for people acroos the State. It was observed that the State is blessed with abundant natural arable land, bodies of water, and suitable weather for farming and rearing of animal that can give employment to not only the denizens of the State, but to even visitors. However, the major abstacle to utilizing this opportunity was presences of armed bandits in most of the rural areas where the farming and rearing activities could takeplace.

Recommendations

It is, therefore, based on the findings of the study that the following recommendations are made:

i. Governments at all levels should device means such as increasing the number of armed forces that ensure the end of armed banditry activities or at least render them ineffective for people to be able to utilize the available farmland and be self-employed.
ii. State and local governments should allocate the unutilized land to the interested youth by collecting a small amount of money from them as rent that will be renewed annually. This will make it possible for many unemployed people to be engaged.
iii. Government should create outlets for the farm produce so the farmers can turn their produce into cash at any given period of time. This will raise their morale in engaging more in the farming activities.

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CULT CULTURE AND THE DILEMMA OF INSTITUTION BUILDING IN AFRICA

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Abstract
One of the greatest challenges to public administration and service delivery in Africa is the weakness of its institutions. Institutions exist but are unable to perform their roles effectively. Beyond the legal framework and actors within these institutions, there would appear to be a preference for a 'we' versus 'them' attitude in the use and appreciation of public institutions in Africa. Several factors are responsible for this. These include ethnicity, language, tribe, and group factors enabling the parochial perception of public institutions. However, these institutions and processes become effective and functional once defined and applied to achieve those parochial ends. These parochial outlooks have taken the form of cults. First because they provide alternatives to mainstream institutional frameworks and secondly, they serve to protect and preserve the interest of the inducted members of these social cults. This paper utilizes secondary data to examine the tragedy of institutional weakness and failure in Africa and submits that the cultic attitude of the people they are meant to serve makes the publicness of these institutions non-functional and continues to frustrate the effort to build strong institutions in Africa.

Key words: Cult, Culture, Institution building, Africa

Introduction

Although, the idea of cult is condemnable, it is practiced in most countries of the world under different guises. Through the examination of the case of Africa, this paper shows that despite the fact that the term is not acceptable and largely considered as negative, the practice of the variables that make up the concept can still be largely observed in the administrative system of most African countries. The aim of this paper therefore is to periscope the cultic approach to public administration in Africa, show how the cult culture is very much in existence and the role it plays in the failure of public institutions in Africa.

Cults are broadly prevalent because they basically exist as groups. As a result, there is controversy as to what a cult is. However, a cult can be categorised as an organised group or a solitary person whose purpose is to dominate cult members by using psychological manipulation and pressure strategies (Rousseleta, Duretetec, Hardouin & Grall-Bronnec, 2017). Cults are largely a product of a breakdown in the assimilation and ease of access of mainstream social processes and structures to the members of the society. The practice of cults is known as cultism. As it is with developed societies, so is developing societies if not more so. In the case of Africa, the phenomenon is so prevalent that it has weakened its public institutions. From the prebendalism of Joseph (1987), the functionalism of disorder (Chabal & Daloz, 1999), the political functions of corruption (Scott, 2006), to the bare faced criminalization of public institutions (see Ugwuja, 2020:99-100), cult culture has impacted on the management and weakness of public institutions in Africa. Especially because cult groups work to ensure unequal access to others that then make the effectiveness of these institutions to be compromised.

Cults are mostly formed in Africa to guarantee group domination. Thus, concerns and interest in domination have led the political, cultural, economic, bureaucratic etc. elite to form or join one 'cult' group or another. As already noted by Joseph (1987), individuals in the broader society have increasingly been added to these cult groups by the desire to gain access to power and wealth through a system of clients. This method of relationship with public institutions and systems generally pervades the administrative systems of most African countries today; leading to the prevalence of contentious politics and the desire for the capture of public institutions and the state itself. Whereas, public administration requires a rational leader with a political will for total development, the cultic group relies strongly on charismatic character; since more may depend upon the skills and the powers of attraction of the cult leader. Similarly different methods of recruitment and conversion might be anticipated where unorthodox and unusual orientations are being proffered in cult movements. Public administration on the other hand requires merit and fair methods of recruitments into public institutions. This heightens tensions for institutional and state capture. The weak nature of most African states has led to the formation of different cultic groups with the aim of becoming relevant in the society and to ensure that power remains with their groups. As in the case of Niger Delta militants in Nigeria (Ukiwo, 2007; Amadi, Imoh-Itah, & Obomanu, 2016) and rebel groups in many parts of Africa such as in dysfunctional Libya.

Given this scenario, public institutions in Africa have not been able to bring about the desired national development rather, they generally serve the interest of those who have succeeded in the venture of state capture. As a result, the cultic utilization of public institutions does not promote policies intended to achieve public good but those meant to benefit cult members and their sympathizers only. Consequently, public administration in most African countries tends to be chaotic because there is always continuous struggle between the group in power and those seeking power. This again will bring about weak public institutions and a weak state in general.

This paper is divided into six sections. Beginning with this introduction, we proceed to the next section on cult and cultism where the historical evolution of both terms are traced. In the end, they are considered synonymous and the concept of cult is ultimately defined as a 'group'. This leads us to the third section that is themed a cult culture. By this, it is meant that the culture of exclusivity of the cult is utilized in the administration of public institutions, leading to endless conflicts and gross inefficiency. The next section namely, the cult utilization of public institutions extends the notion of the cult culture to how it paralyses public institutions and makes it unable to deliver on the expectations of development. In the fifth section, a cultic approach to public administration and the challenge to institution building is considered. Here, focus is on how a cultic approach to administration has made it impossible to build strong institutions in Africa. The paper concludes with the sixth section where the central thesis of the paper is affirmed namely that a cultic approach to public administration has resulted in weak institutions and is the reason for the endemic conflict in Africa.

Cults and cultism

Cults and cultism have a long history in the field of sociology, deriving from the work of Troeltsch (1931), where he discussed cult as something of a residual category. Cults may represent the psychology behind a variety of extreme social movements (Wilson, 2020:140). The ritual dimension of cult (see Nche, 2020:18) is not centrally considered in this paper. This paper basically treats a cult as a group that functions to protect the interest of their members according to a predetermined means. Although this approach creates a confusion as

to the proper reference of a cult, it is consistent with the French categorization of the term (see MIVILUDES, 2016).

In recent years the term cult has become a widely used term, connoting some group that is at least unfamiliar and perhaps even disliked and feared (Dillon & Richardson, 1994). This popular use of the term has such credence and momentum that it has virtually swallowed up the more neutral historical meaning of the term from the sociology of religion. Indeed, some would claim that the term cult is useless, and should be avoided because of the confusion between the historic meaning of the term and its current pejorative use (Richardson, 1993). However, some elements and criteria proposed by authors have emerged in the literature (Chambers, Langone, Dole & Grice, 1994; Rodriguez-Carballeira et al., 2015). A cult can be viewed as an organised group or a solitary person whose purpose is to dominate cult members by using psychological manipulation and pressure strategies (Rousseleta et al., 2017). One of the factors for staying in the group are primarily internal to the group, indicating how central the cult is to the members' life. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013), all activities of the cult members are devoted to the cult and that a lot of time is spent in the service of the cult, resulting in social impairment. Another study found that, during membership, the cultic group held an important and even an exclusive place in the life of the member (Buxant & Saroglou, 2008).

Additionally, cultic groups are present in the member's environment before his or her commitment, be it in the neighborhood, at work or through social associations or in their family (Bandura, 1986). However, it is the dislocations in the communicational and orientational institutions of advanced societies that has led cult to flourish in the practice of what is now known as cultism. There are numerous cults, some even date back to several years ago, but again relatively few, reflect the measure of sociological or other social scientific sophistication needed for full understanding of the phenomena.

Beyond the academic circles, the term cult has a salience provided by small number of culturally defined traits (Crockford, 2018). In view of the foregoing, earlier expressions of cult explained that a cult develops in opposition to the dominant culture (Yinger, 1957; Glock & Stark, 1965). The opposition to conventions seemed a fruitful way to proceed with research into the concept and its practice (cultism). As a matter of fact, the terms cult and cultism have become synonyms, a social weapon that can be used to describe groups that are not favoured.

The practice of cult organisations and movements can be related to some characteristics that can be identified in the public administration system of many African states. For example, conditions of human existence which forms some basis for identifying and arranging values and objectives for coming together is assumed to be a fundamental, both for cult and for public administration. This means that human existence is considered in every organisational goal because it is the primary focus for other goals to be achieved. Therefore, the maintenance of continuous existence is a first priority in public administration. However, cult groups also buy this idea which guides their operations, values and goals. As a matter of fact, the primary aim of forming a cult group is to gain some level of relevance; and this is often exclusively done in the public administration practices of most African states.

A cult culture

Crockford (2018) highlighted three features that determines the culture of cult groups. First is ‘charisma’ which stands for the influence of the leader, seemingly possessed with the power to control the will of his followers. Cultic leaders and cultic law ultimately determine what is to be deemed officially as enrichment or impoverishment in the cultic domain (Tyson, 1965). These leaders in most cases have the tendency to dominate and brainwash their followers to

believing that those who do not belong to their cult are enemies. Therefore, the reward of being members of the cult should not be extended to them. Secondly, is 'isolation' which represents the disconnection from society; the group disappears into the jungle far away from the family and friends looking for the 'Promised Land'. It is a protective motion for those taking it on willingly; for those unwillingly isolated, it is a symptom of an abusive relationship. This suggests that groups who isolate themselves from the general society are dangerous because they see isolation as a powerful privilege (Fondakowski, 2012). However, Taussig (1993) observed that total isolation is a fiction but relative isolation from the state is a privilege

What is troubling here is the notion that these charismatic leaders use their charismatic features to create a segregated community of followers who believe in their vision and will to strike out on their own to build a self-reliant communal society based on their twisted ideologies (Mark, 2013). Most times, the members of the cults are confused into believing that they will all benefit from the whole cult movements, but it eventually profits only the leaders or the elites of the groups. Lastly, is 'poison' which means alleged mind control, a corruption of the individual will to survive in favour of the collective. More than simply the delivery mechanism: it stands for the poisoning of the mind by another; how the authority of a few can take over and dictate the terms of life and death to the many. It is a slippery symbol that can signify both the lethal result of being physically poisoned and the mental effects of being psychologically influenced and damaged by another. It is the other side who drinks the poison, whose brains are saddled with toxic ideas (Crockford, 2018). The symbol of poison goes beyond its mode of delivery and stands for the concept of brainwashing. The mind is poisoned, which leads to a loss of control, and, in the worst cases, death.

Given that the philosophy of cults is basically exclusionary, it poses a challenge to the administrative systems like those in Africa which are unable to create an all-inclusive social framework. The implication of this, is that the negative connotations that goes with the terminology of cult will become the order of the day in public institutions and offices as exemplified in unconventional recruitments (e.g. Ahmed, 2022) and jaundiced service delivery (see Fourie & Poggenpoel, 2016; Fliss, nd). The point here is that, the failure to perform in the range of institutional organisation, by the state, for whatever reason, is basic. Such failure can profoundly affect the operation of the society and of other institutions within the society and change their physical environment or the forces or the relations of production, the level or pace of technological development, or in the political structure or other social arrangements within societies or between them (Forbes, 1912).

These symbols of cult culture (i.e. charisma, isolation and poison) are very much in use in the administrative systems of most African countries today. Different groups as exemplified by the Boko Haram and Indigenous People of Biafara (IPOB) in Nigeria and the various anti state militant groups across Africa, are rising up against the state due to institutional failures. While the point can be made that anti state movements are a global phenomenon, the capacity of non-African societies, in most cases, to deal with these movements are fundamentally bigger. The tactics utilised in getting members for these different groups is not different from the use of charisma, isolation and poison as they are used in cult movements. These groups appear in the forms of ethnic groups, religious groups, terrorist groups, militants, and others. Their aim is to control state institutions for their parochial gains regardless of public interests.

While public administration requires a rational leader with a political will for total development, the cultic group relies strongly on charismatic character; since more may depend upon the skills and the powers of attraction of the cult leader. Similarly different

methods of recruitment and conversion might be anticipated where unorthodox and unusual orientations are being proffered in cult movements. Public administration on the other hand requires merit and fair methods of recruitments into public institutions. However, when public institutions become weak, cultic groups begin to rise and it becomes the survival of the strongest group in taking over the institutions of the state, as manifested in the formation of governments for example (see Okhonmina & Ogbuagu, 2022a, b). This is why there are different uprisings in many African countries today. The weak nature of most African states has led to the formation of different cultic groups with the aim of becoming relevant in the society and to ensure that power remains with their groups. The dislocation in public administration introduces the cultic characteristics to public institutions where recruitment into these institutions would be done based on who is a member of the 'cult' in public power, while those who are not members are denied of public wealth. More so, public institutions will start relying on cultic approach to perform the functions of public institutions. The next section therefore analyses the cult utilisation of public institutions and the impact on public administration.

The Cult Utilisation of Public Institutions

A primary role of public institutions has been to help secure public order and accelerate national development, including reducing poverty (Hyden, 2020). In the case of Africa, it is meant to serve groups who are able to dominate government powers for the interest of a few. Public administration in Africa is considered weak because it deals more with adherence than with capacity (Okhonmina & Ogbuagu, 2022a, b). People are not yet organised according to shared economic interest but rather in communities with a common culture (Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991). These communities with common culture have now metamorphosed into different 'cult' groups such as ethno-religious groups, terrorists and other anti-state groups all contesting to gain control of state institutions. From Angola in the south-west through the Congos to Sudan in the north-west, a conflict zone exists which passes through the heart of Africa. Over the past four decades this has accounted for the death of millions, while contributing to the displacement of millions more. More depressing is the fact that contagion has occurred and now affects areas in Southern, North, East, and West Africa. All of these as a result of cult uprisings against the state.

These conflicts owe much of their origins to poor and ineffective governance, corruption, the ineffective use of the financial resources of the state and the abuse of human rights. Where the perception exists, that state institutions cannot fulfil their functions, 'cult' groups become the order of the day (see Said, Lerche & Lerche, 1995:252). That is why the predominance of the cult culture in the public institutions of most African states cannot be overemphasised. The uprisings of various cult groups to take over governmental powers for their selfish interest has overshadowed the idea of government that is meant for the good of the entire public. The proliferation of subgroups in the form of ethnic nations and the revived sense of identity constitutes a self-evident problem to not just national institutions but also to world politics (Lerche 1995).

It is even more problematic when the internal contradiction between cult identity and the state becomes visible to the extent that loyalty to the state and loyalty to a cult identity are in conflict. What is often experienced is a redirection of authority, legitimacy and loyalty away from the state to the subgroup (Plessis, 2002). It has been argued that perhaps one of the major causes of the failure of the post-colonial state in Africa has been its gross neglect of its cultural basis. In the urge to create political unity the tendency has been to negate ethnic, regional and cultural diversities rather than recognise them as building blocks in the construction of a civil society. The result has been often a facade of seeming unity at the cost

of many unsettled wounds and denied identities (Diamond. 1988). As illustrated by Afigbo (1986), this state-centeredness leads to a lack of historicity which can limit our understanding of significant aspects of intergroup relations. Often ignored by the state-centered approach are processes of identity formation that existed in the pre-colonial period which are of continuing relevance to 'nation building'.

While the nation building project was going on, along with the rhetoric of national unity, old patterns of exclusion and domination continued, and new ones were invented. Consequently, the reality of nation building was often that some groups consolidated their grip on state institutions, to the exclusion of others. The promise of common citizenship remained elusive. The nation building project is partly responsible for the ethnic confrontations and rampant civil wars which have characterised much of the politics of post-colonial Africa. For instance, after decades of independence, ethnicity is more central than ever to the political process of many African countries, as political openings and multiparty elections have led to the formation of innumerable overtly or covertly ethnic political parties. But this is not a sign that a primitive and tribal Africa continues to reassert itself through the thin veneer of modern institutions (Quaker-Dokubu, 2001).

The centralising project of state consolidation or nation building in many plural societies has almost inevitably involved the cultural devolution, political repression and/or economic expropriation of the more vulnerable geoethnic segments of the political communities. For instance, between 1983 and 1999, Nigeria had a succession of northern military leaders – Mohammadu Buhari (1983–1985); Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993); Sani Abacha (1993–1998); and Abdulsalami Abubakar (1998–1999). Because the Nigerian state controls access to the nation's disposable wealth in the form of revenue from petroleum production, the fusion of military and northern hegemony has provoked resentment in southern Nigeria towards a system of governance widely viewed as biased, exploitative and repressive. Such centrist state building strategies and processes have invariably provoked both domestic communal rebellion as expressed by The Arewa People's Congress (Northern region), The O'odua People's Congress (Western region), Movement for the actualisation of the sovereign state of Biafra (Eastern region), and The Niger Delta Militants (Midwestern region).and international strictures (Wunsch, Olowu, Haberson & Ostrom, 1990).

The existence of "cult groups" therefore exert a powerful and autonomous emotional, psychological or consummatory role. They provide a sense of trust, certainty, reciprocal help and protection. In all deeply divided societies, such ethnic affiliations have naturally acquired greater salience and attraction as groups have increasingly found it necessary to mobilise against historic and contemporary inequities and injustices (Horowitz, 1985). In most developing countries of the Third World, different groups (cult) have been ignited by competition for real or perceived resources. Resource competition in Africa animates group conflicts because the survival of the winning group are the key prospective beneficiaries of state allocation decisions. Charismatic leaders use this notion to manipulate and mobilise these groups in their competition for power and privilege.

Another manifestation of cult utilisation of public institutions is in the case of the Sudan crises leading to the creation of Southern Sudan. Ethnicity and religion were regarded as constituting the central determinants for control of the institutions for governance and the econo-political and socio-cultural ways of life. The elites of Northern Sudan took advantage of this to continue to dominate Sudan through the Arabisation and Islamisation doctrines that were imposed on the people. It became imperative, in their view, for non-Moslems to be assimilated into the Arabic culture. Thus, Arabisation – that is, the policy of assimilation and integration of non-Moslems and non-Arabs into the Arabic culture became a sine qua non

condition of leadership in Sudan (Adar, 2001). The Southern Sudan and non-Arabised Northern Sudan were against this policy because they advocated a territorial model of a nation-state, one that is centred on the legal equality of all peoples irrespective of their ethnicity. These groups were labelled as rebels. The promotion of a theocratic state by the Arabic-speaking ruling elite was viewed as a hindrance towards the actualisation of a secular state. These differences led to a perpetual civil war in Sudan, undermined national consensus, leading to the eventual split of Sothern Sudan. The Arabisation and Islamisation doctrines were viewed by non-Moslems and non-Arabic–speaking Sudanese as discriminatory and exclusive because the territorial model encourages a pluralist view of the political system in which zero-sum political gains by the majority ethnic cult are discouraged (Smith, 1991; Hannum, 1996).

Flowing from the above, the cult presence in public institutions tends to alter or not promote policies that will benefit the entire people but promote the ones that will continue to benefit the cult group especially a few. It need be noted that the cultic utilization of divisive categories such as ethnicity and religion is not for the interest of all those who adhere to these values but to those who belong to the cult created on the platform of those values. Extension of privileges to non-cult members who believe in these values is only for the purpose of legitimising the cult itself (see Joseph, 1987). For this reason, public administration in most African countries tend to be chaotic because there is always continuous struggle between the group in power and the others who are not yet in power. This again will bring about weak public institutions and a weak state in general, the one that lacks development focus and would rather fight for the benefit of a few against the entire public.

A cultic approach to public administration and the challenge to institution building

This section gives in depth understanding of how these ‘cult’ groups operate in public administration and the impact on the society, using different case studies from different African states.

Flowing from the foregoing, cult groups can be in the form of state identity, national identity, transnational identity, ethnic identity, tribal identity, social identity, individual or personal identity, and so on. These identities consist of individuals/collectivities emanating from the mutual recognition of the interaction of like and unlike units. The cultic utilization of these groups seems to be specifically pronounced in Africa. Although they have manifested so as in the case of Nazi Germany and Ku Klux Klan in the US, the case of Africa is more widespread and extended. So that, whereas ethnic groups are to be found all over the world (see Plessis, 2001), they have not been mainly utilized as cultic groups that contest over public institutions and the state as in Africa. This impacts on public service delivery and institutions in general.

The conflicts between different cult groups are what is being observed in politics in different parts of the world, especially in African countries which tend to be more plural in nature. This can also be linked to emerging global authority crisis and the erosion of international authorities, as well as to the narrowing competence of governments and even failed states (Rosenau, 1990), this proliferation of subgroups in the form of ethnic nations and the revived sense of identity constitutes a self-evident problem of world politics and administration (Said et al., 1995). It is even more problematic when the internal contradiction between a cult group and the state becomes visible to the extent that loyalty to the state and loyalty to an identity are in conflict. When this happens, what is often experienced is a redirection of authority, legitimacy and loyalty away from the state to the subgroup.

Such are the already noted examples of Nigeria, South Sudan, Rwanda, and generally across Africa. In Nigeria, cult groups were used to affect the efficiency of public educational

institutions when in the mid-80s, they were used against students' union and university staff who were the only organised groups opposing military rule (Muyiwa, 2001). Due to the fact that Nigeria's police and judiciary had failed to protect their credibility, in the East, cult like Militias like the Bakassi Boys became a popular alternative. Executions and the use of the occult were used in fighting evil. But it is only one reason why 'jungle justice' may spread and human rights violated (see Harnischfeger, 2003). Indeed, some police officers have been accused of being cultist (Olawin, 2022) the inefficiency of the police institution in such circumstances can only be left to the imagination.

Furthermore, in Rwanda after her independence, the peace process was jeopardized by 'cultic' cliques of extremist Hutus who sought the peace process in order to retain their commanding positions and financial privileges (see Atkinson, 1990; Staub, 2000). Thus, the Hutu massacre of the Tutsi may be understood as an extreme form of scapegoating, whereby the dominant group (or individual) shores up its threatened self-concept by devaluing the outsider or subgroup. As a result of all these factors, genocide took place in Rwanda. The Tutsi were systematically killed in order to destroy the group to which they belonged. Public institutions and administration were thereby undone.

Almost every country across the broad middle belt of Africa – from Somalia in the east to Nigeria in the west, and from Sudan in the north to Angola in the south – has a volatile mix of armed conflict, unstable political institutions, limited resources, and inevitably a 'bad neighbourhood' of similar crisis-ridden states (Gurr, Marshall & Khosla 2000). All these are as a result of the cultic approach to public administration, where one group perceive another as a threat in the pursuance and acquisition of administrative powers. Therefore, instead of the focus on proper administration and development, the focus is shifted to defending one group against another. In addition, the different chaos and crises that arise from these cults, do not bring about any form of development, rather it results to destruction, deaths, theft, and other anti-development vices.

Conclusion

The administrative system that is evident in Africa today is an expression that the world is witnessing a return to the "cult of origins" where differences often means destruction, destitution, despair and death. This is illustrated in the level of political unrest and killings being experienced in most African countries in order to gain political power. Different cult groups in different guises believe in getting political power through any means. They see whoever is not with them in the race as enemies. That is why when a group succeeds in getting political power, they focus mainly on their members. Those who are not members would have to struggle to get powers and benefits, hence the reason for the different chaos in the public administration of African states. These unrests in the administrative systems will definitely weaken public institutions.

Therefore, a power-sharing structure may need to be established to deal with the problems caused by the power struggle between cult groups. Provisions must be put in place to ensure that leaders stay responsive to the concerns of the population. Free and fair elections are essential to establish trust in the government. Ethnic violence must be minimised or eliminated if a transition is to have any hope of succeeding. Establishing the rule of law will act as a deterrent to future outbreaks of violence. If a constitution can be considered the beginning of a new era, then the country will be able to move forward and strive to ensure a more equitable and appreciative environment that takes account of the multicultural nature of the society. As far as possible constitution building should be done by consensus and it should not be rushed. All parties, all sections of the community, all language groups, all ethnic group and men and women need to feel that their concerns have been taken into

account so that the outcome of the process is theirs. The protection of minorities should be taken seriously, else they will form an alliance and become a major cult against the government. More so, without the protection afforded by a bill of rights, unrestrained majoritarianism could harm minorities or members of minority groups and therefore a check on the power of the majority is essential.

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FUEL SUBSIDY REMOVAL AND THE FUTURE OF SMALL OIL MARKETERS IN KATSINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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Abstract
Taking into account that successive governments in Nigeria have been complaining that fuel subsidy benefits only the oil marketers and very few people around them at the expense of the targeted poor, this study aimed at examining the impact of the out-and-out removal of fuel subsidy in May 2023 by the President Bola Ahmad Tinubu's Administration on the small oil marketers in Katsina Local Government Area. To achieve this, the study employs an ex-post facto research design and exclusively utilized qualitative data that was derived from an observational method and content analysis of relevant documents. The findings of the study reveal that the complete removal of fuel subsidy has negatively affected the small oil marketers to the extent that many of their filling stations in the study area are either closed or leased out. Thus, the paper recommended among the following that Federal Government should consider devising a means of making the product available to the people, such as opning public filling statations, lest more and more marketers continue to move out of the business. This can be done by increasing the number of NNPC filling stations to replace the closed private ones
Keywords: Subsidy, Fuel Subsidy, Oil Marketers, and Filling Station

Introduction

Subsidy is a sort of market manipulation in which prices of consumer goods are fixed by the government and the variations between the real market price and the fixed price is paid by the government to the marketers (George & Eleanya, 2021). This means that subsidies of whatever kind are measures taken by the government which keep prices of the subsidized commodities below market prices for consumers of those products, or above market prices for producers. This could be in the form of grants, tax reductions and price control or exemption. The Academic Dictionary of Economics (2006) in Adeniran (2016) defines subsidy as a cash incentive given to an industry by the government with the view of lowering the price of the product of the concerned industry as well as raising its competitive power. This incentive may be given as a counterbalancing measure to the imposition of the customs duty by the government of an importing country. Fuel subsidy refers to a transfer of economic resources to consumers of producers of goods or services by the government to boost the production or consumption of the commodity over what it would otherwise have been (Ayanruoh, 2023). The reality of fuel subsidy, according to Adeniran (2016), is that as the pump price of fuel rises, consistently the cost of everything in Nigeria increases. Thus, the essence of subsidizing the pump price of fuel is to make the cost of living, production and services affordable to all Nigerians, and maintain a fairly good standard of living.

Fuel prices at the international level have revealed significant instability in recent years. The nominal fuel prices increased more than fourfold between the last quarter of 2003 and the second quarter of 2008 with most of the increase happening during 2007 and the first half of 2008 due to the government claims that it found it very difficult paying huge amount of money as fuel subsidy. Nonetheless, most governments in less developed countries were unwilling to fully pass through the increase to domestic consumers which resulted in

significant fiscal costs (Granado, Coady, & Gillingham, 2010). According to George (2013), petroleum subsidy is regarded as one of the most controversial and passionate issues in less developed countries like Nigeria because of the country's overreliance upon it. The issue, in Nigeria, has become a frequent phenomenon as it is richly endowed with large crude oil deposits as well as being a greater exporter of the God-given commodity (Obasi, Ezenkwa, Onwa, & Nwogbaga, 2017). The effect of subsidy reform on the consumer price index in the country is very significant as about 90% of the transportation of persons and goods is done by road necessitating the use of fuel. Therefore, the impact of any reform on fuel subsidies arguably has an impact on both the rich and the poor as such reforms directly or indirectly affects their income (Okwanya, Moses, & Pristine, 2015). Thus, understanding the beneficiaries of fuel subsidies as well as the welfare impacts of increasing fuel prices is the key to designing and gaining public support for subsidy reform (Coady, Flamini, & Sears, 2015).

The oil wealth derivable by Nigeria has not translated into an enhanced standard of living for most Nigerians as described by George and Eleanya (2021) that the majority of Nigerians, despite their oil wealth, are living in absolute poverty as a result of the fact that the resources are not effectively and efficiently utilized to achieve the developmental goals of the country. Akpobasah (2004) believes that the distribution of oil wealth in the country is very uneven to the extent that less than 15% of the citizens enjoy the wealth leaving all others in poverty – unemployed and underemployed. Even though fuel subsidy removal is a policy on its own that is analytically based, politically acceptable, and economically sound it is not socially credible and the sustainability will pose a life threat to the citizenry due to the unprepared atmosphere and the strangeness of the public officeholders in the country (Adeniran, 2016). Furthermore, the opponents of fuel subsidies conceive that fuel subsidies mainly favour people at the upper rung of the societal ladder for they are the ones who run generators and own cars that use fuel Onyekwena, Adedeji, Akanonu and Momoh (2017). According to them, the poor who are the target of the subsidy do not enjoy the subsidy as they reside in the rural parts of the country, use charcoal, and firewood, have less transportation, and source their food from their immediate environment.

The Nigerian petroleum industry is the largest in the country and provides the region with 90% of foreign exchange earnings and about 80% of the federal government revenue is generated from the industry (Mustapha, Badru, Popoola, Alaga, Ogunyemi, & Samson, 2016). Thus, petroleum is the largest source of foreign exchange and income in general to Nigeria. However, in recent years, the fuel subsidy in Nigeria has consumed over a third of the recurrent budget – constituting a large waste of resources which could have been used more effectively and efficiently on pro-poor intervention in the economy (Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, 2016). According to Ayanruoh (2023), critics of fuel subsidy believe that the large amount of money spent by the government in subsidizing the product to the citizenry has failed to help Nigerians buy refined products at much lower than the prevailing market price. It is observed by Ayauruoh (2023) that although the out-and-out removal of subsidies may have serious economic challenges for Nigerians, the end will be of great benefit to them. This is because the revival will end the diversion and smuggling of subsidized products outside the country's border which drains its economy. It is based on this that this study seeks to examine the future of individually owned filling stations in Katsina State and specifically in Katsina Local Government as the huge amount of money they received for the oil storage they provided, which served as the basis for their business has stopped, and the diversion and smuggling of the product to other neighbouring countries has become almost impossible. Therefore, the main objecive of the paper is to examine the impact of complete fuel subsidy on small filling-statation owners in Katsina Local Government Area.

Conceptual Clarification of Fuel Subsidy

Fuel subsidies come into effect in many less developed countries because domestic consumer prices for fuel are directly under the control of governments and are only adjusted on an ad hoc basis in an attempt to protect domestic consumers from volatile and high prices (Coady, Flamini, & Sears, 2015). Thus, subsidy reform is increasingly seen as an opportunity for consolidating public finances and fostering sustainable economic development. According to Solomon (2016), a fuel subsidy is a direct payment by the government to a producer or consumer. This means that fuel subsidy is a consequence of a government action that bestows an advantage on producers or consumers to supplement their income or lower their costs. According to George (2013), it is a payment made by the government that forms a wedge between the cost incurred by the producers and the price consumers pay, to the extent that the price is less than the marginal cost. He stated that subsidies form part of the vehicles of public policy with the major aim of altering the result most likely under the operation of the free market and which are regarded as politically, socially and developmentally undesirable. Such kinds of payments can be made to distributors or even producers to reduce the heavy cost of production on such investors and subsequently price of goods and services to consumers.

Obasi, Ezenkwa, Onwa and Nwogbaga (2017), opined that fuel subsidy in an economic sense is in existence when consumers of the product are assisted by the government to pay less than the actual pump price per litre of the product. Alternatively, it is the difference between what the final consumers are paying and the real market price of petroleum products per litre. According to Tax Bites (2022), fuel subsidies are direct or indirect payments made by the government to private individuals to offset costs of the petroleum products. These subsidies are driven by enhancing social and economic policy objectives. Shagali and Yusuf (2022) see fuel subsidy as any measure taken by the government to keep prices for petroleum products below market level for consumers. According to them, fuel subsidy within the Nigerian context is the situation whereby petroleum motor spirit is sold below the cost of importation.

Empirical Review of Literature

Studies on fuel subsidy in the entire world and Nigeria to be specific are countless. However, most of the studies conducted in Nigeria focused more on the impact of the removal of the subsidy on economic growth, especially prices of goods and services, and the general well-being of the citizenry. Solomon's (2016) study was conducted to examine the challenges and prospects of fuel subsidy removal on the Nigerian economy. The study employed the ANOVA statistics in testing the stated hypotheses; and the result showed that the removal of fuel subsidy negatively affected the standard of living of the citizenry, reduced the level of savings and investments, and reduced the consumption pattern. The study recommended that the country should diversify its economy by turning to agriculture. George (2013) examines the impact of petroleum subsidies on the consumption of products in Nigeria using a dummy variable to explain its findings. The study concluded that more goods and services are consumed by Nigerians when fuel subsidy is paid as the goods are cheaper.

Obasi, Ezenkwa, Onwa and Nwogbaga (2017), in their study titled *The Political Economy of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria,* examined the implication of the removal of the subsidy on the populace in particular and the economy in general. Using secondary data, the study found that the rampant corruption that sprawls the oil sector in the country is largely responsible for the obstinate poor economic development that negatively affects the living conditions of the citizens. Thus, fuel subsidy has, instead of benefiting the masses, created room for the very few elite to squander the wealth of the nation in the name of the subsidy. Similarly, Shagali and Yusuf (2022), in their study titled *Political Economy of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria,* examined the nature and politics of oil subsidies in Nigeria with an

emphasis on identifying the factors behind subsidy removal. By making use of political economy and public choice theory as the framework for analysis, the study concluded that unless the Nigerian government predicates its legitimacy on the citizens' obedience and support through better socio-economic performance, the country may still experience another setback in the process of democratic consolidation.

A study on petroleum subsidy withdrawal, fuel price hikes and the Nigerian economy was carried out by Inegbedion, Inegbedion, Obadiaru and Asaleye (2020) with the major aim of investigating the degree to which the removal of the fuel subsidy results in the increase in the prices of goods and services in the country. The study used an input-output model and concluded that the reduction in the amount of money paid by the government as a subsidy for fuel gave birth to the increase in the prices of other commodities. Omotosho (2019) studies the macroeconomic implications of oil price shocks and the existing fuel subsidy regime for Nigeria. By developing and employing a New-Keynesian DSGE model, the results of the study showed that oil price shocks create persistent and significant impacts on output which account for around 22% of its variation up to the fourth year. McCulloch, Moerenhout and Yang (2020) also examine the fuel subsidy reform and the social contract in Nigeria using a micro-economic analysis. They found out that the fuel subsidies in the country are very large, reaching about US$3.9 billion; almost doubling the entire health budget. And the subsidy for fuel in Nigeria comes at a great cost to the government.

Akinyemi, Alege, Ajayi, Amaghionyeodiwe and Ogundupe (2015) examine the existence of a long-term effect of petroleum subsidy reform on environmental quality in Nigeria for the period from 1970 to 2012 employing the Johansen and the Eagle-Granger two steps co-integration procedure techniques. The findings of the study supported evidence of a long-run sustainable equilibrium model. Another study titled Fuel Subsidy Corruption and the Illusions of Economic Reconstruction in Nigeria was carried out by Akov (2015) to specifically analyze the incapacitating state of Nigeria's energy-dependent economy against the background of unparalleled oil-generated wealth. Using only secondary data, the study found that corruption in the country's oil sector is hugely responsible for the economic hardship of the citizenry and that the government has shown little political will to address the issue. Adeniran (2016) also conducted a study on the effects of fuel subsidy on transport rates and transport costs in Nigeria where he found out that the effect of fuel subsidy on transport costs, transport rates, as well as the cost of production is quite complex.

Based on the data generated above, and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, it is understood that most of the studies conducted focused more on the impact of fuel subsidy removal on the wellbeing of the citizenry without considering the impact of the removal on the oil marketers which is the main target of this paper.

Methodology

This article employed an ex-post facto alias after-the-fact research design. The ex post facto design is a quasi-experimental research technique that entails comparing preexisting groups based on a dependent variable (Buhari, 2017). The purpose of experimental studies is to investigate the potential influences that one factor or condition might have on another factor or condition; In other words, the ex post facto research design examines causal relationships. In this study, the researchers examined the impact of fuel subsidy removal, which was considered the independent variable, on the future of the small oil marketers in Katsina Local Government Area, which was deemed the dependent variable. The study exclusively utilized qualitative data that was derived from an observational method and secondary sources of data. This is considered more feasible and productive means of generating the needed information required by the researcher. The obtained data was presented and analyzed in a narrative format.

Nature of Fuel Business in Katsina LGA Prior to the out-and-out Removal of Subsidy

Before the complete elimination of fuel subsidy on May 29, 2023, as implemented by the Nigerian Government, several oil markets, particularly those that moved the product to the extreme northern region of the country, were alleged to have redirected the product to neighbouring countries. Akov (2015) elucidated that in addition to the substantial subsidies provided to oil marketers by the Nigerian government, they still partook in the act of smuggling the product to neighbouring nations such as Niger, Cameroon, Chad, and the Benin Republic. This illicit practice significantly contributed to the exacerbation of product scarcity in the affected states. Consequently, Shagali and Yusuf (2022) stated that the Nigerian government has proposed the complete elimination of all fuel subsidies, contending that such a measure would hinder the diversion of the product to other nations by marketers and consequently bring an end to the scarcity of the product across the country.

Being one of the northern states situated at a considerable distance, Katsina State has been experiencing the impact of fuel scarcity on its population. According to a report by Premium Times in 2022, the majority of filling stations in the city of Katsina were inaccessible, while the operational ones were heavily congested. The report, compiled on a specific day, highlighted the presence of more than 10 filling stations along the Yahaya Madaki route to the Barhim Estate, with only three of them actively dispensing fuel. These stations were identified as NNPC, Danmarna, and A. A. Rano, where long lines of vehicles were observed at all entry and exit points of the stations (Babangida, 2022). Similarly, along the route from Kofar Kwaya to the Kutsinta Barracks roundabout, only two out of the over 15 filling stations were selling fuel. This scarcity was a prevailing issue across every part of the city. Premium Times reported on October 12, 2022, that motorists in Katsina State expressed their concerns regarding the negative impact of petrol scarcity on their businesses. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) (2022) further elaborated that the NNPC Mega station on Kano Road and Jibia Road were the only stations selling the product at the approved price, but they were characterized by long queues. Motorists were forced to spend the night or several hours waiting to refill their vehicles. However, the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) attributed this situation to the delay in commodity transportation caused by recent flooding in various parts of the northern region, including Katsina (Agency Report, 2022).

Similarly, it has been documented in the Tribune in 2023 that the residents of Katsina metropolis have become accustomed to the exorbitant surge in prices over the past three months. The majority of the fuel stations are currently retailing petrol at rates ranging from N290 to N300 per litre, which was in stark contrast to the approved price of ₦186. Consequently, a considerable portion of the population in the city has resorted to utilizing commercial vehicles and motorcycles for their daily commutes (Abba, 2023). The fuel scarcity situation in Katsina was of such critical nature that the former governor of Katsina State, Right Honourable Aminu Bello Masari, deemed it necessary to convene a meeting with the leadership of the state chapter of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria, as reported in the Punch. After the meeting, the Governor briefed the media, expressing that the gathering was aimed at finding a lasting solution to the persistent fuel scarcity in the State. According to him, the Association clarified that part of the predicament was attributable to the directive from NNPC, instructing them to procure fuel from Lagos at N172 and N174 per litre (Agency Report, 2023). Unfortunately, fuel was not readily available in Lagos, hence they were compelled to purchase from independent importers, who were vending it at the depot for prices ranging from N300 to N310. Similarly, the News Agency of Nigeria conveyed that the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), in collaboration with the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), endeavoured to terminate the issue of fuel scarcity in Katsina. Based on the report, the recently appointed state commandant of the aforementioned corps, Jamilu Abdu Indabawa,

convened a meeting with the marketers and conveyed that the diversion of petroleum products allocated to the State was an act of sabotage. Consequently, the marketers were cautioned against stockpiling or vending the products to illicit traders who illicitly transport them to neighbouring nations (Daily Nigerian, 2023).

Fuel Subsidy Removal and Fuel Business in Katsina LGA

Nigeria has executed the policy of fuel subsidies as a measure to provide less expensive petroleum products to its citizenry. However, the removal of fuel subsidies in the country in general and Katsina State in particular resulted in an immediate increase in fuel prices (Naidoo, 2023). Naidoo further stated that despite the foreseen benefits of the removal of the subsidy, it poses various challenges in terms of social unrest, potential negative impact on low-income individuals, and above all inflation. It is observed by the researcher in the study area that the number of vehicles moving about in the streets has drastically reduced due to the rise in the price of fuel resulting in the reduction of the movements of people. It was also observed that the time normally taken by a passenger's vehicle to be loaded at both Sabuwar Tasha and NATO motor parks in the Katsina metropolis has increased to the degree that in some cases a driver who used to convey passengers from Katsina to Dutsin-ma and back three or four times a day, for instance, now ended up with only one or two loads of passengers. Opera (2023) stated that the effect of fuel subsidy removal by the Federal Government of Nigeria in May 2024 has been taking a toll on Nigerian automobile owners recently. According to Opera, well-to-do Nigerians are beginning to dump their big cars that consume much fuel for smaller ones just to reduce the quantity of fuel they consume daily. This affects, in no small measure, the quantity of fuel demanded by motorists from the filling stations in Local Government. Consequent to the reduction in the quantity of fuel needed by motorists, the amount of money generated by the filling stations for selling fuel reduced, which negatively affected their wellbeing.

It was also observed by Eromosele (2023) that many marketers developed a habit of blaming the action of the Federal Government of removing subsidies as the cause of low patronage and high cost of food products. Therefore, this hike in the prices of goods due to the removal of fuel subsidies affected the purchasing power of people leading to a reduction of the quantity of goods they bought and moved from one place to another. This affected the business of many commercial motorists which ended up in a reduction in the quantity of fuel purchased in the filling stations in the study area. Being it obvious that one of the major determinants of profit realization is the level of patronage of goods offered for sale (Fareed, Ali, Shahzad, Nazir, & Ullah, 2016), the less patronage of fuel especially in filling stations owned by small private marketers have been complaining of less profits. According to Ozyasar (2021), a decline in the profit margin, which is due to the lower sales price, higher cost, or both, results in the closure of the firm. Thus, the researcher observed that some of the filling stations, especially those owned by small marketers in the study area are either closed or are leased out to big oil marketers in the State.

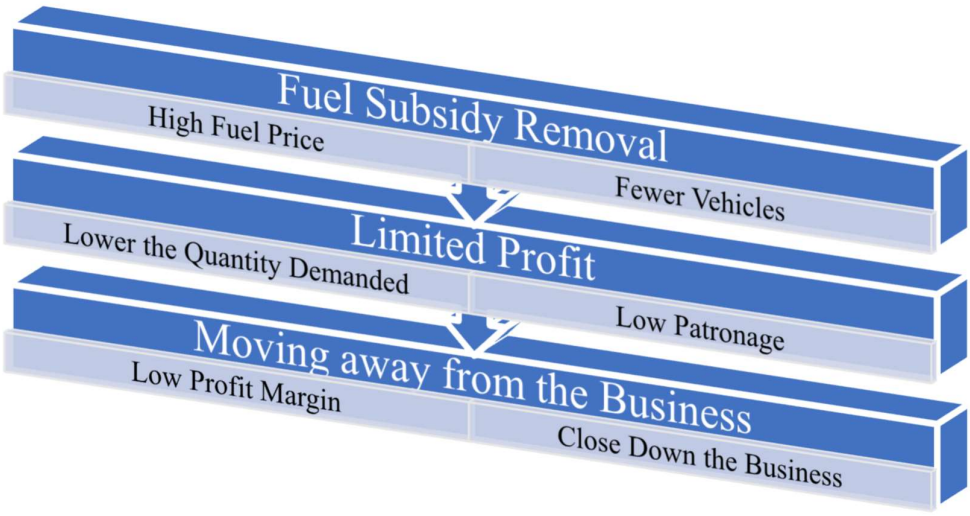


Figure 1: *Model of Fuel Subsidy Removal and the Future of Small Oil Marketers*

The model above clearly indicates the relationship between the total removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria and the pushing out of small oil marketers in Katsina Local Government from the business. It shows that the removal of the subsidy that constitutes a certain amount of money given to the marketers by the government for the citizens to get the product at affordable prices gave birth to the increase of the pump prices to the extent that many people in the study area decided to abandon their vehicles for commercial ones while many others resorted to minimize their movement unless necessary. This resulted in the reduction of the number of bicycles that move about on the study area's streets – a situation that affected the level of patronage of the product due to the decrease in the quantity demanded. This has strongly affected the profit margin of the owners of the filling stations in the Katsina Local Government Area, which in the end resulted in pushing many small oil marketers out of the business. After this condition of low patronage, the profit realized by many filling stations was reduced which made it difficult for the owners to continue in the business. Thus, they resorted to either abandoning the business or hiring out their filling stations to bigger marketers.

Conclusion

The effect of subsidy reform on the consumer price index in Nigeria is very significant as about 90% of the transportation of persons and goods is done by road necessitating the use of fuel. Therefore, the impact of any reform on fuel subsidies arguably has an impact on both the rich and the poor as such reforms directly or indirectly affects their income which subsequently affects the level of patronage of the product. This has strongly affected the profit margin of the owners of the filling stations in the Katsina Local Government Area, which in the end resulted in pushing many small oil marketers out of the business.

Recommendations

It is based on the findings of the this study that the following recommendations are made;

i. The Federal Government should consider devising a means of making the product available to the people lest more and more marketers continue to move out of the business. This can be done by increasing the number of NNPC filling stations to replace the closed private ones.

ii. The government should also initiate programmes meant to create employment opportunities as various youth, especially those connected with the oil businesses lost their jobs. This will contribute immensely to having them engaged so they will not think of indulging themselves in illegal ways of acquiring livelihood.
iii. Government should also use part of the money spared from the removal of fuel subsidy to come up with poverty alleviation programmes. This will help in reducing the level of hardship experienced especially by those at the bottom of the social ladder due to inflation caused by the removal of the subsidy.

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EVALUATING THE ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN STATE IN THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION SYSTEM

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Abstract

Over time, the welfare and protection of the people living within the state's borders have been its main goals. As it stands today, the state's function is contradictory, weakened, and conflicting. As a result, the status quo of the social reproduction system's mode of operation is maintained, and there is no equality, fairness, or justice because the Nigerian State does not act on behalf of all classes. Evaluation of the Nigerian State's role in the Social Reproduction System is the aim of this study. Using the structural theory of the state as a framework for analysis and secondary sources of data from published papers, the study discovered that the Nigerian State is operating for the sustainability of the social reproduction system's current state, which has mostly benefited the capitalist class in society. As a result, the capitalist class in Nigeria continues to oppress, exploit, and rule over the middle class and the masses. The study thus recommends that, as a matter of political will, the Nigerian State should guarantee that policies are made for the benefit of the people rather than for a particular level of class in the society, and that an African Socialism should be modified in order to accommodate all of the needs of the society by establishing equality, fairness, and justice.

Keywords: Social Reproduction System, The State, Capitalist class, proletariat/masses, socioeconomic development.

Introduction

There have been a number of debates regarding the role of the State in the social reproduction system. The social Reproduction system in this context is conceptualized to mean the recycling of the social and economic order created and perpetuated by the ruling class.Silvia (2019) noted that the idea of social reproduction originated in the context of bourgeois economics to indicate the processes by which a social system reproduces itself. This is how'social reproduction' was first conceptualized by François Quesnay (1694–1774) and other Enlightenment-era physiocrats, who, according to Marx, were the first economists of capitalist society and also the first theorists to identify the nature of productive labor with agricultural activities.

While Nicolo Poulantza and other'structuralists' Marxian scholars 'views on the role of the state argue that the state plays a role of social cohesion in maintaining the status quo, and as

such, the state is or possesses what is known as ‘’relative autonomy’’. On the other hand, Ralph Miliband and others argued that the state is purely an instrument in the hands of the capitalist class. Therefore, the state exists in order to serve the interests of the ruling class (Fred,1980)

The concept of the state is abstract. The state has different definitions and different perspectives across scholarship. Majorly, we have two competing paradigms of interpretation of the state as a concept. First, the liberal perspective: the liberal perspective views the state as a contractual structure of society. An agreement between the leaders and the led is also seen in structures of government, otherwise known as the organs of government—the legislature,the executive, and the judiciary as expressed by especially Hobbes, Locke, Rouseou (Steinberger,2008) and the second, the Marxian perspective: the Marxian perspective sees the state as an instrument of the capitalists. For Marx and Lenin, the

executive arm of the modern state is a committee to manage the affairs of the bourgeoisie. It is to be noted that this piece of work mainly dwells on the Marxian perspective of the state. Although there are variant perspectives on the conceptualization of the state across Marxian scholarship, classical Marxism, neo-Marxism, and post Marxism all draw their inspiration from the fundamentals of the earlier works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

Historically, the Nigerian state has had the rudiments of capitalism in its traditional society. The society of the pre-colonial era has the features of the slavery era and feudalism; the advent of colonialism accelerated and exacerbated the social reproduction system and planted the seeds of capitalism and globalization (neocolonialism). After independence, the colonial masters, in the process of handing over political authority to the local politicians, planted indigenous capitalists who would continue the legacies of capitalist modes of production(Princewill et al,2020). Unfortunately, the state that was supposed to play a level playing field that would address the situation in the favor of all classes has become an instrument of the bourgeoisie, both indigenous bourgeoisie and transnational capitalists. In the face of the insecurity bedeviling Nigeria, the role of the state in the socio reproduction system is worrisome. This is because the parity that has been created is enormous between the two classes in the social strata. Many of the affected places and people as a result of insecurity in Nigeria are of the lower class. The elite's class is not hugely affected compared to the lower class.

The role of the Nigerian state in the social reproduction system is assessed in five dimensions, namely: the state and the indigenous capitalists; the state and the working class and masses; the state and transnational capitalists; insecurity in the education sector; and the role of the Nigerian state and insecurity in socio-economic development**.** At the end of the study, there are a number of findings based on the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework.

Review of Literature

The literature review is structured into four sections, or headings, in order to enable understand the role the Nigerian state has played in the social reproduction system in each of the social classes.

The State and the Indigenous Capitalists

This is to examine the relationship between the state and capitalists in the social reproduction system in Nigeria.

Nigeria provides par excellence in capitalist penetration because of the full potential it has. Size, population, and resources are the main factors that will spur the penetration of capitalists (Paul, 2012). The character of the Nigerian state could be understood in terms of the genealogy of global capital accumulation; obviously, capital accumulation has shaped the relationship between the classes (Agbu, 2017). The state has become a tool in the hands of capitalist forces, which have used it as an instrument to pacify, dominate, and keep the pristine forces apart to enable capital accumulation. The neo-liberal state in Nigeria has transformed the political center, at the core of which people at the echelons, who are referred to as the 'Bureaucratic' Bourgeoisie of the government, prioritize marketization, corporatization, and outsourcing, as well as economic relationships in the pace of the social reproduction system (Agbu 2017).

The Nigerian state actors in her economic and financial policies have invariably favored the indigenous bourgeoisie at the expense of the masses; the evidence of this assertion is seen in maintaining or fostering neoliberal policy (Avadia, 2013).

Powerful interests have helped ensure that the Nigerian elite will be the primary beneficiaries of Nigerian content. He contends that by embracing Nigerian content as a new strategy of accumulation, the elite are creating more capitalistic social relations of production in Nigeria.

Agbu (2017, p. 13) asserts that "the modern Nigerian state invariably acts to preserve the existing social order in which the capitalist mode of production is not only prevalent but consistently reproduced." In congruence with the above assertion, Marx and Engels jointly expressed in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" that "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie"(Marx & Engel,1884, para 1).

In furtherance to the above insight, which argues that the state is an instrument of the dominant class, it is explained that public policy is determined by international finance capital, which uses the indigenous bourgeoisie as key stakeholders in the input and output of the nation's economy (Fasakin,2021). As a result, and in the subsequent activities, policies that help cement the social reproduction system as given by the colonial masters are apparent and ubiquitous in the hands of the bourgeoisie (Nnoli, 1981).

The relationship between the state and capitalists in Nigeria may be seen as coherent in the mode of social reproduction operations. They both work in collaboration. The indigenous bourgeoisie tries to sustain its capital-oriented maximization of profit at the expense of the masses. These practices often lead to the subjugation, suppression and exploitation of the working class in the working environment.

The state supports the status quo by making economic policies that will benefit the indigenous bourgeoisie and be detrimental to the poor masses.

The State and the Working Class/Masses

In society, the working class, or masses, is usually the majority. The bourgeoisie of any kind is but few. The masses can be subdivided into the proletariat (the working class) and the peasantry (those at the bottom of the strata).

The Nigerian state has not been a neutral institution in the operations of the social reproduction system; rather, it has acted as an instrument of domination, oppression, primitive accumulation, and the preservation of the elite (Agbus, 2018). According to Olaopoetal (2012), the consequences of these effects are that the masses have lost confidence

in government policies and the ability of the policies to salvage them from the untold hardships and imbalances. Another consequence is that, due to the helplessness and defenseless situation of the people, the masses have resorted to becoming apolitical and apathetic in order to avoid the state and have started indulging in various illegal activities such as banditry, Boko Haram, kidnappers, etc. that retard development (Okopa et al., 2012).

In addition, the Nigerian state plays a vital role in industrial relations. As a bureaucratic bourgeoisie, it supports capital whenever crucial conflicts occur between labor and capital. According to Chike and Eguavoen (2007), the policy of liberalization has removed barriers to trade and controls on the movement of capital and services, which allows market forces to play themselves out. And unfortunately, labor cannot prevail over capital, and therefore the circle continues; accordingly, state action helps in securing the base for the government elites.

This is not without the attendant consequences, as Okoye and Ifeakor (2024) noted that the consequences of the support given to the capitalist class through the state's policies are twofold: first, because political repression is used to suppress the masses, who are rather numerous in the socio-political system, there is a propensity that society is bound to give way to some level of violence by the masses. In light of this, Seteolu states, "The protests and agitations on the social implications of market reforms in Nigeria and the growing social movement for new economic initiatives point at the crisis of neo-liberalism and its inherent contradictions" (Seteolu, 2017, p. 18).

Apparently, the working class and the poor masses are the majority in the social strata of Nigeria. There is always strength in numbers; supposing that an immense and concerted effort between the dominant class is put in place, this may facilitate and give way for a "revolution." But the contending factor and challenges to this notion above are that, first, the state (bureaucratic bourgeoisie) and the indigenous bourgeoisie connived and have formed a formidable force to perpetuate this suppression and domination of the masses, hence the continued recycling of the social reproduction system. Second, the poor masses of Nigeria are disunited across religious and ethnic lines; this has caused a great challenge or obstacle to fighting back, and third, the poor masses, the jobless youth, are constantly being used by the elite to carry out their dubious agenda.

The state and the transnational capitalist

Nigeria's international economic relations rest within the unequal global capitalist system (Seteolu,2017). The character and nature of the Nigerian state global economy could be viewed in terms of the chronology of global capital accumulation and the interplay of local and global class translational capitalists and the indigenous ruling class that plunder the economies of the disadvantaged of the exploited and alienated working class in the urban center and the poor masses in the rural center, mainly peasant farmers (Seteolu, 2017). The global capital accumulation started from the slave era to imperialism to colonialism and neo colonialism. Cinti (2002), in his view, argues that reconnecting the geographies with those of production, both translocally and across geographic scales, starts to redress the losses encountered in the realm of social reproduction as a result of globalized capitalist production. Global capitalist production is intertwined with the third-world states, because without them, the leading global capitalists cannot strive or survive.

The introduction of structural adjustment in the 1980s across several African states, Nigeria included. The reforms, which aim at curtailing the economic downturn of African states instead of improving the economies of the countries, deteriorated the general situation to the

worst. The Nigerian state, within the neo-liberal paradigm as an example, abandoned its crucial role of making regulations regarding international trading and economic interactions' which should favor her citizens; unfortunately, this paved the way for transnational capitalists to hold the economy sway. For example, it is evident that the textile industry, known for its high labor intensity, lost over 120,000 workers as a result of the introduction of SAP (Okopa et al., 2012; Seteolu, 2017).

The dialectics of the existing social forces in their struggle with global capital and wealth accumulation led to the continual transformation that resulted for the betterment of the global capitalist or transnational capitalist at the detriment of the majority of the poor masses, and these developments reflect the historical unevenness of capitalist development and the importance of assessing and having insight into the political economy of individual countries. (Lawrence, 2023)

The financialization of the market also exposed the country to volatility and shocks. Yet, access to credits is granted to the country under some stringent conditions.

These economic hardships usually trickle down to the common men on the street, who are mostly affected by Nigeria's indebtedness (Onkuka&Eguakve, 2007).

Furthermore, the primary role of the Nigerian state in global capital , argues Agbu (2017), is basically to establish, maintain, protect, and expand conditions conducive to capitalist accumulation in general, without which neither foreign nor Nigerian capitalists can survive.

However, indigenous peoples all over the world have been terrorized, exterminated, abused, and misused in the capitalist world system. The homelands, economic resources, and natural resources of indigenous peoples were expropriated and transferred to colonial settlers and their descendants and collaborators, who have no interest in protecting the political, economic, civil, and social rights that are articulated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Since the indigenous peoples are not represented in academia and media institutions, their voices are not heard, and most people are misinformed and know nothing or little about them (Asafa, 2011).

From the foregoing, one can state that the independence of Nigeria in 1960 was but a trap the colonial masters set, and unfortunately, the Nigerian state fell into it. The colonial masters created a petty bourgeoisie before relinquishing political power to the indigenous people. This petty bourgeoisie is also found in state institutions, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and the traditional bourgeoisie, who shall continue to act as puppets on a string to perpetuate the conditions of the reproduction system in the face of capitalism.

Insecurity in the Education Sector and the Role of the Nigerian State

As the role of the Nigerian State has continued to favor the capitalist and her variants, the education sector is not left behind. Since the inception of Boko Haram in 2009, especially in north-east Nigeria, the educational system ranging from elementary to tertiary level has never remained the same. The damages have been colossal and pathetic. And the retrogression of the education system remains constant. To support these claims , Mohammed and Mohammed (2019, p. 81) in their empirical study of '' Analysis of the Effects of Insurgency on Education in North Eastern Nigeria: A Case Study of Yobe State of Nigeria'' revealed that '' The findings of the study revealed that educational output (human capital investment) is significantly and indirectly affected through school enrolment, school infrastructure, and school attendants by the Boko Haram insurgency, as shown by their estimates and probabilities''. Similarly , Ugwumba and Odom (2015) enumerate some of the impacts of

insurgency on education, which are interwoven, namely: falling enrolment or attendance of students, effects on teachers and teaching, impact on infrastructure, effect on education management, and recruitment of schoolchildren for child soldiers (Bilaminu, 2019). As a result of the many dropouts of schoolchildren in the North East, many of these children are being lured to join the insurgency.

The fact that the children of the 'ruling class' and the 'elites' are not found in the schools that are vulnerable to insurgent attacks has proved that the Nigerian State is but a committee representing the interests of the ruling class. This is why many of the affected schools are mainly public schools attacked by the insurgents. The education and security of these poor masses are not the priority of the Nigerian State; otherwise, the Nigerian State has what it takes to put in certain and right mechanisms to end the continuous attack on schoolchildren.

Insecurity and socio-economic development

The socio-economic development of any meaningful society is invariably in one way or another tied to adequate security. It means that, without adequate security put in place, there will be no meaningful development (Brisco & Ginkel, 2013). There are various causes of insecurity in Nigeria today, namely the level of poverty, illiteracy, and bad governance, otherwise known as state failure, among others. Yusuf and Mohammed (2020), in empirical research, found that the high unemployment rate, domestic capital formation, foreign direct investment, and government spending on education and security are negatively affected by the incessant level of insecurity, consequently retarding growth in the long and short run. Lessmore (2022) warns that if insecurity is not urgently addressed in Nigeria as a whole, it could result in massive starvation, which could lead to citizens' revolt, resulting in a monumental impact. The gravity of insecurity in the country as a whole, caused by Boko Haram and bandits commonly referred to as killer-herdsmen, would be detrimental to the socio economic development of Nigeria.

In another dimension, according to Brisco and Ginkel (2013, p. 3),

Above all, there is now growing evidence of linkages between the emergence of violent extremism and conditions of economic deprivation, bad governance, and conflict. Until now, efforts to map a correlation between violent extremist affiliation in numerous contexts and economic factors have struggled to prove any direct link.

This is to say that poverty is not solely the cause of economic retardation. The underdevelopment of Nigeria in its socioeconomic phase is mainly caused by bad governance, and the state is responsible for it. Once the state stands above and acts as a neutral between the upper class and the middle class, other aspects will fall into place for good.

Theoretical Framework

This work adopts the structuralist theory of state, which is widely associated with Nicolo Poulantza.

The structuralist theoretical model is rooted in classical Marxism. Poulantza followed the works of Marx, Engel, Lenin, and Gamsci (Martin, 2008). Marx focused on the economic level of the capitalist mode of production and did not explicitly deal with the state; he dealt only with these levels through their effects on the economy. For Lenin, the reasons are different: it is involved in direct political practice, and this is focused on essential polemical works such as state and revolution (Poulantza, 2008). This classical Marxism views the state

as an effect of class formation and struggle. Shaaperu (as cited in Aondohemba, 2017) vividly captured this: that material production in an organized society and social relations of production necessitated the emergence of the state, which rests upon economic conditions to provide the condition of social reproduction in the society. Interestingly, Gramsci developed the view that state power is nowhere necessary for the capitalist class, but the state has to combine coercion and hegemony in order to remain firm and integrate capitalist society (Jessop, 1982). To this note, Poulantza views the state as a factor of cohesion; that the state, in its role as a cohesive factor in the formation (a role that is especially important in the capitalist formation), has several functions: economic, ideological, and political. These functions are the particular modalities of the globally political role of the state: they are overdetermined by and condensed in its strictly political function, its function in relating to the field of the political class struggle (Poulantza, 1969).

This insight gives us the room to examine these ideas in relation to the role of the Nigerian state in the social reproduction system:

Nigeria's state as a factor of cohesion: Poulantza has established that the state is a unifying factor amidst class struggle; Fred Block adds that these contradictions threaten social dislocation and social rebellion, so that state managers are compelled to intervene in regulating the market in order to both protect society and the ruling class. Yet in doing so, state managers act to save capitalism by reforming the system. (Block,1980). In this context, the state is in a dilemma because it is reluctant to distort the accumulation process, but on the other hand, it faces pressure to intervene to ameliorate the economic and social strains produced by capitalism (Block, 1980).

In Nigeria, the state assumes this position in its mode of policymaking and implementation. In 2012, when the fuel subsidy was removed, the capitalists would benefit enormously while the proletariat would suffer. As a consequence, this led to massive protests by various civil society groups and the masses. The Nigerian state then intervened in order to curtail the situation and was able to placate the masses through the introduction and implementation of the subsidy social programs, which aimed at cushioning the effects of the fuel subsidy removal. However, against this backdrop, as opposed by the instrumentalist, Miliband argues that "There may be occasions and matters where the interests of all classes coincide. But for the most part and in essence, these interests are fundamentally irrevocably at odds, so that the state cannot possibly be their common trustee." (Miliband, 1969). For Miliband, there is no way the state will act as neutral in the midst of a conflicting and irreconcilable class struggle. Nevertheless, in response to this, Poulantza buttresses that:

This means that if the function of the state in a determinate social formation and the interest of the dominant class in this formation coincide, it is by reason of the system itself: the direct participation of members of the ruling class in the state apparatus is not the cause but the effect, and moreover a chance and contingent one, of this objective coincidence (Poulantza, cited in Blackburn 1968, p. 25).

This explains the fuel subsidy scenario in Nigeria; the interests of the capitalists coincide with those of the state, and it is because of the character and formation, which are the effects of the social reproduction system.

Ideological disposition: the role of ideology in the state apparatus is also very essential in understanding the concept of structuralist propositions. For Poulantza, he considered the constitution of the ideology to be the church or mosque, the political parties, and the unions. These groups are ideologically institutionalized by the state apparatus (Blackburn, 1968). In

Nigeria, this can be seen in the way religious institutions in particular have been used by the state bureaucratic bourgeois. The ideology is that, according to Poulantza, they are not different from the repressive state apparatuses.

The fight against corruption is a state ideology sold to the masses in order to win their approval and maintain the social reproduction system.

The neutrality paradoxes of the Nigerian state: the structuralists posit that the state is a neutral entity to regulate social formation and, consequently, the mode of reproduction of the system. Of course, the system is of a conflicting nature, characterized by class struggle and antagonism. This means that the nature of the neutrality of the state coincides with the interests of the ruling class, and its effect serves its interests. Draper, as quoted by Carnoy, posits that "rather, the state arises from and expresses a real overall need for the organization of society, which exists no matter what the particular structure. But as long as there is a ruling class in socioeconomic relations, it will utilize this need to shape and control the state along its own class line" (Carnoy, 1984, p. 56). In this light, it gives what structuralists called "the relative autonomy" of the state. Even the classical Marxists equally admitted that the state seldom enjoys relative autonomy and becomes ‘independent’ from and superior to all social classes as the dominant force in society rather than an instrument of the dominant class. To this regard, Capitalists are protected as a consequence (Itiman & Wolf, 2021). In order not to allow the system to collapse because of its complex relationships and intense conflict, the state sometimes appears to be neutral by intervening in some cases just to save the system and maintain the social reproduction. On this note, it can be said that the Nigerian state is needed and is imperative in the reproduction of social formation and social relations.

Conclusion

The study of the role of the Nigerian state amidst the insecurity nexus between the indigenous bourgeoisie, the proletariat/masses, and the transnational capitalists, the effects on education, and the socioeconomic formation in the social reproduction system,this study assessed the role Nigerian state has played and is playing in the social reproduction system, which it has done in favor of the dominant/upper class. Though the Nigerian state also enjoys some level of relative autonomy, this relative autonomy would have been exercised appropriately, supposing that the Nigerian state, being imperative and necessary for the reproduction of the system, can use its political and economic power and will to serve the general interest of the whole and not just the interests of the capitalists or certain class in the society. The society in which we find ourselves today is one that is characterized by class struggle. These classes are divided alongside intense ‘Interests’. The dominant class always tries to expropriate and oppress the dominated class. Therefore, the summary of the findings of this work includes; first, that the Nigerian state works for the ‘unity’ of the socio-economic system. It is a factor of cohesion; it tries to intervene in order to preserve the system; by doing this, its interests coincide with those of the dominant class in society. Second, that The Nigerian state adopts ideological underpinnings to manipulate the system in favor of the dominant class (the bourgeoisie or capitalists) in order to maintain the social reproduction system. Third, that the Nigerian State, to some extent, can be said to play a neutral role in the social reproduction system by being above the class struggle and acting with some 'relative autonomy’.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations put forward

1.In Nigeria, the indigenous, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and the transnational bourgeoisie are identified as the tools for the suppression and exploitation of the working

class and the masses. Therefore, the Nigerian state can do better to arrest the inequality, the imbalances, the oppressions, and the subjugations in the social reproduction system by having the political will to curtail the negative tendencies of capitalism.

2.That indigenous socialism can be adopted so as to fill the gap of inequality in the socio-economic system and the social reproduction system; this would pave the way for modifications in the sociopolitical and socioeconomic systems.

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ELECTIONS, THE JUDICIARY AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE SOCIO- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The paper examined elections, the judiciary and democratic consolidation for sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria. It focused on the challenges of conducting free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria, emphasizing the role of the judiciary in democratic consolidation for sustainable socio-economic development. The paper argued that the overbearing influence of the judiciary in the electoral process usurps the power of the electorate to freely choose their leaders through a transparent, free, fair and credible process. The paper adopted the documentary method of data collection, utilizing data from a wide range of sources such as journal articles, library materials, text books and newspapers and analyzed using the content analysis. Analysis of the data revealed that the right of the people to freely choose their leaders is denied through manipulation of the electoral process by politicians, which is further validated by the courts. Thus, there is a deliberate attempt and cooperation between the political class and the judiciary to undermine democratic consolidation for sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria. The paper recommended amongst other things that the independence of the judiciary must be guaranteed to enhance its capacity to act as an unbiased umpire in election adjudication.

Keywords: election, judiciary, democratic consolidation, socio-economic development, court.

1. INTRODUCTION

Elections in both developed and emerging economies of the world represent an important ingredient of democracy through which the leadership is recruited. This process of leadership recruitment is very important because the lack of the credibility of this process throws up leaders who would in turn undermine democratic principles and retard development. Development in such societies is stunted either because such leaders are bereaved of ideas or they are simply preoccupied with primitive accumulation. Thus, elections provide a platform or an opportunity for the electorate to decide those who preside over the affairs of the state. Therefore, “only a democratic government, established by the consent of the governed in accordance with their shared values, has the moral authority to act as the legitimate agent of the people” (Ebegbulem, 2017:4).

Since the dawn of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has held seven general elections: 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023. In almost all these elections, the "losers" have followed through with litigations up to the Supreme Court which is the final court of law in the land. Often, the litigants merely settle down with the judgments of the court, not necessarily because they believe that justice has been served, but because it is the final arbiter in the land. The lack of credibility in the electoral process has been attributed to the lack of independence of the electoral body which oversees the conduct of elections. Despite a change in its nomenclature from Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), its independence appears to be more theoretical than practical. It appears that executive arm of government has an overwhelming influence on the activities of the electoral umpire which inhabits its independence, as evidenced by instances where electoral commissions have been accused of favouring incumbents, manipulating election outcomes, or delaying reforms that would strengthen their autonomy. Furthermore, the complacency of the security agencies – the police, armed forces, civil defense and other military and paramilitary agencies have continued to interfere in the electoral process and slow down democratic consolidation. The judiciary has therefore become an important institution that influences and determines the democratic wellbeing of Nigeria, as it often serves as the final arbiter in election disputes and checks abuses of power, thereby playing a critical role in upholding democratic principles and ensuring accountability. The judiciary faces challenges in fulfilling its core responsibility of overseeing and administering justice, as civil and criminal cases often experience significant delays, remaining unresolved in the courts for years.

The operations of the judicial branch seem to be at odds with its core responsibility of overseeing and administering justice as civil and criminal cases drag on in the courts for years unattended to. The judiciary has abdicated its core responsibility of overseeing and administering the temple of justice as civil and criminal cases drag on in the courts for years, unattended to. Before the next rounds of elections, the courts continue to be occupied with election petitions from state high courts to the supreme courts. The judiciary has been enmeshed in allegations of official corruption. It is alleged that the judiciary collect bribes and perverts justice, giving judgments in favour of the highest bidders (Odinkalu, 2010). Thus, money bags take advantage of the weakness of the judicial system, undermine the electoral process by rigging elections and bribe their way through the courts to positions of authority. Such leaders hardly provide services that will benefit the generality of the people. (Businessday, Nov.24,2023). Therefore, the continuous involvement of the judiciary in the electoral process may not be unconnected with the largesse that accompanies such involvement.

The main argument of the paper is that concerns have been raised regarding the judiciary's role in electoral processes, with allegations suggesting that some judicial decisions may undermine popular sovereignty. Instances such as controversial rulings in high-stakes election petitions have fueled public perception of collusion between the judiciary and political elites. While these claims warrant further investigation, they highlight the need for greater transparency and accountability in judicial proceedings. This practice undermines democratic consolidation and development in Nigeria

This paper is broadly compartmentalized into four sections. Following this introduction is the conceptual prologue where the concepts of election, judiciary, socio-economic development, democracy and democratic consolidation are examined. Section three covers the methodology and theoretical framework. The conclusion and recommendations are contained in section four.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Elections

Elections are fundamental to any liberal and competitive political system, serving as a critical mechanism for decision-making, legitimacy, and democratic stability. Gambo, (2006) asserts that elections, when conducted freely and fairly, yield outcomes that are broadly acceptable to politically active groups, emphasizing their importance for mutual agreement within a polity. This perspective aligns with Eya (2003) and Gwinn and Nortan (1992), who describe elections as a process of selection and decision-making through voting, highlighting their procedural centrality to governance.

Election is an important mechanism for the reproduction and sustenance of any democratic society. An election has therefore become a formal decision making process by which a population choses an individual to hold public office. Obkhedo (2011), posited that "election is a major instrument for the recruitment of political leadership in democratic societies". Anifowose (2003), sees election as "the process of elite selection by the mass of the population in any given political system". Thus, election is a process of selecting the officers or representatives of an organized group by the vote of its qualified members.

The Nigerian independent electoral commission (INEC, 2011), conceptualized elections as the means through which the people exercise their sovereign right to choose who govern them and what the political and other priorities of their government should be. Thus, democratic elections provide their sovereignty through the ballot and which confers legitimacy on the government. Corroborating the above position, Gwinn and Nortan (1992), regard election as the formal process of selecting a person for public office or accepting or registering a political proposition by voting. Furthermore, election can be seen as the selection of a person or persons for office as by ballot and making choices as by alternatives (Eya, 2003). Emphasizing the centrality of elections guaranteeing democratic stability, Ighodalo (2012) emphasized that election is a fundamental mechanism through which the people in a democratic society select their political representatives to occupy various public offices.

However, Alfa et al. (2012) introduce a nuanced perspective by interrogating the ideal versus the reality of elections. While they agree that elections ideally foster orderliness, stability, and rejuvenation of leadership, they criticize the frequent travesty of democratic norms in practice. They argue that poorly conducted elections undermine democracy and suggest that, when properly managed, elections contribute to economic growth by creating an environment conducive to capital mobility and reconstruction, especially in post-conflict settings. This perspective diverges from the more idealistic views of Gambo (2006) by emphasizing the disjunction between the theoretical promises of elections and their practical outcomes.

Olu (2013) adds another layer by stressing that elections should not only determine leadership but also reflect the aspirations of an organized electorate. This perspective complements Ebegbulem (2017), who argues for competitiveness, transparency, and credibility as prerequisites for elections to fulfill their democratic essence. Both authors emphasize the procedural and substantive dimensions of elections, which must align to ensure legitimacy and reflect the will of the people.

The integration of these perspectives reveals common ground regarding the significance of elections for legitimacy and governance. Yet, differences emerge in the emphasis placed on idealistic versus pragmatic views. While most authors highlight elections as a cornerstone of democracy, Alfa et al. (2012) and Olu (2013) interrogate the substantive challenges,

particularly in contexts where democratic norms are undermined. These gaps highlight the need for systemic reforms to bridge the gap between the ideals of free and fair elections and their practical realization.

Democracy and Democratic Consolidation

The term 'democracy' suffers from a definitional 'dilemma'. The concept has been rightly or wrongly conceptualized by different scholars from different perspectives. Atelhe and Abunimye (2021:1), note that "it is by no means easy to define with any degree of accuracy the term democracy". These authors further contend that "a cursory glance at extent literatures on the subject reveals an array of definitions".

Alfa et al (2012), approvingly quoting Dahl (2000), argued that "within the enormous and often impenetrable thicket of ideas about democracy, it is possible to identify some criteria that a process for governing an association would have to meet in order to satisfy the requirement that all members are equally entitled to participate in the association's decisions about its policies". Dahl further notes that at least five of such elements are evident namely; effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, exercising final control over the agenda and inclusion of adults. Accordingly therefore, a democratic society should be one that abhors tyrannical tendencies, and produces and promotes desirable outcomes such as the provision of essential rights, general freedom, self-determination, moral autonomy, human development, and protection of essential personal interests, political equality, peace and prosperity (Dahl, 2000).

For Makinda (1996), the salient elements of any liberal democracy include free competition among political parties, periodic elections, and respect for fundamental freedoms of thought, expression, and assembly. The definition put forward by Bjornlund et al (1992), succinctly captures the fact that the whole essence of liberal democracy is the free exercise of political power by the people. They stated that "however one defines democracy, it is irreducibly a system of government in which the authority to exercise power derives from the will of the people" (Bjornlund et al 1992). Corroborating the above position, Appadorai (1975) contends that "democracy is a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by them". Therefore, the hallmark of liberal democracy is its inclusivity and the authority bestowed on the people to freely elect their leaders through a competitive, periodic, free and fair elections. However, the same cannot be said of Nigeria's democracy, which can best be described in the words of Dahl (1989) as 'virtual democracy' that is, 'democracy that shares resemblance with true democracy but lacks the basic tenets of democracy' (Dahl 1989 cited in Atelhe and Abunimye, 2012:3).

The Judiciary

The judiciary is the third branch of government, with the core duty of interpreting laws passed by the legislature and applying such existing law to individual cases in order to resolve disputes between two private citizens and the government. According to Abdullahi (2014:56), the judiciary refers to "the collective body of judges and court systems of a state, the branch of government responsible for the administration of justice based on the provisions of the law". For Obikeze and Obi (2004:23), the judiciary refers to "the court and all those who work in the vine yard of justice". The term "judiciary" notes (Baker, 2016), refers to the system's courts, arbitrations, judges and other administrative staff. Furthermore, the judiciary composed of courts that adjudicate cases, interpret the law and punish offenders according to the provisions of the constitution. Ghali, (2015), thus concludes that "in a

democratic system, the judiciary serves as the organ of government saddled with the obligation to apply the law to specific cases and to settle disputes between parties.

In almost all the elections that have taken place in Nigeria, as previously indicated, the judiciary has played one role or the other in determining the outcome for instance, the judiciary was instrumental to the annulment of the June 12, 1973 election by the military, reputed to be the freest, and fairest in Nigeria's democratic history (Obutte, 2016 cited in Okeke & Idike, 2017:28).

The ineffectiveness of the judiciary in playing its role of stabilizing democracy in Nigeria has been attributed to its lack of independence. Judicial independence, Adaeze, Ibekwe & Onodugo (2023:58) noted, "requires that the judiciary as an organ of government and individual judges carry out their judicial duties without undue interference from the executive, the legislative, peers, the public, or any other source". They conclude that to enhance judiciary independence for sustainable democracy in Nigeria, "the judiciary must be autonomous both institutionally and individually.

The judiciary plays an important role in democratic consolidation and socio-economic development of any nation. As pointed out by Ayene-Akeke (2008), "modern economic relations are highly dependent on law and the availability of structures to implement them". A sound legal jurisprudence is essential for international and commercial investments to thrive. International investors, particularly, multi-national corporations thrive better when there is an efficient judicial system that can enforce binding contracts between nationals of different nations. In that wise, the progress of any nation, writes Udu (2018:9) "is measured largely by the availability of institutional and legal frameworks for protection of the human rights inbuilt to its working system and the level of enforcement and practical enjoyment of such rights by the people". Thus, "feeble judicial and legal systems characterized by corruption and rebellion, poor enforcement of the law, destabilize respect for the rule of law, provoke environmental degradation, and challenge development towards sustainable development (Rahmani & Koohshani, 2013:10).

Socio-economic development

The essence and substance of socio-economic development can be better appreciated by conceptualizing and understanding development generally. The term "development" is a multi-dimensional and multi-faceted phenomenon (Abunimye et al, 2022:51) it is seen as a multi-dimensional process involving the totality of man in his political, economic, psychological and social realities among others (Amucheazi 1980:41). As pointed out by Ettah (2012:35), development must be appropriately differentiated from economic growth, measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or per capita income. Almond and Powell (1966), argued that "growth is conceivable when the political system can articulate and aggregate public interests, allocate resources and, maintain law and order through well-functioning structures" Development, on the other hand, writes Ettah (2012:36), is "the sustained elevation of a community and social structure towards a higher or more civilized existence" As pointed out by Seers (1972:20), development entails the conditions for the realization of the human personality, it therefore involves the process of change in state of affairs which moves from lower to higher levels .Umo (2007), maintained that development connotes the provision of basic needs that ensure better living conditions, such as health facilities, clothing, shelter, food and basic education. The absence of these needs therefore indicate a complete absence of development and prevalence of poverty. "The goal development is to improve the quality of life of the citizenry, especially in developing countries. Better school, a higher level of health, and wellbeing, less hunger, greater social

independence, and a richer cultural life are all factors that contribute to a higher quality of life"(World Bank). Imhonopi and Urim (2013:16), conclude that development connotes the ability of a nation or country to improve the living standards of its people by providing social amenities such as safe portable water, good qualitative education, healthcare services, good roads, housing etc. sustainable economic development therefore, implies the judicious utilization of resources for the benefit of present and future generations. "it is the maintenance and sustenance of a high real growth rate of the economy to achieve the development or economic objectives" (World Bank, 1997:4).

METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted a qualitative research design, utilizing the documentary method of data collection, as described by Bailey (1994). This approach involves the systematic review and analysis of documents containing information relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), documentary research seeks to produce findings through interpretive analysis rather than numerical quantification. For this study, data were primarily sourced from secondary materials, including textbooks, journal articles, conference papers, internet resources, newspapers, magazines, and other documents deemed relevant. This method provided a robust foundation for exploring the research questions by leveraging existing literature and archival sources. The data was analyzed using content analytical technique.

THEORETICAL POSTULATION

Several theories have been proposed to explain democratic consolidation, including the Institutionalization Theory, the Informal Rules Tradition, and the Liberal Democratic Theory. Each offers unique insights into the processes necessary for sustaining democracy, but this study adopts the Liberal Democratic Theory as its main framework due to its applicability in analyzing Nigeria's democratic consolidation. Proponents of Institutionalization Theory argue that democratic consolidation requires the establishment and strengthening of state institutions, such as constitutions and the rule of law, to create a stable environment for governance through predictability and accountability. In contrast, scholars in the Informal Rules Tradition, such as O'Donnell (1988), emphasize that democracy is consolidated not solely through formal rules but also through political actors' adherence to these rules in practice. O'Donnell highlights the interplay between formal institutional structures and informal norms, arguing that the internalization of formal rules by political actors fosters democratic consolidation.

Liberal Democratic Theory, rooted in the works of James Mill and Jeremy Bentham, focuses on political systems characterized by universal suffrage, civil liberties, free and fair elections, a competitive party system, the rule of law, separation of powers, and non-revolutionary methods for changing governments. These principles, as outlined by Kwasau (2013), are particularly relevant to Nigeria, where democratic development faces challenges such as electoral malpractice, limited civil liberties, weak rule of law, and corruption. The theory's emphasis on free and fair elections underscores the importance of improving Nigeria's electoral processes to enhance legitimacy and public trust in governance. Furthermore, its focus on civil liberties highlights the need to safeguard freedoms such as speech and assembly to prevent authoritarian tendencies, while its insistence on the rule of law provides a framework for addressing judicial inefficiency and selective application of the law. By advocating for checks and balances, the theory also offers a solution to the persistent issue of executive dominance in Nigeria. However, critics argue that Liberal Democratic Theory often overlooks socio-economic inequalities and the structural challenges faced by developing

nations like Nigeria. To address these limitations, this study supplements it with insights from the Informal Rules Tradition, which acknowledges the role of local norms and informal practices in shaping democratic behaviour. For Nigeria, this means recognizing the importance of informal agreements, elite consensus, and political negotiation in sustaining democratic institutions. By adopting Liberal Democratic Theory, the study focuses on identifying the necessary institutional, cultural, and procedural reforms required to strengthen Nigeria's democratic consolidation, situating these efforts within global democratic norms while addressing specific local challenges.

CREDIBLE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

*A consolidated democracy is one in which "none of the major political actors, parties, or organized interests, forces or institutions consider(s) that there is any alternative to the democratic process to gain power and that no political institutions or groups has a claim to veto the action of democratically elected decision makers…"(*Linz 1995:18)

Consolidation of democracy, as pointed out by Diamond (1990) is that which the depth, quality and authenticity of democracy in its various dimensions has been improved: "political competition becomes fairer, freer, more vigorous and executive; participation and representation broader, more autonomous, and inclusive; civil liberties more comprehensively and rigorously protected; accountability more systematic and transparent. Furthermore, Ebegbulem (2017) contends that the building of a consolidated democracy involves an affirmation and strengthening of certain institutions, such as the electoral system, vibrant political parties, judicial independence and respect for human rights and rule of law. Real democratic consolidation requires a demonstrable relationship between political accountability and quality governance.

Linz (1995) emphasized that newly emerging democratic political systems are said to have consolidated democracies if they fulfill some or all of the following criteria:

- Structural: this overlaps somewhat with our definition of democracy. It posits that no significant reserve domains of power should exist that prelude important public policies from being determined by the laws, procedures, and institutions that have been sanctioned by the new democratic process.

- Attitudinal: when a strong majority of public opinion acknowledges that the regime's democratic procedures and institutions are appropriate and legitimate, and where support for anti-system alternatives is quite low or isolated from the prodemocracy forces

- Behavioural: when no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actor spends significant resources attempting to achieve its objectives by challenging the regime's institutions or rules with appeals for a military coup or revolutionary activities, and when the prodemocracy forces abide by its rules and do not engage in semi loyal politics.

The point has been made that the lack of credible elections affects sustainable economic development in Nigeria. This is because fraudulent electoral process produces incompetent leadership that is incapable of engineering the process of sustainable socio-economic development that would improve the well-being of the citizenry. Thus poverty becomes a tool in the hands of the political class by which they manipulate the people and perpetuate themselves in power through fraudulent electoral process. Ebegbulem (2017) corroborates this position when he asserted that the socio-economic challenges Nigeria is facing has compelled the average Nigerian voter to sell his votes during elections. This is a consequence

of crippling poverty which pervades the Nigerian state. He further notes that Poverty and selfish interest of Nigeria's political actors have paved way for electoral malpractice which is an obstruction to democratic consolidation in the country. This affects the legitimacy of these political actors and the institutions that produce them, as little attention is given to the development and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. In order therefore, to achieve sustainable economic development, there is need to address the prevalent rate of poverty in the country

Table 1: TIMELINES OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION TRIBUNAL SINCE 1999

Year	Candidate declared by INEC	Challenger	Candidate declared by the court
1999	Olusegun Obasanjo	Olu Falae	Olusegun Obasanjo
2003	Olusegun Obasanjo	Mohammadu Buhari	Olusegun Obasanjo
2007	Umaru Musa Yar'Adua	Mohammadu Buhari	Umaru Musa Yar'Adua
2011	Goodluck Ebele Jonathan	Mohammadu Buhari	Goodluck Ebele Jonathan
2019	Muhammadu Buhari	Atiku Abubakar	Muhammadu Buhari
2023	Bola Ahmed Tinubu	Peter Obi/Atiku Abubakar	Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Source: compiled by the authors

Table 2: TIMELINES OF GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION PETITION 2003-2019

Year	State	Candidate declared by INEC	Challenger	Candidate declared by the court
2003	Anambra	Chris Ngige	Peter Obi	Peter Obi
2007	Anambra state	Andy Oba	Peter Obi	Peter Obi
	Rivers State	Celestine Omahi	Rotimi Amaechi	Rotimi Amaechi
	Edo State	Oserheimen Osunbo	Adams Oshiomhole	Adams Oshiomhole
	Bayelsa State	Ebitimi Amgbare	Timipre Sylva	Timipre Sylva
	Kogi State	Ibrahim Idris	Abubakar Audu	Ibrahim Idris
2009	Ondo State	Segun Agagu	Olusegun Mimiko	Olusegun Mimiko
2010	Osun State	Olagunsoye Oyinlola	Rauf Aregbosola	Rauf Aregbosola
2019	Imo State	Emeka Ihedioha	Hope Uzodima	Hope Uzodima

Source: compiled by the authors

THE 2023 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

The 2023 governorship election in Nigeria held in 28 states of the federation. Not fewer than 22 of them, representing 6.7% went to the tribunal up to the appeal court. 13 of them representing 3.6% followed through to the Supreme Court. The 13 states include Kano, Plateau, Abia, Cross River, Rivers, Delta, Lagos, Sokoto, Nassarawa, Benue, Akwa Ibom, Taraba and Bauchi.

Table 3: 2023 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION PETITION FROM THE TRIBUNAL TO THE APPEAL COURT

S/N	State	Candidate declared by INEC	Challenger	Candidate declared by the court
1.	Adamawa	Adamu Umaru Fintiri	Aishatu Dahiru Binaini	Adamu Umaru Fintiri
2.	Ebonyi	Francis Nwifuru	Ifeanyi Chukwuma Odii	Francis Nwifuru
3.	Enugu	Peter Mbah	Chijioke Edeoga	Peter Mbah
4.	Gombe	Inuwa Yahaya	Mohammed Barde	Unwa Yahaya
5.	Kaduna	Uba Sani	Isah Ashiru	Uba Sani
6.	Kebi	Nasir Idris	Aminu Bande	Nasir Idris
7.	Ogun	Dapo Abiodun	Ladi Adebutu	Dapo Abiodun
8.	Oyo	Seyi Makinde	Barbatunde Ajala	Seyi Makinde
9.	Zamfara	Dauda Lawal	Bello Matawalle	Dauda Lawal

Source: compiled by the authors

Table 4: 13 STATES THAT FOLLOWED THROUGH TO THE SUPREME COURT YEAR 2023

S/N	State	Candidate declared by INEC	Challenger	Candidate declared by the court
1.	Abia	Alex Otti	Kechi Emenike & Okey Achiwe	Alex Otti
2.	Akwa Ibom	Umo Eno	Akanimo Udofia	Umo Eno
3.	Bauchi	Bala mohammed	Sadipue Abubarkar	Bala Mohammed
4.	Benue	Hyacinth Alia	Titus Uba	Hyacinth Alia
5.	Cross River	Bassy Otu	Sandy Onor	Bassey Otu
6.	Kano	Abbar Kabir Yusuf	Nasir Gawuna	Abbar Karbir Yusuf
7.	Lagos	Babajide Sanwo-	Gbadebo Rhodesvivour	Babajide Sanwo-olu

		olu		
8.	Nassarawa	Abdullahi Sule	David Omgbugadu	Abdullahi Sule
9.	Rivers	Siminalayi Fubara	Patrick Tonye Cole	Siminalayi Fubara
10.	Sokoto	Ahmed Aliyu	Saidu Umar	Ahmed Aliyu
11.	Plateau	Caleb Mutfwang	Nentawe Goshwe Yiltwada	Caleb Mutfwang
12.	Taraba	Agbu Kefas	Sani Yahaya	Agbu Kefas
13.	Delta	Ovie Omo-Agege	Sheriff Obor-erwori	Orie Omo-Agege

Source: compiled by the authors

THE ROLE OF THE JUDICIARY IN THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

The judiciary plays a pivotal role in consolidating democracy, serving as the foundation upon which democratic institutions grow and develop. As Aver and Orban (2014:12) aptly observed, "the judiciary is the foundation upon which democracy grows and develops." Its independence as an arm of government is critical to upholding the principle of separation of powers, which safeguards against dictatorship and arbitrary rule. By adhering to the principles of truth, justice, and morality, the judiciary not only ensures the administration of justice but also strengthens democratic governance and the broader goals of sustainable development. A functioning and credible judiciary fosters public trust, resolves disputes impartially, and establishes the legal certainty necessary for economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection.

However, evidence suggests that the Nigerian judiciary has struggled to fulfill its mandate as the last hope of the common man. Aver and Orban (2014:17) contend that "the Nigerian judiciary has made democracy to be chronically sick," citing pervasive corruption as a critical issue. Desperate politicians frequently exploit judicial systems, bribing judges to secure favourable rulings that undermine the rights and aspirations of the electorate. Such practices erode judicial integrity, creating a climate where rule of law is compromised, democratic processes are subverted, and development goals are hindered.

Empirical examples reveal how these shortcomings have manifested in the electoral process. During the 2020 election cycle, the Court of Appeal issued contradictory judgments on the validity of political party nominations, simultaneously affirming and disputing the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) authority to accept or reject candidates (Jalal, 2023). The 2023 election tribunal cycle further exposed these inconsistencies. In Kano State, the Governorship Election Petitions Tribunal invalidated Abba Kabir Yusuf's election on contentious grounds, citing discrepancies in certified court documents. Similarly, the Appeal Court overturned the Nasarawa State Governorship Election Petitions Tribunal's ruling, which deemed the matter a pre-election issue outside the tribunal's jurisdiction (Jalal, 2023). Such conflicting interpretations diminish public confidence in the judiciary, casting doubt on its ability to provide a stable and fair legal environment essential for democratic consolidation and sustainable development.

These controversies have plunged the judiciary's reputation to unprecedented lows, with commentators frequently describing it unflatteringly. Concerns over conflicting judgments

persist, reflecting systemic inconsistencies. For example, in 2021, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) indicted six lawyers for their roles in securing conflicting ex-parte orders from judges in political cases (Dania, 2022). While efforts to address these lapses are commendable, they cannot restore the judiciary's credibility. A judiciary plagued by corruption and inconsistency undermines its role as a guardian of democracy and a driver of sustainable development, obstructing equitable justice, political stability, and the institutional reforms necessary for progress.

Conclusion

The current role of the judiciary in democracy consolidation in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized overemphasised. The return to civil democratic rule in 1999, following several years of military interregnum, heralded a new wave of optimism that Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, had finally put behind it the frequent instabilities caused by military intervention in politics and could now focus its attention on addressing the core development challenges of development through desirable and effective transformational leadership namely the eradication of poverty, reduction of inequality, among the citizenry, through the transformation of its productive capacity for sustainable economic development.

However, as pointed out by Ebegbulem (2017), these hopes and enthusiasm were short-lived as the country's political landscape has been turned into a battleground for promoting ethnic, religious and elitist agendas. Free, fair and credible elections, regarded as the machinery through which democracy can be consolidated, have fallen short of the requirement for the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, thus making a caricature of democracy. In such circumstances, according to Ebegbulem (2017), the people's votes do not count, as election results are decided by a few moneybags whose vote buying, rigging and financial inducement have made a caricature of democracy.

Recommendations

In order to enhance democratic consolidation in Nigeria, there must be a deliberate attempt to build robust democratic institutions rooted in the ideals of accountability and transparency that would promote best democratic practices. Independence of the electoral umpire (INEC) must be truly enhanced by ensuring that strengthened by ensuring that only persons of proven integrity and honesty are appointed to the commission. Such appointments should be made by a neutral and independent body other than the executive arm of government.

Also, the independence of the judiciary should be enhanced by ensuring that the promotion and appointment of judges are made on merit and not on a partisan, ethnic or religious basis. The people's material wellbeing should be improved to reduce their vulnerability to financial inducement. Ultimately, these measures would guarantee a credible electoral process. Because it is only leaders who emerge through free, fair and credible elections enjoy the legitimacy, loyalty and support of the people. Such leaders will also have the interests of the people at heart and produce policies and outcomes that will address the needs of the people and promote sustainable economic development.

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ECOWAS PROPOSED SINGLE CURRENCY (ECO): ASSESSING THE IMMINENT NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC BENEFITS

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Abstract

The objective of conducting this study was to assess the economic benefits derivable from the establishment of a single currency (Eco) by the ECOWAS member states in general and Nigeria in particular. It was discovered that in early 2019 the 15 heads of state and governments of the Community agreed to launch a new currency, the ECO, in January 2020 to free travellers and business people from the hassles of exchanging currencies, as well as boom intra-area trade among the member states. Despite the various challenges leading to the delay of the implementation of the Eco such as constraints of the international monetary system, lack of independence of the central banks of the member states, non-convertibility of currencies, and weak financial management capacity, the study discovered that if the single currency agenda is achieved, Nigeria alongside other member states will stand to benefit in various ways including enhancement of currency stability, reduction of financial risks, reducing transaction costs, reducing exchange rate fluctuation, enhancing price transparency, and reduction of inflation. It is, therefore, recommended alongside other recommendations that the Nigerian Naira, which is seen as the second most valuable currency in the region only to the CFA, which is governed by the French government, should see an increase in value through measures that reduce the current high level of importation, particularly the importation of goods that are capable of being produced locally. The first steps in this should be increasing the nation's production of food crops and refining petroleum products.

***Keywords**:* Single Currency, Eco, ECOWAS, Regional Monetary integration, and Exchange Rate

Introduction

The global economy is subject to broad transformation. And many countries have been facing various degrees of enormous challenges in efficiently and effectively dealing with the changes encountered as a result of globalization and liberalization. The globalization process has led to a rapid transformation of the economic landscape, which was preceded by a noticeable trend of countries repositioning their economic relationships (Olorunrinu, 2020). According to Olorunrinu (2020), it made possible movements of goods and services across borders that gave birth to the exchange of currencies which serves as a barrier to the smoothness of the international trade between the countries involved. According to Subramanian, Taghizadeh-Hesary and Kim (2020), to be able to tackle such challenges encountered by countries, it would be vital for the countries to cooperate and unite mutually as well as enhance economic integration among neighbouring countries through the use of the numerous comparative advantages and the existing complementaries.The phenomenon of regional economic integration has been observed in various regions of the world, regardless of the income or geographical location of the nations involved. In the case of Africa, several sub-regional and continental initiatives have been established to unify its economic space. One notable example is the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975, which aims to create a common market in the West African region (Olorunrinu, 2020).

Prasad and Songwe (2021) stated that over the past decade, leaders of a regional trade bloc of 15 countries under the ECOWAS committed to setting up a currency and monetary union by the end of 2020 which is yet to be realized. The leaders of the member states agreed to relinquish their monetary sovereignty and adopt a common currency managed by a single central bank. They believed that eliminating multiple currencies would remove barriers to the flow of money, goods, and people and lay the foundations for greater prosperity that will reduce the transaction costs of goods and services. Monetary integration and the convertibility of currency activities within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are aimed at addressing the challenges posed by fluctuations in exchange rates and multiple currencies, which are perceived as obstacles to regional integration for they contribute in devaluating the currencies of the member states (Ogunkola, 2005). According to Akinboyo (2011), the establishment of a single currency by ECOWAS is intended to enhance economic cooperation among member states, primarily by reducing transaction costs and eliminating exchange rate risks. Therefore, this approach is widely recognized as a viable means of promoting intra-regional trade and positioning the West African region to gain a strategic advantage in global commerce.

Even though the world has witnessed various monetary unification arrangements such as the European Monetary Union (EMU) which has attracted the attention of the global society more than others, especially when the Euro was created in 2002, Frasad and Songwe (2021) stated that ECOWAS currency unification is not yet realized but still on the process. They stated that before the 2020 deadline, none of the ECOWAS member states had attained what they agreed as a prerequisite for the union. Thus, the leaders of the 15-country member states then set the more realistic objective of realizing the currency union by 2027. According to Mati, Civcir and Ozdeser (2018), ECOWAS member states have undergone a series of meetings, deliberations, and policies that would pave the way for the establishment of a single currency for the entire member states to be called ECO similar to Euro. Because the plan to establish a single currency in the West African region is faced with various challenges leading to it being postponed more than five times (Nzubechi, Oyinmiebi, & John, 2022), this paper aims to examine the benefits that can be got from the planned single currency (ECO) by the ECOWAS member states and specifically Nigeria, which will make the member states hasten the process.

ECOWAS and the Economic Features of its Members

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 by the West African States including Togo, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Ghana, Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Benin, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria as its members (Banik & Yoonus, 2009). The major purpose of initiating the organization was to form a Free Trade Area (FTA) among the member states and subsequently to higher kinds of integration such as Customs Union (CU), Economic Union (EU), and Common Markets (CM). Banik and Yoonus further stressed that the establishment of the Organization resulted in making most of the trade within the region tariff-free which signifies a higher form of regional integration even though the movement of labourers is still missing. According to Talabi (1993), the ECOWAS member states expressed their desire in 2000 to accelerate the process of monetary integration that was started in the early 1980s with the help and support of the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme. This move gave birth to the establishment of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) which is made up of English-speaking countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Gambia.

ECOWAS was established to foster the ideal of collective self-sufficiency for its member states as well as to create a single large trading bloc through economic cooperation (ECOWAS, 2024). Integrated economic activities as foreseen in the region centred around industry, telecommunications, transport, natural resources, agriculture, energy, monetary and

financial issues, commerce, as well as cultural and social matters. However, according to Banik and Yoonus (2009), in terms of the economic structure of the member states such as labour mobility and democratic profile, and savings as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Agriculture constitutes the dominant means of the income of the ECOWAS member states except for very few of them such as Nigeria where natural resources, mainly crude oil are the mainstay of economic activity (Balogun, 2009). Except for Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Sierra Leone, savings as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are similar across the member states. Banik and Yoonus (2009) further observed that the degrees of trade among the member states are very low compared to the extent of trade between the countries and the European countries. United States Trade Representative (2023) indicates that United States exports to ECOWAS member states were $6.7 billion in 2022. U.S. foreign direct investment in ECOWAS in stock was $6.8b the same year (a 16.5% decrease from 2021), while ECOWAS's foreign direct investment in the United States (in stock) was $0.8b in 2022 unchanged from 2021.

One of the primary factors contributing to the limited trade value among ECOWAS member states stems from the predominant presence of agricultural commodities in the countries as their main source of revenue, such as cocoa, timber, beans, coffee, grains, yams, and groundnuts, as well as natural resources like oil and gold – thus the countries produce similar product. Another notable explanation for the minimal trade volume between these states, as highlighted by Ikechi, Chinedun, and Nwokoro (2022), is the inadequate state of infrastructure within the region. Insufficient road networks plague the region, with only Cape Verde and Nigeria exhibiting a somewhat higher proportion of paved roads compared to unpaved ones. A similar disparity can be observed in terms of railway infrastructure, with Nigeria and Guinea boasting relatively superior railway networks when compared to other member states (Banik & Yoonus, 2009). Generally, the percentage of railway line coverage in the area is not more than 0.5% for most of the member states is very low compared to some emerging economies in Asia which stands at double figures. Ikechi, Chinedun, and Nwokoro (2022) observed that social and political conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Niger, and Guinea Bissau were the major factors that hindered the national governments from diverting sufficient funds for development both social and physical infrastructures.

Regional Monetary Integration: Empirical and Theoretical Illumination

Several research studies have been carried out regarding the proposed single currency (ECO) by the member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These studies encompass a variety of perspectives: Ogunkola (2005) conducted an analysis to evaluate the feasibility of a unified monetary zone within ECOWAS; Onwioduokit (2011) delved into the topic of 'Monetary Integration: The West African Experience,' scrutinizing the steps taken thus far towards realizing the establishment of the ECO; Akinboyo (2011) explored the subject in a study titled 'ECOWAS Single Currency by Year 2020: The Need for Timely and Reliable Data to Enhance the Achievement of the Convergence Criteria,' focusing on the necessary criteria and other ECOWAS integration initiatives like statistical harmonization, the ECOMAC database, payment system development, and the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) that are poised to facilitate and expedite the creation of the ECO; an analysis of the costs and benefits of monetary integration in West Africa was carried out by Olorunrinu (2020), aiming to explore the advantages of monetary union derived from gains in macroeconomic efficiency, heightened competition, reduced transaction costs, enhanced policy credibility, and decreased uncertainty and risk. Prasad and Songwe (2021) delved into whether the ECOWAS member states require a unified currency. Mati, Civcir, and Ozdeser (2018) scrutinized the level of readiness among ECOWAS member states in pursuing their objective of establishing the ECO. Nzubechi, Oyinmiebi, and John (2022) endeavoured to assess the feasibility and

capacity of ECOWAS member states in implementing a single currency, alongside various other scholarly investigations in the field. Nonetheless, the researcher noted a lack of studies examining the potential benefits to be gained by the member states, particularly Nigeria, which boasts the highest population among the members. Thus, to achieve this, the study adopts the regional integration theory to serve as its theoretical framework.

The Regional Integration Theory (RIT) seeks to offer a rationale for the formation and advancement of Regional International Organizations (RIOs). It involves the cooperation and intimate collaboration between two or more nation-states to achieve peace, stability, and prosperity (Schimmelfennig & Eth, 2018). The genesis of this idea can be traced back to Viner's research in 1950, where he posited that the influence of welfare on customs unions is uncertain. As a result, a sophisticated regionalism framework can be observed in the structure of a comprehensive economic, political, and monetary union (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2020). As Nzubechi, Oyinmiebi, and John (2022) point out, evidence suggests that the unity among trading nations is bolstered by economic integration. They argue that monetary integration is a component of economic integration, and it is anticipated to facilitate transactions and contribute to the enhancement of benefits derived from trade. However, the task of achieving effective and efficient economic integration poses a significant challenge for nations, often bordering on the unattainable due to differences in financial liberalization, economic structure, and trading systems. As indicated by Olorunrinu (2020), monetary integration involves the consolidation of participating countries in an economic alliance, involving the adoption of a shared currency, the alignment of fiscal and monetary policies, and the synchronization of exchange rate strategies. This particular process is commonly observed during the concluding phases of the five-stage progression of economic integration. Olorunrinu further highlights that monetary integration specifically incorporates two fundamental elements: firstly, an exchange rate union where exchange rates uphold a permanently fixed correlation with each other, although subject to fluctuations relating to non-union currencies; and secondly, convertibility, which signifies the enduring absence of all types of exchange control, encompassing capital and current transactions, within the specified region.

According to Nzubechi, Oyinmiebi, and John (2022), this theory postulates that using a common currency is optimally probable if the states experience similar symmetric shocks and business cycles or have the means to incorporate similar asymmetric shocks. According to Bods (2001), regionalization and integration are associated with globalization. This is so because the microeconomic forces that drive globalization are motivated by regionalization, which is a response to globalization. According to Fischtschenko (2012), the African Economic Commission found that the less developed nations benefited from starting the process of regional integration, particularly in terms of achieving a unilateral trade liberation. Furthermore, the states must continue to dedicate themselves to implementing deep integration, which is summed up as eliminating national borders and disparities in product standards. In a monetary integration system, the member states may decide which currencies will be used as the reference for accounting purposes (Corden, 1972). This indicates that all of the union's partners have decided to maintain a fixed exchange rate for this reference currency. Every state manages its own monetary and fiscal policies and maintains its foreign exchange reserves.

ECOWAS Single Currency Programme

On February 24 and 26, 2014, a regional validation meeting held in Lagos, Nigeria, to discuss the final report on the harmonization of public finance accounting and statistical agendas. This report is a component of the roadmap activities that the ECOWAS Commission has been tasked with executing. Numerous experts from the pertinent Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) of the Member States were present at that meeting,

along with a resource person to oversee and manage the proceedings and approve the study reports per the suggestions and observations made during the meeting (ECOWAS, 2014). The Inter-Institutional Technical Sub-Committee on the Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency met in Dakar on June 25–26, 2014, as part of the ECOWAS Commission's efforts to implement the recommendations made by the ECOWAS Authority during their summit, which took place in Yamoussoukro on March 28–29, 2014. The updating of the state of execution of the roadmap activities assigned to the relevant institutions in the region was the topic of discussion during the meeting. The meeting's conclusions and recommendations focused on improving the roadmap's macroeconomic convergence structure and criteria, streamlining the roles of important regional institutions, and implementing the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Program (ECOWAS, 2016).

The West African countries had believed for several decades that the best approach to promote economic development and cross-border trade would be to establish and use a single or common currency among themselves. In 2003, the idea of an ECOWAS common currency was first floated. Nevertheless, because of the numerous obstacles the ECOWAS faced in launching the ECO, its implementation has been repeatedly postponed despite its lengthy inception. The fact that many of the Community's members are struggling to pay off their national debt due to economic pressure and political unrest, especially in nations like Mali, is one of the challenges they face (Bahgat, 2021). Eight (8) of the fifteen (15) ECOWAS Member States currently use the euro-pegged CFA franc, which is backed by France. As a result, Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara announced in 2019 that the CFA franc would be renamed to Eco. The fifteen Member Countries declared 2027 as the new date for the introduction of their new single currency, the "Eco," (Bahgat, 2021).

The program's activities were carried out in a way that made it easier to evaluate and track the advancements made toward the ECOWAS single currency's actualization. Organizing the ECOWAS-WAMA Joint Task Force's semi-annual meetings on the successful implementation of the ECOWAS Trade and Trade-related Protocols was one of the activities conducted during that time (Banik & Yoonus, 2009). The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between West Africa and the European Union (EU), regional trade policy, and the successful implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Programme (ETLS), a Common External Tariff (CET), were among the topics discussed at the meeting that took place in Abuja from February 16–19, 2016. The Presidential Task Force on the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programs met for the fourth time. The assessment of the implementation of the Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency Program was one of the topics that were anticipated to be covered during the meeting. Finally, The ECOWAS and UEMOA Commission's institutional convergence and coordination. Reviewing the status of their major regional integration programs and making suggestions for improvements for 2017 was the purpose of the meeting (ECOWAS, 2016).

By adopting a common currency, ECOWAS members would be transferring their national political power to ECOWAS institutions in the event of a monetary union. Therefore, the primary questions that must be addressed are: can a nation like Nigeria ever give up the naira, its national currency, for Eco?; and are the Community Member States willing to forgo their national interests in favour of regional ones? According to research by Ordu (2019), if ECOWAS adopted a single currency, Nigeria and some few other members would gain the most while others would suffer net losses. Furthermore, due in large part to its immense economic and political significance, Nigeria's naira is often considered the potential anchor currency for ECOWAS. The Central Bank of Nigeria will have to cede control of the naira to a supranational West African monetary authority (Ordu, 2019). According to him, significant work must be done to close the current divide and remove obstacles to cross-border trade before the ECOWAS Member Countries can fulfil their goal of having a single currency. This is evident as Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Botswana,

for instance, are ranked 162, 156, 182 and 55; and their exports compliance takes 239, 108, 135.4, and 5 hours respectively (Ordu, 2019).

Tabel I: ECOWAS Members Trade Data

Country	Imports within Bloc ($)	Percent of Total Imports from Trade Bloc Member	Exports within Bloc ($)	Percent of Total Exports from Trade Bloc
Benin	501,555,419	11.81	120,549,385	7.72
Burkina Faso	910,053,409	14.77	364,553,869	8.33
Cabo Verde	7,015,653	0.81	3.8,398	0.49
Cote d'Ivoire	1,793,763,419	12.13	2,179,176,511	12.06
Gambia,	91,097,626	12.82	17,566,476	56.28
Ghana	443,498,046	2.64	940,913,643	3.71
Guinea	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Guinea Bissau	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Liberia	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Mali	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Niger	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Nigeria	602,710,965	0.78	6,258,515,067	8.32
Senegal	645,837,204	5.91	1,580,573,906	31.57
Sierra Leone	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Togo	170,271,898	5.96	605,641,118	52.43

Source: Globaledge (2019)

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agreed to adopt the ECO as a single currency for its members, but this agreement was never implemented. After all, the Community's French-speaking members had violated the ECO's currency scheme by replacing their currency with the ECO (Talabi, 2020). Talabi went on to say that the main financial issues facing West African nations that would prevent them from forming the ECO are;

i. **Constraints of the International Monetary System**
West African nations, like the majority of other less developed nations, are susceptible to monetary shocks brought on by the implementation of global policy. Therefore, it is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic altered global economic conditions, which were mirrored in the International Monetary Systems. The developed countries' decisions consistently result in either an appreciation or depreciation of the currencies of African nations, particularly those in the West African region (Talabi, 2020).

ii. **Lack of independence of the Central Banks**
The efficacy and legitimacy of monetary policy, as well as its influence on the economy, are often impacted by the reduction in the authority or independence of the central banks of the member states. The following scores are obtained from the Central Bank index calculation for West African countries: Nigeria: 044, Ghana: 0.50, Guinea: 0.63, compared to the African average of 0.47 (Talabi, 2020).

iii. **Weak Financial Management Capacity**
Numerous flaws in the way each nation's financial markets are set up and their objectives are defined have been found. Trans-border bans in the sub-region have presented a serious challenge for West African Monetary authorities, who are tasked

with maintaining financial stability. Even though several authorities in the sub-region have signed Memoranda of Understanding, not enough of them have been implemented (Talabi, 2020).

Nigeria and the Benefits Derivable from ECO

A monetary union for its fifteen (15) members—former colonies of France, Portugal, and Britain—was the primary goal of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which was established in 1975. Ekpo (2018) conducted a study on economic integration in West Africa, finding that despite the bloc's 43 years of existence, the process of economic integration in the West African sub-region has not been easy, with only minor advancements and significant obstacles to overcome (Ekpo, 2018). It is apparent, nevertheless, that there are certain advantages to a monetary union, such as a sizable market and a regional bloc for international negotiations. According to Bahgat (2021), the presidents of the ECOWAS member states believed that the introduction of the new currency would facilitate intra-regional trade, relieve traders and businesspeople of the burden of exchanging currencies, and bring prosperity to the region. Nevertheless, this would imply that the fifteen state governments would cede to the Community (ECOWAS) their respective national political authority. The implementation of the proposed single currency would be extremely beneficial to all member states, especially Nigeria, which has the largest population in the region, despite all the obstacles that come with the establishment of the single currency, or "Eco," which includes the fact that the Francophone economies were already integrated with a single currency, the CFA, a single central bank, and numerous approved protocols, while the economies of other countries, like Nigeria, The Gambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, are independent with their separate currencies and respective central banks.

According to Ekekwe (2009), currency integration among ECOWAS members could help the Organization's members negotiate favourable trade conditions with the US and the EU on a bilateral basis or globally within the framework of the World Trade Organization. In his view, currency convergence will make it easier for the producers, consumers, and traders of the member states to effectively compete for foreign trade and inward investment in an increasingly globalizing world that favours larger trading blocs as they will no longer have to have their currencies changed before any transaction can take place. Nigeria will therefore stand to benefit the most from these developments at the expense of the other member states because it has the largest population among others. According to Masson and Pattillo (2004), member states of ECOWAS could gain from resource pooling, economies of scale, and improved market access negotiated under better terms if there was a unified currency. Additionally, fostering competition can raise regional productivity and help diversify exports and production.

Talabi (2020) explained that one advantage that Nigeria stands to gain from the establishment of a single currency in the region is the removal of exchange rate uncertainty. Exchange rate uncertainty reduces business confidence in investing, according to Talabi, who also claimed that volatile swings in the exchange rate can wipe out the profitability of exports. In this instance, an increase in trade and foreign direct investment is probably in store, which would lessen capital flight from Nigeria to other nations in the absence of multiple currencies and exchange rate fluctuations. Because of this, the adoption of a single currency would increase business confidence in Nigeria, which in turn promotes economic expansion and increased trade. Apart from the fact that nations must trade in their currencies because doing so lowers uncertainty regarding export receipts for effective result, Kazimoto (2014) went on to say that the establishment of an ECO would have numerous benefits and advantages, including decreased exchange rates and fluctuation risk as well as closer cooperation for stable economies and currencies. This will contribute significantly to lowering Nigeria's high rate of inflation at the moment.

According to Talibi (2020), the ECOWAS Member States' adoption of a single currency will enable the participating nations to benefit from economies of scale as a result of the anticipated increase in trade in goods and services. Increased trade between Member States can also lead to a high growth rate and higher per capita income, which in turn reduces transaction costs, which include exchange rate losses from currency fluctuations. The International Monetary Fund (2011) claims that while the requirement to exchange currencies in cross-border transactions meant additional costs, risks, and a lack of transparency, the single currency offers new strengths and opportunities.

Whenever the ECOWAS member states succeed in adopting a single currency policy, Olorunrinu (2020) noted that no government of the constituting party will have control or power over its monetary policy, protecting policy formation from the influence of national politics. The monetary authority's independence will contribute to the resolution of the inflation issue and guarantee price stability among the participants. This is because stringent rules would be implemented to prevent National Central Banks from funding large government budget deficits, providing a means of preserving macroeconomic stability. Therefore, the adoption of a single currency will benefit Nigeria greatly in that it will slow the rate of inflation brought on by economic instability. This claim is supported by Kazimoto (2014), who noted that corruption, a lack of rule of law, low investment, bad infrastructure, and unsustainable fiscal policies plague West African countries, including Nigeria. All of these issues are somehow related to the inflation issue. According to him, the introduction of the single currency, Eco, will therefore highlight the inability to address these more basic issues.

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the paper, the most potent economic tool available for promoting development and mitigating the detrimental effects of globalization on nations—particularly Nigeria, which has the largest population—is the adoption of a single currency by the Ecowas member states. Regarding contiguous states, this perspective is in line with that of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs); however, it differs from their experience in terms of how they benefit from global trade. In the case of ECOWAS, the effective execution of Eco is thought to have been a suitable policy to bring about increased inflows of capital, new technologies, and foreign investment that will aid in transforming the sub-region economy. Given the foregoing advantages derivable from the establishment of a single currency among the ECOWAS member states, the following recommendations were made;

i. The Nigerian Naira, which is the second most valuable currency in the region only to the CFA, which is governed by the French government, should see an increase in value through actions that reduce the current high level of importation, particularly the importation of goods that are capable of being produced locally. The first steps in this should be increasing the nation's production of food crops and refining petroleum products.
ii. Noting that the eight Francophone ECOWAS nations have very little control over the currency and should consider giving up on using the CFA (Community Financiere Africaine).
iii. It is necessary to address the issues of mistrust and suspicion among ECOWAS member states. To alleviate the fear of dominance in the region, all member states must be viewed and treated equally. Member nations must be perceived as having equal voting rights in all union-related matters.
iv. Through campaigns and public education, the ECOWAS member states must be encouraged to engage in intraregional trade. As a result, it is necessary to establish a

Regional Board to support and stimulate intraregional trade by giving producers in the area financial incentives

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LEVERAGING THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN CONFLICT FOR AFRICA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMAT

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ABSTRACT
While the world was recovering from the socio-economic consequences of the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic, it was confronted by the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Incidentally, the conflict is not just an ordinary regional conflict, but a conflict with severe global implications because of the threat it poses to the global food and energy supply. The United Nations Global Crisis Response Group (UNGCRG) 2022 report identifies Africa as one of the regions that will be severely affected because of their heavy reliance on food imports like wheat, maize, and sunflower; agrochemicals like fertilizers including gas. Incidentally, many African countries are already experiencing price shocks and disruptions in the supply chain of food commodities, petroleum and gas resources from Europe. This therefore implies a danger ahead if drastic measures are not taken to avert the situation. Dwelling largely on secondary sources of data and the use of content analysis, the study found that the Russian-Ukrainian conflict poses great danger to world economy with African being the worst hit. With the use of SWOT analysis, the paper draws an evaluation of the African economy with a view to leverage the potential of the region to covert the misfortune into an economic fortune for the continent. These include the abundant arable land and human resources, the huge gas reserve, and the already existing policy structures amongst others, which can make the continent a major big player in the global economy. The study therefore recommended amongst others, investment in farming across the African farming communities, investment in fertilizer production and de-emphasizing reliance on importation of food commodities and energy products.

Keywords: Conflict, Food Security, SWOT Analysis, War, COVID-19 Pandemic, Price Shocks, Energy Crisis

Introduction
In the early months of 2022, while the globe struggled to recover from the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was confronted with a serious conflict of international dimension between Russia and its former ally, Ukraine. The conflict though may be regional in outlook has serious global implications because of the significant roles Russia and Ukraine play in the international economic system. For instance, Russiais the world's largest exporter of fertilizers, valued at approximately USD 18.7 billion followed by Canada (USD14.5B), China (USD12.7B), United States of America (USD8.17B), and Morocco (USD7.92B) (UNCTAD, 2022; OEC, 2022). It is also reported to be the largest wheat exporter in the world with almost 20 per cent of global trade and the world's third-largest producer of oil behind the United States of America and Saudi Arabia, the second natural gas producer, and also among the top five producers of steel, nickel and aluminium (World Bank Report, 2022; Co-Face Country Assessment Report, 2022). Likewise, Ukraine is ranked as the 1st largest producer of sunflowers, the 6th largest producer of corn, and the 7th largest producer of wheat. Ukraine also ranks among the top ten producers of sugar beet, barley, soya, and rapeseed in the world (Co-face Country Assessment Report, 2022). As a

result, the conflict would automatically have a knock-on effect on the global and financial markets with the worst hit being countries that directly rely on them for their food, agricultural chemicals for food production and energy imports for survival.

The United Nations Global Crisis Response Group (UNGCRG), a special response group established by the United Nations in March 2022 to respond to the war in Ukraine in the areas of food, energy and finance observed that many countries of the world including countries of Europe would be affected by the war. However, it specifically identified African countries such as North African countries and sub-Saharan African countries as the regions that would be the worst hit by the effects of the war. According to the report, North Africa has over 50 per cent reliance on Russia and Ukraine for their food commodities imports and fertilizers while the sub-Saharan African countries ravaged by the impact of climate change and violent conflicts with the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) in the Global Human Development Index (GHDI) needs food imports from these countries to support the rising food insecurity bedevilling the region. These regions therefore are among the areas that would experience the three-dimensional effects of the crisis, which are hunger and poverty, energy crisis and inflation (UNGCRG, 2022).

In response to the UN Global Crisis Response, other international and regional economic monitors in Africa such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Union Commission (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) reiterated the likely implications of the conflict to the socioeconomic well-being of the African continent and called for the intervention of the African Union in concert with the regional economic groupings to come up with a strategic economic plan that will bring about economically resilient and inclusive food systems to mitigate the impending danger in Africa. It is in this light that the paper interrogates the implications of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict alongside the continent's potential with a view towards leveraging the conflict for the socioeconomic transformation of the region.

The paper, therefore, explores the analytical prowess of Strength Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the conflict and how Africa can utilize its potential to leverage the opportunities to build a strong and resilient economy that would ensure socioeconomic progress. The paper is divided into five rubrics; the first is the introductory remark followed by an overview of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on the global economy. The third is the assessment of the impacts of the conflict on Africa using SWOT analysis, while the fourth draws out the strategies for building a strong and resilient economy in Africa for socio-economic progress, and finally the conclusion of the paper which is the fifth.

Methodology

The study relied largely on the use of documented evidences from secondary sources such as extant literature and studies, newspapers, magazines, social media news outlets as well as reports from global economic and financial monitors such as African Development Bank (ADB), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the World Bank, and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organizations (UN-FAO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and many others. It also involves the use of trend analysis from international and national conflict monitor. These were analysed using content analysis technique. The need for this methodology is borne out of the desire to provide a comprehensive understanding of the conflict especially as it is still ongoing with severe implications on the global economic system.

Overview of Russian-Ukrainian Conflict on the Global Economy

The evolution of the Russian-Ukrainian war could be traced to the 2014 Russian federation's annexation of Crimea in Ukraine, as a result of the war in Donbas between a Russian-backed separatist group and Ukraine in its territory. Therefore, the war that erupted between Russia and its former ally, Ukraine on the 24 of February 2022 is a continuation of a prolonged altercation between the two countries (Grunau et al 2022). The war started on the call of the Russian President Vladimir Putin for the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation military in what was termed "a special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine" (Granau et al 2022; Waximan, 2022). The call was followed shortly by the launching of missile attacks and airstrikes across Ukraine, including Kyiv, the state capital. Shortly after the bombings, a large grand invasion was deployed along multiple fronts to seize the entire country (Cable Network News (CNN), 2022; Kirby, 2022).

In response to the invasion, the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for a martial law and a general mobilization of all male Ukrainian citizens between the ages of 18 and 60 years for the war. He further banned all Ukrainian male in the country from leaving (Reuters, 2022). Subsequently, the war which started as a military offensive by the Russian Military Forces escalated into a full-fledged war with heavy fatalities and humanitarian consequences for Ukraine. The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) as of 23 March 2022 (a month in to the war) observed that more than 3.6 million people had been forced to abandon their homes and flee across neighbouring border communities for safety while millions more are internally displaced (FAO, 2022). This implies that majority of the population of Ukraine has been displaced and livelihood disrupted with a knock-on effect on agricultural production and food security. Incidentally, the war started in an agricultural growing season in Ukraine, which makes it more severe for both the Ukrainian economy and the global economy at large.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) food Price Index 2022 indicated a historical record high, up 12.6 per cent from February, 33.6 per cent from its level a year earlier, and 15.8 per cent higher than the peak reached in February 2011 (FAO, 2022). Though the price increase may not be solely attributed to the conflict, due to other forces like the market conditions that resulted from high energy prices before the conflict, it however exacerbated it (FAO, 2022). For instance, Russia and Ukraine are major players in the global food commodities trade and agrochemical products. They account for about 78 per cent of the total global food supply with nearly 50 countries depending on these countries for at least 30 per cent of their wheat import needs. Out of these countries, 26 among them source over 50 per cent of their staple food from wheat (FAO-Food Commodity Index, 2022). Therefore, any disruptions in the production of these commodities and products, particularly in the magnitude of the ongoing war between the two countries will have a direct effect on the global market. Besides, Russia is also a key exporter of fertilizers and other agrochemical products used in growing agricultural produce (FAO, 2022), which makes it a critical player in the global economic system.

Similarly, the global financial market is not spared in this conflict effects. It has been thrown into severe turmoil with recession taking its toll on Europe as prices of gas critical for households and industry soar, due to the fears that Russia will cut off its supplies, possibly leading to energy crisis in some countries (Jones, 2022). Unfortunately, the world is still struggling with the socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic that crippled the globe throughout the year 2020 and halfway into 2021. Thus, making it extremely difficult for countries to cope with the devastating effects of the conflict. For instance, apart

from the unprecedented increase in the prices of food and agrochemical products like fertilizers, products like gas energy, metals and steel have increased tremendously, due to the significant roles these countries play in the global economic system. The Co-Face Assessment Report (2022) noted that Brent Oil prices have breached US$100 per barrel for the first time since 2014 at more than US$125/B, while the European Title Transfer Facility (TTF) gas prices (a virtual network point in the Dutch gas transport network that allows market parties to transfer gas ownership) surged to a record high of EUR 192 in March 2022. Meanwhile, the prices of food commodities like wheat, sunflower, and corn have increased tremendously including agricultural chemicals like fertilizers, due to sanctions imposed on Russia by Western European countries. This trend has continued to soar thereby significantly and pervasively affecting the financial markets around the world (Co-Face Assessment Report, 2022). Although a more recent report by the FAO in January 2024 showed a fall in global food prices compared to the pre-invasion period, receding global food prices mask an ongoing global food security crisis, which Russia continues to manipulate through its own agricultural exports (Centre for Strategic and International Studies-CSIS, 2024).

It is remarkable to note that one of the major forces that have compounded the high cost of living and global prices of food products, fertilizers and energy is the sanction imposed on Russia by the United States of America, Europe and Canada, which forbids them to grant access or passage to her through their countries to convey their products/produce. This sanction separately compounded the increasing high cost of energy, fuelling it further with higher interest rates have been squeezing households and companies with rising costs, despite efforts by the European Central Banks, the Bank of England and other Central Banks to crush inflation (UNGCRG, 2022). The overall implication is the global hunger and destitution that have befallen many countries across the world, especially the most vulnerable countries of the world with low Human Development Index (HDI), of which majority of them are in Africa.

The UNGCRG Report (2022) noted that an estimated 1.6 billion people in 94 countries are exposed to at least one dimension of the crisis, and about 1.2 billion of them live in “perfect storm” countries, which means countries that are vulnerable to the three-dimensional crisis (food, energy and finance-of-the-cost-of-living). This implies that about 2.6 billion of the over 7 billion population of the world would be affected by the conflict. Therefore, no country or community would be left untouched by the cost-of-living crisis because of the unprecedented wave of global hunger the war threatened to unleash with dire economic consequences. Incidentally, some of the countries identified by the UNGCRG as the most vulnerable that would likely be worst hit by the effects of the war include countries in the Sub-Saharan and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, South and Central Asia, and the Middle East (UNGCRG, 2022). Unequivocally, the report stated that sub-Saharan African countries remain significantly vulnerable, for one out of every two Africans in the region is exposed to the three-dimensions of the crisis. While Latin America and the Caribbean will be the second largest group to face the cost-of-living crisis after sub-Saharan Africa with at least 20 countries deeply affected. Likewise, the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia are listed as severely exposed to the energy and finance dimension due to poor remittance on imports from Russia, while South Asia is already experiencing crippling levels of heatwaves with over 500 million people severely exposed to the food and financial crises (UNGCRG, 2022). Meanwhile, in the Middle East and North Africa, extreme poverty could threaten the lives and livelihoods of 2.8 million people. This therefore represents an overall of the likely implications of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the world, if it is not quickly abated.

Other areas that are already experiencing the effects of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict are the automotive sector in Europe and the building materials sector. This is as a result of shortages and high prices of raw materials such as metals, semiconductors, cobalt, lithium, magnesium and many others that imported from Russia and Ukraine that are used in the production of car (Co-face Assessment, 2022). For instance, Ukrainian automotive factories are major suppliers of the aforementioned raw materials to car makers in Western Europe. Therefore, the ongoing war has affected the majority of car-making factories in Western Europe that rely on supplies from Ukraine. The majority of these car companies in 2022 announced the stoppage of production, while other plants around the world have planned their outages, due to supply chain of chips blockages and semiconductor shortages (Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) International, 2022). Other sectors such as building materials, airlines and maritime freight companies were bid to suffer from the higher cost of steel, nickels, and metals including higher cost of fuel prices due to the sanctions imposed on Russia (Co-Face Assessment, 2022). Incidentally, the reality is down on the globe as cost of energy and cost of living have created a new global recession and global inflation estimated at 6.9 per cent in 2023 (Statista, 2024).

Impacts of Russian-Ukrainian Conflict on Africa

Before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, African economies were grappling with the COVID-19 recovery efforts and other challenges such as climate change, armed conflict, terrorism and violent extremism that are inhibiting the continent's efforts towards economic progress. A few months into the invasion the economic situation aggravated further, due to the continent's heavy reliance on food commodities import and fertilizers from Russia and Ukraine. The implications have been the rising food insecurity and increasing cost of living and agricultural production, which is pushing Africa towards the edge of poverty, hunger, and stagflation. (USIP, 14 April 2022; UN GCRG, 2022).

The AU Development Agency and NEPAD (2022) joint report on the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war observed that some African countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia in North Africa; Nigeria in West Africa; Ethiopia and Sudan in East Africa; and South Africa in the southern African region would be severely affected by the effects of the war because of their over-reliance on the two countries for their wheat imports and fertilizers for agriculture. These countries account for 80 per cent of wheat imports in the continent with a projected volume of wheat consumption in Africa to reach 76.5 million tonnes by 2025, out of which 48.3 million tonnes or 63.4 per cent is projected to be imported from outside the continent (AUDA-NEPAD, 2022).

Statistics from the International Trade Centre (ITC) (2022) noted that African countries in 2020 alone imported US$4 billion and US$2.9 billion worth of agricultural products from Russia and Ukraine respectively. However, 90 per cent of the imports from Russia were wheat and sunflower oil, while 6 per cent were for agricultural chemicals. Similarly, out of the US$2.9 billion exports from Ukraine, about 48 per cent were wheat, 31 per cent corn, and the rest were sunflower oil, barley, and soybean (Ecofin Agency, 2022).

With the ongoing war in Ukraine, the prices of food commodities such as corn, wheat, and soya beans have surged, and about 20 million people in the Sahel and West Africa do not have access to sufficient food, thus spelling doom for the region in terms of food security (Abay et al 2022). Abay et al. (2022) noted that in Egypt, wheat is the main food item, representing about 39 per cent of the caloric intake per person. In addition, the Egyptian government imports about 50 to 60 per cent of its cereals from Russia and Ukraine despite

the government's effort to diversify imports following the global food crisis of 2008. Therefore, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has significant effect in the country. Egypt therefore needs an urgent policy option to cut down dependence on Russian and Ukrainian wheat, at least for the short term. Moreover, with the war still ongoing, the surge in the prices of wheat, the pressure on the price to go even higher, the estimated high cost of living, and the continuous reliant on Russia and Ukraine will not only impose serious pressure on the country's budget but will also pose a severe threat to food security in the country.

In the areas of housing and infrastructural development, countries such as Kenya and Sudan with heavy reliance on Russia and Ukraine for their building materials are seriously feeling the impact. This is a burden that homeowners and estate developers as well as the government are likely to share if infrastructural developmental projects are to be provided. For instance, it was reported that the price of steel in Kenya has significantly shot up over the few months of the war in Ukraine, with prices of steel bars and nails rising between 80 – 90 per cent and 13 per cent to 43 per cent respectively (African News Agency, 2022). In addition, the rising fertilizer cost as a result of the shortage in exports from Russia has further worsened the high cost of living challenge in many African countries including Kenya and Sudan. Incidentally, Russia is the highest exporter of nitrogen fertilizer and the second-highest exporter of phosphorous and potassium fertilizer globally and several African countries across the different sub-regions rely heavily on fertilizers from Russia for their agricultural products (Venditti and Parker, 2022).

Another major area of challenge in Africa is the energy price increase. African countries particularly countries in the Gulf of Guinea such as Cameroon, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea that are dependent on Russia for their petroleum and gas as well as crude oil refining will be most affected if the war becomes protracted as it will become difficult to export crude for refining as well as bringing in the refined oil and gas for use in these countries. In addition, the already-initiated oil and gas exploration contract by key Russian oil companies; Lukoil and Tatneft in the Ghadames Basin, encompassing parts of eastern Algeria, Southern Tunisia and Western Libya would suffer setbacks (Kolly, 2022). This is likely to happen because there are fears that drilling operations may be halted due to financial challenges resulting from the war. For instance, it was reported that Lukoil has already withdrawn from exploration in the giant and deep-water Fortuna's underdeveloped gas project, even as the contract remains valid (Kolly, 2022). It is expected that Libya, Congo, and Egypt will experience a similar challenge if the war persists due to the sanctions imposed on Russia. Given the impacts and the likely impacts of the war in Ukraine on Africa, it is envisaged that Africa is likely to be one of the continents that will be severely affected by the conflict in the 3-dimensional crisis of hunger, energy crisis and cost of lining financing, if drastic measures are not taken to avert the crisis and reposition the continent's developmental drive. As a matter of fact, Africa can leverage the conflict to push the continent up as major players in the international economic system, given the situation around the world and the potential in their advantage.

Leveraging the Russian-Ukraine War Using the SWOT Analysis

Here, the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat analysis is employed to critically interrogate the negativities and opportunities of the war to African states and how the Continent can also convert the threats into opportunities in its drive towards resilient, inclusive food security and economic progress. However, efforts are laid here on the strength and opportunities in the war because the weaknesses and threats to the Continent have been discussed in the above subheading.

Strength

Although there are a lot of negativities associated with the Russian-Ukrainian war in Africa because of many factors that have come to pose severe challenge to Africa's economic progress. For instance, the economic state of the continent since the COVID-19 pandemic has been struggling, there have been heavy reliance on food commodities, agricultural, steel and energy products imports from Russia and Ukraine. Others include climate change and its contradictions on human security as well as the rising terrorism, violent extremism and armed banditry ravaging the forests of Africa with huge implications for food security. However, Africa possess the raw materials and resources needed to greatly expand agricultural production. Comparatively, it has an abundance of major natural inputs such as arable land and human resources necessary for agriculture.

Abundant Arable Land: Africa has vast amounts of arable land, nutritious indigenous crops and a booming agricultural sector that can feed the entire continent and even exported outside the continent for commercial purpose (Ghaedi, 2022). Therefore, the issue of hunger and cost of living including energy scarcity should not have been a challenge if the leadership of the continent is moving on the right pedestal in terms of economic growth and development of the region. The World Economic Forum in Davos (2016) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa 2022 confirmed that over 60 per cent of the global share of uncultivated arable land to grow more food for both domestic consumption and export to the global market is located in Africa. In addition, its vast savannas are identified as the world's largest agricultural frontier, estimated at 400 million ha (African Development Bank, 2018). This is an opportunity that the continent policymakers can leverage to transform the region from a food commodity import based region to a producer and supplier of food commodities in the global trade system. On the issue of scarcity or high cost of sunflower oil ad cereals, many African countries are growers of sunflowers, wheat and maize which are in high demand due to the war between the two major exporters of these commodities. For example, South Africa is reported to be the world's tenth-largest producer of sunflower, and the largest in Africa with an estimated production of over 700,000 tons annually (Agri-Business10 Report, 2020). Other countries in Africa that are known for growing sunflower in significant volumes are Tanzania, Uganda, Egypt, Morocco, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Angola (International Trade Centre, 2022). On Wheat, about 17 countries in Africa (three in the North: Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia and 14 in Sub-Saharan Africa) grow what in commercial quantity. Statista report (2022) shows that in the 2020/2021 trading year, African countries produced about 25.7 million metric tons of wheat out of which the North African countries accounted for over 60 per cent, while Sub-Saharan Africa contributed the remaining 40 per cent with Ethiopia and South Africa as lead and the 12 other countries which include Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Zambia follow in descending order. It also projected an increase of 30.5 million metric tons in the 2021/2022 trading year (Statista, 2022).

Abundant Untapped Water and Good Climatic Conditions: Reports from the African Development Bank Group in 2019 shows that Africa has an abundance of fresh water and about 300 days of sunshine each year (African Development Bank Group, 2019). Though some large areas of the region are arid or semi-arid, on the average, water resources are enormous in the region and also greatly under-utilized. Only 2-3 per cent of renewable water resources are being used in Africa, compared to the estimated 5 per cent worldwide (World Bank, 2013). Therefore if the underutilized water resources and reserves are put to use, the continent can leverage it for more agricultural purposes to improve production for both domestic consumption and exports.

Abundant Crude and Gas Resources: It is a fact that Africa is richly endowed with natural resources with almost half of its countries known to have proven oil and natural gas reserves. Reports from Energy Capital and Power (2021) shows the continent a total of more than 800 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves spread across the continent. It observes that the British Multinational Oil and Gas Company predicted the production of natural gas in Africa to increase by 80 per cent by 2035, to contribute to the rising Gross Domestic Profit (GDP), the emergence of middle-class consumers and increased market value (Energy Capital & Power, 2021). The report further highlighted the list of countries with substantial energy deposits in Africa to include Nigeria (206.53 trillion cubic feet of natural gas located in the Gulf of Guinea), followed by Algeria (159.1 trillion cubic feet). Others include Senegal – 120 trillion cubic feet, Mozambique – 100 trillion cubic feet, Egypt – 77.2 trillion cubic feet. Tanzania – 57.54 trillion cubic feet, Libya- 53.1 trillion cubic feet, Angola – 13.5 trillion cubic feet, Congo Brazzaville – 10.1 trillion cubic feet, Equatorial Guinea – 5 trillion cubic feet, Cameroon – 4.8 trillion cubic feet, Sudan – 3 trillion cubic feet, and the MSGBC natural gas reserve estimated at over 100 trillion located at the offshore of Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau-Conakry where it derives its acronym. Meanwhile, by 2021, oil reserves in Africa stood at 125.3 billion barrels with Libya and Nigeria topping the list of the first ten with the largest oil and Gas reserves (Statista, 2022). Data from Statista (2022) shows that Libya is the richest country in oil in Africa as of 2021, accumulating 48.4 billion barrels of proved reserves followed by Nigeria with reserves of 36.9 billion barrels of crude oil. Algeria is the 3rd in line with summed reserves of up to 2.2 billion barrels (Statista, 2022). Others include Angola (7.8), Sudan (5), Egypt (3.3), Cong Brazzaville (2.9), Uganda (2.5), Gabon (2), Chad (1.5) and Equatorial Guinea (1.1) (Statista, 2022). These are potentials that Africa can leverage through collaboration with the developed countries of Europe and America to put the continent on the path economic progress in the near future, especially as the world is grappling with energy crisis because of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Abundant Human Resources: Unlike many other parts of the world, Africa is not in short supply of human resources due to its huge working population. Of the huge working population in Africa, more than 60 per cent of it is engaged in agriculture, and the soil across the continent is rich and fertile (AFDB, 2019). Thus, encouraging this working population will put a stop to the continuous loss of precious foreign exchange to food commodity imports, attracts more hands into farming and improve the agriculture value chain. When these are achieved food security will be ensured and hunger eradicated in Africa. Furthermore, in comparative terms, Africa has a vast pool of intellectuals and experts as well as genuine institutions that can convert the natural resources (arable land, good water and conditions and the huge youth population) to economic advantage in Africa.

Standard Policy structures: The continent of Africa over the past decade has developed policy structures and frameworks to prepare Africa for the future. The AUDA-NEPAD policy plan developed in 2021 to create a common African position ahead of the Food systems and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCTA) established in 2018 by the African Continental Fee Trade Agreement to create the largest free trade area in the world measured by a number of countries participating. The AFCTA alone connects 1.3 billion people across 55 countries with a combined gross domestic product valued at US$3.4 trillion and it has the potential to lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty, if its full potential will be harnessed (World Bank, 2020). These two policy structures if properly managed with the right leadership can surmount Africa's existential challenges and grab the opportunities provided by the Russian-Ukrainian war to stimulate its economy and become a major player in the global economic system.

Opportunities

While the socio-economic consequences associated with the Russian-Ukrainian war are becoming prevalent with the situation across regions highly predictably, there are also opportunities beneath the crisis, if only regions and countries with high economic potentials like Africa can leverage on the effects of the crisis to develop their potentials, to become a significant player in the global economic trade. Africa should see the current global challenges created by the war in Ukraine as an opportunity to make a significant impact on the global economy using its abundant natural and human resources potential and the strategies highlighted by its Agenda 2063 and UN Sustainable Development Goals that are already in existence.

First, with the price volatility, the sanctions on Russia by Western Europe on its territorial waters, and fears of energy crisis in the European and America, Africa with its enormous potentials in terms of energy reserves and arable land and huge human resources automatically becomes the future trade and business destination by Europe, America and China. However, how Africa utilizes this opportunity is determined by its leadership acumen, political will and policy structures to harness them. For instance, the recently proposed Trans-Saharan gas pipeline from African to Europe that stretches from Algeria, Nigeria, and Niger aimed at transmitting about 30 billion cubic meters of natural gas (per year) through the Mediterranean coast to Europe while also supplying inland stations is one of such opportunities that Africa has embraced. There is also, the MSGBC Natural Gas Reserves located at the off-shore in Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Conakry in West Africa with an estimated GTA gas field of more than 115 trillion cubic feet of natural gas (Energy Capital & Power, 2021), on which discussion is been staged between these countries foreign oil and gas companies. If properly utilized and managed, Africa stands a chance of changing its future to a positive one that will put the continent on the Map for global economic powers.

In agriculture, the Africa Common Position on Food Policy championed by The African Union Commission (AUC) and African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) in concert with member states of Africa provides a leeway way to achieve sustainable development of food and ensure food security (AUDA-NEPAD, 2022). For instance, the effective and efficient implementation of the African Common Position on Food and the adoption of the technology-driven agricultural system in lie with the policies and programmes of the AUDA-NEPAD, the continent has the potential to get to its desired destination; it has over 60 per cent global share of uncultivated arable land to grow more food for both domestic consumption and export to the global market, human population of working level, and abundant untapped water to tap into and can also boost good climate for farming. In addition, ACFTA also provides the required backup to its trading capacity by taking advantage of the world's largest free trade area.

Similarly, on agricultural chemicals like fertilizer which have become scarce and the prices highly increased as a result of the sanction by EU countries on Russia, the African business community can emulate what the Dangote Group (an indigenous Investment Group) is doing in Nigeria by leveraging the shortfall in Russian fertilizer exports by opening a USD 2.5 billion fertilizer plant in Nigerian's main economic hub, Lagos. The intent is to sell fertilizer to the continent as well as to the United States, Brazil and India (USIP, 2022). If they can boast of four such plants in about four different sub-regions in Africa the issue of fertilizer to drive agricultural growth would become a thing of the past while generating international revenue and creating jobs to stimulate economic progress for the continent.

Conclusion

Obviously, the Russian-Ukrainian war with its associated global socio-economic consequences has presented a lot of negativities to the struggling economies of Africa especially as it struggles with the COVID-19 recovery efforts, due to the heavy reliance on imported agricultural materials from both countries as well as the high demand for food commodities such as sunflower and wheat since the past decades. However, these are not all negatives as there as also opportunities laced with the war for Africa to transform its socio-economic challenges and play a significant role in the global economic system. The strength to achieve these feet is in the continent's abundant arable land, abundant untapped water and good climate factors, abundant crude oil and natural gas reserves, a working population, and standard policy frameworks and institutions to galvanize the efforts to create opportunities for socio-economic transformation in the region.

Recommendations

The paper, therefore, proffers the following suggestions as strategies for optimizing the opportunities.

1. Focused and Committed Leadership: To actualize the plan of leveraging the Russian-Ukraine conflict for Africa's economic growth and development, the leadership in Africa at the state, regional and continental level must be focused and committed towards Africa's growth and development. This is the first step towards achieving economic progress in the continent. Apart from its ability to muster the needed courage and political will to harness Africa's potentials for economic progress, it will ensure good governance, propel effective implementation of agreements and programmes that would propel economic transformation, reduce corruption and put the continent on the path of economic progress.
2. Investment in farming across the African farming communities: There should be a concerted effort towards farming across farming communities across Africa with a focus on sunflowers and wheat which are in high demand across the world. More so the 60 per cent uncultivated arable land should be utilized using advantage technology agriculture.
3. Investment in fertilizer: There should be an emphasis on fertilizer manufacturing plants in Africa to aid farming because of the scarcity of fertilizer, due to the Russia-Ukraine war. Such investments like the investment by the Dangote Group in the establishment of a fertilizer plant in Nigeria should be encouraged by the region to replicate it in the various economic zones in the Continent. This will reduce the reliance on fertilizer import, create jobs and enhance food security in the continent.
4. Partnership with foreign and indigenous industries: More emphasis should be on strengthening partnerships with foreign oil and gas firms as well as indigenous companies with the required expertise and fund to develop natural gas and establish refineries in Africa. Such partnership will attract more investments in the energy sector value chain, create jobs and generate more revenue for the continent.
5. De-emphasizing reliance on the importation of food commodities and energy products: The importation of food commodities like cereals that can be produced across the continent should be discouraged to strengthen local production. The same should be accorded to the energy sector, so as to be committed to the development of the sector by member states of the continent.

6. Revival of the continental and state policies on food commodity production: The AU Commission for Agriculture and African Union Development Agency-NEDPAD should start the implementation of the new policies on food security in Africa. It should also ensure that the regional economic blocs and state governments have a buy-in on the policies, so as to ensure reach and across the continent for improving production for both domestic consumption and commercial production for revenue.
7. Investment in human capital development: If Africa will adopt the above-mentioned strategies, the huge human capital transformed into a quality working population, it will significantly make an impact on the global economy.

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ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE 2023 NAIRA REDESIGN AND CASHLESS POLICY IN COMBATING KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Kidnapping is a severe security issue in Nigeria, affecting its economy and social stability. In response, Nigeria has adopted non-kinetic approaches, such as the Naira redesign and cashless policy, implemented by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), to reduce kidnapping and related financial crimes. This study explores the effectiveness of these policies in curbing ransom-driven kidnappings by limiting cash circulation and disrupting criminal cash flows. The Naira redesign targets counterfeiting and hoarding, while the cashless policy promotes digital transactions to improve financial traceability, helping track ransom payments. Despite their potential, challenges such as slow adoption of digital banking, limited financial inclusion in rural areas, and vulnerabilities to cybercrime hinder their success. Furthermore, issues like corruption and inconsistent enforcement of policies impede their effectiveness. Using qualitative content analysis of secondary data from peer-reviewed journals, books, and credible online sources, this study evaluates the impact of these policies on kidnapping trends. The findings show that while these strategies have potential, they require stronger enforcement, improved digital infrastructure, and greater public awareness to be more effective. The study recommends enhancing digital literacy, tackling corruption, and investing in financial technology to strengthen these non-kinetic strategies in the fight against kidnapping in Nigeria.

Key words: Naira Redesign, Cashless Policy, Kidnapping

Introduction:

Countries in the world create physical currencies in order to provide a standardized medium of exchange, simplifying trade by eliminating the inefficiencies of barter systems. Physical currency establishes a stable framework for economic activities, monetary policy, and wealth storage. In the contemporary time, some countries (most especially the advanced ones) have partially or completely transitioned toward cashless systems due to evolving economic, technological, and security needs. Currency reform is a pivotal tool for strengthening macroeconomic frameworks, directly impacting a nation's monetary policy control, inflation rates, and financial security. In Nigeria, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has played a key role in currency management and safeguarding the stability of the Naira. Over time, the Nigerian currency has undergone multiple redesigns, each initiative aimed at improving the economy's functionality and tackling rising security challenges, including financial crimes and inflation (Naseem, 2012). In recent years, the CBN has focused on the significant volume of currency circulating outside the formal banking system. According to the CBN, approximately 85% of Nigeria's total currency, valued at N2.73 trillion out of N3.23 trillion, was outside bank vaults as of 2022, raising concerns over inflation, currency hoarding, and

crime facilitation (CBN, 2022; Yinnusa, 2022). This situation illustrates Nigeria's continued struggle with illicit financial practices, which undermine both economic stability and security.

In response to these challenges, the CBN introduced a currency redesign initiative in 2022, accompanied by a stringent cashless policy to limit high-cash transactions. The Naira redesign focused on high-denomination notes like the N500 and N1000, making counterfeiting more difficult while encouraging a shift toward digital transactions. The cashless policy, on the other hand, seeks to limit the accessibility of large cash sums, placing restrictions on over-the-counter cash withdrawals to curb potential misuse of currency in illicit activities, including kidnapping (Emefiele, 2023). These policies are part of Nigeria's broader strategy to reduce its reliance on physical cash, which has been criticized for aiding criminal enterprises by leaving untraceable cash flows in circulation (Victor, 2022).

Experts in economics and security have noted that while the currency redesign is relatively unusual, it reflects a critical need to align with global standards and manage cash flow effectively (Akin, 2023). While the policy of currency redesign and cashless policy were not directly meant to address kidnapping in Nigeria, available data indicated that kidnapping was reduced during the time of the policy implementation. According to a report by the Nigerian Police Force, there was a noticeable reduction in kidnapping activities in states like Lagos and Ogun between 2022 and 2023, coinciding with the implementation of the cashless policy. In Lagos alone, kidnapping cases dropped by 15% within the first six months of the policy's full implementation. Similarly, Ogun State saw a 12% decrease in kidnapping-related incidents during the same period (Nigeria Police Report, 2023). These statistics demonstrate that while the policy is not a complete solution, it has had a tangible impact on reducing kidnapping, especially when combined with other security measures.

Kidnapping, an increasingly prevalent crime in Nigeria, has placed a significant burden on the country's security and economic sectors. Banditry, rural attacks, and highway abductions for ransom have continued unabated, exploiting the ready availability of cash. This cash availability enables the financing of ransom payments without trace, fostering an environment where criminals can operate with relative impunity (Victor, 2022). By imposing limits on cash transactions, the cashless policy seeks to curb these illicit activities by reducing kidnappers' access to liquid funds and encouraging financial traceability. Currency reform advocates argue that such monetary policies are critical for Nigeria's national security, as they force criminal networks to rely on traceable digital funds, thus limiting their operational anonymity (Shelleng, 2023; Ekechukwu, 2023). SMB Intelligence's 2024 report reveals critical insights into the kidnapping crisis in Nigeria. Between July 2023 and June 2024, over 7,568 individuals were abducted in 1,130 incidents nationwide, with ransom demands amounting to N11 billion. However, only about N1.048 billion was paid. Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina states were the most affected, with Zamfara leading in both incidents and victims.

However, the implementation of the currency redesign and cashless policies has sparked intense debate. Critics argue that these reforms could have a limited impact on security if Nigeria's digital infrastructure cannot accommodate the population's transition to cashless transactions (Fasau, 2024). Furthermore, cyber-security vulnerabilities, such as networks, or software that attackers can exploit to gain unauthorized access, disrupt services, or steal sensitive information, pose a potential risk to the effectiveness of the policy, as digital transactions become more common. While the cashless policy may reduce crime through better financial tracking, skeptics highlight challenges related to Nigeria's relatively low rate of financial inclusion and the slow adoption of digital banking, especially in rural areas where kidnapping is rampant (Fasua, 2024; International Monetary Fund, 2022). In contrast, supporters emphasize that these non-kinetic approaches have significant long-term benefits. By reducing cash in circulation, these policies potentially limit the financial resources

accessible to criminal groups, fostering a safer economic environment conducive to investment and growth (Magaji et al., 2024).

Beyond the immediate security benefits, these policies aim to improve Nigeria's macroeconomic stability. The shift from a heavily cash-reliant economy to a more digitally integrated financial system enables better monitoring of currency flows, reduces opportunities for corruption, and aligns with global economic standards (CBN, 2022). This change is critical given the increasing trend toward dollarization in many emerging economies. Countries that depend heavily on foreign currencies, like the U.S. dollar, often sacrifice some level of economic independence and stability, simply because the Dollar will be the one to dominance over their national currency. By enforcing currency reforms that strengthen the Naira, Nigeria can avoid some of the stability costs associated with dollarization, allowing it to better control inflation, monetary policy, and economic growth (Okolie, 2021).

Despite these ambitions, challenges remain. The impact of currency redesign on crime reduction, particularly kidnapping, requires a strong foundation of digital infrastructure, financial literacy, and regulatory oversight. The Nigerian government must also address issues of public trust and encourage financial inclusion across diverse economic strata. Thus, while the CBN's initiatives mark a promising shift toward a more secure and resilient financial system, their success hinges on the effective implementation and widespread acceptance of digital transactions. By examining these facets, this study explores the potential of non-kinetic approaches, specifically currency reforms, in curbing kidnapping and fostering economic resilience in Nigeria. The paper examines the Naira redesign and cashless policy as non-kinetic approaches to addressing the pervasive issue of kidnapping. By analyzing the economic and security implications of these reforms, this study evaluates the policies' effectiveness in curbing crime while promoting financial stability.

Conceptual Clarifications

For better appreciation of the issues raised in this paper, it is imperative that the following concepts are initially clarified:

The Concept of Naira Redesign

The Naira note according to Osadebe (2022) was redesigned to address the issue of individuals who have made currency fraud their main source of income, hidden money they have stolen, for instance, would either find a way to change it by taking the money out or would not need it given the change in the value of the Naira. In Nigeria, there has been an increase in economic hardship for greater percentage of the Nigerian citizens.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on the 17th of November 2022 said that 133 million (63%) Nigerians are suffering from high level of poverty, with children constituting more than half of poor people in the country (Komolafe et al., 2022). They argued that two (2) out of every three (3) Nigerians are very poor and experiences just over one-quarter of all possible deprivations in terms of education, health, living standards, work and shocks (Komolafe et al., 2022). This poverty level is heightened by politicians and other government officials hording the Naira notes, storing them away in GP tanks, ware houses, buried in hidden bunkers and etcetera so that the stacked away cash cannot be traced to their account for money laundry and other criminal charges since it is not in a bank account that can be traced. At November 4th 2022, Sahara Reporters reported that the operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have uncovered billions of Naira in cash stashed in various houses of some serving governors in Port Harcourt, Abuja and Kano (Sahara Reporters, 2022).

These tides of looting and stashing away money if not stemmed will sink Nigeria the more down the drain. Nigeria has been listed as the world poverty capital according to World

Bank data (Alikor, 2022). And the greedy government officials are still struggling to impoverish the states the more. To stop the hording of Naira notes, the CBN governor in collaboration with the federal government has planned to redesign the Naira currency notes in circulation in order to encourage the injection of fund back into the banking system. President Buhari on Wednesday evening in London, UK, after having a meeting with King Charles III at Buckingham palace, said that the commencement of the Naira redesign will surely go on and will take care of the hoarding of banknotes by members of the public with over 80% of currency in circulation outside the vaults of commercial banks (Busari, 2022).

The Central Bank governor Godwin Emefiele in Abuja told journalist that the Naira redesign was informed by mostly concern over the significant hording of bank notes by some members of the public, and statistics has shown that over 80% of the currency in circulation were outside the commercial bank vaults, which has fueled illicit financial flow within the economy (Edeh, 2022). Itsibor (2022) argued that this monetary policy of redesigning the Naira note is also aimed at encouraging INEC in monitoring the funding of campaigns and restricting the incidence of vote buying which has become a menace to Nigeria's electoral system. But most financial analysts see the redesign as a distraction and a move that will plunge Nigeria even into more challenges. The two main aim of the naira redesign was to curb counterfeiting and hording of the Naira notes, and these will be explained below.

The Concept of Cashless Policy

Cashless policy is a macroeconomic policy targeted at reducing the total amount of physical currency in an economy thereby creating room for electronic-based payments (Ejiobih et al., 2019). It is a strategy that is usually deployed by the Apex Banks of many nations to reduce the use of currency for carrying out transactions. To Meseigha and Ogbodo, (2013), it is a system that makes payment for goods and services possible and offered through the Internet or any type of electronic fund transfer system. These opinions stress the fact that a cashless economy/policy is intended to ease transaction processes without the hassle of getting to hold money physically. However, this does not necessarily mean that physical cash would completely be out of reach.

In this vein, Akhalume and Ohiokha, (2012) are of the view that contrary to what is suggestive of the term, the cashless economy does not refer to an outright absence of cash transactions in the economy in question, but when the amount of cash-related transactions are reduced to a very large extent as possible. In such economies, transactions of any nature are predominantly carried out through electronic means: Automated Teller Machines (ATM) transfers, online banking and mobile applications, and other means like the use of cheques, direct bank transfers, mobile money transfer operations etc.

In more advanced nations, the practice of cashless system is not new. The policy has been in existence for more than two (2) decades and it's still gaining attention in both less developed and in emerging economies where there is strong advocacy for reduction in the use of cash in carrying out transactions. This is considered very imperative giving the implication of cost of printing notes on one hand, and on the other, the risks of various kinds and associated corruption. In countries where cashless policies are in place, the key drivers who serve as the regulators and implementers of the policy are usually the Central Banks, Deposit Money Banks (DMBs), Micro Finance Banks (MFBs) etc. These are establishments that are charged with the responsibilities of carrying out regulatory activities including monitoring and evaluation of the policy on behalf of the government.

According to the press remarks issued by the CBN Governor on October 26, 2022 which was called to brief the general public on the need for the Apex Bank to address persisting concerns it was facing as regards management of the currency in circulation, the governor underscores the currency management function of the Apex Bank as stated in Section 2 (b) of

the CBN Act, 2007. Hence, the policy is designed to achieve the following objectives amongst others:

1. To deepen the drive to entrench cashless economy as it will be complemented by increases in minting of e-Naira.
2. To address the hoarding of naira banknotes outside the banking system
3. To check counterfeiting of naira
4. To check the prevailing level of insecurity in the country particularly activities related to terrorism.
5. To check vote buying activities (CBN, 2022).

The Concept of Kidnapping

Kidnapping in Nigeria encompasses various forms, including express kidnappings, where victims are abducted for immediate ransom; political kidnappings, aimed at leveraging political power or influence; and ritualistic kidnappings, often associated with the belief in spiritual or supernatural gains (Adeleke et al., 2021; Emefiele, 2020). The motivations behind these abductions vary, but financial gain remains the primary driver.

Historically, kidnapping in Nigeria can be traced back to traditional practices, but it has significantly evolved over the years. The socio-economic turmoil, coupled with widespread poverty, unemployment, and corruption, has contributed to the rise in criminal activities, including kidnapping (Victor, 2022; Elu, 2023). The transition from localized criminal activities to organized crime has also been facilitated by the availability of firearms and weak law enforcement mechanisms.

Several socio-economic factors fuel the kidnapping crisis in Nigeria. The high levels of poverty and unemployment, particularly among the youth, create an environment conducive to crime (Ogunleye, 2023). The International Crisis Group (2022) notes that young people, often disillusioned and with limited economic prospects, are more likely to be recruited into kidnapping syndicates. Additionally, inadequate governance and corruption within law enforcement agencies hinder effective responses to kidnapping incidents, allowing the problem to flourish (Umeora et al., 2023).

The implications of kidnapping extend beyond individual victims to affect broader societal stability and economic development. Kidnapping instills fear within communities, leading to displacement, loss of livelihood, and a breakdown of social trust (Igbokwe, 2024). The increasing prevalence of kidnappings has also strained the healthcare system, as families may divert resources to pay ransoms, thereby impacting their capacity to access essential services (Adetayo et al., 2023).

Despite the government's efforts to combat kidnapping through military operations and legislation, challenges remain significant. The lack of comprehensive data on kidnapping incidents complicates effective policy formulation (Ogunleye, 2023). Moreover, the involvement of local political elites in kidnapping networks raises questions about the commitment of some state actors to address the issue (Adeleke et al., 2021). Consequently, community-based approaches, including local vigilance groups and public awareness campaigns, are being explored as viable alternatives to enhance security and deter kidnappers (Umeora et al., 2023).

Recent studies indicate that the nature of kidnapping in Nigeria is evolving, with criminals increasingly targeting schools and hospitals, further highlighting the vulnerability of educational and healthcare institutions (Victor, 2022; Elu, 2023). To effectively address this complex issue, a multifaceted approach that combines law enforcement, socio-economic development, and community engagement is necessary. Future research should focus on evaluating the efficacy of existing policies and exploring innovative strategies to mitigate the kidnapping crisis.

Methodology

This paper employs a qualitative research method, specifically content analysis, to explore the impact of Nigeria's cashless policy and naira redesign in curbing the menace of kidnapping. The study primarily relies on secondary data collected from peer-reviewed journals, edited books, and credible online resources, making it fundamentally a library-based research approach.The study adopts a traditional literature review framework, systematically collecting and synthesizing existing knowledge on the subject matter. This design facilitates an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon by analyzing existing scholarly perspectives, historical trends, and recent developments in policy implementation and its outcomes.Secondary data were obtained through a rigorous selection process to ensure credibility and relevance.The study employs content analysis, a qualitative technique for interpreting textual data. Various themes were identified and analyzed to capture the range of perspectives presented by authors. Key themes include the theoretical foundations of cashless policies, the practical challenges of implementation, and the relationship between cash availability and criminal activities like kidnapping.The research is confined to the analysis of secondary data, which might not capture real-time shifts in the impact of the cashless policy. Additionally, reliance on publicly available materials limits access to unpublished insights or government confidential reports that could enrich the study.Despite these limitations, the methodology ensures a robust, scholarly investigation, providing a comprehensive understanding of the topic while maintaining academic rigor.

Theoretical Framework

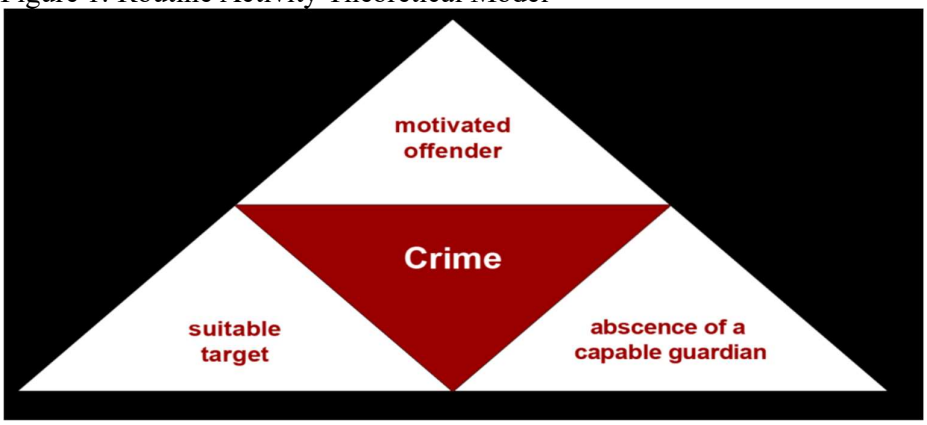
In every social phenomenon, theories play great roles in explaining events, situation of the phenomenon and thereby shed logical meaning to a research work in a sequential order. Thus, two theories were adopted namely: Routine Activity Theory (RAT), Social Control Theory and Situational Crime Prevention Theory. RAT stands as a crime-causation theory that explains the factors that give rise of kidnapping in Nigeria. While Social Control Theory portrays control (cashless policy) mechanisms to curb the menace of insecurity in the country.

Routine Activity Theory (RAT), developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson in 1979, provides a useful framework for understanding how the Naira redesign and cashless policy in Nigeria can impact the occurrence of kidnapping. This theory posits that crime occurs when three (3) elements converge: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardianship. Thus:

1. Motivated Offender: The Naira redesign and cashless policy aim to limit the financial incentives for kidnapping. By reducing the amount of cash in circulation, these policies may deter potential offenders who are motivated by the prospect of ransom payments. If kidnappers perceive that financial gain is less achievable due to increased restrictions and monitoring, the motivation to engage in such criminal activities may diminish (El-Yaqub et al., 2024; Magaji et al., 2024).
2. Suitable Target: The implementation of cashless transactions makes potential targets less suitable for kidnappers. In environments where cash transactions are prevalent, targets may carry large sums of money, making them attractive for criminal activities. With a shift toward digital payments, potential victims may no longer be as easily identifiable as lucrative targets, thereby reducing their risk of abduction (Shelleng, 2023; Ekechukwu, 2023).
3. Absence of Capable Guardianship: RAT also emphasizes the importance of capable guardianship in preventing crime. The Naira redesign and cashless policy promote a more vigilant society, as financial transactions become traceable and monitored. This increased oversight acts as a deterrent to kidnappers, who may fear detection and arrest when attempting to carry out their plans. Moreover, the combination of

enhanced security measures and community engagement can create a more robust guardianship environment, further reducing opportunities for kidnapping (Fasua, 2024).

Figure 1: Routine Activity Theoretical Model



Source: Cohen & Felson (1976)

Figure 1 depicts the three variables which are dependent of time and place. These determinants are the motivated offenders, suitable targets and lack of capable security structures. As per as kidnapping, the Naira redesign and cashless policy can effectively disrupt the conditions conducive to kidnapping by addressing the motivations of offenders, reducing the suitability of targets, and enhancing guardianship. Non-kinetic approaches like the Naira redesign and cashless policy target the opportunity structures for crime rather than relying solely on traditional law enforcement methods. Through these financial reforms, Nigeria is addressing environmental conditions that make kidnapping lucrative and difficult to trace. According to Routine Activity Theory, reducing the convergence of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and lack of capable guardianship can effectively reduce crime rates. By making ransom payments more difficult to carry out discreetly and by increasing oversight over financial transactions, the opportunity structure that previously facilitated kidnapping is significantly disrupted.

Social Control Theory, developed by Travis Hirschi, posits that social bonds significantly influence an individual's likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior. The theory emphasizes the importance of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief in societal norms. In the context of Nigeria's Naira redesign and cashless policy, the theory can help explain how these financial reforms may impact social behavior, particularly regarding kidnapping.

1. Attachment: The emotional bonds individuals have with family, friends, and community play a crucial role in deterring criminal behavior. The Naira redesign and cashless policy aim to enhance societal attachment by promoting legal financial transactions and discouraging reliance on illicit activities. As these policies become more effective, individuals may feel a greater commitment to societal norms, which can dissuade them from engaging in kidnapping (Matsueda, 2018; Kauffman & Tifft, 2015).
2. Commitment: Individuals who are invested in conventional societal goals—such as stable employment or education—are less likely to engage in crime. By promoting a cashless economy, the policies can facilitate better financial inclusion and provide more opportunities for legitimate economic participation. As more individuals engage in the formal economy, their commitment to lawful activities increases, reducing the likelihood of kidnapping as a viable means of income (Hirschi, 1969; Emefiele, 2022).

3. Involvement: The theory posits that individuals engaged in pro-social activities are less likely to commit crimes. The cashless policy encourages economic participation and digital transactions, potentially leading to increased involvement in legal activities. This higher level of engagement in the community and economy can decrease the opportunities for criminal behavior, including kidnapping (Fasua, 2024).
4. Belief: Social Control Theory emphasizes the importance of belief in societal rules and institutions. When the public perceives that the Naira redesign and cashless policy are effective in enhancing financial stability and curbing crime, their belief in these systems may strengthen. As citizens develop faith in the integrity of the financial system, they may be less likely to engage in criminal activities, viewing them as less acceptable (Okolie, 2021; Yinnusa, 2022).

Social Control Theory suggests that Nigeria's Naira redesign and cashless policy can strengthen social bonds, enhance commitment to lawful economic activities, and reinforce belief in societal norms. By fostering a sense of responsibility and reducing motivations for engaging in criminal behavior, these reforms can contribute to a decline in kidnapping incidents in Nigeria. Social Control Theory provides a useful lens for analyzing the effects of Nigeria's Naira redesign and cashless policy on reducing kidnapping. By strengthening social bonds and reinforcing public commitment to lawful income sources, these policies address the social motivations behind kidnapping and other cash-driven crimes. As Social Control Theory suggests, fostering strong attachments, commitments, involvement, and belief in societal norms and institutions can lead to a reduction in crime. Thus, non-kinetic approaches like these financial reforms not only impact economic structures but also work to reinforce social control, reducing opportunities and motivations for crime.

Assessing the Effectiveness of the 2023 Naira Redesign and Cashless Policy in Combating Kidnapping in Nigeria

The intersection of monetary policy, security, and crime prevention, particularly regarding kidnapping, has been a growing area of interest among scholars and policy-makers. This literature review will examine the implications of the Naira redesign and cashless policy in Nigeria, drawing from existing studies on currency reforms, crime prevention, and their relationship with social stability.

An Overview of Naira Redesign in Nigeria in 2023

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced on October 26, 2022 that it intended to redesign the three highest denominations of the Nigerian currency: the 200, 500, and 1000 (CBN, 2022). Nigerians responded in a variety of ways to this move since it caused an unprecedented cash constraint. While some Nigerians thought the policy was not needed, others thought it was just a rehash of the previous one and not a redesign (Nwanma, 2023).

The CBN defended this policy, however, by claiming that it would reduce security threats, such as money laundering, kidnapping, and terrorism in the nation, improve system health, track the flow of funds in the nation, and collect the enormous amount of cash that is currently estimated to be outside of the banking system, which is 2.73 trillion and accounts for about 85% of the total amount of cash in circulation (CBN, 2022). Additionally, this strategy aims to strengthen the banking system's level of financial inclusion in order to expand credit availability and productive activity, implement a better cashless policy, and constrict the money supply to fight inflation (Vanguard, 2022).

According to Muhammad and Abdulmajeed (2022), the policy will stabilize the economy, lower inflation, stop money corruption, ensure a smooth transition to a cashless society, lessen the abuse of Naira notes, and increase the value of the Naira. While the apex bank claims that the new naira was explicitly intended to focus on eradicating illicit market monies from the system, however Pedro and Adesina-Uthman (2022) expressed the opposite opinion.

They said that by disrupting business transactions, raising the cost of production, and promoting counterfeiting, the redesign of the Naira may have harmed the country's economy. They list these negative consequences in the following order:

1. Disruption of Business Transactions: The redesign of the naira made it more difficult for retailers to collect payments and generated confusion, particularly among those who were not familiar with the new approach.
2. Increase in Counterfeit Activity: Because most people might not be familiar with the new note, the likelihood of counterfeiting increases.
3. Rising Production and Printing Costs: This increased the nation's level of spending, which put the economy at risk and created inflation.

The Nexus between Cash Flow and Criminal Activity (Kidnapping) in Nigeria

The relationship between cash flow and criminal activities, particularly kidnapping, is a significant concern in Nigeria. A combination of economic factors, social dynamics, and the evolving landscape of financial transactions influences this relationship.

Currency reforms have historically been viewed as essential tools for strengthening macroeconomic frameworks. Naseem (2012) argues that such reforms can enhance monetary transmission, giving governments better control over their economic policies. In the context of Nigeria, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced the Naira redesign in 2022, citing issues such as money hoarding, inflation, and counterfeiting as primary motivators (CBN, 2022). The CBN reported that a significant portion of the currency in circulation was outside banking systems, indicating a lack of trust in formal financial institutions (Yinnusa, 2022). This context highlights the potential economic instability that could facilitate criminal activities, including kidnapping, if unregulated cash flows persist.

Several studies have highlighted how cash availability can directly impact crime rates. For instance, El-Yaqub et al (2024) noted that kidnapping in Nigeria is often financed through cash payments where raw-cash is being taken to kidnappers' den and paid as a ransom, making it imperative to address the methods through which such funds are transferred. The cashless policy, intended to reduce the amount of physical cash circulating, aims to diminish the opportunities for kidnappers to demand and receive ransom payments anonymously. By making financial transactions more traceable, the cashless policy can limit kidnappers' access to untraceable cash, thereby impacting the frequency of such crimes (Magaji et al., 2024).

Cash flow in an economy plays a crucial role in shaping criminal behavior. The availability of liquid cash can create opportunities for crime, particularly in contexts where the rule of law is weak and economic pressures are high. According to El-Yaqub et al. (2024), kidnappers often rely on cash payments for ransom, making the circulation of cash a critical factor in the prevalence of kidnapping in Nigeria. The authors argued that a high volume of cash in circulation facilitates the operational capabilities of criminal groups by allowing them to conduct transactions without leaving a trace, which is essential for ransom payments.

Additionally, Magaji et al. (2024) emphasized that the anonymity provided by cash transactions can embolden criminals, allowing them to operate with reduced fear of detection. The study highlights that as more cash is accessible, especially in rural areas where banks are less prevalent, the likelihood of kidnappers targeting wealthy individuals increases.

Economic policies, particularly those affecting cash flow, have profound implications for crime rates. The Central Bank of Nigeria's cashless policy, aimed at reducing the amount of physical currency in circulation, is a response to the challenges posed by rampant criminal activities, including kidnapping. Yinnusa (2022) suggests that transitioning to a cashless economy could help mitigate the frequency of kidnappings by making ransom payments more traceable. The study posits that as the availability of cash diminishes, kidnappers may

find it increasingly difficult to demand and receive untraceable payments, thereby reducing the incentive to engage in such crimes.

However, Akin (2023) warns that the effectiveness of such policies may be limited by the slow adoption of digital banking solutions in Nigeria. The study indicates that despite the push for cashless transactions, many Nigerians still prefer cash due to issues such as inadequate digital infrastructure and concerns over cybercrime. This continued reliance on cash perpetuates the cycle of crime, as it allows for easier execution of kidnappings. However, socio-economic factors also play a critical role in linking cash flow and criminal activity. According to Victor (2022), the prevalence of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria contributes significantly to the rise in kidnappings. Individuals facing economic hardship may resort to crime as a means of survival, viewing kidnapping as a viable option given the potential for high monetary rewards. The author argues that the financial desperation experienced by some individuals creates a breeding ground for kidnapping, particularly in regions where law enforcement is insufficient.

Moreover, Okolie (2021) highlights that the relationship between cash flow and crime is further complicated by the existence of organized criminal networks that exploit economic vulnerabilities. These networks often facilitate kidnappings by providing the necessary resources and connections to enable criminals to carry out their plans effectively.

Effectiveness of Naira Redesign and Cashless Policy in Curbing Kidnapping in Nigeria

The Naira redesign and cashless policy introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have been positioned as innovative strategies to combat the rising tide of kidnapping and other forms of financial crime. The primary aim of the Naira redesign is to reduce the volume of cash in circulation, thereby minimizing money hoarding, counterfeiting, and illicit financing (El-Yaqub et al., 2024). By targeting untraceable cash flows, especially in ransom payments, the policy seeks to disrupt the financial networks that facilitate kidnapping operations (Fasua, 2024). The cashless policy complements this effort by encouraging digital transactions, which are more easily monitored than cash exchanges.

One of the main arguments in favor of the Naira redesign and cashless policy is that they enhance the traceability of financial transactions. Analysts posit that as more transactions move to digital platforms, it becomes increasingly difficult for kidnappers to operate without being detected. The traceability of electronic transactions allows law enforcement agencies to track ransom payments and other illicit financial flows (Okolie, 2021; Magaji et al., 2024). For example, The Nations in February 2024 reported a case of Mrs. Aminat Adewuyi and others in Niger State where ransom payment was electronically traced. The victims' families were instructed to transfer ransom payments ranging from N500,000 to N1,000,000 to a designated bank account. The account details, including the name and account number, were documented. Shelleng (2023) notes that by limiting cash withdrawals and promoting digital payments, these policies can effectively curb kidnappers' access to liquid assets.

Early indications of the effectiveness of the cashless policy have been observed in reduced instances of cash-based crime. Reports suggest that certain states like Zamfara, Niger, Sokoto, Katsina in Nigeria have experienced a decline in kidnapping rates correlating with the implementation of the cashless policy (Akin, 2023). For instance, in regions where digital payment adoption has increased, there has been a noted reduction in ransom payments, leading to a corresponding decrease in kidnappings (Yinnusa, 2022). To buttress this assertion with facts, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD, 2024) reported that during the cash scarcity between October 2022 and March 2023, kidnapping incidents dropped significantly, with reports indicating a 50% reduction in abduction events nationally and a 69% decrease in the North-West region (Center for Democracy and Development, 2024). This decline was attributed to the limited access to cash, which constrained

kidnappers' ability to demand or receive ransoms efficiently. The disruption of cash flow effectively impeded their operations, as many ransom transactions traditionally rely on physical cash exchanges.

In addition, ACLED (2024) reported that despite the controversial policy's negative impact, which coincided with Nigeria's fuel scarcity, kidnapping fell by 50% during the implementation period of October 2022 and March 2023. While it is not possible to say whether fuel scarcity or cash scarcity was the primary driver of this decline, it is likely that the lack of cash was significantly limiting kidnappers' efforts, given that kidnapping thrives in a cash-based economy where transactions are hard to track. According to a report by the Nigerian Police Force, there was a noticeable reduction in kidnapping activities in states like Lagos and Ogun between 2022 and 2023, coinciding with the implementation of the cashless policy. In Lagos alone, kidnapping cases dropped by 15% within the first six months of the policy's full implementation. Similarly, Ogun State saw a 12% decrease in kidnapping-related incidents during the same period (Nigeria Police Report, 2023). These statistics demonstrate that while the policy is not a complete solution, it has had a tangible impact on reducing kidnapping, especially when combined with other security measures.

Despite the potential benefits, challenges remain. Resistance from the public, particularly in rural areas where technological infrastructure is limited, hinders widespread adoption of the cashless policy (Victor, 2022). Furthermore, concerns about cybersecurity and the risk of online fraud can undermine public confidence in digital transactions (Akin, 2023; Yinnusa, 2022). This distrust can impede the policies' effectiveness in curbing kidnapping, as individuals may prefer to conduct transactions in cash despite the associated risks. While there is evidence suggesting these policies can enhance traceability and disrupt financial networks used in kidnappings, several challenges—including public resistance, cyber-security concerns, and limited technological infrastructure—must be addressed to maximize their effectiveness. Ongoing research and adaptive strategies are necessary to ensure that these financial reforms can genuinely mitigate the threat of kidnapping and enhance overall security in Nigeria.

Challenges Faced by the Naira Redesign and Cashless Policy in Curbing Kidnapping in Nigeria

The implementation of the Naira redesign and cashless policy in Nigeria is a response to the escalating crisis of kidnapping and other forms of crime. While these financial reforms aim to enhance traceability in transactions and reduce cash transactions associated with illegal activities, several challenges impede their effectiveness. This literature review discusses the various obstacles faced in the implementation of these policies and their implications for curbing kidnapping.

One of the primary challenges to the successful implementation of the cashless policy is public resistance and the slow adoption rate of digital payment systems. Despite the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) promoting cashless transactions as a solution to the growing rates of kidnapping, many Nigerians remain skeptical about the reliability and security of digital banking (Akin, 2023; Yinnusa, 2022). This skepticism stems from concerns about cybercrime, lack of awareness, and inadequate technological infrastructure.Victor (2022) highlights that in rural areas, where access to technology and reliable internet service is limited, the population often continues to rely on cash transactions. This reliance diminishes the effectiveness of the cashless policy in areas most affected by kidnapping, as the cash flow remains unregulated and untraceable.

Another significant barrier to the successful implementation of the cashless policy is the heightened risk of cybercrime. As more transactions shift online, the potential for cyber-attacks increases, which can undermine public trust in the financial system. To back up this point, Punch Newspapers (2023) reported after the declaration of the cashless policy in

Nigeria, there was a significant increase in cybersecurity incidents. According to reports, cybercrime surged by 174% within the first six months of 2022 in Nigeria, aligning with the shift to increased cashless transactions and digital footprints. This rise was attributed to vulnerabilities in digital payment systems and the challenges of securing electronic transactions in a rapidly digitizing economy. In addition, A study by El-Yaqub et al. (2024) indicates that the rise in online banking activities has coincided with an increase in phishing scams and identity theft in Nigeria. This environment of insecurity discourages individuals from fully transitioning to cashless transactions, ultimately limiting the policy's effectiveness in reducing ransom payments associated with kidnappings.

Economic challenges also play a critical role in the efficacy of the Naira redesign and cashless policy. Many Nigerians face economic hardships, including high inflation rates and unemployment, making it difficult for them to engage with new financial systems (Okolie, 2021; Fasua, 2024). The CBN has reported that a substantial portion of the population remains unbanked (with approximately 28 million Nigerians remaining unbanked as of 2024). This population accounts for about 26% of Nigeria's adult population. The financial exclusion rate has been particularly high in rural areas, where 44.2% of adults are unbanked, compared to 19.9% in urban areas). Without addressing these barriers to financial inclusion, the cashless policy risks alienating a significant segment of the population and perpetuating the cycle of crime.

However, the success of the cashless policy is also contingent on the availability of adequate technological infrastructure. According to Magaji et al. (2024), inadequate internet coverage and insufficient digital payment platforms hinder the implementation of cashless transactions. In many regions, the absence of reliable electricity further complicates the situation, as financial technology solutions require stable power sources to function effectively. The lack of infrastructure not only impedes the general adoption of cashless methods but also limits the government's ability to monitor financial transactions that may be linked to criminal activities, including kidnappings.

The coordination of various government agencies and stakeholders in implementing the Naira redesign and cashless policy poses another challenge. Akin (2023) suggests that without a well-coordinated approach, the cashless policy may fail to address the complexities of criminal networks that exploit loopholes in the financial system.

Cultural attitudes toward money and transactions also play a crucial role in the challenges faced by the Naira redesign and cashless policy. Many Nigerians have traditionally preferred cash transactions due to a longstanding distrust of formal financial institutions and the perceived anonymity that cash provides (Yinnusa, 2022). Changing these ingrained habits requires not only time but also targeted education and outreach efforts to build trust in the new system.

Conclusion

The cashless policy implemented by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) represents a significant step towards modernizing the financial landscape of the country. In particular, the policy has shown considerable potential in curbing the menace of kidnapping, one of Nigeria's most pressing security challenges. By reducing the volume of physical cash in circulation and promoting digital transactions, the policy has created an environment where ransom payments are more traceable, thus limiting the operational capacity of kidnappers. For example, empirical evidence from Nigerian Police Force showed a noticeable reduction in kidnapping activities in states like Lagos and Ogun between 2022 and 2023, coinciding with the implementation of the cashless policy. In Lagos alone, kidnapping cases dropped by 15% within the first six months of the policy's full implementation. Similarly, Ogun State saw a 12% decrease in kidnapping-related incidents during the same period (Nigeria Police Report, 2023). These statistics demonstrate that while the policy is not a complete solution, it

has had a tangible impact on reducing kidnapping, especially when combined with other security measures.

However, the cashless policy is not without its challenges. One of the main issues is the slow adoption of digital banking and the lack of adequate infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. Despite the government's efforts, many Nigerians remain unbanked or underbanked, limiting the full potential of the cashless policy (CBN, 2022). Additionally, cybersecurity vulnerabilities pose a significant threat, as the shift towards digital platforms increases the risk of online fraud, hacking, and data breaches. Criminals may exploit these weaknesses to circumvent the policy's intentions (IMF, 2022). Moreover, the resistance to cashless transactions in certain segments of the population, particularly among those who prefer cash-based systems, further complicates the policy's effectiveness. While the cashless policy has proven to be a valuable tool in the fight against kidnapping by enhancing the traceability of financial transactions and disrupting the financial infrastructure that supports criminal activities, its full potential is yet to be realized. Overcoming the challenges related to digital literacy, infrastructure, and cybersecurity will be crucial for ensuring the policy's long-term success. With continued improvements in these areas, the cashless policy can become a central element in Nigeria's broader strategy to combat kidnapping and other forms of financial crime.

Recommendations

In order to enhance the effectiveness of the Naira redesign and cashless policy in curbing kidnapping and other financial crimes in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthening Public Awareness and Education: A comprehensive public awareness campaign is essential to educate citizens about the benefits and functionality of the Naira redesign and cashless transactions. This campaign should aim to demystify digital payment systems, address misconceptions, and foster trust in these technologies. Community engagement programs could be implemented to reach rural populations who may be resistant to change due to a lack of understanding.
2. Improving Technological Infrastructure: To facilitate the effective implementation of the cashless policy, investment in technological infrastructure is crucial. This includes expanding internet access and digital payment systems, particularly in undeserved rural areas. Collaborating with telecommunications companies to improve connectivity can help bridge the digital divide and support the adoption of cashless transactions.
3. Enhancing Cyber-security Measures: As digital transactions increase, so do concerns about cyber-security. It is imperative to implement robust cyber-security measures to protect users from fraud and data breaches. The government should collaborate with financial institutions to develop stringent security protocols and conduct regular assessments of digital payment platforms. Public trust can be reinforced through transparent communication about security measures in place.
4. Developing a Regulatory Framework: A well-defined regulatory framework governing digital transactions is essential to ensure accountability and protect consumers. The government and financial regulators should establish clear guidelines for digital payment providers, including measures to prevent fraud and enforce compliance with anti-money laundering regulations. This framework should also include consumer protection policies to build confidence in the cashless system.
5. Incentivizing Digital Transactions: To encourage the adoption of cashless transactions, the government can introduce incentives such as tax breaks, discounts, or rewards for individuals and businesses that utilize digital payment methods. Financial

institutions could also offer lower transaction fees for cashless payments, making them more attractive compared to cash transactions.

6. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation: Regular monitoring and evaluation of the Naira redesign and cashless policy's impact on kidnapping rates and financial crimes are necessary to assess their effectiveness. The government should collect data on kidnapping incidents, ransom payments, and public adoption rates of digital payments to inform policy adjustments and improvements. Engaging academic researchers and think tanks can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of these initiatives.
7. Engaging Stakeholders: Collaboration among stakeholders—including government agencies, financial institutions, civil society organizations, and community leaders—is vital to the success of these policies. Establishing a multi-stakeholder task force can facilitate dialogue, share best practices, and coordinate efforts to promote the Naira redesign and cashless policy effectively.

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THE IMPACT OF FARMER-HEDER RELATIONSHIPS ON INSECURITY AND FOOD PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The contemporary Nigeria like most African states is challenged with problems associated with farmer/herder crisis that have affected her food security negatively. A state is secured when the aggregate of the people organized under it has the ability to produce and sustain reasonable food supply and reserves needed for the welfare of the citizens. However, the conflicts between farmers and herders in Nigeria have over the years disrupt agricultural production, displaced communities, destroy crops and livestock, and leads to the breakdown of food supply chains. The paper examined the impact of farmer-herder relationship on insecurity and food production on Nigeria's national security. The paper relied on secondary sources of data analysis and argued that frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers and the activities of Boko Haram, Banditry, Kidnappings for ransom, displacement, burning down of farm produce and weak presence of state security and strategic system has exacerbated severe food crisis in the country most especially in the agricultural driven areas. It recommends that government should enhance agriculture and human security.

Key words: farmer, Herder, Insecurity, Food production, food crisis**.**

Introduction

Nigeria, currently is the most populous black nation in Africa and the 7th most populous globally. Its population is 217,436 196 million with 110, 104, 841 males representing 50.6% of the population whereas 107, 331, 404 are females representing 49.4% of the population, it has an estimated annual birth rate of 4, 334, 116 representing 21, 351 births daily (Countrymeters, 2022).

Farmer-herder conflicts in Africa have received heightened attention in recent years in the media, academic circles and policy-making contexts, with attendant concerns about the increasing and intensifying levels of conflicts between groups (Flintan, 2021). Farmer-herder conflicts are mostly local, sporadic and low intensity, without direct involvement of governments and government security forces (Abba, 2018).

However, International Organizations have described farmer-herder conflicts using strong, sometimes alarmist language, giving the issue a heightened sense of urgency and threats to global food security. The African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security stated that 'conflicts between herders and farmers on the continent take more lives than terrorism' (AU, 2018). The humanitarian situation in Africa continues on an upward trajectory, with 40 million people living in forced displacement, and Africa also accounts for a significant fraction of the world's food insecured with approximately 146 million people in 35 countries across Africa faced acute food insecurity in 2023 African Union Report, (2023).

The relationship between herders and farmers in Nigeria over farmland and pasture is a serious struggle and escalating conflict amounting to huge casualties and raising tensions particularly in the nation's most produced North Central and North West. Drought, desertification and the collapsed of Ruga system in the north have forced pastoralist herdsmen to seek grazing lands further south and middle belt resulting in competition over scarce resources and clashes with settled farmers, United Nations Development Programmes UNDP, United Nations Human Refugee Agency UNHCR, and Food and Agriculture FAO, Reports (2022). The consequences include a significant loss of lives and livelihoods, disruption of food production, unfettered proliferation of small arms and light weapons, mass displacement of people and a severe undermining of internal security.

Over the years, North Central particularly Benue State and Plateau State was regarded as a core in terms of agricultural production with high food sufficiency, it was on that note that Benue State was tag the 'food basket of the nation' but regrettably, crop production continues to decline which automatically become a threat to food security (Canice and Yunana, 2022). Benue State, frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in the farming areas of the state have resulted in the destruction of live and farmlands. According to (Vanguard, 2024) no fewer than 60,000 lives lost in farmers/herders clashes in the North Central alone.

Insecurity has worsened across the country, particularly in the form of terrorism, banditry, and armed conflicts displaces farmers and prevents them from cultivating crops or raising livestock. Key agricultural regions, such as the Middle Belt and Northeastern Nigeria, have been severely affected by attacks from groups like Boko Haram and armed herdsmen, leading to reduced food production according to (Doris Dokua Sasu, 2024) Boko Haram alone has caused over 38,000 deaths of farmers and herders in the Northeastern States (Statista, 2024). Furthermore, insecurity leads to the displacement of millions of people, as seen in the Northeastern, North Central and North Western Nigeria. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) often rely on humanitarian aid for food, straining resources and further exacerbating food insecurity. According to National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023) that Nigeria recorded 1,134,828 the highest internally displaced persons in the continent.

Banditry and kidnapping spread across the North West Nigeria, particularly Zamfara, Katsina and the emerging group called Lakurawa in Sokoto and Kebbi poses a severe threat to food security in the region and across the country. This crisis is driven by criminal groups that disrupt rural life and agriculture, frequent target farms, destroying crops, stealing produce and imposing protection taxes on farmers. According to SB-Morgen Intelligence (SBM Intelligence, 2024) investigation carried on the prevalence and effects of kidnappings showed that Nigeria records nearly 4,000 kidnapping cases with N5billion ($6.5million) ransom demanded just in one year. A report by a research firm SBM Intelligence, indicated that atleast, 3,620 people were kidnapped across Nigeria between July 2022 and June 2023.

More so, in early 2024, SBM found that no less than N139 million was paid as farm levies (including planting and harvesting) to bandits who demanded at least N224 million across the North between 2020 and 2023. In the same period leading up to June 2024, at least 1,356 farmers were killed across the country, with most of the killings occurring in the North. These illegal tolls have made it difficult for farmers to access their farms and added to the

mounting food insecurity. While security agents tackle security threats posed by bandits and terrorist groups, new terror organizations are springing up on a daily basis. The latest terrorist group in Nigeria, known as Lakurawa seems to be in firm control of Sokoto and Kebbi states, thus the group's activities are also impacting food security as many farmers in the axis have abandoned their farms or grazing areas for fear of being kidnapped and forced to pay a ransom (Kazeem Akintunde, 2024).

Unknown gunmen spread across South East, and kidnappings in the South West, South-South and across the entire country (Nextier, 2024). Emerging demand and payment of ransom or revenues to the bandits and the insurgents by the farmers/herders in order to gain access to their farmland and or grazing areas in the North east and North West further added to the woes of food production and food security. The United Nations predicts this year approximately 22 million of Nigerians will face food insecurity in 2023, and around 80-82 million are at risk of severe food insecurity by 2030 (UN, 2024). Food insecurity in Nigeria is currently at an alarming rate, necessitating immediate action. Chronic hunger, extreme poverty corruption, bad governance, conflicts reoccurrences, low level of purchasing power and high food prices have in recent months register greater majority of Nigerians cannot afford daily food and consequently the result was the August 1st , 2024 hunger protest that engulf almost all parts of the country. People suffering from extreme food insecurity would go for days without eating owing to a lack of money, high food prices or other resources (Sasu, 2022).

Nigeria's food production is projected, by 2026, to rise again up to $60 billion, up from $55 billion in 2021, Nigeria Food Industry Outlook (NFIO, ReportLinker, 2022-2026). In 2022, Nigeria produced 59.6 million tons of cassava (the largest producer in the world); 47.5 million tons of Yam (the largest producer in the world); 3.3 million tons of taro (the largest producer in the world); 2.6 million tons of cowpea (the largest producer in the world) its exports accounted for 2.67% of the N279.64 billion total agro-foods exports in 2023 and 40% of global ginger production, producing almost 523,000 metric tons annually (FAO, 2023). According to Food and Agriculture of the United Nations report (2021), Nigeria has 70.8 million hectares of agriculture land area with maize, cassava, guinea corn, yam, beans, millet and rice being the major crops. Nigeria's rice production rose from 3.7 million metric tons in 2017 to 4.0 million metric tons in 2018. Inspite of this, only 57% of the 6.7 million tons of rice consumed in Nigeria annually locally produced leading to a deficit of about 3 million metric tons. As for cassava, Nigeria produced 59 million tons in 2017 making it the world's largest producer approximately 20% of global production. All these economic potentials are enormous with high revenue yields from both domestic value and income but it has been drives away by insurgents and farmers/herders clashes in most producing states.

According to African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA, 2021) Benue state for example which is the conflict riddle state, is the largest producer of soya beans, cassava, mangoes and oranges in Nigeria, second largest producer of yams and third largest producer of rice. So also, Borno, Niger, Plateau, Katsina, Gombe, Bauchi, Kogi, Kaduna, Oyo and Taraba are the largest maize producing states which account for nearly two-third (64%) of maize produced in the country . But, the reverse is the case, According to United State Department of Agriculture (USDA, 2023), maize import into Nigeria doubled from 0.5 MMT to about 1 MMT between October 2019 and October 2020. In Q3 2020 alone, Nigeria imported about 26.6 billion worth of maize from Argentina, China, USA and Brazil following the scarcity of maize that emerged as a result of production shortfall because of the growing insecurity in the country especially in the maize producing states and unfavorable climatic change such as drought (AfCFTA, 2021).

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Farmer: A farmer is a person who runs and works on a farm. Some farmers raise a variety of food crops, while others keep dairy cows and sell their milk. Farmers work in some aspect of agriculture, growing vegetables, grains, or fruit; or raising animals for milk, eggs, or meat (Vocabulary.com). Farmers are also responsible for the management of farms, ranches, greenhouses, nurseries, and other agricultural producing enterprises. Depending on the type of farm, farmers are involved in planting, cultivating, completing post-harvest activities, overseeing other labours, and directing farm workers. Thus, farmers are critical to the existence of human civilization and make significant contributions to the country's socio-economic progress and well-being (Nafeez, 2024; Abba, 2018)). Therefore, farmers are people who engage in agricultural activities such as farming with the primary objective of producing food and other cash crops either for subsistence consumption or for public consumption. In Nigeria, they are located in all the six geo-political zones.

Herder: According to Cambridge dictionary conceptualized a herder as a man who takes care of a large group of animals of the same or different type. It is also refers to a person who takes care of herds of cattle or flocks of sheep especially in an open field. A herder therefore implies a breeder, or a custodian of cattle or flocks of sheep (Abba, 2018). Herder are more often than not people from the Fulani ethnic group of the western Savanna. In this case extracts are domiciled in Northern Nigeria. Importantly, although often overlooked, meat, milk, eggs, and other animal products, including fish and other seafood's, will play an important role in achieving food security and source of income to both individuals/herders and government as a result of its global demand.

Insecurity: The word insecurity has myriads of connotations. It signifies danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety and or basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. Achumba, Ighomeroho, Akpor (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also lack basic necessities of life like healthy and nutritious food for them to survive and developed as human beings.

Food Production: Food is something that both animals and humans consume for survival. It is essentially derived from various plants and animals but before consumption, by humans, they are processed. Thus, food production is the process of transforming raw ingredients into edible food products. These converted food products can either be used for home cooking directly or by the food processing industries. However, most of the products that we consume are sourced from plants and animals. The products consist of grains, cereals, pulses, honey, milk, fruits, and vegetables, eggs, meat, and many more. Thus, the process of food production can be segregated into a number of stages and each of them is very important. In the farm its start from the cleaning, plaguing, planting, weeding, harvesting, while in the food processing industry, the process starts with primary steps of cleaning, segregation, and ends when the food is packed and marketed (UN, 2013).

Food Insecurity: According to FOA (2013) food insecurity is a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amount of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. It may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution or inadequate use of food at the household level.

Food Crisis: According to Lee (2012), food crisis exists when situations abruptly threatens food security as a result of shortages. Also, food crisis refers to food scarcity in a society on a large scale arising from a number of factors such as failure in crop production as well as policies by government; which results in malnutrition, hunger and starvation of a group of individual, usually the vulnerable masses.

Theoretical Framework

The main proponents of this theory are Leaning, Arie and Baldwin (1990). However, the use of human security as a theory in the social sciences can be traced back to the pre-cold war, cold war and post-cold war (Menon, 2007). The fundamental objective of human security is to safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfillment (Alkire, 2003). Human security is deliberately proactive and people centered; it recognizes that people and their communities are fatally threatened by events well beyond their control; a financial crisis, a violent conflict, HIV/AIDS, a terrorist attack, food crisis, water shortage, famine, drought, and farmer/herder clashes etc. Many threats are far more destructive if they come as a surprise. The damage of animals, food harvest and deaths of farmers/herders can be avoided by providing strategic intervention by the government and its agencies, early warning system can reduce the effect of famine and food insecurity. Yet many of these preparations require threats to be acknowledged, before they occur or at the very least as they occur. The human security approach urges institutions to offer protection which is institutionalized, not episodic; responsive, not rigid; preventive, not reactive.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design combined with observational techniques. The data collection relied primarily on secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journals, reports from international donor's agencies, Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) reports, and institutional publications.

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was chosen to explore and document the farmer-herder relationship and its implications for food production and security in Nigeria.
Observations were utilized to complement secondary data by capturing recurring patterns and themes.

Method of Data Collection

The study focused on qualitative data, gathered from a variety of secondary sources:
Inclusion Criteria: Data sources related to farmer-herder interactions, food production, food security and conflict dynamics in Nigeria between 2015 and 2024. This includes journals articles, international reports, and news publications.
Exclusion Criteria: Reports or data that were geographically irrelevant, lacked empirical evidences, or focused solely on international agricultural issues unrelated to Nigeria.

Methods of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed qualitatively and described thematically. This involved identifying and categorizing recurring issues, patterns and relationships within the data, such as:

i. the impacts of insecurity on food production
ii. factors exacerbating farmer-herder conflicts
iii. Socio-economic and governance related challenges contributing to food insecurity.

By thematically organizing the data, the study sought to highlight the key issues affecting the farmer-herder relationship and its broader implications for food production and national security.

Results and Discussion

The data collected were qualitatively described in general terms and thematically by identifying the common issues that reoccur, a simple frequency tables was used to summarise all the incidences occur between farmer and herder in recent years.

The study reveals the following discoveries and impacts as a result of recurring conflicts between farmers and herders in Nigeria:

i. Displacement of Farmers: continuous clashes have forced many farmers to abandon their farmlands, limiting agricultural activities.
ii. Livelihood Disruption: farmers and herders face economic instability due to the destruction of crops, livestock losses, and restricted access to grazing areas.
iii. Increased Insecurity: Banditry, Kidnappings, and destruction of farmland exacerbated the violence, further destabilizing rural communities.
iv. Weak Governance: A lack of effective conflict resolution mechanisms and law enforcement has worsened the crisis.

Impacts on food security and production:

i. Reduced food productions, farmer's inability to cultivate crops and herders loss of livestock have led to significant declines in food supply.
ii. Rising food insecurity: Decreased agricultural output has caused food shortages, escalating hunger and malnutrition, especially in affected regions.
iii. Economic consequences: The agricultural sector, a key part of Nigeria's economy, is severely affected, contributing to poverty and inflation in food prices.
iv. Dependence on Imports: With local food production disrupted, reliance on imported food has increased, straining national resources.

Farmer and Herder Relationship in Nigeria

In West Africa, herders have a long history of migration. They often established relationships with sedentary farming populations they encounter. This interaction, while generally cooperative, had also been marked by competition over shared resources, including land, water, and pasture. Historically, the nature of the relationship between herders and farmers has been influenced by individual and communal differences, changes in pastoral and farming systems, and environmental challenges like the depletion of water sources and pasture. In more recent years, factors like climate change have exacerbated these challenges, leading to increased tensions between the two groups (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2023). Although clashes have occurred, both groups have historically benefited from a symbiotic relationship characterized by the exchange of goods and services (International Crisis Group, 2017).

Historically, conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria were rare. During the pre-colonial era, these groups coexisted in a mutually beneficial relationship, exchanging resources like cattle manure for farm stubble, which contributed to increased agricultural food productivity. This relationship was maintained through structures such as the Ruga, a system where elected officials from the Fulani group managed grazing routes, selected grazing areas, and played a role in conflict resolution between herders and farmers (Ellwood, 1995). However, colonial rule brought changes that weakened these traditional systems. For example, colonial administrators introduced land policies that disrupted local land use arrangements and reduced the control herders had over grazing areas. These policies have weakened the symbiosis between the groups and contributed to environmental degradation and resource scarcity.

The post-colonial era, marked by rapid urbanization and increasing pressure on land resources, has seen a sharp rise in violent conflicts between herders and farmers. Herders have been forced to migrate to unfamiliar regions in search of pasture, which has led to clashes with farming communities. In addition to these anthropogenic factors, natural causes, particularly climate change, have also played a role. The decline in average rainfall in Africa's semi-arid regions since the 1970s has forced changes in land tenure systems and agricultural practices, further straining relationships between herders and farmers. In recent decades, violent clashes have become more frequent. For example, in the early 1990s, violent confrontations between farmers and herders occurred in communities like Muri, in former Gongola State (now Taraba), where local farmers resisted land appropriation for large-scale ranching. While these conflicts might appear to stem from long-standing ethnic and religious tensions, the relative peace between these groups in pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria suggests that contemporary factors, including the collapse of traditional systems and competition for resources, are largely to blame (Omilisu, 2016).

The effects of the farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria are profound. Since 2016, more than 3,600 people have lost their lives, and over 62,000 individuals have been displaced in the Middle Belt region alone, where the conflict is most severe. The conflicts have also had significant economic repercussions, costing Nigeria an estimated $2.3 million, or 47% of its internally generated revenue (Assessment Capacities Project Thematic Report – ACAPS, 2017). Farmers and herders alike have suffered from reduced food productivity, with crop yields and cattle herds both in decline.

The following table presents the timeline of some of the farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria:

Table 1: Farmers-Herders Conflicts in Nigeria (2015-2024)

S/N	Date	Location	Incident Details	Source
1	May 24, 2018	Yorro LGA, Taraba State	5 persons killed	This Day Live, 24th May, 2018
2	April 28, 2018	Onocha-Olona Village, Aniocha-North LGA, Delta	2 persons killed in Aniocha-Olona, 6 seriously injured in Ubulu-Uku	Daily Post, 30th April, 2018
3	April 24, 2018	St. Ignatius Quasi Parish UkporMbalom, Benue	2 catholic priests and 17 worshipers killed, 100 houses burnt down	Pulse.ng, 24th April, 2018
4	April 14 & 16, 2018	Nasarawa State	32 Tiv villagers killed, many displaced	Sun News Online, April 2018
5	April 12, 2018	Jandeikyula village, Wukari, Taraba State	25 persons killed, property worth millions destroyed	All Africa, 13th April, 2018
6	March 19, 2018	Agbenema, Omala LGA, Kogi State	Scores killed, houses burnt	YouTube
7	March 14, 2018	Ogane-Enugu and Ikende communities, Kogi State	25 persons killed, several houses burnt	New Telegraph Online, March 2018
8	March 12, 2018	EnyanwuIgwe, Izzi LGA, Ebonyi State	4 persons killed and properties destroyed	Public Eye, March 2018
9	March 8, 2018	Nzharuvo Village, Bassa, Plateau State	11 killed, 50 houses razed	Punch, 8th March, 2018
10	March 5, 2018	Okpokwu, Benue State	24 persons killed, many wounded, 20 missing	Premium Times, March 2018

11	March 3, 2018	Sardauna LGA, Taraba State	15 herdsmen killed	Sahara Reporters, March 2018
12	April 2016	Taraba State	Farm land dispute; between 15 and 44 people killed	[Ojelade, 2019]
13	January 2017	Ipiga, Ohimini LGA, Benue State	15 killed by herders	[Ojelade, 2019]
14	February 2018	Adamawa State	20 people killed by herders in attack on farmers	[Ojelade, 2019]
15	March 2018	Benue State	26 people killed as herders sack Benue village in fresh attack	[Ojelade, 2019]
16	February 11, 2019	UngwarBardi, Kajuru, Kaduna State	141 people killed, 65 missing	[Ojelade, 2019]
17	July 2020	DokaAvong, Southern Kaduna	At least 6 killed, hundreds displaced	[Ojelade, 2019]
18	August 5-6, 2020	ZangonKataf LGA, Kaduna State	At least 19 people killed	[Ojelade, 2019]
19	2015	Clashes over land resources	Jibia, Katsina	Usman, 2019
20	2017	Escalation of conflicts leading to armed banditry involving cattle rustling and kidnapping	Various locations in Katsina	BBC, 2020
21	2018	State-level conflict prevention and mitigation dialogue organized by Mercy Corps	Jibia, Batsari, Kankara, Danmusa LGAs	ThisDayLive, 2024
22	2019	Investigation of socio-ecological indices influencing farmer-herder conflicts	Northern Senatorial District, Kaduna	Usman, 2019
23	2020	Rustling of 200 cattle, more than 300 sheep and other livestock	Faskari LGA	Muhammad, 2020
24	2023	LG plans to establish grazing routes for conflict prevention	Batsari LGA, Katsina	GlobalTrackerNG, 2024
25	2024	Pledge for peace ahead of the farming season	Katsina State	DailyTrust, 2024

Source: Author's compilation, 2024

A number of efforts have been made by successive Nigerian governments to address the conflict. The Grazing Reserve Act of 1964, for example, sought to create designated

grazing areas and routes for livestock movement, but the program became defunct after the First Republic collapsed in 1966. More recent legislative efforts, such as the National Grazing Routes and Reserve Bill of 2012 and the National Grazing Reserve Bill of 2016, sought to re-establish grazing reserves but met with stiff opposition, especially from southern Nigeria, where there were fears of land seizures and ethnic domination. Similarly, the RUGA (Rural Grazing Area) initiative proposed by the Nigerian government in 2019, which aimed to settle herder families in designated areas with necessary amenities, was also rejected due to concerns about ethnic favoritism (Relief Web, 2018).

Insecurity, Food Production and National Security

Man survives only when he produces. One of the basic needs of life is food; it is a key prerequisite for the survival of all mankind (Otaha, 2013). However, food security has lingered in Nigeria mainly as a result of overdependence on the black gold "oil" which remained the mainstay of the Nigerian economy for years back. Food security is one of the pillars of UN Sustainable Development Goals. In Nigeria, the issue of food production is on the decrease despite the efforts of successive governments in initiating series of agricultural programmes and policies targeted on food security (Mary,Ndaghu, Turaki; 2024). Thus, the current crisis revealed flaws of decades of public policies in terms of inclusion and strategic management of farmers and herders clashes. It also revealed the inadequacy of national defence and security systems to the evolution of unconventional threats and criminal networks.

National security is intrinsically linked to human security and food security. Indeed, human securities at the epicenter of national security. Human security priotizes the security of the individual over that of the state, since there can be no state without its citizens. Louw and Lobbe (2017) have noted that human security primarily focuses on protecting the integral worth of people against insecurities by dealing with the circumstances that threaten the well-being and survival of the people. Thus, human security emphasizes the establishment and production of food and water security, economic and political security for the general population as critical mechanisms to achieve a more stable level of state security (Lanicci, 2017). However, there is a nuanced relationship between food production and violence that is any decrease in food production of a nation can be a source of grievances that motivate participation in protest and rebellions which undermines national security and defence just as witnessed recently in Nigeria the August 1st 2024 hunger protest. So acute and severe food insecurity has a dampening effect on conflict bahaviour, these events are increasingly being regarded as significant threats to social stability and peace by academics and policy makers (Bowa, 2011).

Insecurity as a core challenger of increased food production in Nigeria are intertwine and cyclical. Their understanding requires the intertwining of the history of several decades of alternating clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria, and fifteen years of unprecedented instability, and plural responses from States, partners and communities. However, analyses have concluded that conflicts are inevitable due to the scarce resources and the need to satisfy life of both human and animals. The frequent occurrence of conflicts, clashes between farmers and herders, repeated incidents of banditry, kidnappings, destruction of food harvests, climate change, and challenges in governance have significantly contributed to the continuous decline in food production in Nigeria. North Central and North West region were most of the country's food are coming from are major theatres of this insecurity, especially the farmer and herder conflicts. To recall a few incidences Vanguard (2024) reports that, in 2016 the suspected Fulani herders invaded the Agatu Local government area of Benue State and killed an estimated 500 persons. It further added on the eve of Christmas 2023, about 50 villages in Bokkos, Mangu and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas of Plateau State were visited with a crushing bloodbath by terrorist gunmen this attack lasted for

three days, and the houses numbering over 221, farmlands and several vehicles were also set ablaze. Thus, Vanguard noted that between 2017 and 2020, alone suspected Fulani attackers were reported to have carried out 654 attacks and killed 2539 Nigerians (Vanguard, 2024).

Furthermore, serial targeted mass killings have also continued in the North Central States, especially Benue and Plateau states, including in 2021 attack on Bassa Local Government Area that left 17 dead and the 2022 attack in Puka and Dinter Local Government which led to 7 persons dead. The conflict between herders (nomadic and semi-nomadic Fulani pastoralists) and Farmers (non-Fulani agrarian communities) has routinely occurred in Nigeria for over century. It has claimed more lives than terrorism in Africa and poses a great challenge to human safety and food production. Insecurity has threatened Food production in Nigeria largely due to the farmer-herder clashes, the contribution of agriculture to Nigeria's GDP dropped by 40% from US$113.64 billion in 2013 to US$78.45 billion in 2017 to US$60 billion in 2023 (NFIO, ReportLinker, 2022-2026). Meanwhile, at least 10,000 displaced persons from the several affected communities in the North Central are in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps (Vanguard, 2024). This crisis has prevented many farmers and households from accessing their farmlands, leading to reduced food production, widespread malnutrition, poverty and a breakdown of law and order, further put a lot of Nigerians into sever food insecurity.

Similarly, Statista Research Department (2024) reports that livestock production as a source of food security in Nigeria contributes around 2.3 percent to the national GDP and around 10 percent to the agriculture value added. Estimates indicate that Nigeria's national herd comprises 18.4 million cattle, 43.4 million sheep, 76 million goats and 180 million poultry (FMARD, 2017). Meanwhile, the National Bureau of Statistics has revealed that Ebonyi, Jigawa and Benue states have the highest percentage of crop, livestock and poultry agricultural farming households, (NBS, 2024). But with the current insecurity situation the states especially Benue and Jigawa experienced significant decreases. Nigeria consumes about 1.5 million tons of chicken annually but produces only 30% locally, as a result of production deficit in the chicken market, Nigeria loses about N600 billion annually (the Guardian, 2017)

However, cattle rustling have become one of the major drivers of farmer/herder conflict in Nigeria. Okoli and Okpaleke (2014) reported that Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) claimed that a total of 322 herders were killed while over 60,000 cows were rustled in 2013 in Benue, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Niger, Plateau, Taraba and Zamfara states. Shehu et al. (2017) estimated that 1,798 cattle were rustled while 60 herdsmen were killed in Katsina state in 2017 alone and 168 deaths in Junuary 2018, Amnesty International (2018). Thus Nigeria is said to be losing an average of $13.7 billion annually to the farmer-herder conflict (Business Day, 2015). According to Global Initiative (2023) cattle rustling in Nigeria have evolved from a sustainable community practice into a significant illicit economy, delivering material profits to conflict actors and multiplying harms. Since 2011, the country has experienced a surge in the number of rustling incidents, resulting in thousands of deaths, loss of livelihoods, widespread destruction and displacement of people. This has had a debilitating impact on the country's food production. In Nigeria's North-West and North-Central regions, in particular, cattle rustling have contributed to growing instability by increasing levels of violent crime (Madueke, 2023). Cattle raid led to the reduction of income of the cattle owners which has adversely affected their socio-economic well-being and that of the country's national security. This is because herdsmen were forced to either sell or have their cattle forcefully confiscated by bandits. The government is reported to be losing billions of naira due to the menace, as a result of unremitted revenues and the illegal trade of rustled animals in the black market.

Conclusion

It appears from the above issues in security and developments that the vulnerability of food production in Nigeria has been built over time, due to the reoccurrence of farmers and herder's clashes and the emerging insecurity issues like banditry, kidnapping, burning of food harvest, tax imposition by bandits and cattle rustling. This has led to increased food insecurity and poverty, particularly in the agricultural regions of North Central and North West Nigeria. Governance gaps, weak state presence, weak national security strategy and the fragilities of state peace building mechanisms systems have exacerbated these issues, allowing criminal networks and informal systems to thrive. The absence of strong security frameworks has left many communities vulnerable. Food productions remain the backbone for the survival of every State and its citizens, the economic loss from these conflicts is substantial, with billions lost annually due to reduced agricultural output, cattle rustling, and the destruction of farmlands. The human toll includes mass displacement, loss of livelihoods, and diminished socio-economic well-being. While bad policies and environmental factors have contributed to the escalation of violence between farmers and herders, mitigating this conflict is essential for the well-being of the affected populations as well as for the stability and food production prosperity of the country as a whole.

Recommendations

Looking forward, a pragmatic approach is required to resolve the conflict between herders and farmers in Nigeria. Human security must be giving utmost priority, our security forces must be proactive rather than reactive especially in farmers and herders conflict prone states, intelligence gathering and synergy between and amongst security forces are encourage. Engaging traditional rulers and local stakeholders in security and decisions making processes, these leaders often have better knowledge of local dynamics and can mediate conflicts effectively. Leaders in conflict-prone areas have expressed frustration with being excluded from decision-making processes, and involving them could lead to more effective solutions. Finally, Modernizing agricultural and livestock practices, Nigeria can foster peaceful coexistence between herders and farmers. As the demand for land intensifies due to population growth, traditional methods of farming and cattle herding have become unsustainable. Modernizing agricultural practices, such as the use of ranches for cattle herding, could reduce the need for herders to migrate in search of pasture and help mitigate conflicts over land.

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UNDERSTANDING THE FARMERS AND HERDSMEN CONFLICT IN GUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BENUE STATE: A POLITICAL ECONOMY APPROACH

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Abstract
The 21st Century heralded an upsurge of violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen, especially in the Central part of Nigeria. The economic potential of this region for both farming and herding attracted herders from other ecological zones, leading to heightened competition for land and resources. This study employed the Marxist Political Economy approach, particularly the theories of dialectical historical materialism, to examine the socio-economic roots of this conflict, emphasizing the role of land as a material base essential for the subsistence and economic development of rural communities. This study framed the farmer-herder conflict as a class struggle over control of land—a material resource crucial for survival. Data were collected through In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions with targeted respondents. Findings suggested that neo-liberal policies from the 1960s to the 1990s, which encouraged the propertied class to acquire more land and livestock, the expansion of agricultural policies, shifts in land tenure systems, and the impact of climate change were significant long-term causes of these conflicts. Immediate causes included crop damage, cattle raids, political influence, and aggressive actions by hirelings. Finally, this research suggested a ranching system as a viable solution to the farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria.
Keywords: Conflict, Land, Farmers, Herdsmen, Agriculture, Development

Introduction

Land in Nigeria, as across much of Africa, is not only a critical resource for survival but also a major source of income and a deeply significant cultural asset. Rural populations depend on it for their livelihoods, and it carries profound ancestral value, connecting families to their heritage and identity. Access to land involves more than its productive use; it also reflects power relations and symbolic meanings within society. As Odgaard (2006) explains, land has historical and cultural importance that often fuels disputes over its use and ownership.

Over time, increasing population pressures, environmental challenges, and changes in rural land use patterns have reduced the availability of pasture and water for livestock. This scarcity has forced Fulani herders to migrate from traditional grazing areas in the Sudan and Sahel savannah belts toward the central, southern, and western regions of Nigeria. Historically, these regions supported coexistence between minimal crop farming and herding. However, the commoditization of land and the introduction of irrigation farming in northern Nigeria have limited access to grazing lands, particularly along riverbanks. This has prompted herders to migrate southward, including to the Benue Valley, in search of better resources for their livestock.

In Guma Local Government Area, part of Benue State, this migration has created heightened competition for land between Fulani herders and sedentary Tiv farmers. The Fulani herders' free-range system leads them to move during the dry season (November to April) to areas like Guma, which provide pasture and water. While there was a history of peaceful coexistence, with conflicts resolved locally and amicably, recent decades have seen a significant shift. The conflicts have escalated into widespread, spontaneous, and destructive violence, leading to substantial loss of lives, destruction of property, and reduced agricultural output. This has exacerbated food insecurity and social unrest in the region. The conflicts between farmers and herders in Benue State have escalated into widespread, spontaneous, and destructive violence, leading to substantial loss of lives, destruction of properties, and reduced agricultural output. According to the Benue State Government, over 1,500 people have been killed in the past five years due to these clashes (Benue State Government, 2023). Furthermore, it is estimated that tens of thousands of homes have been destroyed, with over 200,000 people displaced from their homes (International Organization for Migration, 2023). The ongoing violence has also led to a significant decline in agricultural productivity, exacerbating food insecurity, which has affected over 1.5 million people in the region (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2024). This situation has contributed to rising social unrest and instability in the affected communities.

This research seeks to understand the factors driving these conflicts. Key issues include land tenure policies that often disenfranchise local populations, shifts in traditional power structures that disrupt historical conflict resolution mechanisms, political interference that aggravates tensions, and environmental pressures that force competition over scarce resources. The violence has had severe impacts on agricultural productivity in Guma, with farmers abandoning their lands, reduced crop yields, and entire communities being displaced. This instability not only disrupts local economies but also undermines long-term development goals.

Theoretical Framework

The Political Economy Approach and Marxist Dialectical Historical Materialism provide essential frameworks for examining the farmers-herders conflict in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. These theories delve into how economic structures, material conditions, and class relations underpin societal dynamics and conflicts. The Political Economy Approach, grounded in the works of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and later Karl Marx, views the economy as the foundation of society's political and social structures. Marx argued that the "economic base"—the system of production and ownership—determines societal relations and institutions (Marx, 1859). In A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859), Marx explained that legal and political structures are shaped by material conditions and the mode of production.

Ake (1981) reinforced this by noting the primacy of economic needs in shaping human activities and identities. This is to say, economic struggles, such as access to land, are central to human existence, as people often define themselves by their roles in economic production, such as farmers or herders. This highlights the material basis of identity and conflict in rural communities like Guma. Marxist Dialectical Historical Materialism complements this by exploring how historical conflicts arise from contradictions within the economic system. According to Marx, these contradictions drive societal change through class struggle, often linked to material inequalities. For instance, as land becomes increasingly scarce due to population growth, environmental degradation, and migration, conflicts over its control intensify.

As it applies to Guma LGA, this theoretical lens reveals the conflict as a struggle between two groups with opposing economic needs. Farmers depend on land for crop cultivation and survival, while herders rely on it for grazing livestock. Both groups view land

as vital to their livelihoods, but their competing uses create inevitable friction. Ake (1988) underscores that such conflicts are not random but stem from systemic economic inequalities embedded in broader political and historical contexts. The Political Economy Approach situates this conflict within the structural dynamics of Nigeria's rural economy. Historically, Benue State's agrarian communities have depended on land for subsistence farming, while herding traditionally thrived in the north. However, environmental pressures and changing policies have forced herders southward, exacerbating competition for land. This economic and ecological restructuring disrupts agricultural productivity, displaces farmers, and fuels violent clashes. Marx's insights into historical materialism illuminate the structural roots of this tension. The ownership and control of land—the economic base—shape societal relations, making land disputes an expression of broader class contradictions. As Marx (1859) observed, the economic base influences the "superstructure" of society, meaning conflicts over land reflect deeper systemic issues.

Research Method

This study adopted a qualitative approach, utilizing oral, face-to-face interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and secondary sources to collect data. The interviews were semi-structured and aimed at gathering detailed insights directly from respondents. FGDs were used to supplement the interviews, providing collective perspectives and validating individual responses. Each FGD session lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and comprised 6–10 participants grouped by demographic categories such as elders, farmers, youth, women, and teachers.

The study focused on Guma Local Government Area in Benue State, with data collected from six of its ten council wards: Saghev, Nyiev, Mbabai, Mbawa, Mbayeyandev, and Yogbo. One village from each ward was selected using a list of conflict-affected areas provided by the Benue State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (2018). Participants were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. This method was specifically selected to target individuals with deep knowledge and firsthand experiences of the farmer-herder conflict, including those who had served on mediation committees or possessed historical understanding passed down through generations. Responses were audio-recorded with the consent of participants, then transcribed for analysis. However, the study faced limitations, particularly the inability to include herders due to security concerns and language barriers. This exclusion, while necessary for safety, might be interpreted as potential bias and is acknowledged as a limitation of the study. Despite this, the perspectives of the selected respondents, who had direct experiences and roles in mediating the conflict, provided substantial and reliable insights into the dynamics of the farmer-herder conflict.

Historical Dynamics, Underlying Factors, and Root Causes of the Conflict in Guma Local Government Area, Benue State: Impacts on Agricultural Development

The historical relationship between the Tiv people and the Fulani herdsmen in Benue State has been one of cooperation, mutual respect, and shared understanding. According to tradition, the two groups coexisted peacefully for over a hundred years, even before the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1803. Their relationship was based on kinship, where practices like sharing goods, including cattle, were governed by mutual respect and agreements. The "cow debt theory" and other cultural tales, such as the exchange of fire-damaged items, illustrate the deep interdependence between the groups. The Tiv and Fulani were seen as brothers, bound by historical interactions that fostered a unique form of understanding. Despite occasional tensions, these groups relied on each other for trade and shared resources, reinforcing their long-standing bond. Even today, the "munchi" story remains a symbol of this relationship, reflecting both the harmony and the challenges they

have faced together over time (Unongo, 2017; Women Environmental Programme, 2020). A group of respondents in Guma Local Government Area reflected this understanding, emphasizing how these connections fostered reciprocity and strengthened their interactions over time. They stated;

> Prior to independence, there existed no conflict between the farmers and herdsmen. Previously, the herdsmen only visited the area during dry seasons up to the period (April) which marked the commencement of farming seasons where they would move up North to allow the farmers to farm. After harvesting, the herdsmen would return back with their cattle' to graze on the remaining grass and plants. To substantiate my argument, during the peaceful olden times, whenever the herdsmen celebrated 'Biki', after slaughtering and preparing rice, we would be invited to make merry with them, which we did happily. Their wives and daughters frequently visited our homes to grind their maize, corn and other things with our wives grinding stones. We also exchanged our millet for their "nunu". There was no conflict; such were the nature of our relations. It was when they wanted to show us that they own our land and, therefore, will dictate to us what to do that the problem arose. (Focused Group Discussion, 2024)

The historical relationship between farmers and herdsmen in Africa was once harmonious, marked by equitable resource sharing under communal land systems. However, neoliberal policies like Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in the 1980s and 1990s disrupted this balance. These reforms privatized communal resources, leading to land scarcity as elites acquired significant tracts, leaving smallholder farmers and herders marginalized. This economic restructuring intensified class struggles and resource competition, fueling conflicts. While religion and ethnicity are often used to frame these disputes in Nigeria, economic inequalities and land ownership remain the root causes. Sensational narratives and political manipulation amplify tensions, but in localized contexts, such as the one studied, respondents affirm that the conflict is fundamentally about land, not religion or ethnicity. Despite the complex socio-political backdrop, the primary driver of these clashes remains economic in nature, specifically the struggle over access to diminishing land resources. Some respondents in Mbawa stated;

> Those who make such allegations may say that because of what they are experiencing in their places coupled with the reaction and proclamation of the herdsmen. Here, when we talk of Guma Local Government Area, our problem with the herdsmen is that the herdsmen we see today are strange and alien to us. The herdsmen we had dealings with in the past always informed us about their intentions i.e. where there intend to visit for grazing etc. Their movements were made known to us. Today, they would move to "Fiena", from there, they would travel to Angwer and later return to us. In this way, the same herdsmen whom we saw yesterday and, familiar with, followed this circle of movement which we were comfortable with. During the rainy season, he would take his cows and leave in order to enable you farm without worry and, after the harvesting season, the same herdsman would return with his family and cattle seeking permission from you to allow him to settle on your land with his family and feed his cattle. Again, he would only settle and graze where you have shown him. But now, we don't even know the current herdsmen who choose to settle wherever they deem fit without our consent. So, for some us, even if it is Jihad, we don't know because since we haven't experienced Jihad in these parts, we cannot say that it is a religions war. (Focused Group Discussion, 2024).

Closely related to the above assertion, one of the respondents, (Bernard Ishor, Male, 59 years, 30th October 2024, Daudu) added that;

> It is not Jihad! Typically, once you have a squabble with Fulani herdsmen, even if you are a Muslim, he does not care in so far as it concerns his cows. Why I say this is that, even the Hausa, their Muslim brothers- four of them- who live and sell cows here were lured into the bush by these herdsmen and cut with machetes simply because they were unable to pay the meat collected from them on credit. So, if it was Jihad, I don't think they would cut their own brothers. (Interview, 2024).

While it was agreed that the conflict between farmers and herdsmen is largely economic and centered on land, it was observed that some individuals exploit the resulting insecurity for personal gain, such as looting and theft, which further inflames tensions. A significant factor contributing to the conflict is the increase in cattle ownership by the ruling and bureaucratic classes. These elites often employ youths, referred to as "hirelings" or "small boys," to manage their growing herds. These hirelings, driven by monetary incentives, lack the responsibility and reliability of the original herdsmen, who had a personal stake in maintaining peaceful relations with farming communities. Expatiating and substantiating this claim, one of the respondents (Moses Atem, Male, 48 years, 30 October 2024, Daudu) stated;

> These cattle do not exclusively belong to them. Most of these cattle belong to prominent Hausa-Fulani sons. It is this wealthy individual that entrust into their herds these cattle for up keeping. We say this because average herdsmen cannot rear up to 300 or 400 cattle alone. The cattle also belong to their friends, also. If you want to verify the truth of what we are saying, if you look critically at the hirelings rearing the cattle now, you will notice that they are not Fulanis nor do they even understand the common Hausa language spoken by the herdsmen who came to these parts. These boys sniff drugs and carry sophisticated weapons around. Not only this, they are very ill tempered. (Interview, 2024).

It must be stated that the organization of resources to maximize one's gains in a conflict is not restricted to the herdsmen alone but also applies to the farmers. Most respondents interviewed preferred to describe this as a defense against the herdsmen's incursions. However, there are two divergent views regarding the sponsors and motivations behind the farmers' organization of defense, which I shall present below. A respondent from Saghev (Sam Kwende, Male, 69 years, 21 June 2024)

> They are not really paid by the farmers..... The efforts of the government (past executive governors) are enjoyed by our people by providing bullets and guns to those who choose to fight. (Interview, 2024).

However, contrary to this view, one of the respondents (Peter Ishor, Male, 45 years, Daudu, 18 August 2024) argued that:

> The farmers do not fight or go to war. In general terms, a Tiv farmer man is a very humble person. There has never been a period when farmers or the youths organized themselves to fight without being provoked in the first instance. The herdsmen have pushed us to the edge. If someone comes to your house and tries to kill you and your entire family, will you still sit and sleep comfortability? No! Definitely, you must rise to defend yourself. For instance, on the day they (herdsmen) attached Daudu, to be precise, on the 7th March 2014, most of the youths here stood up in defense of their people and land because they felt something had to be done least they would be driven out of their lands. (Interview, 2024).

The traditional institution in Nigeria, like other colonial systems, works in collaboration with the propertied class, often at the expense of the peasant farmers. Traditional rulers, by granting herdsmen permission to settle on farmland, accumulate wealth, leading to conflicts over land ownership. These practices, endorsed by both traditional rulers and the ruling class,

allow herdsmen to claim large areas of farmland, which results in clashes with farmers. In some cases, such as the actions of the late Tor Tiv, HRH Dr. Alfred Akawe Torkula, this system has led to significant loss of life and property.

> The Late Tor Tiv, HRH. Dr. Alfred Alkawe Torkula, directed the people to allow the Fulani herdsmen to settle among them provided that they would settle the farmers or land owners. (Focused Group Discussion, 2024).

The result of this submission is that most of the communities which the traditional rulers received money or gift-if one must be economical with words- without the knowledge or consent of the entire people, constitute the most conflict-ridden areas in Benue State. For instance, it was argued by one of the respondents (Orkulan, Male, 57 years, Yogbo, 1 November 2024) that;

> It is true that the traditional rulers collected money from the herdsmen. In my council ward (Mbayeyandev), Zaki Gbogyo collected money from them and Zaki Nege in Makurdi L.G.A. There are the two heads that collected money from the herdsmen. However, other rulers like Mbakaan and Njuka refused to collect their money. This explains why the herdsmen did not attack their communities. (Interview, 2024).

The herdsmen mostly attacked villages which they felt the traditional rulers had betrayed their arrangement and, since the main targets of their attacks were the traditional rulers, on occasion of their absence, they visited their wrath on the peasant farmers. This explains why one of the respondents (John Lawrence, Male, 33 years, Nyiev, 15 July 2024) asserted that

> Even up till now, most of the traditional rulers are residing in Makurdi, they are yet to return back to their domains for fear of their lives. (Interview, 2024).

Even though some form of peace has been reached between farmers and herdsmen, it is important to note that the conflicts between farmers and herders in Benue State, particularly in Guma Local Government Area (LGA), had disastrous effects on livelihoods, agriculture, and security. Recent data reveals that more than 600,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are currently living in camps across the state, including in Daudu, Umenger, and Gbajimba, under deplorable conditions with inadequate access to food, water, and healthcare (National Emergency Management Agency, 2023; Benue State Government, 2023). Agriculture, a primary source of livelihood for the region, was severely disrupted. Farmers abandoned their fields due to incessant attacks, leading to reduced crop yields and food shortages.

From 2020 to 2023, it is reported that more than 1,500 people were killed in attacks attributed to armed herders, with Guma being one of the worst-affected areas. Prior to 2023, the conflict worsened following the implementation of the anti-open grazing law in Benue State, which herders opposed as detrimental to their livelihoods (Benue State Government, 2023). Though some peace has been reached, the conflict in Guma Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue State profoundly affected agricultural development in the region, disrupting its role as Nigeria's "food basket." This is premised on the fact that the main stay of their economy, farms-*referred to as 'indomie' by the herdsmen- was eaten by the cows* (Focused Group Discussion 2024). Guma, like much of Benue, is heavily reliant on agriculture for subsistence and economic activity, with crops like yam, cassava, maize, rice, and sorghum being significant outputs (Ezeibe et al., 2017; Hembe et al., 2019). However, persistent violence between herders and farmers drastically curtailed farming activities. This violence stems largely from disputes over land use and grazing rights, exacerbated by environmental

challenges such as desertification in northern Nigeria, which has pushed herders southward (Odo, 2020). The displacement of farmers is one of the most visible impacts. Thousands of residents have been forced into Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, leaving their farms abandoned. This displacement has caused significant declines in agricultural productivity, with substantial losses in crop yields. For instance, Hembe et al. (2019) found that staple food production in conflict-affected areas like Guma has dropped by over 50% in some years, contributing to food shortages not just locally but across Nigeria. This disruption extends to livestock farming, as cattle theft, destruction of grazing land, and loss of herds during attacks have reduced meat and milk production, further straining local economies (Adeleke et al., 2021).The conflict also disrupts access to essential agricultural inputs and markets.

Before 2023, despite efforts by both state and federal governments to address the persistent conflict between farmers and herders in Guma Local Government Area and other affected regions of Benue State, the crisis continued to escalate. President Muhammadu Buhari, a Fulani man, faced significant criticism, with accusations of being indifferent to the killings perpetrated by herders, many of whom share his ethnic background. Critics argue that his administration failed to adopt stringent measures against the herders, leading to heightened political tensions before the February 2019 elections. Protests in Makurdi, the Benue State capital, saw thousands of mourners clad in black, waving wreaths and banners with inscriptions like “President act now: your people are killing us”, as coffins carrying victims from rural communities were paraded during mass burials.

The Federal Government introduced several measures to curb the violence. At the height of the conflict, former President Buhari directed the Inspector General of Police to relocate to Benue State and launched a special military operation, Ayem a Kpatuma (Cat Race), aimed at restoring peace and order while apprehending perpetrators of the attacks. However, the operation was widely criticized for yielding minimal results, with reports of continued sporadic attacks and destruction in the affected communities. On the legislative front, the Federal Government proposed the National Grazing Commission Bill to establish and regulate national grazing reserves and livestock routes. This bill was meant to provide a lasting solution by formalizing grazing routes, but it faced vehement opposition from groups such as the Pan-Yoruba socio-political organization, Afenifere. The group argued that the bill was pro-Fulani herders and anti-peasant farmers, as it contravened the Land Use Act and traditional land ownership practices. Similarly, the Federal Government’s proposal to introduce cattle colonies was met with stiff resistance from states, particularly those directly affected by the violence. Many saw the measure as favoring herders while undermining the rights of local landowners.

Efforts by the Buhari administration include the establishment of the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP), which aims to modernize livestock farming through ranching while addressing the root causes of the conflict, such as competition over land and water resources. The plan emphasized collaboration with state governments to provide alternatives to open grazing. While the initiative was implemented in some pilot states, progress has been slow, with limited adoption in affected areas like Benue due to political resistance and logistical challenges. Overall, government's responses—though significant on paper—were largely inadequate in practice. Most respondents agreed that confined grazing systems, where grass is supplied to herders within designated spaces, might be the best solution to the conflict. One of the reasons stated;

> Provision should be made for the herdsmen to graze within a confined environment. This is because, considering the expansion of farming activities and increase in the

> number of cattles, the two occupation can never be in harmony if allowed to operate in a free range. (Focused Group Discussion, 2024).

After Governor Hyacinth of the All Progressives Congress (APC) assumed office in 2023, the farmer-herder conflict in Guma Local Government Area (LGA) significantly decreased. Since his swearing-in, no new attacks have been reported. Respondents attributed this to a peace meeting between the herders and farmers, during which both sides, worn down by prolonged conflict, agreed to put an end to the violence. This agreement fostered a calmer environment, encouraging internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly younger individuals, to return to their farmlands and resume farming activities. One of the respondents, (Bernard Ishor, Male, 59 years, 27th November 2024, Daudu) noted;

> This year, 2024, there has been no attack. Since a new state government was elected and sworn in, in May 2023, we have not experienced any attacks from the herdsmen. The Fulani herdsmen are currently with us here, and their wives are also trading *nunu* with us. People are also returning to their ancestral lands. Even in places where people dared not reach, like Mbagwem and Utyondo, people have returned and commenced minimal farming activities. Although many people are still living in camps because they have nowhere to return to, having lost all their properties and even relations. However, as far as Guma LGA is concerned now, there have been no devastating attacks. It is important I tell you that the herdsmen who are in our midst now are not the mercenaries or militia who attacked us. It is the original owners of the cows who have returned because, just like us, they also became tired of fighting, as conflict is expensive. Though they are no longer intentionally destroying our crops as before, there are still cases where their cows destroy and eat crops. In such instances, they are compelled by the police to pay *barana* or compensation. (Response from interview, 2024).

The current peace in Guma LGA is indeed precarious and reflects a temporary lull rather than a sustainable resolution to the conflict between farmers and herdsmen. This situation arises from unresolved underlying issues, particularly the competition for land, which is vital for both farming and cattle grazing. While the absence of attacks might suggest progress, the dynamics of land use and population growth among both groups signal the likelihood of renewed tensions. From a political perspective, such peace accords, while valuable for immediate relief, fail to address the root causes of the conflict. Historically, similar agreements have broken down once the demand for land increased, especially as farmers expanded their agricultural activities or when herdsmen needed more grazing territory. With many displaced farmers still residing in camps, their eventual return will intensify the competition for land, leading to inevitable clashes. This cyclic nature of conflict underscores that the current peace is not a solution but a reprieve.

To establish long-term peace and prevent future conflicts, the government must adopt proactive policies. A key recommendation is the implementation of a ranching system. Ranching would confine cattle grazing to designated areas, reducing encroachments on farmland and minimizing direct competition between the two groups. Such a system would not only mitigate conflict but also enhance agricultural productivity and livestock management. Despite failures in Nigeria, ranching has seen success in several African nations. Ethiopia enhanced livestock productivity with tailored policies, animal health services, and marketing structures. Mali improved cattle productivity through selective breeding and infrastructure investments. South Africa integrated small-scale farmers with

strong private sector support, while Uganda transformed its dairy industry through the Dairy Master Plan. Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Ghana, Niger, and Mali advanced livestock improvement through research-focused ranches, promoting indigenous breeds like N'Dama, Lagunaire, and Azawak zebu. These efforts have bolstered economic opportunities and food security. These examples illustrate how ranching systems and associated reforms, when implemented strategically, can enhance livestock productivity, reduce resource-based conflicts, and support economic development in various African contexts. Nigeria can also copy from these countries to address resource use conflicts in Nigeria.

The implementation of ranching in Nigeria is controversial, raising concerns about land acquisition, fairness, and environmental impact. Past initiatives like grazing colonies and RUGA failed due to perceptions of favoritism toward Fulani herdsmen and inadequate stakeholder involvement. To succeed, ranching must operate as a commercial enterprise, with government support through loans and incentives, rather than being imposed. Ensuring fairness and avoiding the use of national funds to benefit specific groups is essential to address distrust and prevent further conflicts in affected communities.

The idea of government-funded ranches for Fulani herders raises concerns about fairness, as it would single out one ethnic group's occupation over others. Critics argue that such initiatives would deepen divisions and create tensions. Instead, government support should focus on facilitating access to loans and grants for herders through financial institutions to enable them erect ranches or group ranches as currently practiced in Ghana. Past livestock schemes have failed due to a lack of local involvement of traditional knowledge or expertise and the imposition of foreign models. Collaboration and education for both herders, farmers and the public are essential for successful and sustainable ranching solutions, fostering harmony and reducing conflict.

Conclusion

The conflict between farmers and herders, often mischaracterized as religious or ethnic, fundamentally stems from competition over land and resources. The struggle for land as a central factor has caused distrust and strained relations between the two groups, disrupting agricultural development in affected areas. Through the Marxist political economy perspective, the conflict is understood as an inevitable clash of opposing interests within a shared environment, emphasizing land as the material basis of the violence.

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AN ANALYSIS OF EXECUTIVE-LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS IN THE BUDGET PROCESS ON GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA, (2015 TO 2019)

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Abstract

When it comes to the budgeting process, the executive and the legislative arms of government usually have harmonious or conflictual relationships in any presidential democracy. This is because each institution exercises its power by the constitution's provisions. Therefore, this paper examines the impact of executive-legislative relations on Nigeria's budgeting from 2015 to 2019. The paper adopts institutional conflicts theory to analyze the major factors responsible for the conflictual relationship between the executive and legislative on budgeting in Nigeria. The study utilized secondary sources such as newspapers, journals, and internet materials to discuss the major issues in the study. However, the paper discovered that party differences in the 2015 National Assembly leadership election were responsible for the conflictual executive-legislative relationship. This resulted in budget padding and delay in the passage and implementation of the budget in 2015-2019. It also revealed that fear of control and domination between the two arms of government is the primary cause of the conflictual executive-legislative relations. This led to a huge cut of projects by the National Assembly in the administration under study. This paper recommends that Nigerian executive and legislative institutions prepare a budget to address Nigerians' needs. This would reduce the level of their political engagement in budgeting. Internal democracy should be used to address all grievances and divided interests within a political party.

Keywords: Executive-Legislative Relation, Budgeting, Democratic Government, Separation of power and Good Governance

Introduction

The term budget becomes a major source of political antagonism between the executive and legislative arms in modern democracies. This is because it determines and shapes the economy of a nation. This makes budgeting a cornerstone for any successful governance because all government activities are inextricably bound up with the annual budget of a democratic government, without this, the public policy of the executive arm of government cannot be implemented or achieved (Ekpu and Iweoha,2017). The executive and legislature are the major actors and their relationship determines the success or failure of the annual budget of a nation. In this case, Posner and Park, (2007) state that the relationship between the two arms of government could be either conflictual or cooperative due to the overlapping functions and power based on the doctrine of separation of power. In this regard, Emeka &

Michael (2016) state that a cordial relationship between the executive and legislative arms of government promotes state effectiveness on security, employment opportunities, maintenance of law and order, and the management of the state economy, in terms of monitoring the economy, businesses, and banks and issuing money. It also gives room for the promotion and protection of the rule of law, transparency, accountability, and checks and balances in government (Paul, 2018).

Given this, Muhammed and Kinge (2015), Ekpu and Iweoha (2017), and Adibe and Mbaegb (2017) stressed that conflictual relationship occurs between the executive and legislative arms in many democratic governments based on a wrong appreciation of the institutional role and responsibility between two arms laid down by the constitution of a country. Nigeria for instance, the constitution sufficiently spelled out the basis for the functional relation of the two arms in the budgeting process but in reality, the situation is in contrast (Muhammed and Kinge, 2015). This is because the doctrine of separation of power advocates for overlapping power and functions of these arms on budget processing which cannot be removed if there has to be checks and balances and effective governance in the country (Posner and Park,2007). As a result of this overlapping power between the two arms of government, the legislative power on a budget is a distinctive mark of a country's sovereignty because the sovereign power of a state relies on the organ that has the power to make law and issue command on government activities. This is because law validly made by this organ is a source of executive power, and without it, the executive function cannot be performed (Obidimma and Obidimma,2015).

In another relation, Obidimma and Obidimma, (2015) argued that legislatures are selfish politicians who help themselves with public resources and pursue individual, constituency, or political party's interest, not national interest in the budgeting. The executive arm of government constitutes non-elected members or politicians, who cannot understand the needs of the people like legislatures because they are elected representatives who represent the interests of the people in their various constituencies (Obidimma and Obidimma,2015). Based on the above argument, the paper seeks to examine the impact of executive-legislative relations on budgeting between 2015 and 2019 on governance.

Conceptual Clarification

Budgeting: the term budget is described as a fundamental tool for planning and controlling scarce resources of the state. It is also a document that explains formal plans, goals, and objectives that cover all aspects of government for a designated period (Posner and Park,2007).

Executive: This is an arm of government that is responsible for the daily administration of a country. It is also referred to as 'the government because it carries out its policies, implements the laws passed by the legislature, and ensures that decisions of the judiciary are implemented. The doctrine of separation of power in a democratic government creates harmonious working relations among the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. However, each branch checks the power of the other two so that there is a balance of power between them. The executive operates at three levels of government: the national, provincial, and local levels. All of these levels of government have executive authority in their spheres (www.civicsacadem.2024)

Legislature: Legislature refers to the arm of government consisting of an elected assembly of people whose role is to make, review, and repeal laws for the good and well–being of the society as well as serve as a watchdog on the activities of other arms of government.

Methodology.

The paper adopts a qualitative method to analyze the impact of executive-legislative relations on budgeting on governance between the 2015 and 2019 administrations. This consists of non–numerical data such as budget documents in the years under study. Therefore, secondary sources of data collection were used which include newspapers, journals, and internet materials to discuss the major issues in the study

Theoretical Framework: Institutional Conflicts Theory

The paper adopted institutional conflict theory to explain the conflictual relationship between the executive – and legislative relationship on budgeting during President Buhari's administration 2015- 2019. The theory was propounded by Schmidt (2006), It emphasizes the state as a structure of interest within which rational actors follow in competition over scarce resources in the heart of all social relations. The theory also focuses on the relations among the levels of government, the implementation of which the pursuit of interest causes different types of conflicts in the normal life of the citizens (Osakede and Adesanya (2017). In this case, the theory believes that conflict arises when executive-legislative pursue incompatible goals and this makes conflicts inevitable in the cause of performing the constitutional responsibilities in the state. Osakede and Adesanya (2017) maintain that an institutional conflict also arises in the state when resources, status, and power are unevenly distributed between the levels of government, and that these conflicts become the engine for social change. This is because conflicts exist whenever incompatible activities occur in a society and cause injuries to other groups.

However, the central focus of this theory makes us understand why the executive-legislative relation on budget under the Buhari administration in 2015 – 2019 was conflict and how it resulted in the highest rate of budget padding, corruption, and division along the political line. This led to poor policy formulation and implementation on budgeting that resulted in poor governance in the above administration as a result of leadership tussle at the national assembly**.**

Budgeting in the Democratic System of Government

Democracy cannot achieve its objectives in a particular country without good budgeting. This is because budgeting in any system of government is a fundamental tool for planning and controlling scarce resources of the state. It is an important document of government that explains formal plans, goals, and objectives that cover all aspects of government for a designated period (Egbide and Agbude 2012). This makes the budget to be the most important piece of legislation that constitutionally bridged the gap between the legislature and executive arms of government in a country like Nigeria.

However, in the budgeting process, the executive and legislature are major actors but their roles and functions vary from nation to nation based on the type of government that a particular nation operates.

(NDI, 2003). In this regard, Posner and Parker in Muhammed and Kinge, (2015) point out that in a presidential system, the executive and legislative play different roles in the budget process based on the doctrine of separation of power whereby the legislative and executive powers are shared between two arms whose principal officers are elected. In this system, the legislature makes laws, including appropriation laws while the executive, through its several agencies, translates such laws into concrete actions and programs (NDI, 2003). In the same vein, Ekpu and Iweoha (2017) state that the executive has the primary role in developing an

annual budget and presenting it to the legislature while the legislature has the legal power to amend, monitor, oversee, and supervise the executive arm not only to ensure the implementation of budget but to ensure that the legislations are properly executed in the presidential system (Posner and Park, 2007). In order words, Ekpu and Iweoha (2017) stress that the executive-legislative role in the budget process in the parliamentary system is quite different from that of the presidential system whereby legislative power resides on a popularly elected parliament, composed of one or two chambers. In this system, the majority party, or a coalition of parties, agrees to form a government of the day and there is to some extent fusion of executive and legislative powers. However, the power to amend executive budget proposals is commonly considered as a vote of no confidence in the cabinet (Posner and Park, 2007).

Going by the above submission, it is not out of point to state that the supremacy tussle between the executive and legislature over budgeting in most democratic countries, begins in a situation whereby the two arms of government struggle to find an equitable balance of power over financial matters, particularly annual budget of a government, despite the principle of separation of power in a democratic nation. This is in line with the positions of Posner and Park, (2007) and Ekpu and Iweoha (2017) that one of the areas of friction between legislature- executive role in the budget process is a misconception of the constitutional responsibilities of the executive and the legislature in government. In this case, Posner and Park, (2007) argued that in a presidential - separation-of-power system, the legislature plays a significant role in policy formulation and budgeting. This is because they are elected independently by their constituencies which are different from the president. As a result of this, it is argued that the executive is largely made of non-elected members or politicians, who cannot claim to understand the needs of the people better but the parliamentarians who are made up of elected representatives who understand the needs of the people than the executive. Given this, the state's sovereign power relies on the organs that make law by legislation, to issue the command in the form of legislation binding on the community. On the other hand, major actors in the executive arm argue that the legislatures are selfish politicians who help themselves with public resources and pursue individual constituencies or political party's interests and not national interest.

As a result, Ekpu and Iweoha (2017) stated that the legislature has the power to alter budgetary estimates prepared by the executive. This is because budget development is the primary function of the executive arm, subject to amendment and or approval by the legislature but the legislature exerts its influence over the budget through the amendment process. This is practiced in many democratic nations in the world, such as the United States of America (USA). This is because in the USA congress is constitutionally granted unlimited amendment powers in the budget process (Posner and Park 2007).

National Assembly Leadership Election and Executive – Legislative Relations in Muhammadu Buhari-led Administration 2015 -2019

The first civilian administration of President Muhammadu Buhari from 2015 -2019 was received by Nigerians with enthusiasm and huge expectations due to his promise to address insecurity, ethno-religious crisis, poverty, unemployment, and agitation for secession by different groups in the country.

During the administration's inauguration, the newly elected president announced to the world that insecurity and other challenges facing Nigerians would be fixed in the next six months and there would be a smooth-running relationship between the three arms of government. He also stated that the executive-legislative relationship would be given serious attention to make his promises a reality (Guardian Newspaper, 2015). He supported this stand in his inaugural speech that:

> I belong to everybody, and I belong to nobody. The Federal Executive under my watch will not seek to encroach on the duties and functions of the Legislative and Judicial arms of government (Guardian Newspaper, 2015).

The above statement was welcomed and also helped to rekindle the hope of Nigerians and the world at large that there would be a better Nigeria in the next year in the aspect of insecurity, unemployment, and poverty.

However, Oluokun (2015) and Ogunye (2015) described the election of the leadership of the National Assembly in 2015 as the beginning of the discord between the executive and the legislative arms of government in Nigeria. As a result of the emergence of Senator Bukola Saraki as Senate president, was against the wishes of the president and his political party (All Progressive Congress APC). They also stated that the election was quiet, unlike the tradition of electing leadership of the National Assembly in Nigerian democracy since 1999 where the party supremacy supersedes the individual interest in the party. Therefore, Oluokun (2015) and Ogunye (2015) described the election as a coup d'état against the ruling party's choices for the offices that constitute the leadership of the NA, as well as the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and the rule of law. This is because Senator Saraki and Hon. Yakubu Dogara who were elected as the Senate President and House Speaker were neither the preferred candidates of the party nor that of the majority of its National Assembly members-elect but they forged a coalition with the opposition party (People Democratic Party (PDP) against their party choices and the coalition led to the defeat of the APC choices in the elections (Oluokun (2015) and Ogunye 2015).

In this process, in the House of Representatives leadership election, Mr. Dogara scored 182 votes to Mr. Gbajabiamila's 174 votes out of the 209 APC legislators in the House. This means that about 36 legislators in APC leagued up with PDP legislators to defeat Mr. Gbajabiamila, the party's candidate. While Senator Bukola Sakari was elected unopposed as Senate president, this is because the majority of senators who were loyal to Senator Ahmed Ibrahim Lawan (a preferred candidate by a group of senators-elect within the APC) were not of the seat before the commencement of the election while his Deputy SenatorIke Ekweremadu, defeated the ruling party's candidate.

The above election controversy created a series of reactions and counter-reactions among scholars in various fields of study over the legality of Senator Bukola Saraki and Honorable Yakubu Dogara contesting for leadership positions against the party's interest thereby raising the question about party supremacy over its members, well as the president wishes to have a smooth running relationship between the executive and legislative for good governance.

On the constitutionality of this election, lawyers are of different opinions but Ogunye (2015) states that the events of 9th of June, 2015 have serious implications for Nigeria's democracy, constitutionalism and the rule of law. He describes the election of Mr. Bukola Saraki as the Senate President and Ike Ekweremadu as Deputy Senate President as illegal, unconstitutional, null, and void. This is because no Senate president or deputy senate president can be elected under a non-existent or forged Senate Standing Orders. He also states that the organizers of the election claimed to conduct the election based on the Senate standing orders, 2015 as amended, which provided that elections into the two offices shall be by secret ballot, instead of the open ballot as provided by Orders 72 and 73 of the Senate Standing Orders, 2011. Given this, Oluokun (2015) and Ogunye (2015) claimed that there were no Senate Standing Orders, in 2015, this is because at the time of the dissolution of the 7th National Assembly, on the 4th of June, 2015 and the inauguration of the 8th Senate on the 9th of June, the Senate was not in existence. Therefore, Standing Order 2015 which gave the organizers go go-ahead to conduct the election was not fit to be used in that election. In this regard, Ogunye (2015) submitted that the organizers acted alone or in concert with the generality of the members of the 7th Senate members.

Despite the disagreement over the leadership election of the 8th National Assembly, the president rekindled his wishes over the executive-legislative relationship that the stability of our constitutional order and the overall interest of the common man were uppermost on his mind. Therefore, the president resolved to work with whoever the lawmakers chose as their leaders and did not have any preferred candidates for the Senate and the House of Representatives leadership (Oluokun,2015)

Given this, Peter & Anthony (2016), Ogunyele (2015), Oluokun (2015), and Abubakar (2019) submitted that the 8th National Assembly leadership election resulted in endless crises arising from long disagreement over the elections and appointments into leadership positions, budget padding, jumbo pay, hostile executive relations, and defection from one political party to another. In his view, Abubakar (2019) stated that the principal task of the National Assembly is to cooperate with the Executive in promoting enabling policies for the common good of our people but there was a lack of cordiality in the relationship between the Executive and Legislature in 8th National Assembly as a result of disagreement in the leadership election. This resulted to conflict of interest, low capacity of some members to constructively engage in legislative work, poor communication strategy, executive blackmail, and intimidation resulting in sabotage and needless delay in the performance of some legislative activities.

Impact Analysis of Executive and Legislative Relations on Budgeting from 2015 -2019

This paper must analyze the impact of disagreement in the 8th National Assembly leadership election on budgeting from 2015 to 2019 in the Muhammadu Buhari-led administration.

It is stated in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that both members of the legislature and executive arms of government are major actors in the budgeting process from its formulation to implementation in a particular year (NDI,2003). Although, there are agitations in many countries in the world like the USA that the responsibilities of a nation's budgeting should be extended beyond governmental actors like legislators and the executive arm of government but should be an all-inclusive task that would involve the citizens and civil society in the nation. This is because the national budgets touch the lives of nearly everyone and are one of the most important tools for implementing public policy. And there is hardly any room for public participation, as the activities at this stage are conducted within the executive. The citizens are not allowed to make inputs into the formulation of the budget, neither is there a forum for engaging with them to determine their priorities for the fiscal year. It is mostly an executive affair (NDI,2003, Muhammad &kinge, 2015).

Going by the provision of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, four main stages are stated for national budgets which include formulation, approval, implementation, and auditing. Although each stage involves a complex set of processes in the approval, the legislative and executive members usually clash in terms of interest and politics (Azuta-Mbata 2006, Nzekwu 2006, Barkan et al 2004 and Muhammad &kinge 2015). Therefore, this paper discusses an analysis of how the negative relationship between the legislative and executive arms of government affects the above stages of budgeting under the Muhammadu Buhari-led administration from 2015 to 2019 and identifies the results of their relationship on Nigerians

Budget Formulation and Planning

The responsibility of budget formulation in the Muhammadu Buhari administration from 2015 to 2019 was not given to anybody except the executive through the Budget Office of the Federation (BOF) (Muhammad &kinge 2015). This office situated within the Ministry of Finance, is an executive agency primarily concerned with providing necessary technical support on the preparation of annual budgets of the federation. The steps involved in the preparation of the annual budget include developing a medium-term revenue framework, that

is an estimation of revenues that will accrue to the nation from different sources; development of a medium-term expenditure framework which means determining the maximum spend-able amount and allocation to different expenditure heads; Budget Call Circular to Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs); Evaluation and consolidation of submissions from MDAs and presentation of draft budget to Mr. President for subsequent transmission to the National Assembly(NDI, 2003, Muhammad &kinge 2015).

By the constitutional provision of this stage, it is pertinent to understand that the process of formulation and implementation are in the executive domain while the process of approval and oversight actively involves the legislature. As a result of this, the two areas of legislature's involvement are what usually result in antagonisms between the two arms. That is, the process of approval which involves scrutiny of the executive's proposal and, oversight of the budget. This is in line with the 1999 constitution which says that 'The President shall cause to be prepared and laid before each House of the National Assembly at any time in each financial year estimates of the revenues and expenditure of the Federation for the next following financial year (section 81 (1), 1999 Constitution).

As a result, the President presents the draft budget, with other supporting documents, to the National Assembly, usually at a joint sitting of the Senate and the House of Representatives, for scrutiny and approval. As a result of this, the President needs the support of the legislators particularly those who are members of his political party for smooth passage of the draft budget. In other words, during President Muhammadu Buhari's administration from 2015 to 2019, there was a delay in the passage of the budget as a result of the National Assembly leadership tussle. This degenerated into negative executive-legislative relations and led to a high rate of budget padding in the above administration. For instance, the draft budget was presented to the joint sitting of the parliament on November 7, 2017, ratified on May 16, and transmitted to the President for assent on May 25, 2018. The interval between the presentation of the budget and ratification of it is attributed to divided interest in the executive-legislative relation under the leadership of Senator Bukola Saraki. In the same vein, in the 2016 budget, President Buhari attributed the differences in the leadership of the National Assembly to the cut of N347 billion in the allocations to 4,700 projects submitted to the National Assembly for consideration, and the introduced 6,403 projects by the National Assembly which amounted to N578 billion. As a result of the above action by the National Assembly, the president stated that many of the projects cut are critical and may be difficult, if not impossible, to implement with the reduced allocation. Some of the new projects inserted by the National Assembly have not been properly conceptualised, designed, and cost and will therefore be difficult to execute by his administration (FinancialNigeria**,** 2018**).** This explains the differences between the executive and legislature over the leadership tussle at the National Assembly responsible for the delay of passage of the draft budget in 2016 and 2107 appropriations bills at the National Assembly. It has also made it difficult for the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari a large number of projects completed in 2018, as a result of the cut in the allocation sent to the national assembly.

Approval Stage

In this stage, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 is explicit enough to state that legislators at all levels are allowed to examine, and discuss the budget draft with ministries and departments in governmental agencies and amend contradictions that are not in line with the policy and program of government. In other words, the 1999 Constitution (sections 80–84) and FRA 2007 provide for no limitations on the National Assembly's power to amend the annual Appropriations Bill. It also empowers the legislature to take some steps and processes similar to law-making before the budget can be approved, which include first reading, second reading, committee review, and third reading (Nigeria 1999, Constitution).

First Reading: this stage is called a formal and ritual stage whereby any presiding officer of the law-making chamber would direct the clerk of the house to read the Short Title of the bill and pronounce it as the first reading and no question is proposed but the main aim of this reading is for the lawmakers to have the knowledge about the basic contents of the bill and prepare for the questions and discussion in the second reading (Okojie, 2007 and Albert &Christopher 2016). By the nature of this stage, lawmakers hold no differences against the executive on the bill until they embark on the second reading.

Second Reading; in this stage, the lawmakers generally discuss or debate all aspects of the appropriation bill such as objectives of the financial and economic state of Nigeria as well as the government's financial policy. Unlike a general bill, a money bill cannot be killed at the second reading stage but all Members have the right to debate the bill (Okojie, 2007 Albert &Christopher 2016). In this stage, there cannot be any differences between the lawmakers and the executive but a thorough examination would be done on the bill by the lawmakers according to their constitutional mandate.

Committee Review: After the second reading, the bill is referred to the Appropriation Committee with Committees having jurisdiction collapsing into sub-committees of the Appropriation Committee (Albert &Christopher 2016). In the same vein, Okojie, (2007) states that the appropriation committee sends copies of the bill to various standing committees and holds hearings with respective Ministries and Department agencies (MDAs) in their portfolios as well as from the general public if necessary. The Appropriation Committee collects, collates, and compiles a report which it lays at plenary. The Report of the Appropriation Committee is considered by the Committee of Supply as opposed to by the Committee of the Whole in the case of general bills. Also, in the House, the Speaker, rather than the Deputy Speaker, chairs the Committee while the Senate President chairs as is the case in general bills. After the approval of the schedules, the clauses are considered last as against the practice in general bills. The rest of the process is as in general bill save for veto override (Albert &Christopher 2016).

Third Reading: As earlier mentioned, what operates in a general bill repeats itself in budget processes in Nigeria's constitution. This is because the constitution requires the president to lay the Appropriation Bill in each of the two Houses, there is no question of one House transmitting the Bill to the other House for concurrence. Rather, where one Chamber passes the bill and the other fails to pass its own two months after the commencement of the financial year, the Senate President is required by Section 59(2) of the Nigeria Constitution to convene a meeting of the Joint Finance Committee to resolve the differences between the two Houses. Where, however, the Joint Finance Committee fails to resolve the differences, the Bill shall be presented to the National Assembly sitting at a joint meeting and if the Bill is passed at such joint sitting, it shall be presented to the President for assent. (Albert & Christopher 2016).

In the same vein, Albert &Christopher (2016) submit that there is a symbiotic relationship between the executive and legislative arms of government in the approval stage of budgeting but the Muhammad Buhari administration from 2015 to 2019 witnessed many setbacks in the passage of budget and bills as a result of the National Assembly leadership tussle. For example, the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill was rejected by President Muhammadu Buhari because it reduced the President's powers (Albert &Christopher 2016). In the same vein, Ismail (2016) links the delay of the 2016 budget to the leadership tussle in the National Assembly. This was responsible for the 2016 budget process to be lingered from January 2017 to May 2017 before it was finally signed by President Muhammadu Bihari. As a result of this, the 2016 budget proposal was first infected with controversy at the Senate on January 12, when it emerged at the end of a 90-minute closed-door session that the fiscal document had gone missing. Two days later, the Senate announced that two versions of the document were in the Red Chamber. On February 8, the issue of padding the document emerged during

a budget defense of the Ministry of Health. Therefore, the minister, ''Professor Isaac Adewole,'' disowned the budget of his ministry, saying it was doctored. This made the passage of the budget by the National Assembly become a serious problem as it was postponed thrice. It was first fixed for February 25th, 2017, and then March 17th, 2017. It was finally done on March 23rd, 2017. However, the controversy did not end, as days after, the issue of the budget details became another problem because the National Assembly transmitted the budget summary without its details and It took two weeks for, the summary to be made available to the Presidency (Ismail, 2016).

Moreover, the administration of President Muhammadu from 2015 to 2019 waged war against corrupt cases of the immediate past administration headed by President Goodluck Jonathan. The cases include:

1. $2.2 billion was illegally withdrawn from Excess Crude Oil Accounts, of which $1 billion was supposedly approved by President Jonathan to fund his reelection campaign without the knowledge of the National Economic Council made up of state governors and the president and vice president.
2. NEITI discovered $11.6 billion was missing from Nigeria LNG Company dividend payments.
3. NEITI indicates losses due to crude swaps due to subsidy and domestic crude allocation from 2005 to 2012 indicated that $11.63 billion had been paid to the NNPC but that "there is no evidence of the money being remitted to the federation account".
4. Diversion of 60% of $1 billion foreign loans obtained from the Chinese by the Ministry of Finance.
5. Massive scams in weapons and defense procurements, and misuse of 3 trillion-naira defense budget since 2011 under the guise of fighting Boko Haram.
6. Diversion of $2.2 million vaccination medicine fund, by Ministry of Health.
7. Diversion of Ebola fight fund up to 1.9 billion naira.
8. NIMASA fraud under investigation by EFCC, inclusive of accusation of funding PDP and buying a small piece of land for 13 billion naira.
9. Ministry of Finance led by Okonjo Iweala hurried payment of $2.2 million to health ministry contractor in disputed invoices.
10. NDDC scams and multifarious scams including 2.7-billion-naira worth of contracts that do not conform to the Public Procurement Act.
11. The Police Service Commission Scam investigated by ICPC revealed the misappropriation of over 150 million naira related to election-related training. ICPC made refund recommendations, but many analysts indicated prosecution was more appropriate.

In the process of investigating the above cases by this administration, in 2016, the Senate and hoc committee on the humanitarian crisis in the North East" led by Senator Shehu Sani accused Mr. Babachir Lawal (Secretary to the government of federation) of N200 million contract scandal for the clearing of "invasive plant species" in Yobe State by Rholavision Nigeria Limited; a company that belonged to the SGF. As a result of the senate investigation, the House of Senate compelled the president to sack the SGF, it was done without any hesitation. In the same vein, Ayo Oke, Director General of Nigeria's National Intelligence Agency (NIA) was also accused of a $43 million cash haul found by Nigeria's anti-graft agency (Kazeem, 2017). Not only that, in 2016, chief of Staff, late Mr. Abba Kyari, was accused of collecting an N500 million-naira bribe from MTN to help it slash the $5 Billion fine slammed against it for violation of Nigeria's telecommunications regulations bothering on national security while MTN fired the staff involved in the bribery scandal but Abba Kyari was left intact till his death in 2020 as a result of coronal virus infection (Kazeem, 2017).

With the above investigation of the corruption cases, Ismail (2016) submitted that differences between the executive and legislative in the 2015 -2016 administrations led by President

Muhammadu Buhari reduced the level of corruption in the executive arm of government because the differences made the leadership of the two arms of government to serve as watch god to the implementation of the budget. In the same vein, the differences also many corrupt practices of the leadership of the House of Senate and it strengthens the capacity and ability of the executive to investigate every corrupt senator, including the senate president, Senator Bukola Saraki

Conclusion

Going by the analysis of this paper, it is not out of point to conclude that the executive-legislative relation on the budget process under the administration of Muhammadu Buhari 2015 – 2019 is conflictual. This resulted in a high rate of budget padding, disunity among party members, low capacity of some members to constructively engage in legislative work, poor communication strategy, executive blackmail, and intimidation, and escalated to sabotage and needless delay in the performance of some legislative activities. However, the negative relationship between the legislature and executive also reduced the level of corruption in both executive and legislative arms of government because both arms served as watchdogs to one another in their constitutional role.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of this paper

1. The national budget should not be a political matter between the executive and legislative arms of the government in Nigeria
2. The supremacy of the political party should be respected by every member of the party. This would not create any divided interest within a political party
3. Internal democracy is the key to the success of a political party in power, this would give room for them to settle any differences among the party members before passing the budget in the National Assembly.
4. Leadership of the legislative arm of government should be drawn from the ruling party for smoothing policy implementation and rancho-free on matters that have a great impact on the masses like budget.

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EFFECTS OF YOUTH GANSTERISM ON SECURITY IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF *YAN SHARA* GANG IN KADUNA METROPOLIS (2015-2023)

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Abstract
Gangsterism has become a fractious phenomenon affecting individuals and social activity in Kaduna Metropolis. The Yan Shara gang moves mostly in groups victimizing, terrorizing, intimidating, and injuring innocent individuals at their homes, shops and on the streets which resulted in loss of lives and valuable property in the Metropolis and by extension challenge the Nation's national security. It is against this background; therefore, this article attempts to examine the effects of Yan Shara gangsterism on national security using Kaduna Metropolis as a case study from 2015 to 2023. The objective of this study was to find out the factors responsible for the occurrence of Yan Shara thuggery on social and political settings. Data was obtained through secondary sources. The study considered this assumption that, Yan Shara gangsterism recurs frequently in Kaduna Metropolis because it is sponsored by the elites. Frustration-aggression theory was adopted to serve as a theoretical base for this

study. The findings of the study depict that gangsterism in the Metropolis is as a result of unemployment, illiteracy, poor governance, group sentiment, poverty, injustice and weak security agencies to mention but a few. Therefore, the study recommends among other that government should initiate programmes including awareness campaigns that will transform and dissuade the Yan Shara and intended thugs from involving into such violent behaviours within the State.
Keywords: Gangsterism, violence, Yan Shara, Security.

INTRODUCTION

Insecurity that involves the youth as important segment of the society in most countries around the world has been a thorny issue in academics and policy making entities with the most concern factor to be the case of unemployment. The correlation between insecurity and high level of unemployment in developing countries like Nigeria poses a serious concern to the national security of the country, its citizens and by implication the West African sub region in general.

Urban youth gangs have been in existence in Nigerian cities for a long time. In the immediate post-civil war period, i.e. from early 1970s, there was a noticeable increase in the incidence of violent crimes such as kidnappings, ballot stuffing, and killings and in the heinous nature of these crimes particularly in the use of dangerous weapons and killings. The national awareness and emergence of thuggery and increased violence can be traced back to the aftermath of the Nigerian civil war that lasted from 1967 to 1970. The roots of urban violence have been attributed to the loss of traditional structures that kept people together (Aderinto,1994).

It is an understatement to state that the Nigerian youths today have no future, as there is no serious social programmes or economic policy to cater for the interests and needs of the youths, despite the existence of some agencies in Nigeria such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Economic and Empowerment Development Scheme (NEEDS), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) among others, in other to alleviate the suffering of the youths (Freedom, 2008)

However, despite assurances from the Nigerian Police Force on security, opposition candidates are harassed or arrested; voters were turned away from polling stations by gang of young thugs (Bratton, 2008). It is commonly reported that long military rule in Nigeria is responsible for high level of political violence orchestrated by political thugs in the form of election rigging, falsification of electoral register, assassination of political rivals among other things. The inability of the government to conduct free and fair election has continued to undermine smooth transition and good governance, and in the words of Omotosho, (2008) '… has made the country the butt of bad jokes in the international community'.

More recently, Kaduna State, being the focus of this paper, has experienced this trend of violence, especially the 'the End bad Governance protest' in the State. Thus, since the creation of the State in 1967, the State has experienced several cases of violence. These include ethno-religious conflicts, land dispute, pastoralists-farmers conflicts, violent actions of thugs called *Yan shara* and election related violence, armed robbery, kidnapping and other related social vices. Of all these forms of violence, however, the most devastating one that keeps recurring in the State is thuggery by *Yan shara*. The use of political thugs, *Yan Shara* and its attendant consequence in the State has been a source of worry in recent years.

Statement of Research Problem

The issue of youth gangsterism remained highly disturbing as the country faced serious security challenges. Youth gangsterism is among the major factors that affect the Nigerian

socio-economic status and also a serious problem that contributes to the country's multi-faceted problems. Thuggery also perpetually affects innocent individuals on daily basis in their homes, shops and on the streets. Thus, the activities of thugs called *Yan Shara* in Kaduna State have widely affected the relative peace enjoyed by the people. These gangsters move mostly in groups victimizing, terrorizing, intimidating, and injuring not only politicians but also innocent individuals in the state. The menace of this youth gangs called *Yan Shara* results to death or poses deadly threats by deterring individuals from actively partaking in the political, economic and cultural activities in their environments.

Methods

This article adopted the secondary type of data collection approach through which textbooks, journals, and other materials were consulted to review scholarly works on gangsterism while using same to explain the scenario in Kaduna Metropolis and how it affects security development in the area.

Review of Related Literature

This paper utilizes thematic styleof literature review whereby the author place the items base on the themes they occupied in the paper to enable the work provides adequate knowledge on the research topic.

Violence and Conflicts in Nigeria

Violence has attracted different definitions in a number of contexts and dimensions. According to Osaghae (1994:3) "Violence is any act that involves a threat to, or destruction of, lives and or property". This definition is significant because it brought two issues: threat and destructions, but violence on a wider outlook cannot be limited to only act of threat and destructions. Gurr (1970) and Hibbs(1973) have defined violence based on political grounds as the use of force, that is, the intentional use of force by an individual or society on the opponent(s) in order to injure, kill or destroy lives and property. Though, the above definition expanded the dimension of violence to a political angle but that alone cannot fully explain violence as itexcludes other important aspects in human society.

It is necessary to explain the concept of violence from different aspects such as socio-cultural violence, economic violence, and ethno-religious violence. According to the 2011report by the Thinking Security for Africa, there are five forms of violence in Nigeria. These includeviolence caused by political differences; religious extremism; communal differences; the economic struggle and crime. Each of these overlaps with one another, in many important ways. This identification of the forms of violence helped us to understand the dimensions of violence in Nigeria and Kaduna state in particular. Consequent to any form that the violence may assume is the nature and disposition of the actors involved and whether the violence is incidental, ancillary or endemic. Therefore, violence, regardless of its form, is surrounded by the four compartmental circles: the organizers, the victims, the beneficiaries and above all, the environment.

Thuggery has become a matter of national insecurity, especially during campaigns and elections. Security is thus elemental in governance as it is the protection of the lives, rights, dignity and property of the citizens and the resources, territory, sovereignty and lawful institution of the country. It is also when these institutions utilize the resources of the nation for the provision of secure, just and equitable living conditions for the citizens of the country that they own their legitimacy (Usman, 1986:173). However, in most African states, including Nigeria, the rulers of the states constitute the major threat to the security of the lives and property of their own citizens. Meanwhile, the security agencies that exist to

checkmate the excesses of such leaders become the propagators of disunity because of their political ambitions.

Ethno-religious violence also formed an integral part of violence. Albert (1994) considers a few cases of violence in Kano. He argues that ethnicity, religion, and culture are the foundation of violence in Kano state. He further explains that the first major religious violence in Kano took place between December 18 and 29, 1980, and was triggered by the Maitatsine sect under Muhammad Marwa. The riot expanded to other places in Northern Nigeria such as Jimeta in 1984, Gombe in 1985 and Funtua in 1987. Between May 28 and June 5, 1985 over 61 people were killed and over 101 injured in some areas of the then Bauchi State, specifically Gombe, Azare, Kaltungo and Alkaleri.

Furthermore, religious violence also affects "unity in diversity" in the contemporary democratic process of Nigeria. A study of violence suggests that conflicts between Nigerian Christians and Muslims manifests in deadly inter-religious conflicts. On February, 2000, Kaduna state experienced religious violence within the metropolis. The crisis erupted as a result of the apprehension arising from the agitation for the implementation of Sharia in the State. Also, on March, 2002, another religious tension occurred in Kaduna State, owing to a revolting act against the holy prophet in a publication by Thisday Newspaper, it took the intervention of the security agents to forestall reprisals (Sampson, 2012).

Similarly, other major cases of violent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria include the Zangon-Kataf riots of 1992. Between May 28 and June 5, 1985 over 61 people were killed and over 101 injured in some areas of the then Bauchi State, specifically Gombe, Azare, Kaltungo and Alkaleri. Tafawa Balewa clashes in 1991, 1995 and the Jos ethno-religious riots of 2001. Although no exact figures of casualties are available, the Jos riots of 2001 have claimed several hundreds of lives and generated violent ripple effects beyond Jos (Osaghae, 2005).

Nature and Pattern of Youth Thuggery in Nigeria

As a political concept, thuggery has been defined differently by different scholars depending on their own perspective of the term. As observed by Howell (2004) and Asiegbu (2011), thuggery refers to the activities of thugs connected with stealing, killing, kidnapping, rudeness, victimization, intimidation and harassment. This manner affects peace, harmony and mutual co-existence among groups in their respective communities. If politics is criminalized through thuggery, right people who are the observers of good values tend to be scared and keep away from political processes. This suggests that thuggery is a violent behaviour affecting political processes in the Nigerian politics. Banwo (2003) maintains that the processes of the use of extra-judicial means in the course of the contest for or in exercising political power including intimidation, harassment, assassination, blackmail, and arson; physical and psychological attacks could not help to ensure sustainable peace and security within any democratic system like Nigeria. Hence, scholars believe that the attributes of sponsoring thugs is due to the fact that Nigerian politics is characterized by rigging, violence and ropes under the manipulation of the few elites.

Furthermore, in discussing the causes of thuggery, Mbaya (2013) argues that the majorities of youth are jobless, illiterates, with no means of livelihood, and are being paid to manipulate election results. The political elite capitalize on this weakness and recruit the youths. Secondly, politics for personal gain – this has become a common feature in Nigerian politics. This is a situation in which an individual tries to hold on to power for personal gains. In an attempt to hang on to power, leaders often create a regime of violence, repression and bloodshed. They organize political thugs, hooligans and scavengers to sing their praises,

intimidate opponents and kill them if they become intransigent. The unnecessary and uncoordinated urge to control, dominate and amass wealth for their family and friends informs the emergence of political thugs to be used to win election by all means. Thirdly, The politicians, having invested huge amount of money on campaigns and other political activities, coupled with the existing system of winner takes all, would want to win at all cost. In view of the above, the need to employ the use of thugs and touts to manipulate and rig elections becomes necessary, especially when such politicians are not popular candidates.

Nexus between Youth Thuggery and Insecurity

The word thug refers to a person inclined or hired to treat another person roughly, brutally or murderously (beaten or robbed) (The Merriam Webster Thesaurus 1995). In this sense a thug is a person or group of persons employed to perpetrate violence on another person or group of persons. Example of thug in this respect is the *Yan Shara* thugs in Kaduna State who strangle their victims. Howell, (2004) on the other hand observed that political thug can be seen as the tireless repetition of misleading 'facts' designed to depict an opponent as personally despicable and with regard to governance and it is dangerous to the physical and political life of the nation.

Political violence on the other hand refers to act of the processes of execution of the activities of political thugs enticed by politicians. In other word Banwo, (2003:100) posits that:

"It is the processes of the use of extra-judicial means in the course of the contest for or in exercising political power. These include intimidation, harassment, assassination, blackmail, arson, and looting, physical and psychological attack among others".

To Mehler, (2007:209) political violence has become a prominent part of the culture of Africa. Indeed he emphasized that governance and violence have become common mode of political competition in African societies more than consensus or co-operation. Political violence is usually part of the machinery employed by the political class in most underdeveloped economies to attain and sustain power or protest its deprivation. Bazenguissa-Ganga, (1999) further argued that, … 'faction leaders in collapsed or collapsing states are often politicians or officers who jockeyed for position in an elite hierarchy and benefited from 'official' political violence, the goals of violence turn toward battling local rivals and appropriating as much of the wealth of this political network for themselves' Therefore political thuggery and political violence are intertwined. This had in many ways truncated political process in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, national security is threatened when unemployed youths are involved in conflict situations such as religious and ethnic conflicts. For instance, the conflict situation in the Niger-Delta and so many parts of the Northern states is spearheaded by youths, most of whom were unemployed. At the very least, there is a correlation between economic hardship (occasioned by poverty and unemployment) and those accused of taking part in the orgy of violence or violent disorder taking place in this country are the youths. Therefore, it is discerning that unemployment pre-dispose people to poverty which co-jointly influence national security by creating chaos and other security situation. Rising crime waves are therefore the consequence of unemployment among the teeming youth population (Rotimi, 2011).

The Menace of Youth Gang (*Yan Shara*) on Social and Electoral Processes in Kaduna State

The popularity of political thugs in Kaduna State could be traced to the politics of 1999 when youth were mobilized to refute the claims of the leading party PDP by ANPP as it were in

Kano and other neighboring States (Usman, 2019). *Yan Shara*, or tout; resurfaced in the Politics of 2007, 2011 but became eminent and unhealthy for democratic process in the Politics of 2015 and 2019. There activities commences from the early stage of politicking and becomes intense at election periods. Most of these groups of unemployed youths are sponsored by desperate politicians who lure them with extravagant promises of employment and other government patronage. Since 1999 to date, some of these youthful thugs have been sponsored by desperate politicians to protect their political interest.

After elections, these boys trained to maim and kill political opponents are left helpless without any tangible means of sustenance (WeeklyTrust, 2018). Dashee, (2019) asserted that in other instances, even their sponsors are not spared from their acts of violence as they equally attack them in public functions like wedding, political rallies and so on, when they fail to meet their expectations or demand. Two major reasons why politicians employ violence could be attributed to their quest for power and drive toward primitive accumulation of wealth and competitive authoritarian nature of the Nigerian state. This gave rise to the high level and sophistication of political thuggery in Kaduna State.

For instance, Weekly Trust reported worrisome atrocities of *Yan Shara* titled "*How Yan Shara held Kaduna state hostage"* revealed that hooligans tagged *Yan Shara* from both opposing parties APC and PDP and others fought, left some dead and many casualties with injuries. Similar incidents abound in Borno state when Ali Modu Sheriff won the 2003 election. Many youths across Borno state found it enterprising to engage in political thuggery. As a result other groups emerged with seeming divisions amongst them and persistent clashes between the different camps mostly associated with sharing of largesse. On 12th June 2016, there were intra group clashes between political thugs loyal to the ruling APC and inter group with PDP an opposition party. These activities however do not occur without the input of the two players the politicians and the youths (thugs) themselves and the youths depend on the politicians to perpetrate their nefarious activities without impunity.

Factors responsible for the incessant *Yan Shara* Gangsterism in Kaduna State

Governance is the way rules, norms and actions are structured, sustained, regulated and held accountable. Democratic governance involves promoting the sustainability of democracy which includes an enduring capacity for the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms; and the transparency and accountability of a responsible civil service, functioning at both the national and local levels. Democratic governance is a machinery of government that allows the voice of the minority to be held while majority have their way in deciding and addressing various issues that confront them as a people or an entity for the good and fairness of all. Elections provide a theatre of power politics amongst elites in Nigeria. Such moments lay bare elites' desperation to hang on to power for incumbents, or achieve power for marginal elites. For incumbents, state resources and other privileges associated with State power are invested in retaining power. And for those wanting to gain power, personal wealth and those of "power brokers" are patronized to fight their way into power (Tar and Shettima, 2010).

Several factors abound to explain the cause of political thugs as well as political violence. Prominent amongst these are two principal factors these are - competitive authoritarian nature of the Nigerian state and economic factor. The rest can be tied to either two of the above. These include illiteracy and poverty, weaknesses in the institutions, checks and balance. *Nature of Nigerian state:* - The competitive authoritarian nature of the Nigerian state after long punctuations of military regimes accepted civilian government in 1999 that permits democratic competition but bedeviled by fraud and abuse of state apparatus which enables those with machinery of the state to suppress opposition group or party. This groupings result

more often than not into clashes of interest between different groups which end up in violence or skirmishes.

Illiteracy: - This is another cause of political violence. Some studies revealed that most of those that engage or used by politicians in their shoddy deal are either illiterate or received low level of education as such they become prey to overzealous politicians as they are vulnerable to resort to violence.

Poverty: - High level of unemployment have accounted for high level of poverty in the State. As most of youths come from humble families which cannot fulfill their obligation. It goes with the common saying "*a hungry man is an angry man"* hence need little effort to join any group of militia/thugs.

Weaknesses in the political system: - There are prevalent weaknesses in the institutions responsible for carrying out electoral processes in Nigeria. The inability of institutions of government such as Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the police, judiciary and the executive resulting from abuse of office and fraud often emasculate electoral process. This includes undue favor to some group or individuals and power of incumbency.

Checks and balances: - Lack of checks and balances on part of the three arms of government to ensure smooth electoral process often leads to fraudulent acts and behaviors, rigging, cheating among others.

Theoretical framework

Frustration-aggression theory was adopted in this study. Frustration Aggression theory which Dollard (1962) and his associates initially developed and has been modified and expanded by scholars like Aubrey (1962) and Leonard (1962) appears to be the leading and common explanation for violent behaviour stemming from inability to satisfy needs. In an attempt to explain aggression, scholars' points to the difference between what people want or deserve and what they actually get. As Kirby (2011) noted, where expectation does not meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront those they hold responsible to frustrating their ambition.

The basic argument of the theory is frustration is not undertaken as a natural reaction or instinct but that is the outcome of disappointment and that in a situation where the actual legitimate desires of an individual is denied either directly or by the indirect consequence of the way the society is structured, the feelings of disappointment may lead such person to express anger through violence. The annual increase of the unemployed and without corresponding industries (space) to absorb the youths in Nigeria is largely responsible for the emergence of violent groups such as *Yan shara* thugs and other social vices. Because it is very uncommon, if not totally impossible, for someone that is gainfully employed to engage in irrational killing and willful destruction of Individual and National properties. (Bello, 2003).

Most of the youth gangs such as the *Yan shara* gang were formed as a result of frustration, the large percentage of the youth that participates in this act were either illiterates, or unemployed people in whatsoever ways who express their aggression because of marginalization, nepotism and injustice. The aggressive activities of *Yan shara* gangs in Kaduna state were largely as a result of frustration due to poverty and illiteracy.

This theory helps to explain how aggression is always caused by some form of frustration, at as argued that people are motivated to reach their goals, but if these goals are blocked then

frustration occurs, frustration always leads to aggression which later leads to crime and continues crime gives birth to crises and it is the continuous crises that in most cases affects National security.

Frustration aggression theory will be appropriated for this study considering the fact that the youths are frustrated about the poverty and unemployment situation in the country. Other reasons include high cost of living, deplorable state of infrastructure and social amenities in the country. This made the youths susceptible in the hands of the desperate leaders who use them to unleash violence especially during and after electioneering. The youths use the opportunity to express anger concerning the wide gap between the rich and the poor.

Discussion

From the gamut of the available data, selfish interest, unemployment, illiteracy, poor governance, group sentiment, political manipulation, poverty, injustice and inactive security agencies can be considered as the major factors that contributed to *Yan Shara* gangsterism in Kaduna State. All these contributes perpetually to the endless thuggery, as a socio-political phenomenon, affecting the people and democratic process negatively in Kaduna State in spite the policies and programmes initiated by the government to tackle the menace.

The ruling elites' fault is attributed to the lack of employment, ineffective policies on education to booster literacy level, poor governance, manipulation in political processes, injustice and inactive security agencies. Government of Kaduna State has been accused in many respect related to the above atrocity which felt reluctant to overcome the aforementioned issues that invariably influenced thugs to emulate violent behaviour leading to thuggery and more often than not resulted to social violence. The government is being proactive in its different decisions on tackling the menace of thuggery in the state.

On several occasions, public commentators and political analysts blamed political elites on supporting *Yan Shara* gangsterism for their selfish gain, in the State. Just as in 2019 that Human Right Watch was being secretly informed by Police that politics is making their life very difficult; PDP supporters were not arrested, and or if they were arrested, Police Officials, handed them over to the governor, and in turn released. Similarly, in some occasions, police officers posit that thugs had been detained on purely political ground as a result, they should be released, that they are human beings and they have human rights like any other human being.

Finally, It can be deduced that the reasons for thuggery is as a result of youth are joblessness, they are impoverished, and being paid easily to manipulate election results. Politics for personal gain, being a situation in elites organize thugs, hooligans and scavengers to sing their praises, intimidate opponents and kill them; and prebendal politics, as an investment by hungry politicians also created chances on which politicians have invested huge amount of money and resources on campaigns and other political activities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the effects of the perpetual *Yan Shara* gangsterism in Kaduna State are basically included creating fear amongst citizens, hindering electorates from voting, killing innocent people, violating human rights, destruction of valuable properties, insecurity during and after elections and intimidating people. The paper observed that these effects have been politically and socially motivated which affected different people in different places in Kaduna State. As a result, both government and private properties including vehicles and offices were burnt, offices and valuable properties of different political parties were destroyed and burnt, innocent individuals lost their valuable properties on the streets, in their

shops and at homes. Besides, elites and innocent individuals of various positions in both public and private establishments have been affected by the *Yan Shara* gangsterism with different degrees of injuries ranging from wounds to loss of lives within the state.

Finally, the paper also observed that the activities of Gang called *Yan Shara* have fuelled insecurity in the state which is characterized by killing, kidnapping, street attacks, house break-ins, shoplifting, frightening and threatening innocent individuals losing their lives and valuable properties that invariably exacerbated social violence affecting economic and social activities especially during campaigns, rallies and election related activities for which electorates and candidates of different party affiliations are scared and frightened of in Kaduna State.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

1. The study recommended that government should ensure the physical punishment (detention) to *Yan Shara* gang members. This will deter them from involving into thuggery within Kaduna Metropolis.

2. Additionally, the study also recommended that security agencies should continue to cooperate and coordinate with vigilante groups to combat the nefarious activities of *Yan Shara* in Kaduna Metropolis.

3. Furthermore, the study recommended that Government and communities should prioritize the provision of quality education at the secondary and tertiary level for the youth to be educated against engaging in *Yan Shara* gangsterism that could endanger their lives.

4. Security operatives and vigilante groups should strengthen their patrol along routes that attracts the activities of *Yan Shara* to safe guard lives and properties of the people in the area.

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THE CONCEPT OF THE 'DEEP STATE' AND PRESIDENT TRUMP'S EMERGENCE: AN EXPLORATION

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Abstract
The concept of the "Deep State" has become a prominent topic of political discourse, particularly in the context of contemporary U.S. politics. Often characterized as a shadowy, entrenched network of bureaucratic elites, intelligence agencies, and powerful interest groups operating outside of direct democratic oversight, the Deep State has been portrayed as a force working to undermine political leaders who challenge the status quo. This concept gained widespread attention during the presidency of Donald Trump, whose outsider status and confrontational approach to established political institutions seemed to clash with the perceived power of the Deep State. This paper explores the development and implications of the Deep State theory, particularly in relation to Trump's rise to power. It examines the roots of the concept within conspiracy theories, its evolution in public discourse, and its manifestation during the Trump administration. A key focus is placed on how Trump's rhetoric and actions, such as his frequent criticisms of the "swamp" and his attacks on intelligence agencies, contributed to a public perception of conflict with this alleged shadow government. The paper also addresses the broader implications for American democracy, the relationship between the executive and the intelligence community, and the ways in which the media and public perceptions shape political narratives. By analyzing Trump's emergence within the context of the Deep State, the paper offers a comprehensive understanding of the tensions between populist movements and the entrenched political elite, contributing to ongoing debates about the nature of power and governance in modern America concerning Donald Trump's return to the white house.
Keywords: Deep State, Contemporary Political Discourse, United States, President Donald Trump.

Introduction

The concept of a "deep state"—a clandestine network of unelected government officials, military personnel, and powerful elites—has become a central term in political rhetoric, particularly during the presidency of Donald Trump. The deep state is often described as an invisible but influential group that operates behind the scenes, exercising significant control over national policies and decisions, regardless of the political party in power. While the term is not new, it gained renewed prominence during Trump's political rise, where it was used to explain the resistance, he faced from various segments of the U.S. government. This paper examines how the deep state theory evolved, its use in Trump's political discourse, and the implications for American political culture and governance. Trump's populist narrative of an entrenched, shadowy power structure working against his administration resonated with a significant portion of the electorate, reflecting a broader disillusionment with the political establishment. As such, the deep state became integral to understanding Trump's identity as a political outsider, with his supporters viewing him as a champion of the people against a corrupt system. This paper will explore the deep state's theoretical underpinnings, its historical evolution, and its relationship to the Trump presidency, while critically examining the implications for American democracy. The term "deep state" refers to a hidden network of powerful individuals within government institutions—particularly in intelligence agencies

and the military—who are believed to manipulate national policies outside the control of elected officials. Although the term originated in Turkey to describe clandestine political networks of military and intelligence figures, its application to the U.S. political landscape grew in prominence in the early 21st century. Critics of the deep state theory contend that it is a conspiracy theory with no factual basis, suggesting that resistance from bureaucratic agencies is often a result of institutional independence and professional integrity rather than a coordinated effort to undermine elected leadership (Kelly & Menzel, 2020). In the context of the United States, the deep state narrative emerged in response to perceived power imbalances between elected leaders and unelected bureaucrats. Proponents of the theory argue that this permanent government—comprising intelligence agencies, military leaders, and financial elites—operates in secrecy, beyond the reach of public accountability, and often pursues its own interests over those of the democratic electorate (Harris, 2017). However, critics argue that such views simplify complex political dynamics and contribute to the erosion of public trust in democratic institutions (Ginsburg, 2020).

The deep state concept in the U.S. has historical antecedents, particularly concerning concerns about military and intelligence agency overreach. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, in his 1961 farewell address, warned against the growing influence of the "military-industrial complex," cautioning that its power could potentially subvert democratic control over national policy (Eisenhower, 1961). Similarly, the Cold War era brought to light the power of intelligence agencies, particularly through the revelations of covert CIA activities and the Watergate scandal, which raised questions about the role of unelected government officials in shaping national policy without public oversight (Church, 1976). In the post-9/11 era, the expansion of surveillance powers, the growth of intelligence agencies, and the rise of military engagements in the Middle East further fueled concerns about the existence of a shadow government working behind the scenes. The growth of the surveillance state and the increasing opacity of government agencies contributed to the belief that there were powerful, unelected forces manipulating policy for their own benefit (Glennon, 2014).

While the deep state concept initially had academic and theoretical foundations, it became a prominent part of political discourse during the early 2000s, particularly after the September 11 attacks. The increased power of intelligence agencies and the military led some critics to question the extent to which these entities operated independently of democratic control. Scholars like Michael Glennon (2014) have argued that the U.S. government's decision-making process is often guided by powerful, unelected bureaucrats who operate in secrecy, shielding their actions from public scrutiny and accountability. In recent decades, the deep state theory has evolved into a central element of populist rhetoric, especially in the United States, where dissatisfaction with the political establishment has grown. Figures such as Donald Trump have framed the deep state as a major obstacle to their political agendas, using it as a rallying point for those who feel disenfranchised by the political elite.

Donald Trump's rise to political prominence in 2016 marked the deep state as a focal point of populist resentment. Trump's campaign positioned him as an outsider, untainted by the corrupt system in Washington, D.C. Central to this narrative was his claim that the so-called deep state—comprising bureaucrats, intelligence agents, and political elites—was working to undermine his agenda and subvert the will of the people. His frequent references to the deep state resonated with many Americans who were frustrated by the political establishment and skeptical of Washington's ability to enact meaningful change (Trump, 2016). Trump's use of the deep state narrative was especially pronounced in response to the ongoing investigations into Russian interference in the 2016 election, spearheaded by Special Counsel Robert Mueller. Trump labeled the investigation a "witch hunt," claiming that it was part of an effort

by the deep state to delegitimize his presidency (Mueller, 2019). In doing so, Trump capitalized on populist sentiments, portraying himself as a defender of the people against a powerful, unelected elite. **The Deep State and American Governance**. The rise of the deep state narrative raises important questions about the nature of power in American governance. Proponents of the deep state theory argue that unelected officials within the federal bureaucracy hold disproportionate influence over national policies, undermining democratic accountability (Harris, 2017). This perspective challenges the conventional view that elected representatives have the ultimate authority to shape policy, with bureaucracies serving as neutral implementers of their decisions. Critics of the deep state narrative, however, argue that it oversimplifies the complexities of governance. Public bureaucracies are staffed by professionals who bring expertise and continuity to government operations. Moreover, the relationship between elected officials and bureaucrats is not always antagonistic. Professional civil servants often provide necessary checks and balances to prevent executive overreach and to ensure that policies align with legal and constitutional norms (Kelly & Menzel, 2020).

Conceptual Issues

Overview of the USA as a Model Democratic State

The United States has long been viewed as the epitome of a democratic society, with its founding principles deeply rooted in the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. The U.S. Constitution, established in 1787, marked the foundation of the nation's democratic structure, emphasizing the balance of power, individual rights, and the rule of law. The American democratic model, characterized by a system of checks and balances among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, has been an enduring example of democratic governance. The U.S. was one of the first modern states to implement a democratic system based on universal suffrage, individual liberties, and an independent judiciary (Mearsheimer, 2021). This model has influenced democratic systems worldwide, providing a framework for countries emerging from authoritarian regimes or colonial rule. The American democratic system promotes pluralism, political freedoms, and participation through free elections, where citizens have the right to vote, engage in political discourse, and exercise their civil liberties.

Moreover, the United States has been at the forefront of supporting global democratic initiatives, leveraging its military and economic power to promote democratic values abroad. Organizations like the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), in which the U.S. plays a pivotal role, underscore the country's commitment to fostering international governance based on democratic principles (Kagan, 2019). The U.S. has historically positioned itself as a beacon for democracy, not just in theory but also through its political engagement on the world stage. With the end of World War II, the United States emerged as the leader of the Western bloc during the Cold War, actively promoting democracy as the counterpoint to communism. This was reflected in its participation in forming international institutions like the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), all designed to promote stability, peace, and democratic governance (Sullivan, 2020).

The U.S. has frequently supported democratic movements globally, from its advocacy for the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa to its more recent efforts in supporting pro-democracy protests in the Middle East during the Arab Spring. Additionally, U.S. diplomacy and foreign policy have emphasized the importance of human rights, the rule of law, and free elections as cornerstones of a stable global order (Kagan, 2019). In its role as a standard-bearer of democracy, the U.S. has also undertaken military interventions with the stated goal

of promoting democratic governance. The 2003 invasion of Iraq, for instance, was justified by the Bush administration on the grounds of removing an authoritarian regime and establishing a democratic government (Mearsheimer, 2021). While these actions have been controversial, they reflect the U.S.'s commitment to spreading democracy, even at the cost of military conflict.

However, despite its stature as a global democratic leader, the U.S. faces several internal and external challenges that threaten its standing as a model of democracy. These challenges include political polarization, racial inequality, voter suppression, and the undue influence of money in politics. In addition, the rise of populist movements and questioning of democratic norms have prompted global concerns about the future of democracy in the U.S. (Mudde, 2019).

To maintain its position as a democratic beacon, the U.S. requires constant self-reflection, internal reform, and external support. This is particularly critical in an era marked by increasing global uncertainty, rising authoritarianism, and the erosion of democratic norms in many regions of the world. As such, it is imperative for the United States to address its domestic shortcomings while continuing to lead and collaborate with global partners in promoting democratic ideals.

The emergence of the deep state narrative under Trump has profound implications for American political culture. The deep state theory fuels skepticism about the efficacy and legitimacy of government institutions, eroding public trust and complicating efforts to achieve political consensus. The belief that a hidden network of bureaucrats and elites controls the levers of power undermines the democratic principle of popular sovereignty, where elected officials are expected to represent the will of the people. furthermore, the narrative has exacerbated political polarization, as Trump’s populist rhetoric casts federal agencies as adversaries to his administration, further dividing the electorate. While the deep state theory highlights concerns about government accountability and transparency, it also risks overshadowing the more complex, structural challenges of modern governance.

A broader Implications of the Deep State on America's World Power Position: The Relationship Between Its Allies, World Power Structures, and Politics

The concept of the "Deep State" does not only carry implications for American domestic governance but also has broader geopolitical consequences, particularly concerning the United States' role in the world order and its relationships with allies. The narrative of a hidden network of elites controlling political decisions behind the scenes can affect perceptions of the U.S. as a global power and its relationships with foreign governments and international organizations. As the Deep State theory gained traction during the presidency of Donald Trump, it reshaped discussions about American leadership in international politics, particularly regarding how foreign allies view U.S. stability, governance, and the reliability of American political institutions.

The Deep State narrative suggests that powerful, unelected entities within the U.S. government—such as the intelligence agencies, military-industrial complex, and corporate elites—are often at odds with the wishes of the publicly elected government. This portrayal has raised concerns among U.S. allies, especially regarding the consistency and reliability of American foreign policy. Trump’s presidency, characterized by frequent tensions with the U.S. intelligence community and foreign policy decisions that contradicted traditional U.S. alliances, highlighted this internal division. Allies, particularly in Europe and Asia, began questioning whether the U.S. could be trusted to uphold long-standing international

commitments given the internal battles between elected leaders and unelected bureaucratic elites (Bacevich, 2020).

The Impact of This Narrative on American Alliances

A critical aspect of the relationship between the U.S. and its allies is the assumption of political stability and shared values. The Deep State concept, when amplified by Trump's confrontations with entrenched governmental structures, threatened to undermine this foundation. For example, Trump's questioning of NATO's value, alongside his public critiques of the European Union and his praise for authoritarian leaders, raised doubts among Western allies about America's commitment to multilateralism and the post-World War II order. If political decision-making within the U.S. is perceived to be controlled or influenced by a hidden, elite structure—potentially undermining the President's policies—other nations might hesitate to rely on the U.S. as a global leader in strategic matters (Kagan, 2019).

Furthermore, the notion of a Deep State could weaken diplomatic engagement by fostering suspicion and mistrust. If U.S. allies perceive internal instability or view the political process as manipulated by unelected actors, they may seek alternative power structures and alliances outside the traditional U.S. sphere of influence. For instance, the European Union has taken steps to become more independent of U.S. influence, with the rise of leaders who advocate for a more autonomous European foreign policy (Lynch, 2020). This trend could be seen as partially influenced by the perception that the U.S. political system, under the influence of a Deep State, is unpredictable and unreliable.

Global Power Structures and the Deep State Narrative

The Deep State theory also interacts with global power structures, particularly concerning how other world powers—such as China, Russia, and emerging economies—perceive American leadership. For autocratic regimes like those in Russia and China, the Deep State narrative may serve as a tool to delegitimize the American democratic process and amplify their own models of governance. The narrative of a fragmented, destabilized U.S. political system provides these nations with ammunition to criticize American values and assert that the U.S. is no longer the reliable leader of the global order. For instance, Russian propaganda has frequently used the concept of the Deep State to depict the U.S. as being run by an unaccountable elite, emphasizing the divide between American leadership and the will of the people. This rhetoric can create a perception of instability that undermines the credibility of the U.S. as a force for global stability, particularly among countries that are considering aligning with authoritarian powers. Similarly, China can leverage this narrative to promote its own vision of governance, which is presented as more stable and effective in comparison to the perceived chaos of American politics under the sway of a Deep State (Mearsheimer, 2021).

Moreover, the Deep State theory could impact U.S. foreign policy initiatives, especially those focused on democracy promotion and human rights. If U.S. actions are framed as being dictated by a shadowy elite, foreign governments may question whether these policies reflect true democratic principles or are part of a larger strategic game driven by unelected interests. This could lead to the undermining of American moral authority on the global stage, as other nations perceive the U.S. not as a champion of democracy, but as a country where the true levers of power lie with undemocratic forces. The Deep State theory has significant implications for America's position as a global power and its relationship with allies and international power structures. While the theory is often rooted in speculative rhetoric, its political consequences cannot be ignored, particularly when it influences perceptions of American reliability, governance, and leadership. The narrative of a hidden elite subverting

the will of elected officials can lead to skepticism and mistrust among U.S. allies, potentially eroding longstanding diplomatic ties. Additionally, global competitors like Russia and China may exploit this narrative to further challenge American influence and advance their own models of governance. Ultimately, the rise of the Deep State concept calls into question the stability of U.S. democratic institutions, both domestically and in terms of their impact on the global order, as it reshapes how foreign powers engage with the United States on the world stage.

Exploring the Broader Implications of the Deep State on American Democracy: The Relationship Between Elected Officials and Unelected Power Structures

The concept of the "Deep State" presents profound implications for American democracy, particularly in terms of the complex relationship between elected officials and unelected power structures within the government. As the term implies, the Deep State refers to a hidden network of bureaucrats, intelligence agencies, and institutional elites who are thought to exert disproportionate control over national policies, often operating outside the bounds of democratic accountability. The rise of this concept, particularly during the presidency of Donald Trump, has significantly influenced public perceptions of how power is distributed in the United States and the degree to which unelected entities can shape governance. One of the most significant implications of the Deep State narrative is the erosion of trust in democratic institutions. When elected leaders, such as President Trump, publicly challenge the legitimacy of agencies like the FBI, CIA, and the broader intelligence community, it fosters skepticism and distrust among the electorate (Griffin, 2018). Trump's rhetoric, exemplified in phrases like "draining the swamp," suggests that a powerful, unseen network of elites is systematically obstructing or undermining his administration, despite his electoral mandate. This type of narrative has the potential to undermine public confidence in institutions that are critical for maintaining checks and balances, such as the judiciary and law enforcement (Hochschild, 2020). The questioning of these institutions erodes public faith in the very systems meant to safeguard democratic values.

The relationship between elected officials and unelected power structures is also central to discussions surrounding executive power. Elected leaders like the president are accountable to the public through regular elections, but unelected officials, such as career bureaucrats and intelligence officers, are less directly accountable to the electorate. When the Deep State concept gains traction, it raises questions about the appropriate balance between executive authority and the influence of permanent bureaucratic structures (Lynch, 2019). In the case of Trump's presidency, his frequent clashes with intelligence agencies and federal agencies were framed as a battle for control over national policy. This dynamic underscores the tension between the executive branch, which is democratically elected, and the unelected officials who form the backbone of the administrative state.

Furthermore, the Deep State narrative challenges the normative understanding of the role of civil service in a democracy. In theory, career civil servants are meant to provide continuity and expertise that ensure stability in government, irrespective of political leadership. However, in the populist era, their role is increasingly seen as problematic by those who view them as resistant to the will of the people. Trump's administration, for instance, frequently depicted career officials in terms of opposition, claiming that they were sabotaging the agenda of the elected president (Sullivan, 2020). The increased politicization of the civil service under such circumstances can threaten its neutrality, potentially undermining the very principles that allow a democratic system to function efficiently. In addition, the Deep State theory has implications for democratic accountability. If citizens believe that the state is being manipulated by a hidden elite, they may disengage from traditional forms of political

participation, seeing voting and public discourse as powerless against the forces that they believe are manipulating the system. This disillusionment can lead to a breakdown in democratic norms and the rise of authoritarian tendencies. Scholars have noted that populist rhetoric about the Deep State can encourage a more authoritarian approach to governance, where leaders bypass traditional checks and balances in favour of more direct forms of power (Mudde, 2019).

The concept of the Deep State also interacts with media narratives and public opinion. In the modern age, media plays a crucial role in shaping the perception of power. When high-profile figures like Trump challenge the legitimacy of the Deep State, the media often amplifies these claims, framing political battles as part of a larger, shadowy conflict. As a result, the public may begin to view political conflicts through a lens of conspiracy, where institutional opponents are cast as enemies of the people, rather than political adversaries with differing views (Hochschild, 2020). This has long-term effects on the way citizens interact with political discourse, often reinforcing division and polarization. In sum, the concept of the Deep State significantly alters the relationship between elected officials and unelected power structures in American democracy. The erosion of trust in institutions, the politicization of the civil service, and the challenges to democratic accountability all reflect the broader implications of this phenomenon. The Deep State theory underscores the growing tension between populist movements and entrenched political elites, highlighting the fragility of democratic norms in an increasingly polarized political landscape.

The USA as a Model Democratic State: A Call for Continued Support

The United States has long been regarded as a model of democracy, with its system of government founded on the principles of checks and balances, individual freedoms, and the rule of law. As one of the most influential and established democratic nations in the world, the U.S. has served as a beacon for democratic ideals, inspiring nations across the globe to adopt similar political structures (Kagan, 2019). However, despite its global influence and leadership in promoting democratic values, the U.S. requires ongoing support—both internally and externally—to maintain its position as a model democratic state.

The Role of the United States in Global Democracy

The United States has traditionally been seen as the standard-bearer of democracy, advocating for free elections, human rights, and the rule of law worldwide. Its political system, with its democratic institutions such as an independent judiciary, free press, and political pluralism, sets an example for nations striving to establish or strengthen their own democratic frameworks (Lynch, 2020). American policies and diplomacy have often promoted democracy, from its role in the founding of international organizations like the United Nations to its active involvement in supporting democratic movements and countering authoritarianism.

Moreover, U.S. foreign aid, diplomatic efforts, and international collaborations have helped foster democratic institutions in developing countries (Mearsheimer, 2021). Its global influence, underpinned by soft power, military alliances like NATO, and its economic clout, has been instrumental in shaping global norms and policies around democracy, governance, and human rights (Kagan, 2019). Given its leadership role, the U.S. continues to be seen as a symbol of democratic values, one whose stability and success are crucial for maintaining a rules-based international order.

Internal Challenges to the U.S. as a Democratic Model

Despite its prominent position, the United States faces significant internal challenges that threaten its status as a model democracy. Issues such as political polarization, voter suppression, racial inequality, and the influence of money in politics have raised concerns about the health of American democracy (Mudde, 2019). The rise of populism and the increasing fragmentation of the political landscape have led to divisions that undermine national unity, and in some cases, challenge the fundamental values that have historically defined American democracy. Additionally, concerns about the role of the so-called "Deep State," as discussed in earlier analysis, highlight an internal crisis of legitimacy and transparency in governance (Bacevich, 2020). The perception of a disconnect between elected officials and unelected bureaucratic elites can erode public trust in democratic institutions. Such divisions threaten the ideal of democratic governance that has long been central to the U.S. model and pose a risk to its credibility as an exemplar of democracy (Lynch, 2020).

The Need for Internal and External Support

To maintain its status as a model democratic state, the U.S. must confront these challenges head-on. Domestically, this involves addressing issues of political polarization, restoring faith in democratic institutions, and ensuring that elections are free and fair for all citizens (Sullivan, 2020). Campaign finance reform, efforts to combat gerrymandering, and policies that promote racial and social justice are all critical to the integrity of American democracy (Mudde, 2019). Ensuring that the rights and voices of all Americans are represented is key to sustaining the country's democratic ideals. Externally, the U.S. must continue to demonstrate its commitment to democratic values on the global stage. Its leadership should focus on strengthening international democratic alliances, supporting democratic transitions, and standing firm against autocratic regimes (Bacevich, 2020). As other countries face challenges to democracy, the U.S. must not only support those struggles but also set a positive example by living up to its own democratic ideals (Kagan, 2019).

Additionally to these efforts, it is important for the U.S. to recognize that the support of international allies and democratic institutions remains crucial. In a world that is increasingly multipolar, where rising powers may not prioritize democracy in the same way, the U.S. must continue to build partnerships with like-minded nations. This includes promoting democratic norms in international organizations and ensuring that global governance structures uphold human rights and democracy (Mearsheimer, 2021). The United States' role as a model democratic state is invaluable not only for its own citizens but for the global community. While it continues to serve as a beacon of democracy and a leader in promoting democratic values, internal challenges and external pressures require ongoing effort and collaboration. To remain a true model of democracy, the U.S. needs continuous support from both its citizens and international allies, with a renewed commitment to addressing its own democratic challenges while championing democracy worldwide (Sullivan, 2020). By upholding its core principles of freedom, equality, and justice, the United States can continue to inspire and guide other nations on their paths to democratic governance (Lynch, 2020).

Conclusion:

This paper on *The Concept of the Deep State and President Trump's Emergence: An In-Depth Exploration* delves into the evolution and political significance of the "Deep State" concept, particularly during the tenure of President Donald Trump. The Deep State is typically described as an elusive network composed of government bureaucrats, intelligence agencies, and influential elites, who supposedly work behind the scenes to manipulate political outcomes and maintain the status quo. This paper examines the historical emergence

of the Deep State idea, rooted in conspiracy theories, and its subsequent mainstream prominence, especially during the rise of Trump as an outsider candidate and eventual president. Central to the exploration is how Trump's rhetoric, especially his frequent use of the term "draining the swamp," resonated with public distrust of the established political elite. His accusations of a Deep State working to undermine his administration reflect broader tensions between populist movements and the entrenched political establishment. The paper investigates how this theory was further amplified by Trump's public clashes with intelligence agencies and the media, particularly during his presidency, when key figures like former FBI Director James Comey and intelligence officials became subjects of suspicion.

Moreover, the paper explores the broader implications of this phenomenon on American democracy, examining the relationship between elected officials and unelected power structures. It considers the consequences for democratic accountability, transparency, and public trust, suggesting that the Deep State narrative reshapes the way power is perceived and exercised in the United States. In conclusion, the paper underscores the profound political and social implications of the Deep State concept in relation to President Trump's emergence. The narrative of a hidden, malevolent network subverting democratic processes has contributed to a significant shift in how power is perceived in the U.S. While the Deep State theory is often rooted in speculative and conspiratorial rhetoric, its widespread acceptance signals a deeper disillusionment with traditional political structures. As Trump's presidency demonstrated, populist leaders often find fertile ground in the distrust that these theories foster, positioning themselves as champions of the people against shadowy elites.

A key takeaway is that the Deep State concept reflects not only Trump's opposition to the existing political order but also a broader crisis of legitimacy facing American institutions. As Trump's critics argue, the narrative may undermine trust in critical democratic structures, such as intelligence agencies and the judiciary, by presenting them as antagonistic forces rather than neutral arbiters of governance. Ultimately, the exploration shows that while the Deep State may be more myth than reality, its political utility in shaping public perception and fueling partisan divides cannot be overlooked. The tension between populist movements and institutional authority will likely remain a defining feature of American political discourse for years to come.

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THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PUBLIC DEBT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the relationships between public debt and economic development in Nigeria, specifically focusing on the relationship between domestic debt, external debt and real exchange rate and real GDP per capita in Nigeria. Economic development was represented by per capita real gross domestic product (RGPCt), the dependent variable, while domestic debt (DMDt), external debt (EXDt), real exchange rate (RXRt), and nominal exchange rate (EXRt) served as the independent variables. Time series data of the variables are sourced from the Central Bank of Nigeria's statistical bulletin spanning 1981 to 2022. The variables underwent unit root test and were found to be integrated of order one I (1) and order two I(2). Following, the Toda-Yamamoto Causality (Block Exogeneity Wald) test was employed to examine causality among the variables in the model. The analysis revealed that external and domestic debt have no statistically significant relationship with per capita real gross domestic product in Nigeria. The study recommended that policymakers ensure effective and transparent utilization of borrowed fund, prioritizing investments that promote sustainable economic growth and development in Nigeria.

Introduction

Public debt is vital source for funding public expenditures, especially when increasing taxes and cutting public expenditure are challenging (Aimola & Odhiambo, 2019: Kaka, 2020). By increasing government spending through borrowing, government could stimulate economic growth during times of recession or economic downturn by boosting aggregate demand in the economy, leading to increased investment, consumption, and employment. Theoretically, public debt is a viable option that can be used to address income inequality and social welfare issues when borrowed money is used to fund social programs such as healthcare, education, and +poverty alleviation initiatives that can improve the standard of living for its citizens (Saleh & Ibrahim, 2020: Asravor and Sackey 2023). While debt can facilitate development, excessive accumulation poses significant threats to economic stability, advocating for balanced debt management and structural reforms to enhance resilience (Kose et al., 2022).

The trends in public debt are raising concerns among policy makers in Nigeria. Nigeria's total public debt, which includes both external and domestic debt, has been increasing, reaching over ₦80 trillion (around $100 billion) by late 2023. In view of recent debt relief and various bank reforms, economists wonder if trends in public are negatively affecting financial and macroeconomic stability even when authorities are achieving or close to achieving set macroeconomic objectives (Aimola & Odhiambo, 2019; CBN, 2023). As of 2023, Nigeria's debt-to-GDP ratio stands at approximately 40-45% which is below the critical threshold of 60%, its debt service burden and challenges in generating revenue mean that the country faces substantial fiscal pressure toward economic growth and as being a continuously debatable topic among researchers globally. Moreover, the issue is widely debated, particularly in highly indebted developing countries such as Nigeria (Olabisi & Effiong, 2023). Meanwhile, the rate at which domestic debt is increasing in developing countries, particularly in Nigeria, has raised concerns among economists and policymakers, due to the potential effect of sovereign debt on private sector growth, economic growth rate and debt sustainability. In 2020 Nigeria's total domestic debt was approximately ₦19.6 trillion, but by 2023 the total domestic debt had escalated to about ₦60 trillion. The sharp increase in domestic debt highlights Nigeria's reliance on local borrowing to finance its budget deficits and address its economic challenges over these years. Economics literature suggests that, even in the absence of fiscal costs, a persistently high and increasing public debt ratio may have a detrimental effect on long run economic growth in an economy (Paivi, 2022). Moreover, high public debt creates expectations about future tax increases and a climate of uncertainty, reducing incentives to save and invest. At a high threshold of 60% debt-to-GDP ratio, there are evidence of an S-shape impact of government debt on gross domestic product per person. Thus, high government debt, unarguably, harms gross product per person and results in fiscal consolidation not being able to stimulate gross domestic product per person (Buthelezi & Nyatanga, 2023).

Public debt is a crucial tool for countries to achieve their macroeconomic objectives through funding essential infrastructure projects, stimulate growth during economic downturns, address social welfare issues, manage fiscal deficits, and capitalize on investment opportunities. However, excessive accumulation of debt is a critical factor in the debt-growth dynamics and underscores the relevance of a balanced debt management. By screening 892 articles and narrowing down to 535 relevant studies, Khudzari et al. (2022) identified three primary research clusters on public debt sustainability: fiscal sustainability and policy rules, empirical sustainability testing, and debt-growth dynamics. The findings revealed a predominance of analytical and empirical articles, reflecting the diverse economic contexts influencing public debt, highlighting a growing complexity in the literature on public debt sustainability, underscoring the need for this research on debt-growth dynamics to inform effective fiscal policy decisions. Nigeria's debt burden, despite its necessity for financing critical infrastructure, raises serious sustainability concerns because of issues of sustainability of debt service that diverts funds from development priorities, issues relating to mismanagement of borrowed funds, which leads to weak returns on investment and oil dependency as well as external shocks, which expose the country to significant economic vulnerabilities. Thus in this study, we provide evidence and argue that public debt has no positive impact on per capita income in Nigeria, over the years.

Theoretical Review

The discourse on the relationship between public debt and economic growth presents two opposing theoretical frameworks. The Keynesian perspective posits that increased public debt can enhance capital, output, income, and aggregate demand, particularly benefiting developing economies with limited capital. This positive effect is contingent upon the

effective allocation of borrowed funds to productive sectors, as supported by various empirical studies. Conversely, the Neo-Classical viewpoint argues that external debt can negatively impact economic growth, primarily through mechanisms such as the debt overhang hypothesis and the crowding-out effect. This suggests that excessive debt may hinder investment and economic performance. The contrasting implications of these theories highlight the complexity of public debt's role in economic development, emphasizing the importance of both the context and management of debt in influencing growth outcomes (Meraj et al., 2024: Islam & Nguyen, 2024: Dawood, 2024).

Empirical Review

The literature on public debt revealed a complex interplay between debt levels, economic growth, and fiscal policy across various contexts, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria and emerging markets. Aimola and Odhiambo (2018) examined the interplay between public and private debt in Nigeria, highlighting their implications for financial and macroeconomic stability. Utilizing a 37-year trend analysis, the authors identified persistent issues such as fiscal dominance, elevated borrowing costs, and the detrimental effects of poor coordination between fiscal and monetary policies. Notably, the study pointed out that government borrowing from banks leads to a crowding-out effect, limiting private sector credit availability. The findings underscored the necessity for fiscal adjustments to reduce public debt, improve coordination between fiscal and monetary authorities, and enhance central bank autonomy to mitigate political influences on monetary policy. Despite some progress in debt management, the authors argued that substantial challenges remain, which must be addressed to foster macroeconomic stability and sustainable growth in Nigeria.

Aimola and Odhiambo (2020) provided a comprehensive review of the literature on the relationship between public debt and inflation, highlighting the complexities and variances in this relationship across different economies. The authors categorized existing studies by region, variables, and methodologies, revealing mixed findings: while some research suggested a positive correlation between public debt and inflation, others indicated a negative or negligible relationship. Key influencing factors include central bank independence, political stability, and prevailing economic conditions. The above has implications for the need for policymakers to navigate the intricate dynamics between public debt and inflation when crafting fiscal and monetary policies to ensure economic stability. The study underscored the necessity for further research to elucidate the mechanisms at play, ultimately aiming to provide clearer guidance for effective management of public debt and inflation.

Kaka (2020) examined the interplay between direct taxation and Nigeria's national debt, highlighting an underutilized potential for tax revenue to alleviate fiscal pressures and stimulate economic growth. Applying a documentary research design, the analysis draws on secondary data from reputable sources and revealed that direct taxes could significantly bolster government revenue, akin to practices in developed economies. The findings suggested that enhancing tax policies is essential for improving revenue generation, which is critical for effective debt servicing, particularly given Nigeria's vulnerability to fluctuating oil prices. This underscores the importance of fiscal policy reform in addressing the country's economic challenges. The study concluded that a strategic overhaul of tax policies is necessary for Nigeria to achieve sustainable economic development and calls for further research into the taxation-debt nexus.

Puonti (2022) investigated the intricate relationship between public debt and economic growth, with a particular focus on Finland and EU fiscal policies. The study employed both theoretical frameworks and empirical analysis, revealing several key findings. Firstly, it identified that high public debt levels can adversely affect economic growth, especially when

they surpass certain thresholds. Secondly, the relationship is characterized by significant cross-country heterogeneity, indicating that the effects of public debt on growth are contingent upon varying economic conditions and institutional contexts. Additionally, the study highlighted that these effects are time-varying, influenced by economic cycles and policy responses. The implications of these findings underlined the need for prudent fiscal policies. Puonti suggested that policymakers exercise caution regarding public debt increases, particularly in the context of revising EU fiscal rules, to ensure fiscal sustainability and support long-term economic growth. Ultimately, while public debt can facilitate growth, excessive levels pose substantial risks to economic stability, necessitating a balanced approach to fiscal policy that weighs the long-term consequences of debt on economic performance.

Heimberger (2021) study employed meta-regression analysis to quantitatively assess the impact of the public-debt-to-GDP ratio on econdomic growth, synthesizing existing econometric literature. The analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between high levels of public debt and economic growth, identifying specific thresholds where this relationship intensified. The findings underscored the necessity for policymakers to exercise caution regarding public debt accumulation, as excessive levels could impede economic development. Heimberger advocated for sustainable debt management to leverage public debt as a growth financing tool while mitigating potential adverse economic effects.

Saleh and Ibrahim (2020) investigated the impact of debt management strategies on economic performance in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study employed quantitative analysis of secondary data from reputable financial sources. The findings revealed a significant relationship between the level of indebtedness and debt maturity, with short-term debt exacerbated debt conditions while long-term debt mitigated risks associated with debt crises. This underscored the importance of effective debt management in fostering economic growth. Saleh and Ibrahim postulated that Policymakers are optimize debt composition to enhance stability and growth, and emphasized the critical role of debt management practices in the economic landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Barrows (2020) provided an analysis of the economic performance of the PIIGS countries—Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Spain—post-Great Financial Crisis, with a focus on peak debt levels. Employing a comparative framework, the research evaluated trade flows, industry dynamics, demographics, and economic outcomes through twelve key metrics, including GDP trade ratios, government debt, foreign direct investment, and unemployment rates.

The findings revealed a distinct ranking among the PIIGS, with Ireland at the forefront of recovery, followed by the EU average, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece, which continues to face significant economic challenges. This divergence in recovery trajectories underscored the varying effectiveness of economic policies and the need for tailored support mechanisms within the EU. This implied that EU policymakers, sustain relevant economic support and integration strategies aimed at stabilizing weaker member states. Barrows concluded that understanding the economic dynamics of the PIIGS is essential for fostering overall EU stability and growth, advocating for sustained monitoring and intervention to assist struggling economies.

Frascaroli, Oliveira, and Almeida (2019) examined the interplay between public debt and economic policy coordination within the European Monetary Union (EMU) and Brazil. The authors highlighted that both regions grapple with fiscal deficits and the challenges of policy coordination, but Brazil's lack of coherence in economic policies contributing significantly to macroeconomic instability. The research underscored the critical role of institutional

frameworks in determining the success of policy coordination. The findings suggested that enhanced coordination of economic policies is a means to improve economic outcomes, particularly in managing public debt and fostering stability. Frascaroli, Oliveira, and Almeida concluded that stronger institutional mechanisms are essential for effective fiscal and monetary policy implementation, suggesting that lessons from the EMU and Brazil could be applicable to other regions facing similar economic challenges. Frascaroli, Oliveira, and Almeida emphasized the necessity of cohesive economic strategies to achieve sustainable growth and stability.

Buthelezi and Nyatanga (2023) investigated the intricate dynamics between government debt, fiscal consolidation, and economic growth in South Africa the study employed a threshold analysis methodology to discern how these relationships evolved under varying economic conditions. The authors analyzed data from 1979 to 2022 and found that fiscal consolidation can positively influence economic growth when government debt is below a certain threshold, but may prove detrimental at higher debt levels. These findings pointed to the relevance of maintaining sustainable debt levels to avoid undermining growth through consolidation efforts.

Asravor and Sackey (2023) examined the sustainability of Ghana's domestic debt and its implications for economic growth, particularly its interaction with private sector investment. Exploiting econometric models and data from 1994 to 2018, the research applied the debt overhang theory. The study revealed that while domestic debt can stimulate growth, excessive levels may crowd out private investment, ultimately hindering economic growth. Key findings indicated a causal relationship between domestic debt and economic growth, underscoring the necessity for sustainable debt management. Asravor and Sackey argued for need for the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at increasing GDP and revenue, promoting export-oriented manufacturing, and curtailing excessive imports to enhance debt sustainability.

Serzane and Askoldaviciute (2022) investigated the determinants of Lithuanian public debt to foreign countries, focusing on key macroeconomic indicators: inflation, minimum wage, GDP, unemployment rate, and population. The authors employed a robust dataset spanning three decades (1991-2020) employed both pairwise and multivariate regression analyses via SPSS, the authors find that all considered variables significantly influence public debt. Notably, the multivariate analysis reveals that the regression model is only viable when excluding the population variable, indicating that GDP, unemployment, inflation, and minimum wage are the primary drivers of external debt levels. Serzane and Askoldaviciute emphasized the necessity of continuous monitoring of macroeconomic indicators to navigate the complexities of public debt dynamics effectively.

Kose et al., (2022) examined the economic ramifications of rising debt levels in emerging markets and developing economies, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a mix of literature review, empirical analysis, and case studies, the authors identified that unprecedented debt levels correlated with slower long-term economic growth and present complex inflationary dynamics. Kose et al., stressed the necessity for prudent fiscal policies and transparency in debt management to mitigate risks associated with high debt. The study concluded that while debt can facilitate development, excessive accumulation poses significant threats to economic stability, advocating for balanced debt management and structural reforms to enhance resilience.

Olabisi and Effiong (2023). analyzed the intricate relationship between external debt servicing and Nigeria's economic growth from 1985 to 2021. Applying econometric methods,

including the autoregressive distributed lags (ARDL) model, the research draws on data from the World Bank and Nigeria's Debt Management Office, focusing on GDP per capita as a growth indicator alongside variables such as external debt stock and service payments. The findings revealed a dual nature of external debt: while servicing can hinder growth by diverting resources, a well-managed external debt stock may foster economic development. The study highlighted the significant roles of corruption, mismanagement, and prevailing economic conditions in shaping this relationship. The study suggested that the relevance of effective debt management strategies that prioritize productive investment of borrowed funds, alongside tackling corruption to enhance the benefits of external debt. Olabisi and Effiong posited that external debt can be a growth catalyst if managed properly, advocating for the strategic use of borrowed funds in infrastructure and development projects to bolster Nigeria's economic trajectory.

Ricardo Reis (2022) examined the sustainability of public debt amid evolving economic conditions, particularly in a low-interest-rate environment. Using a theoretical framework, the research highlights the relationship between government debt, interest rates, and economic growth, challenging traditional views on debt sustainability. Findings of the study indicated that the issuance of public debt can generate substantial "debt revenue," enabling developed economies to maintain high debt levels without incurring a debt crisis. The study notes a concerning trend where government bond returns have consistently fallen below economic growth rates, complicating conventional assessments of debt sustainability. Reis argued that governments must navigate the policy trade-offs at her disposal to decide on the optimal debt level that balances these considerations. Reis urged policymakers to rethink traditional debt sustainability frameworks, emphasizing the potential of debt revenue as a tool for effective fiscal management. Reis posited that understanding the interplay between debt revenue, interest rates, and economic growth is crucial for fiscal authorities. According to the study, the absence of a debt crisis in advanced economies, despite elevated debt-to-GDP ratios, can largely be attributed to the revenue generated from public debt issuance, suggesting a need for a paradigm shift in fiscal policy assessment.

The studies collectively advocate for a good understanding of public debt dynamics, emphasizing the necessity for ongoing research to inform effective fiscal policy decisions. Policymakers are urged to balance the benefits of debt as a growth financing tool against the risks of excessive accumulation, with a focus on enhancing institutional frameworks and coordinating economic policies to achieve sustainable growth. The overarching theme is the critical need for strategic debt management and fiscal reforms to navigate the complexities of public debt and its implications for economic stability.

Theoretical Framework

The debt overhang theory is adopted as the theoretical framework of the study. This theory was primarily developed by Krugman and Sachs in the 1980s, though the concept has evolved through contributions by various scholars (Imbs & Ranciere (2005). The debt overhang theory posits that excessive borrowing leads to high levels of debt, creating a debt trap that hampers economic growth. When a government's debt is perceived to exceed its repayment capacity, it discourages both domestic and foreign investment due to fears of increased taxation to service that debt. This expectation diminishes the incentive for current investment, as potential returns are overshadowed by anticipated future tax burdens. Furthermore, accumulated public debt acts as a tax on future output, reducing savings and investment incentives. The theory suggests that servicing debt limits available funds for productive investment, particularly in critical areas like infrastructure and human capital, ultimately restraining economic growth. Therefore, mismanagement of debt can significantly

hinder a country's economic development (Meraj et al., 2024: Islam & Nguyen, 2024: Dawood, 2024).

Research Design

The study used a quasi-experimental design (ex post facto), particularly about the data utilized for the research. This is a research methodology wherein the researcher exerts no influence over the data for analysis.

Variables in the Model

The model's dependent variable is real gross domestic product growth per capita (RGDPCt), while the independent variables are domestic debt (DMDt), foreign debt (EXDt), and the real exchange rate (RXRt). The parameter estimates of the relationship reflect the impact of public debt variables on economic development.

Model Specification

Based on the theoretical framework and the selection of variables, the mathematical model to examine the relationship between public debt and economic development in Nigeria is as follows;

RGPCt = f(DMDt, EXDt, RXRt) …….. 3.1

Where:

RGDPCt = real GDP growth rate

DMDt = domestic debt

EXDt = external debt

RXRt = exchange rate

The econometric model becomes

RGPCt = $\beta 0 + \beta 1DMDt + \beta 2EXDt + \beta 3RXRt + \beta 4EXRt\ t + Ut$ …….. 3.2

Equation 3.2 states that economic development as proxy with real gross domestic product per capita (RGDPC) depends on domestic debt (DMDt), external debt (EXDt), real exchange rate (RXRt) and nominal exchange rate (EXRt) as the control variable of the model.

A priori Expectation

According to the debt hangover hypothesis, domestic debt (DMDt), external debt (EXDt), and the real exchange rate (RXRt) are expected to adversely impact economic development; hence, the coefficients of these variables in the model ($\beta 1$, $\beta 2$, and $\beta 3$) should be negative.

Method of Data Analysis

The variables of the model are subjected to both unit root to test for the stationarity and the order of integration of the variables of the model which are necessary for the choice appropriate method of estimating the parameters of the relationship.

Model Evaluation

The coefficients of estimates of the study are evaluated using critical values and probability values. The choosen level of significance for the rejection of the null hypothesis the study is the 5 percent level of significance.

Data and Data Sources

Time series of real gross domestic product per capita (RGDPC) depends on domestic debt (DMDt), external debt (EXDt), real exchange rate (RXRt) and nominal exchange rate (EXRt) from 1981 to 2022, to cover periods of low and high public debt, will be obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria statistical bulletin of 2022.

Table 1.1 Phillip Perron (PP) Unit Root Test

Variable	Test Equation	Level		First Difference		Second Difference		Order
		Stat	PV	Stat	PV	Stat	PV	
DDBt	I	27.1407	1.0000	-0.2607	0.9218	-8.38106	0.0000	I(2)
	I & T	22.1910	1.0000	-2.3376	0.4051	-11.6808	0.0000	
	N	25.5378	1.0000	0.3623	0.7846	-7.07920	0.0000	
EXDt	I	3.4057	1.0000	-1.9525	0.3059	-8.8858	0.0000	I(2)
	I & T	1.7779	1.0000	-2.6819	0.2491	-15.9088	0.0000	
	N	4.2416	1.0000	-1.4088	0.1455	-7.89750	0.0000	
EXRt	I	3.2589	1.0000	-4.1254	0.0025			I(1)
	I & T	0.0610	0.9958	-4.7974	0.0021			
	N	5.2120	1.0000	-3.4140	0.0011			
RGPCt	I	-0.4559	0.8895	-3.8349	0.0055			I(1)
	I & T	-2.8677	0.1831	-3.8068	0.0265			
	N	0.6165	0.8455	-3.6657	0.0005			
RXRt	I	-2.0466	0.2666	-4.2950	0.0015			I(1)
	I & T	-2.0218	0.5724	-5.3172	0.0005			
	N	-1.6398	0.0947	-4.2695	0.0001			

Source; Author's Computation

The unit root test result is assessed by comparing the probability value of the test statistic for each variable with the selected significance level of the study, which is 0.05. The decision criterion is to reject the null hypothesis if the probability value of the test statistic for the variable is less than the selected significance level (0.05). The selected level of significance for the study. The final column of the unit root results in Table 1.1 indicates that the order of integration comprises variables of order one I(1) and order two I(2). Domestic debt (DDBt) and foreign debt (EXDt) are interconnected at the second order, I(2). For these two variables, the probability values of the test statistics under the first difference exceed 0.05; hence, the hypotheses asserting that these variables are non-stationary at first difference cannot be rejected. Nevertheless, the probability values in the second difference column are below 0.05; hence, the null hypothesis asserting that the variables are non-stationary at first difference is rejected. This indicated that domestic debt (DDBt) and external debt (EXDt) are non-stationary at both the level and first difference, but become stationary at the second difference. The remaining three variables—exchange rate (EXRt), real gross domestic product per capita (GPCt), and real exchange rate (RXRt)—are integrated of order one, I(1). The probability values of the test statistics for the variables in the first difference column are below 0.05. Consequently, the hypothesis that the exchange rate (EXRt), real gross domestic product per capita (RGPCt), and real exchange rate (RXRt) are non-stationary at first difference is refuted.t The variables are non-stationary at the level but become stationary after

the first difference. The unit root test analysis indicates that domestic debt (DDBt) and foreign debt (EXDt) are integrated of order two I(2), whereas the exchange rate (EXRt), real gross domestic product per capita (RGPCt), and real exchange rate (RXRt) are integrated of order one I(1). The Toda Yamamoto approach is employed to estimate the parameters of the models, which exhibit mixed orders of integration I(1) and I(2).

Toda Yamamoto result

Table 1.2; VAR Lag Order Selection Criteria

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SC	HQ
0	0	-1560.740	NA	4.23e+29	82.40737	82.62284
1	1	-1306.056	428.9410*	2.41e+24*	70.31876	71.61159*
2	2	-1282.965	32.81460	2.87e+24	70.41919	72.78938
3	3	-1251.745	36.14951	2.51e+24	70.09182	73.53937
4	4	-1223.215	25.52652	3.16e+24	69.90605*	74.43096

Source; Author's Computation

The optimal lag length (K) is 2, determined by the minimum values of the AIC, SC, and HQ criteria. The unit root test results in Table 2.3 indicate that the maximum order of integration is I(2), signifying that dmax equals 2. The (k+dmax)th order corresponds to the 4th order, necessitating a 4th VAR to implement the Toda-Yamamoto methodology and to provide the Granger Causality or Block Exogeneity Wald test results.

Table 1.3; Toda-Yamamoto Causality (Block Exogeneity Wald) test result

Dependent Variable; Real Gross Domestic Product Per Capita (RGPCt)

Null Hypothesis	Chi-sq	Prob. Value	Direction of causality
DDBt does not cause RGPCt	0.970964	0.6154	No causality
EXDt does not cause GPCt	0.231283	0.8908	No causality
EXRt does not cause GPCt	0.960899	0.6185	No causality
RXRt does not cause GPCt	1.895142	0.3877	No causality
All	8.242586	0.4101	No causality

Source; Author's Computation

The criterion for establishing causation is to reject the null hypothesis if the p-value of the test statistic is below 0.05 (5%). According to Table 4.4, with real gross domestic product per capita (RGPCt) as the dependent variable, the probability values for domestic debt (DDBt), foreign debt (EXDtt), exchange rate (EXR), and real exchange rate (RXRt) are 0.6154, 0.8908, 0.6185, and 0.3877, respectively. The values exceed 0.05, indicating that the null

hypotheses asserting that domestic debt (DDBt), external debt (EXDt), exchange rate (EXRt), and real exchange rate (RXRt) do not influence real gross domestic product per capita (GPCt) cannot be rejected. Consequently, there is no statistical evidence indicating that domestic debt (DDBt), external debt (EXDt), exchange rate (EXRt), and real exchange rate (RXRt) influence real gross domestic product per capita (GPC). The analysis of joint causality indicated that debt (DDBt), external debt (EXDt), exchange rate (EXRt), and real exchange rate (RXRt) do not significantly affect real gross domestic product per capita (RGPCt), as the overall probability value of 0.4101 above the threshold of 0.05.

Diagnostic Test

Table 1.4; VAR Residual Serial Correlation LM Tests

Null hypothesis: No serial correlation at lag h

Lag	LRE* stat	Df	Prob.	Rao F-stat	Df	Prob.
1	35.02524	25	0.0877	1.535243	(25, 49.8)	0.0982
2	34.41470	25	0.0993	1.500285	(25, 49.8)	0.1106
3	18.29616	25	0.8296	0.692801	(25, 49.8)	0.8388

Source; Author's Computation

Null hypothesis: No serial correlation at lags 1 to h

Lag	LRE* stat	Df	Prob.	Rao F-stat	Df	Prob.
1	35.02524	25	0.0877	1.535243	(25, 49.8)	0.0982
2	70.59716	50	0.0291	1.610940	(50, 39.8)	0.0610
3	112.6713	75	0.0032	1.668239	(75, 18.6)	0.1072

Source; Author's Computation

The null hypothesis for the serial VAR Residual Serial Correlation LM Tests posits the absence of serial correlation inside the model. The decision criterion is to reject the null hypothesis if the p-value is less than 0.05 at the selected lag. The probability values of the test statistics at lag 2 exceed 0.05; hence, the null hypothesis asserting that the model is devoid of serial correlation cannot be rejected. The model has no serial correlation.

Discussion of Finding.

The model's results indicated that domestic debt (DDBt), external debt (EXDt), nominal exchange rate (EXRt), and real exchange rate (RXRt) do not influence real gross domestic product per capita (RGPCt) either individually or collectively in Nigeria. The observation that domestic debt does not influence real GDP per capita in Nigeria indicates that variations in domestic borrowing do not directly affect the nation's per capita economic performance. This research provides empirical evidence for the debt overhang theory of Nigeria's debt-economic development dynamics. This result is also in tandem with Aimola and Odhiambo (2018) that discovered crowding-out effect of government borrowing on private investment in Nigeria. The finding is also similar to that of Puonti (2022) that posited that public debt could have adverse effect on economic growth. However, the findings contradicted those of Asravor and Sackey (2023), that identified causal effect between public debt and economic

growth. Considering the continuous raise in public debt in Nigeria, this result suggested that domestic debt is not utilized in manners that substantially impact productivity or per capita economic growth. The absence of causality from foreign debt to GDP per capita indicates that borrowing from outside sources does not directly influence Nigeria's per capita economic productivity. Since domestic and external debt levels, together with exchange rate fluctuations, do not directly influence real GDP per capita, policymakers ought to prioritize allocating borrowed fund to productive investments and structural reforms to stimulate economic growth. Investment in infrastructure, education, and technology developments can establish a more resilient foundation for enhancing per capita real GDP. Structural reforms designed to improve productivity and stimulate a more vigorous private sector may also prove advantageous. Given that domestic and external debt do not directly influence real GDP per capita, it underscored the necessity for effective debt management, emphasizing efficiency and transparency, while prioritizing investments that bolster long-term economic capacity and sustainability.

Conclusion

Following the findings we concluded that external debt and domestic debt do not have significant statistical relationship with per capita real gross domestic product in Nigeria. While public debt remains a crucial variable for economic management, the absence of a direct statistical relationship between public debt and real GDP per capita suggested that public debt has not been properly managed in Nigeria over the years. The findings implied that effective debt management and exchange rate policies alone may not suffice to drive improvements in per capita economic performance. Given these insights, policymakers should focus on broader economic strategies that go beyond managing debt and exchange rates.

Recommendations

Therefore, the study recommended that policymakers ensure efficient and transparent use of public debt while focusing on factors that enhance long-term economic growth that are essential for economic development. More so, the government consider a broader economic strategy that includes maintaining a stable exchange rates while also addressing other factors such asinvestment in infrastructure, education, and technological advancements to create a more robust foundation for improving per capita GDP in Nigeria.

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THE IMPACT OF GREAT DEPRESSION OF THE 1930'S ON EUROPEAN ECONOMIC POLICIES IN AFRICA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE COLONIAL RESPONSES AND ECONOMIC REFORMS

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Abstract
The Great Depression of the 1930's was a severe global economic downturn that lasted from 1929 to the late 1930's. The economic crisis that quickly spread worldwide leading to widespread unemployment, poverty, and social distress that significantly altered European Economic Policies in Africa, intensifying the exploitation of African Natural Resources and African Labor in order to mitigate the misery effect of the depression in Europe. The objective of the paper is the examines the extent to which European economic policies in Africa were altered in response to the economic downturn. However, this study derived its data from secondary sources and adopting content analysis method to explore wide varieties of literature on the impact of Great Depression on European Economic policies in Africa. The findings of this paper posit that, the Great Depression significantly reshaped European economic policies in Africa, leading to intensified carting away of Africa's natural resources, exploitation of African people into forced labor, and the imposing of rigid policies of total control over the Africans and their resources in order to safeguard European economic interests. The 'Dependency' theory was adopted in this paper and concluded that the Colonial Administration in Africa imposed stiffer majors, including rigid agricultural policies that favored the Europeans and imposing forced labor in order to maximize the extraction of Africa's natural resources and the European policy on infrastructure development was primarily on facilitating exports to Europe. The paper recommended that, by examining the extent to which European economic policies in Africa were altered will contribute

significantly to a broader and nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between global economic crises and colonial governance in Africa.

Key Word: Africa, Economic Policies, European, Great Depression

Introduction

The Great Depression was a severe global economic downturn that affected many countries across the world. It became evident after a sharp decline in stock prices in the United States, leading to a period of economic depression(Garraty, 1986). The Great Depression of the late 1920s and 1930s remains the longest and most severe economic downturn in modern history. Lasting almost 10 years (from late 1929 until about 1939) and affecting nearly every country in the world, it was marked by steep declines in industrial production and in prices (deflation), mass unemployment, banking panics, and sharp increases in rates of poverty and homelessness (Duignan).

The Great Depression, worldwide economic downturn that began in 1929 and lasted until about 1939, was the longest and most severe depression ever experienced by the industrialized Western world, sparking fundamental changes in economic institutions, macroeconomic policy, and economic theory. Although it originated in the United States, the Great Depression caused drastic declines in output, severe unemployment, and acute deflation in almost every country of the world (Editors, 2009).

During this period, the banking system had collapsed, nearly 25% of the labor force was unemployed, and prices and productivity had fallen. Reduced prices and reduced output resulted in lower incomes in wages, rents, dividends, and profits throughout the economy. Factories were shut down, farms and homes were lost to foreclosure, mills and mines were abandoned, and people went hungry. The resulting lower incomes meant the further inability of the people to spend or to save their way out of the crisis, thus perpetuating the economic slowdown in a seemingly never-ending cycle (Archives, 2016).

The Great Depression of the 1930's had far-reaching global impacts, significantly influencing European economic policies in their African colonies, as European economies struggled with severe hits and economic downturns, the colonial powers turned to their African territories to mitigate these effects. This period witnessed a shift in strategies that aimed to maximize resource extraction and economic exploitation in Africa, intensifying sources for raw materials and labor demands, and reshaping trade and fiscal policies (Libretexts, n.d).

This paper seeks to analyze how European Colonial Administrations adjusted their economic policies in Africa during the Great Depression of 1930's, analyzing the responses and reforms that followed.

Conceptual Clarification:

This section provides an understanding of key concept relevant to the study, including Africa, Economic policies, Europeans and the Great Depression in their historical and contextual frameworks.

i. Africa: According to Study.com 'Africa' is located south of Europe and southwest of Middle East. The continent is surrounded by water bodies on all sides. The Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the northeast, the Indian Ocean to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west (Study.com, 2023). In the context of this study, Africa represents the continent under colonial rule during the Great Depression. The period characterized by the exploitation of resources and labor to support European economies, making Africa an integral part of the global economic system impacted by the crisis.

ii. Economic Policies: Economic Policies covers a wide range of measures which governments use to manage their economy. They are also strategies and decisions

implemented by government or authorities. These include monetary policy (money supply and demand), taxation, budget, job creation, and etc (EUR-Lex, n.d). In the context of this study, during the Great Depression, such policies included austerity measures, monetary adjustment and forced labor among others which often exacerbated economic struggles in Africa and Europe.

iii. European: According to Cambridge Dictionary, 'Europeans' refers to belonging to, or relating to Europe or its people (Dictionary, n.d). In the context of this study, European refers to colonial powers that governed African territories and the European continent itself, which faced significant economic and social challenges during the Great Depression. The European responses such as tightening control over colonies, shaped the economic trajectories of both Africa and Europe.

iv.Great Depression: The Great Depression was the worst economic downturn in the history of the industrialized world, lasting from the stock market crash of 1929 to 1939, and was regarded as the worst economic crises in modern history, lasting from 1929 until the beginning of World War II in 1939 (Editors, 2009). In the context of this study, Great Depression was the severe global economic downturn that spread unemployment, financial crises, and social hardship with its effect felt worldwide, including Africa, where colonial economies experienced disruption in trade and production.

Literature Review

There are many existing literatures on the Great Depression of the 1930s; according to Ushehwedu and Honest, the economic depression of the 1930's was a world-wide catastrophe that affected the international economy as a whole. It affected both the developed and colonial economies and societies (Kufakurinani, 2016).

According to Charles, the turning points during the Depression often coincided with or were preceded by dramatic events in financial markets: stock market collapse, waves of bankruptcy and bank failure, and contractions in the money stock. But the mechanism through which financial factors contributed to the Depression has been a source of controversy, as has been the relative importance of financial factors in explaining the origins and persistence of the Depression (Charles, 1993).

According to the Great Depression expert David Wheelock, among the suggested causes of the Great Depression are; the stock market crash of 1929; the collapse of world trade due to the Smoot-Hawley Tariff; government policies; bank failures and panics; and the collapse of the money supply (Wheelock, n.d).

According to Quizlet, the great depression was the worst economic depression in the US history. It was a huge financial decline that started in 1929 that lasted into early 1940's. Many businesses and banks closed their doors, people lost their jobs, homes, and savings and many depended on charity to survive. It occurred in North America and Europe but affected countries around the world. Times became very hard in many countries where employed and homelessness rose tremendously and even construction stopped in many areas (HollyHim, 2024).

According to Temin (1991), he highlighted how European economies contracted under the weight of reduced global demand, leading to changes in policies that extended to their colonial Africa. He further posits that, the colonial economies, heavily dependent on exports of raw materials and agricultural products, were severely affected by declining commodity prices as a result of the Great Depression.

In a similar vein, Fieldhouse (1981) and Frankema (2011), explores how colonial economies were structured to serve European interests, making them vulnerable to economic shocks. The Great Depression led to a significant decline in export of African commodities like cocoa, groundnuts, and cotton, forcing colonial governments to implement austerity

measures. This often-included wage cuts for African workers, reduced public expenditures, and heightened tax burdens.

Theoretical Framework

Dependency theory emerged as a critique of modernization theory in the mid-20th century, primarily focusing on the unequal economic relationships between developed the core and the peripheral that is between the developed and developing nations.

The theory of 'Dependency' is also an approach to understanding economic development that emphasizes the putative constraints imposed by the global political and economic order. This theory was first proposed in the late 1950's by the Argentine economist and statesman, Raul Prebisch, (1901-1986), and subsequently by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Andre Gunder Frank and Theotonio Dos Santos among others while the dependency theory gained prominence in the 1960's and 70's (Munro, 2024).

The key and central argument of dependency theory is that, underdevelopment is mainly caused by the peripheral position of affected countries in the world economy. Typically, underdeveloped countries offer cheap labor and raw materials on the world market. These resources are sold to advanced economies, which have the means to transform them into finished goods and underdeveloped countries end up purchasing the finished products at high prices, depleting the capital they might otherwise devote to upgrading their own productive capacity (Munro, 2024).

Therefore, dependency theory posits relevance insights for this study and provides useful framework for analyzing how the Great Depression reinforced the economic subjugation of African Colonies and entrenched the exploitative relationship between Europe and Africa. It highlights the unequal exchange of resources and the systemic barriers to African economic self-sufficiency, both during the colonial era and beyond.

Results and Discussions:

The Impact of Great Depression on European Economic Policies in Africa

The Great Depression of the 1930's had a profound impact on European economic policies in Africa, significantly altering colonial administration strategies and economic practices. Here are some of the key ways in which European policies in African colonies were affected:

Agricultural Policies on Raw Materials extraction: During the 1920s, Africa was tied even closer to the global economy and became more dependent on producing primary products. During the Great Depression period, there was a push by the European Colonial Administrations in Africa to produce more cotton, ground nuts, palm oil, coffee, and cocoa. Wealth was extracted from Africa and sent to Europe, but the European powers spent little on healthcare, education, and other vital services for the Africans themselves. The European governments promoted policies in Africa that only generated more poverty. These governments encouraged farmers to grow more, but only at a reduced price for European economic interests (Libretexts, n.d).

According to Walter Rodney (1972), European colonial powers intensified resource extraction in African colonies to sustain their economies during the Great Depression. Their focus shifted as a result of the Great Depression to maximizing exports of raw materials such as minerals, cash crops, and other commodities while minimizing local investments.

Infrastructure Development with focus on extraction: As posited by Professor Oloruntimehin, the Europeans during the Great Depression had a push to develop infrastructure, such as railways, roads, and ports in Africa, especially in Nigeria, but

primarily to facilitate the export of raw materials from Africa to Europe. These projects often did not benefit African local populations but were designed with the sole aim of integrating African economies more tightly with European industrial needs in order to cushion the impact of the Great Depression (Oyemakinde, June 1977).
Falola and Heaton also posit that, during the Great Depression, the colonial authorities scaled back infrastructure investments, focusing instead on projects that directly supported resource extraction and exportation, such as railways and ports (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

Monetary and Fiscal Policies: The colonial administrations in Africa often adjusted monetary and fiscal policies to serve European economic interests during the Great Depression. Currency policies were designed to keep African currencies pegged to European currencies, ensuring control over African economies. Taxation policies were also often adjusted, increasing the tax burden on Africans to finance colonial administration and infrastructure projects. As observed by R.O. Ekundare, the Nigerian colonial government adjusted some direct and indirect taxes to help stimulate production and the export of raw materials to their home countries during the Great Depression period, and the taxation by the Colonial Administration on Africans forced peasants to produce for the market to earn cash for paying the poll tax (Encyclopedia, 2024).
Freund (1998), added that colonial governments during the Great Depression increased taxation on African populations to compensate for reduced revenue from international trade. This often led to heightened use of forced labor for public works and cash crop production in Africa.

Forced Labor and Exploitation: The colonial government increased reliance on forced labor to sustain infrastructure development and resource extraction. According to Cooper (1996), Africans were compelled to work in mines, plantations, and public projects, often under harsh and exploitative conditions.
Similarly, during the Great Depression in Africa, especially in the Congo, the colonial administration practically converted the whole colony into a huge plantation, ordering the peasants what to produce, dictating prices, and controlling delivery. While imposing this system of forced cultivation, the government also diversified production, pushing the cultivation of cotton, coffee, rice, and peanuts in addition to the traditional crops such as palm kernels and cocoa. Cotton exports from this region tripled from 1929 to 1937.
The colonial government could be proud of its economic success, but the peasants suffered because any rebellious act by the peasants was brutally suppressed, and the government was restored to an old system of forced labor (Encyclopedia, 2024).

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Great Depression profoundly altered European economic policies in Africa, resulting in the intensified extraction of their natural resources, and heightened exploitation of Africans and their assets to protect European economic interests. These policies had far-reaching consequences for Africa and Africans, including the overdependence of African economies on European markets. These policies also hindered the development of Africa, leading to the neglect of local industries and the imposition of social and economic inequalities. The legacy of these policies had long-lasting effects on African historical, economic and political development during and after the colonial periods. Historically, the study deepens understanding of how global economic crises like the Great Depression influenced colonial economic policies in Africa, shedding light on the intersection of global and local economic dynamics significantly contributing to the structural challenges faced by many African nations in the so-called post-independence era.

The study highlights the structural economic reforms introduced by colonial powers, revealing the mechanism through which African economies were further integrated into global capitalism and lastly, elucidates the strategies of resource extraction and labor exploitation, offering a nuanced perspective on the long-term economic underdevelopment of Africa during the colonial period.

The contributions of this study to policy options includes promotion of economic diversification, restoration of economic initiatives, labor rights advocacy and investment in local industries. Thereby providing the foundation for addressing historical colonial economic legacies and fostering equitable economic development in Africa.

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THE IMPERATIVE OF TRIANGULATION IN RESEARCH

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Abstract
This study examined the concept of triangulation, its various forms as well as its influence on research (i.e. benefits). The data for this study were acquired through reviewing extant literature on triangulation; this is achieved via surfing search engines as well as databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, EBSCO, and PROQUEST. Hence, the keywords were searched individually as well as in combinations, which incorporate; triangulation, mixed methods, types of triangulations. It is evident that triangulation involves the integration of multiple theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, data sources, investigators, or data analysis methods. The essence of triangulation is to reduce or offset the limitations/shortcomings of a single strategy, thereby enhancing the capacity to interpret the findings. In addition, deploying triangulation strategy does not right nor enhance a study that is fundamentally flawed. Therefore, it is recommended that should different philosophical positions and research traditions aid to answering research question(s) most robustly, then the use of triangulation is imperative. Nonetheless, researchers should clearly articulate the rationale for employing this strategy and its contribution(s) to the study.

Keywords: Triangulation, Research Methods, Mixed Methods, Data

Introduction

Unanimously, researchers endeavour to conduct studies that offer diverse views of the phenomenon while also yielding comprehensive, valid data that may be interpreted with a satisfactory level of confidence (Bans-Akutey&Tiimub, 2021; Flick, 2004). The underlying objective of researchers is to develop a study that exhibits robust internal and external validity and reliability, incorporates a complete multidimensional approach (Boyd, 2000), and deploys measures to mitigate any biases in the research (Noble, & Heale, 2019). Utilizing triangulation approaches can enhance the validity, robustness, and interpretative capacity of a study, mitigate investigator biases, and offer diverse views (Ritzer, 2007; Denzin, 2017). Triangulation has increasingly gained prominence as researchers have got more adept at developing and evaluating theories (Bans-Akutey&Tiimub, 2021). What is the value of study with unreliable and erroneous findings? Responses to research questions should strive to approximate reality as closely as possible, even if absolute accuracy is unattainable.

Researchers have discovered a means for generating dependable outcomes through the deployment of triangulation.

Triangulation denotes the integration and deployment of various research methodologies to examine the same phenomenon. This concept, analogous to the act of constructing a triangle, can be traced to ancient Greek origins in modern geometry. It was introduced into the social sciences in the 1950s, subsequently facing substantial criticism in the 1980s (Silverman, 1985; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Campbell and Fiske, 1959). In the 1990s, triangulation is regarded as a post-positivist methodological strategy(Flick, 2004). Recently, it has regained prominence as a new breed of scholars embraces a mixed or multi-method approach to social inquiry (Creswell, 2011; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003).Thus, it is in the quest to achieve validity and credibility in research that propels researchers to deploy triangulation in research.

The objective of this study is to delineate the concept of triangulation as deployed, while examiningthe various forms of triangulation and their influence on research. The data for this paper were acquired through reviewing extant literature on triangulation; this is achieved via surfing search engines as well as databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC,EBSCO, andPROQUEST. Hence, the keywords were searched individually as well as in combinations, which incorporate; triangulation, mixed methods, types of triangulations, etc.

Concept of Triangulation

Linguistically, triangulation is conceived as a procedure that use trigonometry to ascertain an unknown point or place by utilising the positions of two fixed points separated by a known distance (OED,2024; MWD, 2024). The triangulation metaphor employed in research originates from construction, surveying, and maritime navigation. The concept involved utilising two established points to determine the location of an unknown third point by constructing a triangle (Britannica, 2000). The objective of research is to employ multiple means to enhance the design, hence improving the capacity to interpret the results (Thurmond, 2001). Triangulation involves the integration of many data sources, investigators, methodological approaches, theoretical views, or analytical techniques within a single study (Bans-Akutey&Tiimub, 2021; Tashakkori&Teddle 2003). These combinations yield data triangulation, investigator triangulation, methodological triangulation, theoretical triangulation (Denzin, 20 17; Patton, 1990), or analytical triangulation (Kimchi et al., 1991). When numerous types of triangulation are employed, such as two or more data sources in conjunction with two or more investigators, this intricate triangulation is termed multiple triangulation (Denzin, 20 17; Kimchi et al., 1991; Patton, 1990).

The word, when introduced in research, notably in the social sciences, served as a conduit between quantitative and qualitative epistemologies. This was perceived as a means to enhance the rigour of qualitative researchers, potentially enabling them to confront a methodological inferiority linked to a "stepchild complex" (Kamberelis& Dimitriadis, 2004: 2). Proponents of mixed-methods research contend that it enables them to address enquiries that singular research approach cannot. Additionally, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) contended that triangulation offers overriding inferences ensuing from the integration of diverse perspectives.

The application of various research approaches in a survey to mitigate the limitations or biases inherent in a singular approach is referred to as multiple operationalism. In the social

sciences, triangulation has emerged as a metaphor for the methodological integration of the post-positivism. The metaphor suggests many interpretations, wherein triangulation may represent "(1) a synonym for mixed-methods, multi-methods, or mixed-modeldesigns" (Teddlie &Tashakkori, 2003: 11, 14); (2) a validation technique; (3) an integration of diverse mixed-methods techniques; (4) a method for integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies within a single study (Erzberger& Kelle, 2003).

Nonetheless, the historical context of the word, along with its applications and interpretations, is fraught with ambiguities (Denzin, 2017). For instance, Richardson (2000) maintained that some authors differentiate triangulation from multiple-methods research influenced by post-structuralism and cultural studies. In this parlance, multiple realities exist for comprehending the social world (epistemological relativism)... thus, diversity and contradictions must be integrated into research narratives (Denzin, 2017). Conversely, Saukko (2003) notes that the "classical aim of triangulation is to combine different kinds of material or methods to see whether they corroborate one another" (p. 23).

Necessity for Triangulation

Qualitative research is fundamentally multi-methods in nature. Triangulation, or the employment of various methods, signifies an effort to attain a comprehensive understanding of the subject under investigation. Objective reality can never be fully apprehended.Our understanding of an entity is solely derived from its representations.From this perspective, critical or interpretative triangulation serves not as a validation tool or method, but rather as an alternative to validation. The integration of diverse methodological methods, empirical materials, viewpoints, and observers within a single study is optimally seen as a strategy that enhances authenticity, trustworthiness, credibility, rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth in any investigation.

The social realm is socially produced, and its significance to both observers and the observed is ever evolving.Consequently, no single research methodwill ever encompass all the evolving characteristics of the social phenomenon being examined. Every research method entails a distinct perception of reality and proposes many courses of action that the researcher may pursue during the research process. The significance of methodologies is ever evolving, and each researcher applies distinct interpretations to the research methods employed. Consequently, an effective exploration for robust interpretations of the social world (realm) utilises triangulation approaches.

Forms of Triangulation

Although it is widely believed that triangulation involves employing numerous methods to examine the same phenomenon, this is but one variant of the strategy. There exist four fundamental forms of triangulation: (1) Data triangulation, encompassing time, space, and persons; (2) investigator triangulation, involving multiple observers instead of a single one; (3) theory triangulation, utilising multiple theoretical frameworks for phenomenon interpretation; (4) methodological triangulation, employing various methods, which may include within-method or between-method approaches. In addition, there are multiple and interpretive triangulations, the former occurs when the researcher integrates several observers, theoretical viewpoints, data sources, and procedures within a single investigation; the latter (interpretive triangulation) may be regarded as an alternative to conventional post-positivist validation methods. Interpretive triangulation facilitates discussions regarding how a text validates or legitimises itself through the deployment of many voices and representational forms. Various forms of triangulation have been recognised, including reflective, structural, and multi-purpose varieties.

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation entails gathering information from diverse demographics, such as individuals, groups, families, and communities,etc across different times and space to obtain varied perspectives and validate the data.There are three categories of data points: time, space, and person (Denzin, 2017). Data points (sources) may differ according to the time context, geographical location, or the individuals from whom the data were collected (Denzin, 2017). Conversely, longitudinal studies aim to detect changes across time; hence, they are not classified as triangulated. Time triangulation refers to the collecting of data at several intervals to ascertain the consistency of findings (Kimchi et al., 1991). Diversity in events, situations, dates, locations, and individuals enhances the study by potentially uncovering anomalous data or recognising analogous patterns, hence bolstering trust in the results (Thurmond, 2001).

Investigator Triangulation

This entails the involvement of two or more researchers in the same study to yield diverse views and conclusions. This form of triangulation can provide both validation of results and diverse viewpoints, enhancing the scope of the phenomenon under investigation. In other words, investigator triangulation connotes employing multiple observers, interviewers, coders, or data analysts within the research. The validation of data across researchers, conducted independently without prior communication or collaboration, enhances reliability and credibility of the findings (Denzin, 2017).

Theoretical Triangulation

Theoretical triangulation involves employing different/ multiple theories or hypotheses to analyse and interpret a phenomenon or data (Denzin, 2017). The objective is to undertake the investigation using many perspectives and inquiries to either corroborate or challenge the findings. Theoretical triangulation involves utilizing perspectives or hypotheses that may be either connected or contradictory, contingent upon the researcher's objectives (Denzin, 2017). Theoretical triangulation can be employed to evaluate many hypotheses by examining data from a singular data set (Boyd, 2000).

Methodological Triangulation

The initial category of triangulation is method triangulation, which entails employing various data collection methods to investigate the same phenomenon (Carter, 2014). Methodological triangulation is often referred to as multi-methods, mixed-methods, or methods triangulation (Denzin, 2017;Boyd, 2000; Kimchi et al., 1991). Methodological triangulation, as discussed in the literature, can be rather ambiguous (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1984) since it may pertain to either data collection methods (techniques) or research designs (Thurmond, 2001). Some scholars have examined methodological triangulation in terms of qualitative and quantitative methods, suggesting a paradigmatic relationship (Barbour, 1998; Greene &Caracelli, 1997). Others have mentioned qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, along with their analysis and interpretation, rather than philosophical positions (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1984). Accordingly, Mitchell, (1986) contended that the researchers use various ways to mitigate the "deficiencies and biases that arise from any single method" (p. 19), hence "potentially counterbalancing the flaws or weaknesses of one method with the strengths of another" (p. 21).

In addition, methodological triangulation can be categorised into two types: within-method triangulation and between- or across-method triangulation. Researchers employing within-method triangulation utilise a minimum of two data collection processes from the same methodological framework (Kimchi et al., 1991). Quantitatively, it may involve the distribution of survey questionnaires and the utilisation of previous data from a database,

while qualitatively; non-participant observations may be integrated with focus group interviews. Researchers utilising between- or across-method triangulation incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques in the same study (Denzin, 2017;Thurmond, 2001; Mitchell, 1986).An illustration is the integration of interviews and questionnaires within a single study or the employment of participant observation or questionnaires (Denzin, 2017).

Benefits of Triangulation

The significance of triangulation must not be overlooked in guaranteeing the dependability and validity of data and findings (results).

The first benefit of triangulation is its ability to validate research findings. When a researcher employs diverse methods, such as quantitative and qualitative approaches, and is fortunate to obtain data from all methods that converge in a specific direction, the results are thereby validated. This verifies that the job completed is precise. It must, however, be emphasised that employing triangulation to validate research findings does not imply that the collected data is beyond scrutiny. It is essential to consistently scrutinise obtained data to enhance research and augment current knowledge (Bans-Akutey&Tiimub, 2021). However, quantitatively gathered data in a triangulation can validate qualitative data when the triangulation is meticulously planned and expertly deployed by researchers who possess a clear understanding of their objectives.

The second benefit is when researchers employ many sources or methods in a study, the shortcomings of one approach are mitigated by the advantages of another. When both quantitative and qualitative methods are employed concurrently in a study, thereby utilising mixed methods, the researcher can validate qualitative findings, examine relationships, and statistically represent results, while simultaneously grasping the context of the findings and addressing complex issues arising from the quantitative data. In many cases, quantitative and qualitative research methods typically enhance one another.

The third benefit of triangulation is that it yields additional insights that assist researchers in elucidating a phenomenon more effectively. In instances of theoretical triangulation, researchers utilise many theories to elucidate research findings. This assists researchers in analysing data in relation to various ideas for enhanced comprehension. It is important to acknowledge that theoretical triangulation can be complex and necessitates that researchers possess a thorough understanding of the theories employed in the study and their applications. However, there is no universally correct method for conducting triangulation. Triangulation is conducted in the most effective manner known to researchers.

The fourth benefit of triangulation is to facilitate the identification of conflicting data, allowing for cleaning or expunging. A researcher cannot arbitrarily reject data for a specific study, as this would be unethical and could adversely affect the research outcomes. In investigator triangulation, where multiple researchers, interviewers, or data analysts are employed, contradicting data can be readily identified and excluded to prevent adverse effects on the study's conclusions. Errors are readily identifiable and can be rectified or eliminated entirely.

Ultimately, triangulation enhances the credibility and validity of the research. Utilising numerous data sources mitigates study biases in sampling, procedural bias, and researcher bias, hence enhancing validity and trustworthiness. Even when faced with contradicting findings during triangulation, researchers remain assured and can readily articulate the reasons for these discrepancies. Enhancing the reliability and validity of research through

triangulation bolsters researchers' confidence. Nonetheless, the validity of any research cannot reach 100%, and so, the acquired data may always be subject to scrutiny (Social Sciences Research Laboratories, 2018).

Conclusion

Triangulation primarily aims to validate study results, enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions based on the research findings. Validity, which signifies the accuracy with which a research method assesses a reality, can be categorised as internal, external, or construct. All three forms of validity can be attained through systematic triangulations using methodological, data, investigator, theoretical, multiple triangulation. Although triangulation demands significantly more resources from researchers and necessitates a high level of expertise, it offers some advantages that render it attractive to researchers. Triangulation aids in validating research findings, mitigating shortcomings from a singular method or source, offering other insights, promptly identifying and rectifying inconsistent data, and enhancing the validity and credibility of the study. Ultimately, study triangulation enhances researchers' confidence in their findings.

Finally, when utilised correctly, triangulation can augment the comprehensiveness and validation of data in research findings. Employing both quantitative and qualitative methods within a single study is a feasible approach to acquire complementary results and fortifyresearch outcomes. The golden advice is, should different philosophical positions and research traditions aid to answer research question(s) more robustly, then the use of triangulation is imperative. Nonetheless, researchers must clearly articulate the rationale for employing this strategy and its contribution(s) to the study.

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