

**ICRPC JOURNAL OF CRISIS RESOLUTION
AND PEACE BUILDING
[IJCPB]**

VOL. 1, NO. 1, February, 2024

ISSN: 3027-0006

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Peacebuilding and Conciliation.
Abuja, Nigeria

February, 2024

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ISSN: 3027-0006

Published By:

Institute for Crisis Resolution,
Peacebuilding and Conciliation
Febson Mall, Suite S5, Herbert Macaulay Way,
Wuse Zone 4, Abuja
Nigeria.

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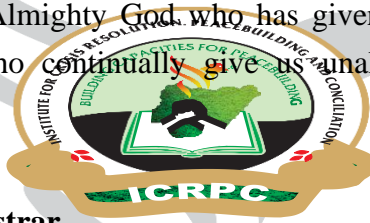
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The Institute hereby specially appreciates all erudite scholars who have voluntarily to serve as members of the Editorial Board who despite their busy schedules have not relented in providing mentorship opportunity for every member of the Institute.

I do hereby appreciate the Almighty God who has given us the ability to get the institute running and on who continually give us unalloyed inspiration for the sustenance of the Institute.



Dr. Abdulwaheed Odewale
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ICRPC JOURNAL OF CRISIS RESOLUTION AND PEACE BUILDING [IJCPB]

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Paper submissions are welcome in areas like, Crisis and Conflict Management, Peace Building, Business Development and growth and relevant areas in Arts, Social Sciences, Management Sciences, sciences etc and must follow the guidelines stated below:

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3. All submissions should use the Times New Roman fonts (12 font size) including the References. The manuscript should be formatted using 1.5 line spacing.
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5. Manuscripts should contain at least three keywords (not more than five keywords) for indexing purposes. This should be inserted immediately after the abstract.

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7. Manuscripts must contain a conclusion section, which explains the findings of the paper and how the research problem was resolved. Where necessary, the conclusion should also contain the recommendations.
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ELECTION SECURITY AND VOTERS' INTIMIDATION IN 2023 SENATORIAL AND PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTIONS IN EDO SOUTH

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ABSTRACT

The only legitimate window opens to voters to choose or change their leaders is through election. It is against these backgrounds; the study examined the extent to which security agencies effectively discharged their functions to protect voters during the 2023 senatorial and presidential general elections in Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba-Okha local governments in Edo South elections. It also ascertains the level of intimidation of voters during the elections. The study employed both primary and secondary data, sourced from personal interviews, media reports, textbooks, journals, the internet, among others, using historical and narratives analyses. Given the tensed atmosphere under which the senatorial and presidential elections were conducted in Edo South, on February 25th 2023, it was clear that party loyalists and thugs hired by candidates were sided and supported by security agencies who employed intimidations to affect voters voting choices by inflicting bodily injuries on those perceived to have voted against the candidates of their choices, outright denial of voters in places where their candidates have no winning strength, snatching and destruction of ballot boxes, among others. It was recommended that the rights of voters must be protected jealously so as to enable the will of voters to prevail on candidates of their choices, that the security agencies should be honest, diligent and abide by their professional ethics to rise above manipulation by individuals against the general public, amongst others.

Keywords: Candidates, Election, Intimidation, Security, Voters.

Introduction

Nigerian's election is full of controversies and unwholesome activities of both aspirants and their ardent supporters who undermined the presence of security agencies, to engage in reckless rigging, thuggery, vote buying, ballot snatching, arson, killings, among others. This situation is appalling and worrisome when security agencies whose responsibilities among others are to protect lives and property during the voting process, become helpless to curtail

the excesses of electoral criminals because of directives given to them by self-centred politicians in government. Therefore, the services of security agencies are centred around personalities rather than individual or society during any elections in Nigeria. The same politicians orchestrating poverty and youths' unemployment are taken advantage of the same susceptible jobless youths to engage in crime and the coercion of opponents to further their personal political agenda.

This development has created general and widespread voting apathy expressed by majority of electorate who on every election are intimidated by political thugs to vote against their conscience, if they are allowed to vote at all, they need to display the ballot paper to show the party they voted. These are electorate who believed that democracy and periodic elections will bring with it such attributes as transparency, good governance, accountability, respect for human rights and dignity, reduction of poverty and the creation of employment to improve the quality of lives of the people. This expectation is often cut short by politicians' inordinate quest for power, predicated on whoever wins wields political power, controls economic power, and determine the location and distribution of scarce resources (Ojenamah, 2021, p.101)

The security of elections is central to the survival and growth of every democratic state. This is because election goes to the root of democratic governance as it forms the foundation upon which the government stands. It is also the mandate and legitimacy of government determined by the will of the people expressed at the polls. Undisputedly, the presence of a dependable and operational security in an election is fundamental to the success of a democratic system. Similarly, adequate security is a pre-condition for increasing the level of participation of political parties, candidates and voters in an election. It also encourages a more objective coverage of events by the media and easier transmission of electorate's education, message and materials. Elections in Nigeria have a pathetic history, often characterized by all sorts of recklessness such as: Insecurity and violence, especially attacks on voters and threats to peaceful elections with impunity and instrumentality of ethnicity and religion sentiments. Others are voters' inducement and vote buying, particularly with money,

thuggery, snatching and damaging of ballot boxes, intimidation of voters to vote against their choices, rigging, killing or assassination of political opponents, among others are pertinent issues believed to be within the functional purview of security agencies to prevent or tackle if they occur (Ibeanu, 2023: pp. 8-9).

For a developing country like Nigeria, politics appears to be the only means to access political power and take full control of government resources. So, the average politician does everything possible to corrupt electoral officers, employ thugs who are ready to brandish weapons to unleash mayhem, arrest and intimidate voters to vote against their will, disperse electorate in polling units where they don't have strength in terms of supporters, snatching of ballot boxes, clandestinely supported by compromising security agencies, among others. The spread of anomalies in an election irresistibly distorts a smooth electoral process and pose a significant threat to elections. It is on this note, the study examines the extent to which security agencies have effectively discharged their functions to protect voters and their property during the elections and also to ascertain the level of intimidation voters went through during the 2023 Presidential and Senatorial elections in Oredo, Egor and Ikpoba Okha local Government Areas.

Conceptual Analyses

Concept of elections

Election is a process by which political representatives are elected by eligible citizens of a particular state. The significance of an election is to choose people who will direct the affair of the state among other things to solve the collective problems of the people. Furthermore, election is a process of selecting eligible representative through the vote of its members (Nwolise, 2007, p. 155). In the same vein, elections are essential mainstay of democracy and they give citizens choices of choosing among the contesting parties and candidates through credible, free and transparent voting (Bamgbose 2012: p. 206). In Nigeria the conduct of most elections is questionable because their conduct most times do not reflects the winners and the

intentions of voters. Nigeria as a country cannot be said to establish credible elections to sustain its democracy unless the security is guaranteed before, during and after elections.

On February 15th, 2023 citizens across the 36 states including the federal capital cast their ballots, yet some of the outcomes of the exercise could not reflect the inputs of the electorate as alleged from different states during and after the elections. This development betrayed the expectation of the electorate as free, fair and credible elections which are the hallmarks of democracy were compromised. It is pertinent to understand that the electorate's confidence and trust in the value of their vote is mainly contingent on the security agencies and the level of preparedness of the Independent National Electoral Commission to make the nation's elections possible. Accordingly, an electoral process that is both secured, trusted and dependable is a common interest of the electorate and the security personnel's highest reward.

Election security

The scope of election security consists of the conduct of free, fair, transparent and credible elections, including the activities of providing necessary security to the entire electoral process and voters on the voting day. Security is indispensable in the electoral process such as: the protection of electoral personnel, ensuring that voters freely exercise their civic duties without intimidation and harassment, protection of domestic and foreign observers in discharge of their duties and the maintenance of the overall integrity of the democratic and electoral processes. The significance of electoral security is fundamental in ensuring the creation of proper environment; recruitment of electoral staff require to carry out their duties; the safety of voters to freely go to their polling units to vote for the candidate of their choice, provision of safety environment for candidates and political parties to organize rallies and campaigns, among others (Bawa, 2013, p.31).

Therefore, election security ensures a proper planning, organizing, controlling and coordination of electoral processes. It also entails the guarantee of free movement of electoral staff, candidates, voters, domestic and international observers, and other concerned individuals on election day. Every action taken to protect the electoral process such as the security of

electoral personnel, sensitive materials such as ballot papers and result forms, media officials, observers, contestants, voters, ballot boxes, results of the election, reliability of technology such as the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), among others constitute part of election security (Igini, 2013, p.44).

In all the entire gamut of election, the role of security agents cannot be relegated. Such roles include:

1. Providing security at the Polling Stations and collation centres to ensure the conduct of counting of ballots and declaration of results are without breach of peace.
2. To ensure necessary measures are taken to prevent violence or any subtle activity that can disrupt elections.
3. To ensure there is total compliance to the directive issued by INEC authority
4. Provision of escort to ensure the safety of all election materials
5. Providing maximum protection for election officials at the polling stations and collation centres.
6. Making arrest of any reported person(s) by INEC or by any party agents preventing the smooth conduct of election proceedings.
7. To ensure that impersonation does not occur
8. To ensure that the official close of accreditation is adhered to strictly.
9. To ensure the safety delivery of election results, ballot boxes and other election materials from the Wards to Collation Centre.
10. To ensure election results are safely delivered to Returning Officers (Igini, 2013, Pp.50-51)

From the corollary of the above, it is clear that election security means the ability of electoral officials, party loyalists, contestants, among others including the security personnel to maintain and conduct credible election processes, devoid of voter's intimidation by political thugs and armed youths with the general aim of ensuring fairness, consistency, precision and competence in the voting process. In addition, election security begins right from the formation of political parties to electioneering activities conducted towards the realization of free, fair, credible and transparent elections.

Theoretical framework

Election cannot be judged as credible, free and fair unless the following agents of democracy INEC, security, media and civil society organizations perform their constitutional roles. The performers of roles are why structural-functionalism theory is utilized in the study to x-ray the

functions of voters, the security agencies, the Independent National Electoral Commission and the candidates and political parties. In addition, structural functionalist theory is one of the major works of Emile Durkheim, which asserts that when various institutions in society perform their requisite duties and functions to the general public, there will be stability and progress. In functionalist theory, different parts of society are made up of social institutions, each has its area of jurisdiction where requisite roles are performed, with a view to balancing the system. In the electoral process INEC, security agencies, political parties, candidates, electorate, among others needs to ensure election are free, fair, credible and transparent by performing the functions allotted to them meticulously.

When it comes to elections some of the institutions such as INEC, political parties, security agencies, among others having direct bearing on the outcome of elections most often than not fall short of their responsibilities. For instance, the election security lead, is taken by the Police as stipulated in section 4 of the Police Act. The police is charged with: Preventing and detecting of crime; (including electoral crimes), arrest of offenders; (electoral offenders), protection of law and order; (pre to post elections), security of life and property; (pre to post), ensuring observance of all laws and regulations (Onyekpere, 2013: p.89).

Other notable theorists of structural functionalists according to Crossman (2020, p. 1), include Talcott Parsons, Herbert Spencer and Robert Merton. According to functionalism, institutions exist because they serve vital roles in the functioning of society. So, the failure or success of any election is predicated on the institutions (political parties, media, INEC, election observers and security agencies), in performing their functions. The security agencies roles are designed to make a difference in the outcome of elections. It is therefore significant that security officers need to display maximum level of honesty, impartiality, expertise and sense of responsibility. The security of life, electorate, electoral materials and officials and the safeguarding of lawful and organized electoral processes are essential for free, fair and credible elections. Security is central to the conduct of free, fair and credible election, from the provision of the basic security to voters at political party rallies and campaigns, among

others (Lai, 2013, p. xx). The essence of applying this theory is to ensure all parties to elections in Nigeria conduct their roles credibly for credible and efficient elections to be realized.

Methodology

Methods of data collection: Primary and secondary methods of data collection were employed.

Sources of data collection: The primary data sources, were derived from media reports and questionnaire as instrument designed to obtain information from respondents through convenient and accidental sampling. While secondary materials were sourced from textbooks, journals, the internet, Newspapers, periodicals, among others.

Population of the study: The population of the study covers three local governments in Edo South Senatorial District in Edo State. These include Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba Okha local government areas. The reasons for using these three local government areas for the study are because they are located in the Benin metropolis and they are embroiled with enormous population.

Sampling method: The study used non-probability sampling techniques, such as purposeful and convenient sampling.

Data analysis: This was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. 300 questionnaires were distributed across Egor, Ikpoba Okha and Oredo local government areas. 227 were returned but 225 were correctly filled. So, we have 225 respondents for the structured interview. Simple mean was adopted with level of 2.5 and above used as an agreed factor. While less than 2.5 is a disagreed factor. As a rule of thumb, the accepted mean is 2.5 and above using 4 Likert Scale stated below:

SA=Strongly Agree =4

A= Agree =3

D= Disagree = 2

SD= Strongly Disagree =1

Total= 10

$$\therefore 10/4 = 2.5$$

The effectiveness of security agencies in the discharged of their functions to protect voters during the February 25th 2023 Senatorial and Presidential elections in Edo South was tested with the below table 1.

The table below is designed to test relevant prepositions derived from the first objective of the study.

Table: 1. Distribution of respondent’s responses on the effective role of the security agencies during the February 25th Senatorial and Presidential elections in Oredo, Egor and Ikpoba –okha in Edo South

S/ N	Questionnaire	No. of Resp.	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	\bar{X}	Remar k
1.	On the 25 th of February there were no enough security personnel around your polling unit	225	142 (568)	83 (249)	-	-	3.63	Agreed
2.	The security personnel present were not committed to the maintenance of law and order for the smooth running of the elections.	225	155 (620)	70 (210)	-	-	3.68	Agreed
3.	There were security violations that the security personnel could have handled which they did not handle	225	146 (584)	79 (237)	-	-	3.64	Agreed
4.	Were there erratic firing of guns by political thugs, destruction of polling cubicles, ballot boxes, gun wounds, death of voters, and carting away of election materials in your voting centre.	225	160 (640)	65 (195)	-	-	3.71	Agreed

5.	The security personnel did not resist the thugs and armed actions?	225	172 (688)	53 (159)	-		3.76	Agreed
6.	Were the elections distorted by the actions of thugs and armed youths?	225	174 (696)	51 (153)	-	-	3.77	Agreed
7.	The presence of security personnel did not deter the perpetuation of election anomalies,	225	165 (660)	90 (270)	-	-	4.13	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2023

The respondents affirmed that there were no enough security personnel around their polling units on the 25th of February, adding that the security personnel present were not committed to the maintenance of law and order for the smooth running of the elections. This was also revealed by Buba (2013, p.125), that the security agencies were passive to deal with security breach of electoral process; that they adopted a sit down and look attitude. It was also gathered from the respondents that there were security violations during the elections, that the security personnel could have handled which they did not handle. For example, Oredo at Idia College Ward 4 and Fabiyi Akpata Primary School Ward 4, the voting processes were distorted when men armed with gun came with a black utility vehicle to destroy ballot boxes and ballot papers, scatter them, and left with others, while police and voters ran away to scamper for safety (Bee. TV, 2023).

The respondents agreed that there was erratic firing of guns by political thugs, destruction of polling cubicles, ballot boxes, gun wounds leading to the death of three voters, and finally carted away election materials from the voting centres. For instance, Idahosa Festus, a thirty–three-year-old was shot and died on the spot, by some armed political thugs who invaded ward 9, in Ogheghe community, in Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area of Edo State. Festus was a graduate of Mythological Engineering from the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State. He hailed from Egbokor Community in Orhionmwon Local Government Area of Edo State while one other victim Elizabeth Owie died on the way to the

hospital, and another man shot in the head was still battling for survival at an undisclosed hospital in Benin City, Edo State capital (Usman, 2023). Elizabeth Owie, a 41-year-old mother of three, died after being shot in the chest by suspected political thugs who invaded their polling unit on Saturday, February 25, in Ogheghe community in Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area, Benin City, Edo State (Francis, in newtelegraphng 2023).

This was corroborated by Vanguard News (2023), saying that mixed fortunes trailed the Presidential and National Assembly elections on Saturday in Edo state as elections was twisted especially in Edo South from mid-afternoon with reports of destruction of already thumb printed ballot papers, snatching of ballot boxes in some areas and burning of thumb printed papers in others. The respondents agreed that the security personnel did not resist the thugs and armed actions and as a result, the elections were distorted.

Adding that the presence of security personnel did not deter the perpetuation of election anomalies, such as delay in the arrival of INEC officials and administration of ballot papers to prospective voters, rigging and disruption of queues. This development was also unveiled by Bee TV on February 25 2023, that in Ward 7 unit 54 and 55 in Internal Revenue Service in Oredo, INEC arrived at about 12:43pm. The same Oredo Ward 1 Unit 48 and Ward 12 Unit 4 INEC did not show up so the prospective voters could not exercise their franchise. The same Oredo in the Ministry of Education Iyaro, INEC arrived at about 10:25 am with pockets of complaints from the prospective electorate.

Table: 2. The level of intimidation of voters during the February 25 Senatorial and Presidential elections in Edo South

S/N	Questionnaire	No. of Resp.	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	\bar{X}	Remark
1.	There was no smooth voting throughout the election day	225	123 (492)	53 (159)	29 (58)	20 (20)	3.24	Agreed
2.	Voters could not vote freely for the candidates of their choice during the elections	225	118 (472)	57 (171)	32 (64)	18 (18)	3.22	Agreed
3.	Some voters were given choices by party loyalists (agents) of the party and candidates to vote for	225	108 (432)	73 (219)	50 (100)	24 (24)	3.44	Agreed
4.	There were inducements of voters by party loyalists	225	108 (432)	70 (210)	33 (66)	14 (14)	3.20	Agreed
5.	Some voters were prevented from voting because of the possibility that they will vote for the candidate of their choice	225	112 (448)	62 (186)	31 (62)	20 (20)	3.18	Agreed
6.	There were intimidations of voters by party thugs and armed youths	225	110 (440)	52 (156)	42 (84)	21 (21)	3.11	Agreed
7.	There were distortions or total closure of the voting processes as a result of thugs activities	225	102 (408)	76 (228)	54 (108)	23 (23)	3.4	Agreed

Source: Field survey 2023

The respondents agreed that smooth running of elections was not attained throughout the election day. For instance, AIT News crew who monitored the election at Egor Primary School in Egor Local Government Area, which has three units, reports that agents and thugs of a political party took away several numbers of unused ballot papers to a nearby location, as men of the Nigerian Police and INEC officials turned blind eyes. One of the INEC officials said that they had no choice but to allow them to do what they had to do because of the threat to life. Furthermore, a large crowd of boys besieged the gate of the school and later found their

ways into the compound, thereby causing tension in the area, throughout the voting period (Inarumen in AIT live 2023). That some voters could not vote freely for the candidates of their choice during the elections. Some voters were given choices by party loyalists (agents) of the party and candidates to vote for.

There were inducements of voters with promises of material items by party loyalists and some voters were prevented from voting because of the possibility that they will vote for them. There were intimidations of voters by party thugs and armed youths thereby disrupted the proceedings of the elections. According to Vanguard, some metres away from the Emokpae Primary School, gun wielding men stormed unit 42 voting unit on Butcher Street, off Mission Road, and carted away the ballot boxes. Adding that the suspected thugs stormed the Oredo Ward 4, unit 42, when voters were waiting to vote. As they were shooting, everyone including the police ran away for safety (Vanguard News, 2023).

The constitutional roles of security men in Nigeria during election are quite germane. The electoral security in Nigeria is primarily handled by police. In other words, the police are primarily saddled with the responsibility of making sure that people exercise their voting rights in an orderly manner with the help of other paramilitary organizations. It is clear that the security agencies were just shadows of themselves, because of their inability to maintain law and order during the elections. The ineptitude of the security agencies during elections to curtail electoral excesses has always provoked the electorate to conclude that the security agencies are being used by one or more political parties against others to turn down the expectations of the people (Mediayanose, 2018, p.139).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In a representative democracy like Nigeria, election is an important element which provides an institutional medium by which electorate choose their representatives. The expectations and the usefulness of elections often fail when the security men are inadequate or docile to act when there are security breaches. The consequence of such security violations has been one of the failures of governance in Nigeria. This development also heightens the risk of violence

present in every election by inhibiting voters' turnout, limiting political campaign movements and question the credibility of an electoral process.

Election security is about the scope of security and protection of INEC personnel, security of election materials and security of voters and results of the elections. Talking about election security, the protection of INEC officials, election materials and effective supervision of credible elections, including logistics such as arrangement for the security agents, adequate transportation and communication facilities during election activities are the hallmark of election security. Ineffectiveness of the security agents at polling stations particularly during general elections has always compromised a credible election because of their inability to protect voters and electoral materials or undertake effective mass control.

It is recommended that elections should be seen as security matters and that the processes should be handled realistically to obtain credible results. That any party agent or loyalist establish to intimidate voters should be made to face the law squarely, to serve as a deterrence to others. That police and other security agencies should be well equipped with crime prevention materials to curtail the excesses of political thugs, and also to make sure their morals are boosted with attractive salaries and modern weapons.

Government should also ensure that logistics needed for the execution of a credible election are made available. This is to ensure early delivery of elections materials and to prevent late arrival of INEC official. The intimidation and killings of voters by political thugs during elections should not be swept under the carpet as the situation will generate political apathy if the perpetrators are not brought to book. That at every election at Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba-Okha local governments, as well as other local governments in Edo South should be security tight to prevent future election violence.

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PEACE EDUCATION FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION: A STUDY OF AGULERI AND UMULERI COMMUNAL CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined peace education as an instrument of conflict prevention: a study of Aguleri and Umuleri communal conflict. The survey used a five-point Likert scale. The use of Focused Group Discussion (FGD) sessions used. KoBoCollect/Toolbox was used to gather data for this study in the form of mobile-friendly surveys and forms. The result revealed that the majority of the respondents (71.9%) agreed that Historical grievances can cause communal conflict. Also, they also agreed that competition was over land and resources (81.9%), political issues (72.7%), Cultural and ethnic differences (73.8%) and lack of adequate dispute resolution processes (75.9) are likely causes of the communal conflict between the Aguleri and Umuleri. The findings further show that conflict has had a significant impact on various aspects of the communities in Aguleri and Umuleri. The hindrance of economic activities and investment opportunities, as well as the negative effects on agricultural activities and social services, indicate that the conflict has severely affected the overall development and well-being of these communities. Based on the findings of this study, it's recommended that the government should continue to support and invest in decolonised peace education as a means of addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting peacebuilding in Nigeria.

Keywords: Peace education, Conflict, Violence and Communal Conflict.

Introduction

Peace education is a powerful tool that can be used to prevent conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence. By teaching individuals about the importance of empathy, understanding, and non-violent communication, peace education helps to foster a culture of peace and tolerance. It equips individuals with the skills necessary to resolve conflicts peacefully and encourages them to actively work towards preventing violence and promoting social justice. Additionally, peace education plays a crucial role in addressing the root causes of conflicts and promoting a culture of non-violence, such as inequality, discrimination, and lack of access to resources.

Except for the conflict in 1999, Aguleri and Umuleri hostilities typically recur after 31 years. Although disputes between the two communities have received much public and academic attention over the years, most studies focus on conflict resolution. Few academic publications explore contemporary conflict management techniques, while some discuss the role of the government in conflict management and settlement. Nevertheless, despite this scholarly focus, little has been written about decolonising peace education in conflict management in Aguleri and Umuleri conflict. Since 1964, every battle between Aguleri and Umuleri has been bloodier and more destructive than the one before it (Omeje and Uchendu, 2021). Both groups' political class and elites' roles in the conflict have received little written attention.

Various institutions in Igbo land played vital roles in conflict resolution. These included the Council of Elders, the Umuada institution, and the oracle Priest or Eze-Ala. Those whose actions caused unrest were severely punished to ensure lasting peace. However, conflict resolution mechanisms among the Igbo, as in other pre-colonial African societies, were not meant only to assuage or pacify the victim(s) but to act as a deterrent to all those who may want to commit such crime(s); not only to appease the living but the ancestors and gods of the land (Ezenwoko and Osagie, 2014).

Peace education plays a crucial role in preventing conflicts by equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to promote peaceful coexistence. However, there is a

need to further explore the effectiveness of peace education programs in different contexts and evaluate their long-term impact on reducing violence and fostering sustainable peace. Additionally, understanding the potential challenges and limitations of implementing peace education initiatives can help in developing more comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of conflicts.

The Aguleri and Umuleri communal conflict has been a longstanding issue that has resulted in numerous casualties and destruction of property. Despite efforts to resolve the conflict, it continues to persist, causing significant tension and instability in the region. The conflict between Aguleri and Umuleri dates back several decades, with both communities claiming ownership of the disputed land. Previous attempts at mediation and peace agreements have failed to bring a lasting resolution to the conflict, exacerbating the animosity between the two groups. The ongoing violence has not only claimed lives but also hindered development and economic growth in the area, making it imperative for a sustainable solution to be found. This study aims to explore the potential of peace education as a means to prevent and mitigate future conflicts between these two communities. To achieve this, the following questions were raised.

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of the Aguleri and Umuleri communal conflict?
2. What is the effect of the conflict on the socio-economic development of Aguleri and Umuleri?

Conceptual and Literature Review

Peace Education

Education on peace is crucial because it helps people take a positive outlook toward the various problems they may encounter and acquire the skills to settle disputes amicably. This will have a favourable effect on society as a whole. Therefore, creating a curriculum for peace education is essential. But teaching about peace doesn't necessarily lead to constructing peace. Peacebuilding incorporates social and economic justice instead of peace education, which

focuses on helping people acquire good attitudes. The two ideas are connected, nevertheless, because they both aim to advance the state of human rights (Ubogu, 2016)

The idea of peace is seen differently by Christians, Muslims, fascists, communists, democrats, and psychologists. Therefore, it is essential to recognise that there are several ways to think about peace. For instance, according to Aboyeji (2019), sociologists may see peace as the value that arises from human relationships, which enhances social harmony, creativity, and productivity and prevents armed conflict, while the political perspective depicts a broad concept subsumed in the balance of power. According to Aboyeji (2019), peace is “a state of mind in the concourse and with serenity; a state of harmony, tranquillity, concord, and balance of equilibrium of powers”; it is “the absence or opposite of conflict, abhorring violence and wars”; and it is also a state of justice, goodness, and civil administration.

Nwafor (2022) defines peace as the absence of conflict or violence at a specific moment and location that recalls an atmosphere free from fear, intimidation and harassment, oppression and brutalisation by outside forces or agents. Several international congresses have recognised the value of societal peace as a tool for national security and come to specific agreements. The Beijing Platform of Action, adopted in 1995, also acknowledged peace education as a human right and a crucial tool for accomplishing the objectives of equality, development, and peace.

Conflict

Conflict is an unavoidable part of human contact and the result of choices and decisions, according to Michael and Ikiabo (2022). Conflict can be defined as an interaction between at least two incompatible parties in which one party suffers harm while the other purposefully causes damage to that party. In conflict, according to Putra (2023), “two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power, and resources in which opponents’ goals are to neutralise, injure, or eliminate their rivals.” Therefore, it may be said that irreconcilable competitions are what causes conflict. According to Miller, Wan, Carlson, Kacmar and Thompson (2022), conflict is an instance of incompatibility where one party has

a strong desire to carry out the means or achieve the aims, but that desire is or appears to be, incompatible with the other. Conflict arises from the incompatibility of motives, aspirations, and objectives. According to Lamorde and Ibebunjo (2022), conflict is the interaction of interdependent persons who perceive conflicting goals and obstruction from one another when attempting to achieve their goals. According to Kelshall (2019), perceived incompatibilities in aims and interference from one another in accomplishing these goals lead to conflict. It should be mentioned that the degree of conflict that results from incompatibility cases varies from actor to environment, circumstance, and time of occurrence.

Conflict management

As we often say, prevention is preferable to treatment. Conflict prevention may only apply to circumstances not constrained by inevitableness or causality. As a result, conflict can only be handled in some situations, even while it can be prevented in others (Lungu, 2022). While disputes involving resources, for instance, may be permanently resolved, especially when the basic needs of the aggrieved parties have been met with necessary satisfiers and their palpable fears have been allayed, conflicts involving values, on the other hand, may not be resolvable and may, therefore, at best be transformed, regulated, or managed (Best, 2022). According to Salihu and Gholami (2022), conflict management is an effort to lessen the harmful or destructive effects of conflict and produce more favourable outcomes for the parties involved.

They argued that this interchangeable use of terms like conflict prevention, control, termination, and resolution is incorrect. This entails developing tactics to turn disputes that appear insurmountable into sustainable relationships to minimise the damaging impacts of human connection. Best (2022) distinguished between conflict regulation, suppression, and transformation, but since conflict regulation, limitation, containment, and litigation are also sometimes used as synonyms for conflict management, we will equate them all for this study. Conflict management appears to support both the idea that disputes are inevitable and that not all conflicts can be resolved. As a result, managing and controlling them is the most outstanding thing practitioners can do.

Political Institutions in Igboland

In Igboland, the political system is shared by various political institutions. These institutions performed the functions of law-making, law execution and law adjudication diffusely and intermittently. No particular procedure is exclusively performed by a specific political institution, except the holding of the ofo, which was the preserve of the Okpara (Ogunna et al., 2008). Some of the institutions in Igboland for administrative and conflict resolution are as follows: Village Head, Council of Elders, People's Assembly, Age Grade, Women Association, the Ozo Title Association, and the Oracle Priest, among others.

The Village Head/Family Head

The Village head had various names in Igboland, for instance, Okpara, Obi, Eze, Igwe, etc. He exercised ceremonial powers and was usually the eldest male of the senior kindred descended from the town's founder. The Obi, Eze or Igwe is a democratic ruler exercising only the powers the people would want him to exercise. He had no executive powers. Okpara cannot make laws or policies alone. He participated in law-making during the Council of Elders and the People's Assembly meetings. He presides over the meetings of the two bodies and pronounces the decision(s) reached at the meeting to the people. He is regarded as the symbol of unity in the town. He maintained peace, order and good governance in the community.

The Council of Elders (Ndi Ichie/Ama- ala)

The council of elders, Ndi Ichie or Ama-ala, comprised the eldest men drawn from each kindred that contained the village groups or towns (Dibie, 2020). The council is presided over by Obi, Eze or Igwe, who is charged with executive and legislative responsibilities. The council deliberate on issues brought before it by individuals, women's associations, Age-grades, and youths, among others. Issues are carefully debated, and decisions are reached by consensus opinion. The council made policies and laws for the people's security and welfare. The council also performed judicial functions. It settles conflicts such as land, thefts, family matters, and other crimes between individuals, kindred, villages and communities.

In a severe case where the parties involved remain adamant in the resolution, the chief priest is approached to administer oath-taking to prove their innocence. Four market days, such as Orié, Afor, Nkwo or Eke, depending on the area after the oath-taking, something terrible will happen to the actual defaulter raging from death or falling into one terrible illness to prove that he lied. The council have powers to impose punishments, such as fines (like, some kola nuts, palm wine, goats, cock, etc.), banishment, ex-communication, and the death penalty. A person who committed aru (abomination or sacrilege) could be sacrificed to an idol as a punishment. The council ensured that all its decisions were executed by employing the Age-grades as its enforcement agency.

The People's Assembly/Village Assembly (Ohana-eze/Umunna)

Theoretically, the Assembly meets all male adults in a community. But in practice, the conference is conducted by experienced older men within the community. The young people attended, observed and learned the art of culture and politics from the older ones. Every adult had the right to express their opinion in the Assembly. The meeting of the Assembly is usually held at a public square called Ama or Ogbe, mainly near the Eze or Igwe's palace. The conference is not a regular one. Whenever a crucial issue arose that required the attention of the Assembly, the Eze or Igwe, after consultation with members of the council of elders, would order for the convening of the Assembly. The meeting is usually summoned by beating a wooden gong, drum, or another form of town crying, popularly called Ekwe or Ogene. The consensus reached is then presented to the Assembly. The agreement reached by the elders is, in most cases, accepted unanimously. But where the Assembly rejects this, the elders would retire again to re-examine the issue. This would continue until their decision is acceptable to the Assembly (Ogunna et al., 2008).

Effect of the Aguleri and Umuleri Conflict

Aguleri and Umuleri's disputes have odd personalities. It has been noted that since the conflict in 1933, Aguleri and Umuleri have gone thirty-one years without a confrontation. Thirty-one years after the 1964 outbreak of the previous conflict between Aguleri and

Umuleri, the 1995 conflict broke out (Ani, 2017). The lone exception to the thirty-one-year rule was the conflict in 1999. It happened just four years after the 1995 conflict. In the 1999 conflict, Umuoba-Anam, who had previously been observers in wars between the Aguleri and the Umuleri, entered the primary theatre of battle for the first time (Umar and David, 2021). The occurrence of conflict every 31 years is unusual and unsettling. One can't help but wonder what associations people in both groups may have with the number 31. Even if it is not a perfect number, the warring communities might find some significance.

They chose to reside in the triangle Aguleri, Nteje, and Nsugbe, created to be safe from invasions. To defend themselves from the Aboh people of Delta State, who frequently assaulted Aguleri and Nsugbe from the river, Aguleri and Nsugbe restricted their access to the river. Additionally, Nteje and Aguleri protected Umuleri against invasions coming from the upland. This is not shocking considering how vital family and brotherhood were in traditional Igbo territory, especially when there was a risk of attack from outsiders. This assertion of the Aguleri is supported by the fact that, while Nteje, Aguleri, and Nsugbe all encountered Edda invaders at different points in time, Umuleri, who were situated in the middle of the triangle created by Aguleri, Nsugbe, and Nteje, never did (Abada and Omeh, 2022).

Once more, the Aguleri claimed they had stopped Umuleri's access to the river for safety reasons. Aguleri owns lands on the other side of the river and has grown there. Geographically limited, Umuleri's attempt to enlarge Otuocha seems reasonable. They would have acreage to accommodate their swollen population and access to the river by moving to Otuocha. However, the Aguleri have resisted their attempts at growth and have fought the Umuleri repeatedly over Otuocha territory. The Aguleri's action raises many doubts: Are the Aguleri still committed to protecting Umuleri against assaults on the other side of the river? Why have the Aguleri repeatedly engaged the Umuleri in conflict if the security and safety of the Umuleri are a concern for them? Are there any further problems they don't want the public to know that would prevent them from ceding Otuocha land?

Methodology

Anambra East Local Government Area in Anambra State is the centre of this qualitative study that examines the communities of Aguleri and Umuleri. Design considerations for data collection and analysis were taken into account and were consistent with study objectives. Otuocha, Igbariam, Nando, Nsugbe, and Umuoba Anam are just a few of the other cities that contribute to the region's total population of 216,800. For Aguleri, the predicted sample size is 39,075 (396), while for Umuleri, it is 21,438 (393). Both Research Sites contributed to a total sample size of 789.

The survey used a five-point Likert scale, with responses including Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Strongly Disagree, and Disagree. There will be a free-form question for the responder to fill in with their own ideas and recommendations. A Focused Group Discussion (FGD) sessions was used. KoBoCollect/Toolbox was used to gather data for this study in the form of mobile-friendly surveys and forms. The study was carried out in phases, beginning with the creation of a questionnaire and ending with the presentation of the results. The data's veracity and accuracy were taken into account, as was the connection between the data's contents, recurring conflicts, and efforts to terminate those conflicts.

Results: Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the causes of the Aguleri and Umuleri communal conflict?

Table 2 is the presentation of various causes of Aguleri and Umuleri communal conflict. Frequency and percentage of the responses were determined to answer the question.

TABLE 2: Causes of Aguleri and Umuleri inter-communal Conflict

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	STD DEV
1.	Historical grievances contributed to the communal violence between the Aguleri and Umuleri	22.1	49.8	34.7	17.6	2.9	3.81	.96

2.	The competition was over land and resources that contributed to the communal violence	31.3	50.6	34.9	12.0	0.9	4.06	.85
3.	Political issues contributed to the Aguleri and Umuleri communal violence	30.6	42.1	35.0	14.8	2.1	3.89	1.02
4.	Cultural and ethnic differences contribute to the tensions and escalation of the communal strife between the Aguleri and Umuleri	29.7	44.1	34.6	14.9	1.9	3.91	.99
5.	lack of adequate dispute resolution processes exacerbated the communal conflict between the Aguleri and Umuleri	32.4	43.5	35.6	14.0	1.6	3.96	.98
Weighted mean =		3.93						

Table 2 revealed that the majority of the respondents (71.9%) agreed that Historical grievances can cause communal conflict. Also, they also agreed that competition was over land and resources (81.9%), political issues (72.7%), Cultural and ethnic differences (73.8%) and lack of adequate dispute resolution processes (75.9) are likely causes of the communal conflict between the Aguleri and Umuleri. Additionally, the mean showed that the competition was over land and resources has the highest contribution to communal conflict in the communities (Figure 4.3)

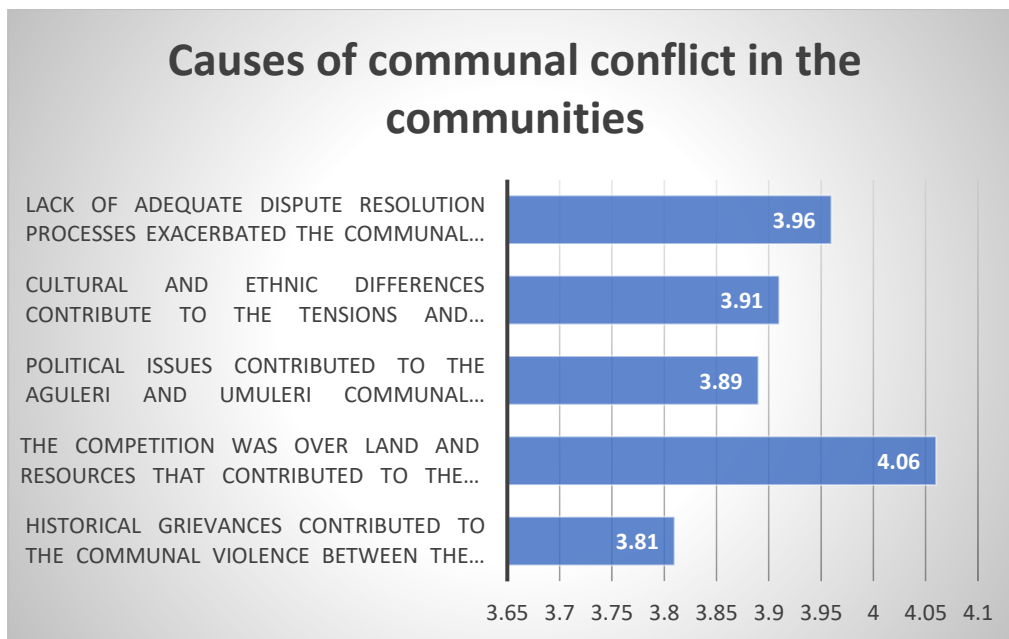


Figure 1: Causes of Aguleri and Umuleri inter-communal Conflict

Research Question 2: What is the effect of the conflict on the socio-economic development of Aguleri and Umuleri?

Table 2: Effect of the conflict on the socio-economic development of Aguleri and Umuleri

S/N	Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	STD DEV
1.	Conflict has impeded the development of infrastructure in Aguleri and Umuleri	26.1	25.3	34.7	11.2	2.7	3.61	1.07
2.	Violence has hindered economic activities and investment opportunities in Aguleri and Umuleri	28.4	27.0	34.9	8.0	1.6	3.73	1.01
3.	Impact of the conflict on agricultural activities in Aguleri and Umuleri, such as healthcare and education	29.2	24.0	35.0	8.8	3.0	3.68	1.08

4.	Impact of the conflict on social services in Aguleri and Umuleri, such as healthcare and education	27.0	25.9	34.6	10.4	2.1	3.65	1.05
5.	Violence has hindered tourism and cultural development in Aguleri and Umuleri	27.0	27.0	35.6	8.6	1.9	3.68	1.02
Weighted mean = 3.67								

The weighted mean of 3.67 suggests that the conflict has had a significant impact on various aspects of the communities in Aguleri and Umuleri. The hindrance of economic activities and investment opportunities, as well as the negative effects on agricultural activities and social services, indicate that the conflict has severely affected the overall development and well-being of these communities. Additionally, the hindered tourism and cultural development further highlight the detrimental consequences of violence in Aguleri and Umuleri. As presented in Table 2, majority of the respondents affirmed that the communal conflicts have

- impeded the development of infrastructure in Aguleri and Umuleri
- hindered economic activities and investment opportunities in Aguleri and Umuleri
- negative impact of the conflict on agricultural activities in Aguleri and Umuleri, such as healthcare and education
- negative impact of the conflict on social services in Aguleri and Umuleri, such as healthcare and education and have also
- hindered tourism and cultural development in Aguleri and Umuleri.

Furthermore, the conflicts have also resulted in a decline in the overall quality of life for the residents of Aguleri and Umuleri. This includes limited access to essential services and a decrease in opportunities for cultural exchange and growth.

Discussion of Findings

This section presents the findings of the study and discusses them in line with previous studies. The presentation addresses the five research questions. The study investigated decolonising peace education in conflict management in Igboland: a study of the Aguleri and Umuleri conflict in Anambra State, Nigeria. The distribution of the age of the sampled respondents for

the study shows that the majority of the respondents were between 41 and 50 years of age. There are more non-formal respondents when compared to the formal respondents.

Causes of the Aguleri and Umuleri communal conflict

The findings revealed that the conflict between the Aguleri and Umuleri communities is rooted in historical grievances, competition over land and resources, political issues, cultural and ethnic differences, and a lack of adequate dispute resolution processes. These findings corroborate Nweagbo's "A Study of Aguleri-Umuleri Conflicts" in Miriam Ikejiani-Clark's (ED.) Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, which links the introduction of Europeans with the cause of commoditization of land in the two communities to the beginning of the wars. According to Obiakor (2016), the struggle over Otuocha land was the cause of the disputes between Aguleri and Umuleri. Despite the economic importance of land to the Aguleri and Umuleri people in the pre-colonial era, he divided conflicts between the two communities into pre-colonial and post-colonial Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts.

Effect of the conflict on the socio-economic development of Aguleri and Umuleri

From the findings of the study, it was noted that the conflict has had a negative impact on the socio-economic development of the communities, hindering infrastructure development, economic activities, investment opportunities, agricultural activities, security, and social services. The result of the findings is in support of Inoykwe (2021), who says the struggle led to the destruction of commercial crops, markets, banks, churches, and schools, which significantly impacted the socioeconomic situation in both areas.

Conclusion

The 'indigen/settler' syndrome refers to the tension that arises between indigenous people and settlers who have migrated to a particular community. This issue often leads to disputes over land ownership and resource allocation, further exacerbating inter-communal conflicts in Nigeria. Additionally, historical grievances and political manipulation also contribute to the persistence of these conflicts, making them a complex and multifaceted challenge for the country. However, the arrival of the European explorers brought about a significant shift in

the dynamics of inter-communal relations in Nigeria. The introduction of colonial rule and the subsequent imposition of boundaries and land ownership systems created new sources of tension and conflict among different communities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. It is imperative that principals recognise the importance of implementing a successful conflict management plan in order to support them in fostering a culture of peace in the education system. Principals may foster a peaceful atmosphere that promotes constructive relationships among students by putting into practice an efficient conflict management plan. This method not only helps to create a culture of peace but also gives students the tools they need to resolve problems in the future.
2. The government should continue to support and invest in decolonised peace education as a means of addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting peacebuilding
3. The government should also work to improve dispute resolution processes between the Aguleri and Umuleri communities.
4. Community leaders and traditional institutions should continue to play a role in mediating conflicts and promoting peace building.

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary practice, the relationship between corporate organisations and host communities is lubricated by the growing desire for organisations to re-invest in the communities, in appreciation of the convivial environment provided by the communities, and in demonstration of the discharge of the role expected of stakeholders. Previous studies recognize the imperative of increasing corporate social responsibility (CSR), whether in Nigeria, or overseas. In this regard, Shell Development Company, Total and Exxon-Mobil, among others, have been more CSR-centric in recent times. Unfortunately, evidence abounds regarding considerable deficit in the discharge of CSR by tertiary institutions in Nigeria, empirically investigated. The central problem of this study therefore, is the observed empirical deficit. As a corollary, the main objective of the study is to examine the extent of engagement in CSR by tertiary institutions in Benue State, with focus on Benue State Polytechnic, Ugbokolo and Benue State University, Makurdi. Underpinned by Stakeholders' Theory, the descriptive study relied on the physical examination of projects executed by the citadels, in addition to validating the effort, using primary data and oral interviews held with residents of the respective host communities. Salient among the findings was the pervasive absence of evidence of executed projects, in furtherance of CSR, due majorly to lack of commitment, paucity of financial resources and absence of compelling formal legislations. It was therefore recommended, among others, that government should enact suitable legislations, compelling re-investment by citadels operating in host communities, in other to re-direct the existing poor attitude towards CSR.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Host Communities. Stakeholders, Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

Branco and Rodrigues (2006) described corporate social responsibility (CSR) as the specific and social or environmental context in which organizations are committed to the public. Although the practice was hitherto limited to business organizations, particularly multinational corporations (MNCs), engaging in corporate social responsibility in contemporary times has assumed a wider dimension by extending the gambit or scope to all organizations, be they corporations or government that locate within and interact with host communities, Amadi and Princewill (2020). Implicit in the connotation of CSR is that in organizational literature, the modern thinking is based on participation in the development of host communities by corporate organizations through value re-investment in society, particularly host communities, in appreciation of the contributions of such communities, to the growth and survival of the organizations.

In extant thinking, CSR was the responsibility of business organizations, particularly the large multinational corporations. Little or no responsibility was assigned to public organizations, particularly educational institutions. When therefore, in Nigeria discourses on CSR were held, reference was limited to the large international corporates such as Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Chevron, Mobil, Texaco, AGIP, UAC, Julius Berger, etc. In particular, it was the expectation that the purview CSR did not extend to tertiary institutions, such as public universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, notwithstanding the emernity of support provided by the host communities, in terms of security, land, labour, intelligence and environmental cordiality, among others (Amadi&Princewill, 2020).

A study on University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University reported that the institutions appeared not to have come in terms with coherent and integrated strategies around CSR in accordance with international best standards (Amadi & Princewill, 2020). To the contrariwise, Poroma (2020), in a study on CSR by SPDC, found that SPDC made concerted efforts towards addressing the perennial conflicts that engulfed the host communities through

effective CSR. Given the finding of the studies by Amadi and Princewill, (2020) and Poroma (2020), it has become interesting to extend the search for evidence or otherwise of the practice of CSR with respect to tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Accordingly, this study is focused on the engagement in CSR by Benue State Polytechnic, Ugbokolo (Ben Poly) and Benue State University, Makurdi (BSU), both in Benue State, Nigeria.

As a corollary to the motivation for this study, it is contended that the scope of empirical studies on the engagement of tertiary institutions in Nigeria generally, and Benue State particularly in CSR has remained very narrow and grossly inadequate. In the circumstance, not much is known about the CSR relationships among tertiary institutions and the host communities. The central problem of this study therefore, is to narrow the observed gap in literature and empirical studies in CSR practice by tertiary institutions in Benue State, using the aforesaid citadels as case studies.

Flowing from the problem statement, the major objective of this study is to examine the extent of engagement in CSR by tertiary educational institutions in Benue State, Nigeria with Benue State Polytechnic, Ugbokolo and Benue State University, Makurdi as studies. Other objectives include to: investigate whether or not public tertiary institutions, particularly the case-study citadels, are indeed CSR-exempt by any design whatsoever; examine the effect of the neglect or otherwise of the responsibility on the mutual relationships among the host communities and the institutions; and proffer policy panacea for active CSR engagement and improved relationships.

In order to guide the study, the following questions were posed:

- i. Are Benpoly and BSU by any law or design CSR-exempt?
- ii. Do Benpoly and BSU engage in the practice of CSR in the respective host communities?
- iii. What are the challenges in engaging in CSR by Benpoly and BSU within the host communities?

iv. What measures can be taken to raise the level of CSR engagement by Benpoly and BSU, in order to improve the relationships?

Review of Literature and Previous Studies

Several concepts have been employed in this study. For focus, a clarification of each of the concepts, which include corporate social responsibility, community relations, host community and tertiary institutions, is provided.

Corporate Social Responsibility

The orthodox conception of CSR was that of meeting maximum shareholders' return on investment by the firm. This position has however waned progressively. Thus, the position of Ijaiya (2014) aligns with the position of Ndu-Okon and Agbonifoh (2014), to the effect that in more contemporary times, the focus of CSR has shifted to one of the responsibility of corporations towards also meeting the needs of the host communities and environments.

Notwithstanding the absence of a compelling legal obligation by corporations with respect to any duty under CSR, several morally compelling extant "conventions" abound; for example, the United Nations Global Compact, ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises, among others (Adeyemi & Ayanola, 2015).

Relying on the shifting paradigm in the widening scope of stakeholders under CSR, protagonists held the view that a multi-stakeholder position, which accommodates the interest of all groups, should be adopted (Freeman, 1984; Ragan, Chase & Karim, 2012). Accordingly, the interests of investors, customers, employees, suppliers, government and communities, among others, must be recognized and accommodated by corporations. Menick Dodd is widely credited with the authorship of multi-stakeholder position, as noted by Valor (2005).

Interestingly, Esteves and Barclay (2011) have provided a model for incorporating the needs and therefore expectations of host communities into corporate strategies with respect to CSR. The model stresses the importance of shared responsibility among stakeholders within a specified domain. Very important, the model designed tools that are capable of assisting

corporations in identifying community problems within the domain. Essentially, the domain-linked model de-emphasized the corporation as the locus of strategic planning; instead, the model stressed the adoption of an integrated system which allows for the participation of all stakeholders.

In spite of the emphasis on all-stakeholders approach in designing CSR plans, it is the considered view of Brown and Flynn (2008) that contemporary theoretical arrangements are in deficit with respect to the inclusiveness of key stakeholders, namely the corporations, government and community. The deficit is more acute in emerging countries, as noted by Brown and Flynn (2008), who posited that studies conducted in advanced countries to test CSR ideals, were incapable of addressing the dissimilar conditions in the third-world countries. Accordingly, it has been aptly observed that the exclusion of CSR from the overall developmental of the local communities has been largely responsible for the failure of CSR strategies in emerging countries, Nigeria inclusive (Idemudia, 2007).

Host Community

Although host community has been variously defined, Fasasi (2016) provided a simple and practical alternative definition to the effect that it is a community within which an organization is located and within which the organization carries out its normal business engagements. Thus, the host community of a tertiary educational institution is the community in which the institution is situate and located. While providing the conducive physical environment for the smooth operation of the business of the organization, the host community expects reciprocity of the organization in terms of voluntary contribution to the development of the community through robust CSR policies and practices. The resultant cooperation and interaction is a *sinc qua non* for mutual peace and progress. This study adopted this definition, in view of its practical ability and appeal.

Community Relations

In the Niger Delta Region, CSR programmes began in the 1960s and 1970s, with the commencement of oil exploration and production by MNCs (Ukeje, 2004). Shell Petroleum

Development Company of Nigeria (SPDCN), Chevron, Texaco, Agip, Elf and Exxon-Mobil, among others, now operate at different locations across the Region. Over the early years, the imperative of CSR as a strategy for building a cordial and enduring community relation with the hosts was immaterial to the oil producing MNCs. Thus, initial CSR strategies were limited to philanthropic activities, such as provision of community health centres, feeder roads, scholarship awards and payment of cash palliatives, among others (Fasasi, 2016). Without doubt, these strategies have become inadequate, due to several reasons: excessive focus on business motive, legal compliance and observance of moral needful (Adeyemi, 2005).

In any case, most of the CSR projects were incapable, by design, of meeting pressing socio-economic and environmental challenges within the host communities. In this regard, while schools constructed provided good “shelter”, lack of maintenance of the structures on continual basis diminished the utility derived from the buildings (Fasasi, 2016). Very important, community development and the attendant projects were not integrated into oil MNCs’ CSR strategy until the second half of the 1990s, when the communities became very restive and confrontational (Fasasi, 2016). Besides, the oil companies were unmindful of the very poor and vulnerable nature of the host communities, the adverse ecological conditions in the Region notwithstanding (Ejumudo, 2014).

Recent trends however, indicated that oil MNCs’ CSR practices have been more responsive to community integration (Fasasi, 2016). Thus, the paradigm shift in CSR strategy by SPDCN from mere community development was aimed at achieving a considerable improvement in host community relations in the Region. The change was also intended to stress the desired collaboration among the MNCs, government, international development organizations and host communities, as strategic allies. Thus, SPDCN had drawn up huge budgets for the provision of social amenities in healthcare, education, rural electrification, road construction and water, among others (SPDC, 2009). Other oil MNCs such as EXXON-Mobil and Chevron-Texaco have also embarked on projects, in order to maintain peaceful, safe and conducive operating environment, as noted by Amnesty International (2009).

The expectations of host communities from corporate organizations which operate within the communities' domains transcend the nature and business of the organizations (Fasasi, 2016). While, previous empirical studies: Eweje (2006); Idemudia (2007) Ugochukwu and Ertel (2008), and Evuleocha, (2005) have focused on CSR of business corporates, the focus of this study and empirical review is on the practice of CSR by public tertiary educational institutions in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Unfortunately, available literature and published studies in the subject in Nigeria have remained inadequate, thereby militating against a robust review.

Review of Previous Studies

Poroma (2020) conducted a study on CSR and conflict management in Rivers State within SPDC's framework. The major objective of the study was to determine whether community-based CSR projects were capable of militating social conflicts in the host communities. using survey method, the study examined the relationship between CSR findings and communal hostility.

The study found that although SPDCN had performed credibility in CSR, the failure of the CSR projects to transform the communities was fundamental in the pervasive conflicts between the host communities and shell. Very fundamental too, the failure to include the host communities in CSR strategy design and implementation was instrumental to the lack of community buy-in. accordingly, the study recommended that failure of CSR strategy design and implementation should be transformational in nature, while involving the participation of host communities.

Amadi and Princewill (2020) conducted a comparative study on the CSR of Rivers State University and University of Port Harcourt respectively in Nigeria, based on stakeholders and system theories. The study adopted qualitative research design and collected data using interviews with respondents in the host communities Heads of communication and public relations of the Universities in whose remit it falls to relate with communities on behalf of the Universities were also interviewed, for a balance.

The findings of the study revealed that the Universities had no effective CSR policy. In effect, CRS was relegated; just as interaction with communities was ineffective. The study therefore recommended a deep integration of University CSR policies into the overall corporate strategy; while professionals should be saddled with designing and implementing the communication strategy, in order to upscale the status of interaction by the respective Universities with the host communities.

In a similar study on CSR policy and practice by College of Education, Ekiadolor, Edo State Nigeria, Ogbeifun (2012) gathered relevant data from the host rural community via personal interviews with members of the community. The study adopted descriptive methods, including bar chart, pie chart and frequency distribution tables to present the responses. The underpinning stakeholder theory provided a suitable grounding.

One of the major findings of the study was a positive relationship between community empowerment and mutual coexistence between the College and host community. Consequently, the study recommended that the College should considerably improve the existing attitudes toward assisting the community, by evolving a more and community-centric CSR, in order to reduce the spate of fracas, which had characterized the relationship, ascribable to a dysfunctional CSR policy and practice.

This finding corroborates the positions of Amadi and Princewill (2020)'s study which reported that apart from teaching and learning, tertiary institutions should provide moral, financial and technical support to the development of host communities. It is against this background therefore, that the overall impact of tertiary institutions must be judged. In Nigeria, the issues, and debates on, CSR have been centred around the relationship between host communities and major oil prospecting and producing MNCs, particularly in the Niger Delta Region. A brief review of the CSR relationships and activities in the region is therefore presented, for illustrative purposes.

Tertiary Educational Institution

A tertiary educational institution is an organization, whether public or private, that offers secondary, post-academic subjects of study; in addition to conducting researches.

Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical perspectives have been advanced in explaining the diverse views on the role of CSR in promoting a harmonious relationship between organizations and the host communities. Of direct relevance to this study, and hence adopted, is Stakeholders Theory.

Stakeholders' theory was popularized by the pioneering publication of Richard Freeman in the mid-1980s. To Freeman (1994), stakeholders refer to a group of interested parties in the absence of which an organization is non-existent. Accordingly, Freeman (1984) defined stakeholders as "a group or individual, who may be affected by the achievement of the organization's goals". In line with the definition, several shareholders: customers, employees' host communities, suppliers and other parties have been identifying as critical.

Other but secondary stakeholders include the media, business partners, future generations, founders or previous generations, professionals, NGOs, candidates, business managers, the private sector, and regulator or government (Freeman, 1994). The cardinal thesis of stakeholders' theory is that in managing different interest groups and relationships, methods must be developed or evolved; managers must formulate strategic policies and implement processes capable of including everyone, but only groups with interest in the organization. Implicitly, stakeholder management must ensure an integration of the interests in a manner that guarantees the success and survival of the organization ultimately. Building enduring relationships with stakeholders, therefore, is a sine qua non for corporate survival. The relevance of shareholders theory to this study drives from the recognition of the role of diverse stakeholders and interest groups and the need to integrate all, for the long-term survival and growth of an organization. The relevant host community is critical in the stakeholder-integration.

Methodology

This study is initiated to investigate whether Benpoly and BSU engage in CSR, in the relationships with the host communities, in the absence of legal or policy requirements, and benchmark attainment or deliverables on CSR by the institutions. A survey research design was adopted, since comparison of actual with expected outcomes are hard to make.

In all, there were six tertiary institutions in Benue State, including BSU, Benpoly, Federal University of Agriculture (Makurdi), Federal Polytechnic (Katsina Ala), Benue State College of Education (Oju), and Federal University of Health Science Otukpo (Otukpo). The key variables of study included amenities, facilities or support of any type and form provided by the case study institutions to the host community pursuant to CSR policies, during the study period, 2010-2020. In addition to gathering data on the variables, including social amenities or other support variables through a questionnaire, interviews were also held with members of the host communities who constituted the beneficiaries. The aim was to validate claims of CSR support by the institutions.

Simple percentage analysis of responses was undertaken, as is widely accepted in social and management sciences (Osuala, 2005).

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1 presents a summary of the frequency distribution of the responses. No official population census figure was obtained; but a stratified purposive sample of 580 respondents made up of ward heads, opinion leaders and long-time residents in the various quarters across segments of Makurdi and Ugbokolo communities were chosen. The adoption of purposive sampling technique was informed by the homogeneity of the population and the communities, as the crux of the research investigation. Stratification ensured that the various segments of the communities were accommodated, for participation or representation. In all, 500 (86.21%) copies of the questionnaire administered were retrieved, validated and adopted.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Responses by Benpoly and BSU Community Members.

S/n	Question	Response	Frequency
1	How old are you(years)?	18-23 24-28 29-33 Above 33	70 55 125 250 = 500
2	For how long have you lived in Ugbokolo or Makurdi continuously (year)?	Less than 5 5-10 11-15 16-20 Longer than 20	60 80 105 100 155
3	What is your social status in the community?	Head of Quarters Community Leader Resident	35 80 380
4	Are you aware of any project executed or provided by Benue State polytechnic or BSU in your Community?	Yes No No Idea	0 500 0
5	If you are aware, or your response is “Yes”, kindly indicate from the list provided (tick); you may provide additional information, if any, not captured in the list: (i) water borehole (ii) electric power generating set, iii. Free medical service iv. Environmental Sanitation v. Employment vi. Special admission quota vii. Recreational facilities (park, garden, viewing centre, sporting facilities/activities, etc)	Yes No Yes No	0 0 500 0
7	What is your disposition towards the situation of absence of CSR by the Institutions in your community? (i) No bad feeling because the University provides a sign of development with much economic opportunities (ii) Not satisfied with the situation; but nothing can be done, since the institutions are not under a legal obligation to extend CSR to community members. (iii) The situation is not commendable; the institutions and similar organizations	Yes No Yes No Yes	390 110 406 94 500

	operating in the community should do something to assist the community	No	0
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Source: Field Survey, 2023

A perusal of Table 1 indicates that all residents, irrespective of social status, responded in the negative to the question on awareness of CSR projects undertaken by the referenced institutions. Responses to oral interviews held specifically with community leaders and residents also indicated negative responses. Of note is the adequacy and relevance of the credentials of respondents with regard to age and length of domicile.

Without doubt, all respondents recognized the importance of CSR to the development of the community. They also deplored the non-provision of social amenities or support by the tertiary institutions through CSR. To be sure, the communities may not make formal demands, because no legal duty or obligation compelled the institutions to so act. Nevertheless, the communities expected reinvestment by the tertiary institutions upon which the institutions derive operational bases. Developing the communities will therefore be advantageous to all stakeholders.

As to the existence of a compelling legal obligation to support host communities, a perusal of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and the various Acts establishing and governing the operations of the Institutions reveals that no provision so exist. Consequently, extant CSR policies were voluntary guides for convivial relations with host communities, at the convenience of the institutions.

Evidence deduced from the oral interviews suggested that notwithstanding paucity of funds, the more critical factors in the poor attitude towards CSR by the respective institutions included the diminished importance or relevance accorded to CSR as a veritable tool for fostering community relations; ignorance of host communities resulting in docility, absence of a compelling public legislation or policy on support by organisations, and misrepresentation or selfish representation of community leaders who, more often advanced personal interest at the expense of communal interest.

It is trite experience that community leaders representing the interest of communities relegate the common benefits for personal aggrandizement. For example, a protest embarked upon by Obinze community in 2021 was against an alleged massive acquisition of community land by Federal University, Owerri, without compensation, or engagement in any form of CSR by the University, for the benefit of the community.

Arising from the analysis, the major findings include the following:

- i. in Benpoly and BSU, as it is elsewhere, no legal enactment compels the provision of any service in pursuance of CSR, although internal policies allude to the desire to be socially responsible in host community relations;
- ii. no real or apparent development (physical or otherwise) were observed within the host communities of the case-study institutions, as evidence of execution of CSR engagements;
- iii. the institutions under study were constrained by paucity of funds in the desire to provide CSR-support to the host communities; and
- iv. notwithstanding the constraints in (iii) however, poor commitment of the institutions to CSR practice, ignorance and docility of the host communities and bad leadership may have exacerbated the poor CSR engagement by the academic citadels.

Discussion

To the question of whether tertiary institutions, Benpoly and BSU inclusive, were CSR-expt, the response was in the negative. What the institutions relied on for alibi centered on financial constraint. Be that as it may, it is contended that beyond financial deficits, the will may have been largely weak. To be sure, if the will was strong, the citadels would have found the way. It is highly probable that if CSR support became legally compelling, all institutions would comply.

Similar situation existed in the Niger Delta Region in which oil MNCs relegated or neglected CSR towards host communities, the extensive damage done to the economic life of the region by the activities of the companies notwithstanding. When however, through youth

restraint and militancy the host communities advanced the agitation beyond persuasion to confrontation, the MNCs approached the responsibility differently. The considerable advance in CSR has thus been a major factor in the improved peace in the mutual relationship between the host communities and the MNCs, as reported by Fesasi (2016). It is therefore expected that in due course, militancy and confrontation by host communities would replace the prevailing docile posture of the host communities in the relationship with the institutions. To forestall the development, policy antidotes have been recommended.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings and discussions, the following policy antidotes are proffered, to institutionalize CSR, for a more compelling reinvestment in host communities by operating tertiary institutions generally, but Benpoly and BSU particularly:

- i. Government should enact a legislation which compels operating institutions to reinvest by any means in host communities.
- ii. Benpoly and BSU should institutionalize Host Community Committees that will always articulate and advise periodically on possible areas of community needs and collaboration for the intervention of the institutions, as resources may from time-to-time permit.
- iii. Benpoly and BSU should establish Host Community Support Fund into which a token fee of #200 per session should be payable by every student. Proceeds of the Fund should be applied to argument any statutory provision which the institution might make towards community development projects.

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GOOD GOVERNANCE, NOT GUNS: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Good governance, principally, promotes transparency and guarantees the rule of law, justice, fairness, equity, and equality. It is marked by inclusiveness, and efficient and effective use of the resources to adequately promote collective gains. It fosters unity and national cohesion. It promotes citizens' participation and enhances the sense of patriotism which constrains individual or group interest to reasons of state. It ultimately fosters national development by adequately promoting the living standards and welfare of the people. Where resources are sufficiently adequate, and leadership is met with good governance, the misfortune of poverty, which induces vices that often snowball into security threats, is ultimately contained. On the contrary, poor governance—as well as the alienation and bitterness it fosters, where citizens are marginalized, government services are limited, corruption is rampant, extremism, banditry, and maritime crime are often proliferated. This has been the unfortunate tragedy of governance in Nigeria. The paper adopted the qualitative method, content, and thematic analysis. The paper argued that for the Nigerian state to reverse the unholy and inglorious security threats plaguing the country, good governance, rather than guns, should be strategically deployed. The paper recommended that as a strategy, infusing new dynamism that will holistically reconfigure the style of governance in Nigeria, to that which will adequately enhance the quality of life of the populace should constitute the priority.

Keywords: Good Governance, Guns, Strategic Approach, Security.

Introduction

In the world's most developed nations, good governance has been the hallmark of peace and stability. Countries in the Arab world, like Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Saudi

Arabia, where crude oil proceeds have been prudently managed, have shown how effective and strategically relevant good governance appears as an instrument of advancing stability. The same could be said about countries in Western Europe and North America (except Mexico). Good governance remains fundamentally, a pre-condition for stability. Conflict and violence are driven by several complex underlying social, political, economic, and ecological dynamics, or root causes, many of which directly connect to how communities and nations are governed. Conflict and violence affect countless communities around the world, driving many of the worst humanitarian crises. In 2018 alone, there were 52 state-based conflicts, 77 non-state conflicts, and 33 one-sided incidents of violence which resulted in over 77,000 deaths (Mercy Corps, 2019). Nigeria suffers a similar unfortunate reality.

The Nigerian security environment has seen skyrocketing incidences of violence. The level of fatalities has risen disproportionately. Old threats are assuming an existential dimension. Emerging threats are surging astronomically. Violent extremism unleashed on communities by Boko haram has tragically caused lives and property, and distorted the societal equilibrium in states like Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa. Kaduna and Niger States have recently come under attack by Ansarudeen, a dare-devil terrorist faction of Boko Haram, who have recently claimed control of some local governments in the aforementioned states. The ripple effects are felt across the country, as the group now joins forces with kidnappers to unleash hell on the generality of Nigeria.

In the views of Mercy Corps (2019), ineffective and unjust governance compounds natural resource challenges perpetuates distrust, alienates youth, and exacerbates inequalities between communities, which ignite and prolongs violent conflict, criminality, youth restiveness, and other unholy activities inimical to development. Poor governance fuels grievances and can create space for violent extremist groups to gain hold in communities. While there are multiple paths to participation in violent extremist groups, there are often links to governance-related root causes like exclusion, discrimination, and corruption, or more extreme cases of state-sponsored abuse of specific communities and vulnerable populations.

Conversely, good governance is capable of harnessing prospects and promises of democratic leadership. It guarantees the rule of law, justice, and accountability. To reverse this unholy trajectory, it is strategically needful to tackle these governance-related root causes of threats to effectively promote sustained peace and attain lasting development outcomes. It is on this note that the paper argues that good governance, not guns, is strategically capable of resolving violent conflict and extremism, and other plethora of threats troubling the generality of the Nigerian state.

2. Conceptual analysis and theoretical framework.

i. Governance

Governance is a multifaceted concept with wide ramifications. This is so because of the fast-changing and interdependent global environment. No country can afford to continue with a governance system that is outdated, slow, ineffective, expensive, and corrupt in this age of globalization (Khan, 2003). Governance though is increasingly widely used is not a new term. It was first used in the fourteenth century. At that time, it was used in two senses. In the first case, it meant action, a method of governing; and in the second sense, it included action and manner of governing (Khan, 2006:19).

Governance has a dual meaning; on the one hand, it refers to the empirical manifestations of state adaptation to its external environment as it emerges in the late twentieth century (Pierre, 2000); on the other hand, governance also denotes a conceptual or theoretical representation of coordination of social systems and, for the most part, the role of the state in that process (Pierre, 2000).

In general terms, it can also denote how people are ruled, how the affairs of the state are administered and regulated as well as a nation's system of politics and how this functions to public administration and law (Landell-Mills and Serageldin, 1991:304). Governance is defined as a system of government concentrating on effective and accountable institutions, democratic principles and electoral process, representation, and responsible structures of government, to ensure an open and legitimate relationship between the civil society and the

state (Halfani, McCartney and Rodriguez, 1994:). In the broadest sense, governance concerns performance of the government including public and private sectors, global and local arrangements, formal structures, informal norms and practices, and spontaneous and intentional system of control (Roy, 2006:5). McCartney, Halfani and Rodriguez, 1996) define governance as a system of government concentrating on effective and accountable institutions, democratic principles and electoral processes, representative and responsible structures to ensure an open and legitimate relationship between the civil society and the state.

ii. Good Governance

Emphasizing the UN Report on Good Governance as Instrument of Promoting Human Rights (1977), George Genyi (2012) perceives good governance as the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences. Olowu and Akinola (2000) identify good governance as an approach or view which focuses on the state and institutions crafted by the people, the relationship between them, and how rules are made in societies that are accepted as legitimate by the individuals and organizations within the collectivities, cited in Coker & Obo, 2012: 63). Olowu and Akinola (2000), further observed two dimensions of the processes: the first has to do with the governors or leadership whose responsibilities are derived from the principle of the effective governmental group; the second, with the governed, that is, with the masses of the people who have a responsibility to participate in the socioeconomic and political affairs of the society.

iii. Security

Security challenges have been a serious problem in Nigeria, which has made life uncomfortable, unbearable, and unfavorable in many parts of the country. Microsoft Encarta 2007, is the concept of safety for the territory and population of a state, and by extension the policies adopted for its preservation. Security is sometimes defined as the assurance of future welfare. In this broad sense, national security might be regarded as the whole range of measures affecting the economic and social welfare of a population, as well as a provision

against aggression from abroad or subversion from within, Donald (2020). Security is viewed as the condition of feeling safe from harm or danger, the defense, protection, and preservation of values, and the absence of threats to acquire values (Terriff, 1991). So, it is the responsibility of the government to provide an enabling environment and adequate protection for its citizens to engage in any law-full activities and protect the country from external sovereignty. It is the ability to protect and defend oneself, be it an individual or a nation its cherished values and legitimate interests, and the enhancement of well-being (Imobighe, 1990; Mijah, 2007). McNamara (1968) and Mijah (2007) perceived security as tantamount to development. Security is not only about the presence of military might and military hardware. The Kampala Document on Security clearly states that the concept of security goes beyond military consideration. It embraces economic, political, and social dimensions of individual, family, community, local and national life.

Theoretical Analysis

Theoretical analysis is sufficiently impressive and massively productive in plotting the trajectory of the research on empirical grounds that allows generalization possible. The paper will adopt the theory, structural functionalism. Structural functionalism is one of the classical or traditional theories in Sociology. Its origin could be traced to August Comte (1798-1857). While scholars such as Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and Robert Merton (1920-2003) contributed to its development. The theory was later refined by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Talcott Parson (1902-1979). Central to this paradigm is that within human society, the following structures exist: political, economy, religion, education, industry, technology, social control or social order and work together in an interrelated and interdependent manner to promote solidarity and stability within the system. Hence, any structural defect in one part of the society, has a corresponding negative implication in another part.

Functionalism, also called structural-functional theory, sees society as a structure with interrelated parts designed to meet the biological and social needs of the individuals in that society. Functionalists compare society with a living organism and drew analogy between

them. Just like a living organism whose parts work together for its survival, society in the same manner has various parts which enable it to meet its needs towards survival. These parts are regarded as social institutions, which are strongly related to the structures mentioned above and they perform specific roles towards maintaining the whole. These roles could be manifest and latent and they have continued to hold the society together (Merton, 1938). Durkheim envisioned society as an organism since each component plays a necessary role but cannot function alone. When one-part experiences a crisis, it will affect the working of the whole system.

According to Diego (2020), functionalism is a theoretical perspective that focuses on the functions performed in society by social structures such as institutions, hierarchies, and norms. Within this theory, function refers to the extent to which a given activity promotes or interferes with the maintenance of a system. The theory contends that the various components of society ultimately comprise social institutions, designed to fill different needs. Family, government, economy, media, education, and religion are important aspects of the society. An institution only exists because it serves a vital role in the functioning of society. If it does not longer serve a role, it will undermine the collective functioning of the whole system.

To buttress this further, according to this theory, if the political system is replete with contradictions and plethora of problems like poor governance, which culminates to insecurity, poverty, unemployment, internal displacement etc, it will grossly impair the smooth functioning of the whole system. The failure of governance has undermined security sector, and along this destructive trajectory, it has structured Nigeria on a path that sadly undermines the prospect and potential of the state.

Element of Good Governance

Equity and Inclusive Government

One of the fundamentals of good governance is equity and inclusion. Donald (2022b) argued that equity and inclusiveness are where there is no unfair treatment of certain people based on various factors such as race, religion, tribe, point of view, and others. A society's well-being

hugely positioned on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake and can contribute overwhelmingly to nation-building. Menocal (2020) asserted that inclusion in terms of both processes (how decisions are made and who is included in that process and how and why) and outcomes (how wealth and prosperity are distributed and shared across a population and why) is a leading priority in international development. Inclusive governance has important intrinsic value that is rooted in enabling people to exercise voice and influence in the processes that concern them. Inclusive governance can also provide the basis for forging shared identity and common values and in this way, it can galvanise social cohesion, harness and promote prosperity and shared well-being. Equity in itself is a core value that adequately harnesses the promises of good governance and engages diverse interests in the project of governance while ensuring that a sustained equilibrium is advanced.

Free, Fair, and Legitimate Elections

The legitimacy of government is ultimately derived from free, fair, and transparent periodic elections, which are crucial for the mobilization of public support for government policies. When the legitimacy of the political leadership is heavily contested (through the public perception of rigged elections), the positive linkage to stable policies and economic development could be lost. Similarly, while the legitimacy of the legislative body (parliament) ensures that it is able to effectively perform its legislative, representation, and oversight functions (with positive consequences for development performance), contested legitimacy at that level would also impact negatively on the development performance Ikenga and Chima (2021). The linkage of electoral legitimacy and development performance is through citizens' participation in governance, which is fostered by the organization of periodic elections. Thus, free, fair, and credible elections allow the governed to elect their leaders, including throwing out non-performing elected officials while re-electing good performers who would contribute more to socio-economic development.

Administrative Competence

Ikenga and Chima (2021) observed that drawing on existing public administration literature, five key issues need discussing: matching the role of the state to its capability, merit-based recruitment and promotion, the centrality of budget management, the importance of decentralization and devolution, and achieving administrative accountability. These critical components of the administrative system are structurally positioned to enhance social and economic development. It follows that well strategically designed features found in a country's administrative system would result in corresponding enhancement of its impact on development performance. Administrative accountability is the most vital feature of administrative competence in the modern state. In the context of this study, administrative accountability denotes the responsiveness of elected public officials to the political executive as well as to the general public.

Transparency and Accountability

Transparency refers to an environment in which government policies and actions and the information relating to them are provided to the public on an understandable, accessible, and timely basis. Transparency could be accomplished when decisions are made and their enforcement is achieved in a manner that is in conformity with the rules and regulations guiding the business of governance. To guarantee good governance practices, government policies are to be openly disseminated to the entire citizens, so it will boost confidence between the leaders and the led. The ultimate decisions reached and government actions taken are expected to be made open and subject to check by other organs of government and non-governmental organizations (Apaza, 2009; Gisselquist, 2012; Addink, 2017).

Thus, transparency makes open government possible and increases the demand for accountability. Closely linked to transparency, is the concept of accountability. It refers to the degree to which political actors have the ability and willingness to demonstrate consistency between their activities and the constitution (Gisselquist, 2012). A government is positioned on footing, when its office holders, both the appointed and elected, are responsive to the

demands of the governed. Respect for the rule of law and an independent judiciary, free press, are instrumental in enforcing accountability. Elected legislatures (a key component of electoral legitimacy) also constitute mechanisms for enforcing accountability through their oversight function. The institution of the public complaint commission, popularly called the Ombudsman, where it exists, is yet another instrument for enforcing accountability. Commonly referred to as the ‘citizen’s defender’, the ombudsmen have a strong role to condition and influence transparency and accountability. Also, citizens can seek redress in the courts for acts of omission or commission by a government and its officials.

Public Participation

Participation by citizens is the cornerstone of good governance. It is thus, important that governments create a mechanism that will enhance citizens' participation in governance. Interactions principally influence social relations, attitudes, and behaviour, both at the personal and institutional levels. UNDP (2016), posited that evidence is emerging that citizen participation improves access, responsiveness, inclusiveness, and accountability in the delivery of public services such as health, water, education, and agriculture. The provision of information and capacity development support to citizens and civil society leads to increased citizens’ and civil society awareness, capability, and willingness to participate. This enables the citizens and civil society to monitor government functioning, programmes, projects, and policies, voice concerns where norms of behaviour and operational procedures are negated, and promote accountability. Citizen and civil society voices and monitoring results are shared with authorities, media, and the general public. This often translates to increased public pressure on authorities to respond, change behaviour, and reduce corruption. Authorities’ response leads to improved governance outcomes and development effectiveness.

Civil Liberties

Empirical analysis demonstrates that the extent of civil liberties in a country affects the performance of a government's investment projects. Finding contributes to accumulating evidence that the degree to which citizens' voices in the public sphere are repressed or are

allowed to be heard has an important influence on whether the accountability necessary for government efficacy will be created. Civil liberties refer to the fundamental freedom entrenched and guaranteed by the laws of the land. Freedom of expression is referred to as freedom of the press (print and electronic) and freedom of association is concerned with political associations (political parties), and civil society groups (for example, trade unions, community-based and faith-based organizations).

The definition of civil liberties is most often extended to cover human rights such as the right to life and property for all citizens and specific concern with the rights of children, women, the disabled, and their marginalized groups in society. The constitutions of many modern states have provisions on respect for civil liberties and the protection of human rights. Civil liberties also guarantee equity and inclusiveness. It covers the dignity of the human person, equal rights, and freedom from any discrimination. This, therefore, ensures that every citizen is given equal access to better his or her lot and also to enhance his or her well-being in the society (Harrison, 2005). In the modern state, the enforcement of respect for civil liberties and human rights is normally a key responsibility of the judiciary.

Efficient and Effective Service Delivery

Efficiency is primarily the process of doing things right while effectiveness is the process of doing the right things (Cole & Kelly, 2011). Thus, the principle as it applies to good governance means doing things right and doing the right things within the society by the government, using the resources available. Efficiency embraces the long-lasting use of God-given resources of the society and most especially environmental protection while the principles of effectiveness the good use of the natural resources of the society by the government (Rotberg, 2004; Nanda, 2006; Rothstein & Teorell, 2008, Oluwa, 2012). The primary purpose of a public service in a modern state is the delivery of quality public goods and services to the citizens.

Bad Governance and Insecurity in Nigeria

Achebe (1983), posited that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. Nigeria, over the years, has been troubled by the tragedy of poor leadership, a tragic self-induced catastrophe that has overwhelmingly manifested in bribery and corruption, nepotism, poverty, unemployment, dilapidated infrastructure too weak to accommodate development, insecurity, terrorism, secessionist agitations, banditry, ethnic religious conflict, and more recently, weak institutions like electoral commission, that is not capable of organising free fair and credible elections.

Bribery and corruption have substantially represented one of the several challenges troubling the growth and development of the Nigerian system. At every level of government, the widely acknowledged reality is that rarely does anything get done without money exchanging hands. According to Corruption Perception Index reported by Transparency International, Nigeria is currently the 154th corrupt nation out of 180 countries sampled. The principal index used for the ranking has to do with how corrupt the public sectors of the countries ranked were perceived to be.

Poverty and unemployment are other noticeable indices of bad governance in Nigeria. To such a disdainful and unacceptable proportion, poverty figures have tragically risen dramatically. Under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration in Nigeria (2015-2023), the country has maintained the infamous ranking of the poverty capital of the whole world. The GDP per capita is on a freefall. Unemployment has shockingly risen to an alarming unacceptable proportion. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) puts the unemployment ratio at about %33.3. Youths' unemployment stands at staggering %42.5. Nigeria is currently facing numerous security challenges; this has created a fertile ground for the spike in security challenges across the country.

Good Governance as Strategic Approach to Insecurity in Nigeria.

Over the years, the leadership style demonstrated in Nigeria by successive governments have woefully failed to effectively manage resources to ameliorate the numerous challenges of development, diversity and inclusiveness. The country was never positioned to fundamentally translate the dreams of the people to cosmic. Ineffective and unjust governance compounds natural resource challenges, fundamentally creates an atmosphere of distrust, exclude youth, and exacerbates inequalities between communities, which creates and sustains violent conflict. Nigerians' governance challenges like illegitimate and unfair institutions, lack of political inclusiveness, unequal provision of services, and corruption are key drivers of conflict and security threats. Poor governance fuels grievances and can create space for violent extremist groups to gain hold in communities. While there are multiple paths to participation in violent extremist activities, there are often link to governance-related root causes like exclusion, discrimination, and corruption, or more extreme cases of state-sponsored abuse of specific communities and vulnerable populations like the one championed by the Buhari administration. This explains the rise in secession agitation by groups like Biafra in the East, and Odua People's Congress in the Western part of Nigeria.

Gurr (1970) in his work *Why Men Rebel*, examined the psychological frustration-aggression, which argued that the primary source of the human capacity for violence is the frustration-aggression mechanism. Frustration does not necessarily translate to violence, but when it is sufficiently prolonged and sharply felt, it often does result in anger and eventually violence. This makes the Nigerian strategic environment susceptible to violence. Through a lens of prevention, it will be necessary to further reflect on how to build the resilience of societies and address legitimate social grievances to prevent crises, threats pose by bandit, maritime crime, oil bunkering, farmer-herder conflict etc, from escalating and conflicts turning violent. This requires a deeper understanding of the drivers of conflict and the potential role that the security sector can play, as either a source for peace or a cause of instability. The use of guns alone to tackle insecurity is not enough in any society.

In the last analysis, military solution should concurrently trigger governance solutions which should primarily designed to address the fundamental causes of poor governance as an effective tool that can address the root causes of insecurity, such as poverty, unemployment, marginalization and inequality. Good governance can ensure that the wealth of the nation is distributed equitably, create employment opportunities for youths and improve access to basic social services and improved their economic well-being. By doing so, it reduces the incentives and propensity for people to engage in criminal activities and equip them with skills that make them adequately productive members of society.

Efficient resource management that profoundly demonstrates accountability, transparency and probity can as well serve as a strategy of curtailing insecurity. Good governance ensures that resources are properly managed and that there is accountability in the use of resources. Ineffective governance breeds corruption and mismanagement, which leads to the diversion of funds to advance individual sentiment and interests, rather than the common good. This corrupt practice deprives citizens of luxury and resources that could be used to improve their standard of living; and it also erodes their trust in the government.

Strengthening institutions, including security institutions, to perform their duties effectively and efficiently is a step in the right direction. When security agencies are well trained, well equipped, and well-managed, their chances of success are high. They will be able to tackle insecurity without resorting to human rights abuses and extrajudicial killings. Civic engagement promote good governance, promotes civic engagement, civil societ participation, and active citizenship. Citizens who feel that they have a voice in governance, and who participate in the decision-making process have a sense of ownership of their society. They are more likely to cooperate with security agencies in providing useful information needed to address insecurity.

Socio-economic development again advances good governance. It is linked to socio-economic development. When the government engages in policies that promote economic growth and development, it leads to job creation, which will reduce poverty levels and help to

address inequality. This, in turn, translates to a reduction in the level of crime and insecurity that would have otherwise increased.

Conclusion

Good governance provides a consistent and strategic approach to tackling insecurity. It is necessary to address the root causes of insecurity and institute measures that would prevent citizens from resorting to violence. With good governance, there will be sustainable peacebuilding and security for all citizens. The new framework must be based on an understanding of the importance of and a commitment to further promote resilient, legitimate and inclusive national and local institutions, as well as inclusive participation in public processes. It must address institutional and governance bottlenecks to ensure transformative and sustainable development. It must encourage the identification and support of options and initiatives that enhance the collaborative capacities of empowered societies to find peaceful, effective and long-term solutions to national and local development challenges.

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MIGRATION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND NIGERIAN WOMEN: A PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Women world over are known to be the major victims of most adverse conditions. They also bear the most burden in society as mothers, catering for the family (men, and children). In Nigeria, women have been the worst hit any time there is climate change issue. They are seen going far distances to fetch drinking water, fire woods, and food for the families and their animals. Due to the distance they have to search for water and food coupled with the dangers involved, relocation becomes a better option for them. The study tries to find the link between the three variables namely, climate Change, migration and Women; the consequences these portend in society and proffers solutions for harmonious living. Qualitative data collection was employed with recommendations on the inclusion of women at the centre of the process of peace building; inclusion of women in leadership; protection of their rights and well-being and empowering them economically.

Keywords: Migration, Climate Change, Conflict, Woman.

Introduction

The idea that the consequences of climate change can be shaped by gendered realities of human societies are widely acknowledged in both researches by such scholars as Chindarkar

(2012), Hunter and David (2009), Djoudi and Brockhaus (2011); and United Nations (2013). Similarly, scholars have shown the consequences of the linkages of climate change, its impact on human mobility and migration (Conisbee and Simms, 2003; Renaud et al., 2011; Warner et al., 2010), from policy makers, as well as the general public and the media. As Borràs (2019) has noted, gender has long been argued to be core to mobility studies, where discussions have oscillated between understanding the impact of mobility on gender and the influence of gender on mobility. Indeed, every part of the world suffers one aspect of climate change abuse or the other. It could be Drought, Desertification, Ocean encroachment, Erosion, Flood, Earthquake, Landslide and others. This has great impact on the vulnerable ones in societies, mostly the women fold. Nigeria being one of the counties with different landscapes, experiences different kinds of climate disturbances at varied geo-political divide.

In Nigeria, there is desertification in the north, landslide and erosion in the east, and west, and ocean encroachment and earthquake in the south-south. When any of this happens in any area, it leaves many homeless, drives many away from their original habitations, makes them wonderers, and puts them to untold hardship as their farmlands will also be affected. It has always been a project on its own and then the farm lands where subsistent farmers depend for their living is another tragedy. Then coming to lose them to hazards of this nature is so devastating. They migrate to neighbouring communities for refuge. This is what Olivia referred as “force” migration. Many migrate outside the country to become refugees adding to the economic situation of such country. Where not well catered for, the refugees could be used to fuel conflicts at various quarters thereby bringing unrest to the host country. This can be unbridled as the women who mould the youths are also victim. One cannot give what he does not have. In this case the woman as a refugee not catered for does not have peace within her and cannot possibly converse for peace. As this great role of a woman is left undone, the society becomes gradually saturated with conflict issues. Not only that, as climate change hits harder, taken women and they are found relocating from their origin. Their education status is

affected somehow along the line, the health status too and there is that possibility that they will face abuses such as rape.

Many of the issues that impact on migration issues results from climate change. It has become a silent war humanity not only has to fight but contain with. Migration in itself is inevitable in human history. It has no negative consequence if planned for. However, in an emergency such as occasioned by the effect of climate change, victims are thrown to untold hardship. As can be seen from the foregoing, when it comes to climate and migration, the focus has been largely on women as the primary subject of inquiry providing examples from the Global South to make the case (Arora-Jonsson, 2011). Climate, gender and migration are often tied together to argue that women are more vulnerable when it comes to the negative impacts of migration due to their material differences in having the least capacity to migrate in the first place (Chindarkar, 2012; Djoudi and Brockhaus, 2011).

Migration is a global issue of concern and has been globally discussed at different quarters. As it is one of man's attribute, to migrate for safety and fend for a living, it is not peculiar to any particular country. People migrate due to displacement from one's country which could be caused by climate change concerns as drought, landslide, flood ocean encroachment (Iheoma-Hart, 2021), rejection from one's community, wars and other things which lead to the destruction of villages (Alobo & Obaji, 2016). For thirty years that the issue of internal displacement was placed on the international agenda (Mooney, 2005), international human rights and development agencies, including international governmental organisations, have become increasingly engaged with the policy level as this has become the most worrisome humanitarian issues (Ejiofor, Oni & Sejoro, 2017).

With the high rate of conflicts all over the world today and especially in the country, Nigeria receives lots of immigrants within its boarder states and some Nigerians as well emigrate for both safety and better opportunities. Thus, Alobo & Obaji (2016) posit that:

The presence of internally displaced persons within national territory means that their own government bears primary responsibility for meeting their protection and assistance needs but, in most cases, they are either unwilling or

unable to guarantee the basic rights and minimum needs of their internally displaced persons (Alobo & Obaji, 2016, 24).

There is a global regulation that countries take care of their IDPs, which is why they are left vulnerable and prone to all forms of abuse including rape by those who should rather protect them. While Akume, (2015) reports that refugees are catered for and “protected under international humanitarian law” by the international community, Yusuf, Lawan, & Maikud, (2019), on the other hand, report that “IDPs in Nigeria face insecurity and all forms of exploitation and abuse, including rape...” The fact is that the high rate of immigrants in countries has been overwhelming. As countries are not able to contain with their maintenance, these immigrants constitute problems to the country in order to survive. Women and their children suffer most. In country like Nigeria, women with their children remain vulnerable ones prone to attacks, abuses, rapes and kidnap.

Conceptualisation of Terms

Migration

Migration is the movement of persons between regions, state or countries. It is the process of changing one’s place of residence and permanently living in a region, state or country. Migration occurs when people leaving their place of residence move to live permanently in another area. People tends to move from a place of low opportunity, low safety to the place of higher opportunity and better safety (Patna University). Migration is a serious factor in population. Migration, at any time, causes large scale changes in the size and structure of population. It is influenced by social, cultural economic and political factors (Sociology Discussion, 2017). In Nigeria, Migrations occasioned by the climate change is obvious. We have families migrating from the north due to the devastating effect of drought and desertification. From the east due to erosion and landslide, from the west due to ocean encroachment, and from south due to tremor in order to seek a safer abode.

For the purpose of this study, migration caused by climate variation is forced migration. It comes to victims as emergency and could be so devastating hence the victims especially the women and other vulnerable ones need special assistance. Force migration does

not only include refugees and asylum seekers fleeing war or political repression but also people displaced from their homes by projects such as dams or roads and as a result of certain natural disasters (Living Reviews in Landscape Research online, 2010).

Climate Change

Climate change is a long-term change in the average weather patterns that have come to define Earth's local, regional and global climates (NASA Global Climate Change, 2021). The frequency and severity changes in extreme weather such as hurricanes, heatwaves, wildfires, droughts, floods and precipitation and others are the indicators of climate change. For study in focus, in Nigeria, drought, desertification, flood, ocean encroachment, landslide have been main indicators of climate change which more often than not has displaced many from their original abode and caused them to migrate to near or far places for safety.

Conflict

Conflict is the result of a disagreement between actors on the basis of perceived incompatible goals (Herbert, 2017). Conflicts are often analyzed at different levels namely: individual, group, community and national level. It is a condition in which one identifiable group of human beings (tribal, ethnic, culture, economic, political) is engaged in conscious opposition to one or more identifiable human groups due to pursuance of incompatible goals. Lewis A Coser said that conflict is an interaction involving human and not man and environment (Coser, 1956) but was faulted by analyst who insisted that conflict must embrace not only intergroup but interpersonal and intrapersonal phenomenon. This group of analysts maintained that society would not have to be concerned about conflict within the individual if it were not for the plausible assumption that there is a significant relation between conflicts within the psychic structure of the individual and conflict in the external social order which cannot be ignored (James E. Dougherty/ Robert L. Pfalzgraff, 1971). Conflict occasioned by climate change is usually hazardous and as was explained happens unexpectedly. One of the consequences is forced and uncontrolled migration which if not properly managed brings unrest to a society.

Gender and Gender Roles

Socially defined gender roles often position women and girls as stewards of the physical, economic, and cultural well-being of their communities. A woman has been described by many in different ways of perception. A woman is a mature adult female. However, for the purpose of this study, a woman is a being with female physiological parts. In other words, she is a grandmother, a mother, a wife, sister, cousin, aunt, and friend. In Proverbs 1: 20-33 and 8:1-9, wisdom is personified as a woman who has much to offer including enduring wealth and prosperity and life to anyone who would heed her words (Proverbs, 8:18). They are typically responsible for natural resource management and use. Women have a lot to offer the family, community and indeed the larger society, if they have the opportunity and the enabling environment is created for them to thrive.

However, when they find themselves in a situation that is very devastating, they cannot be productive and useful to the society as great agents of change they are. This could pose great danger to a society. During drought or following a natural disaster, women and girls may need to walk much farther to access clean water, adding to their workload, decreasing the time available for education, and increasing their risk of sexual violence (United Nations, 2020).

Literature Review

Women are grouped among the vulnerable group. The nature of women is such that they cannot stay without proffering solution to family issues however When climate change strikes, it behoves on them to try by every means to cater for families. Studies have shown that women possess “agency” though they might be doubly or triply disadvantaged, they are not helpless as they have the power to adapt and most times thrive in difficult situation (Lindsey, 2015). Women role in social conflict will bring about social development. According to a study by Inter-American Development Bank, Social development refers to a multi-dimensional, dynamic process that leads to sustainable improvements in the well-being of individuals, families, communities and society as a whole in a context of justice and equity. It is a process

that seeks to reduce poverty and inequality (IDB, 2004). Women and girl-child education is still far to be fully achieved. From UN report, 25% of women and girls between 25-34 will live in extreme poverty as most them lack access to social protection and public services that can enable them get out of poverty (United Nations, 2020).

As climate change strikes leading to migration, many activities are distorted education of women and families are hampered if not stopped. This is an indicator of looming danger. When children are out of school roaming about the streets, they can be conscripted into bad groups which is unhealthy to the society. Women are affected. They are the mothers who are also incapacitated and they with their girl-children are at risk of being sexually molested by miscreants created by the fall out of migration. Migrants can be slaves, refugees or job seeker or other things. A single theory cannot explain the process of migration (Theories of Migration, 2021). The expression experience in migration refers to the fact that different causes of migration will produce different outcomes observable from a sociological perspective. Migrants need care and services from the host population such as food, shelter, legal aid, health services. The psychology trauma of fleeing their homeland and leaving their family members behind can also complicate refugees' adjustment to their new environment.

Following the adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which commits member states to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions by the United Nations General Assembly in 25th September 2015 and special reference on asylum and migration, there were mentions on the recognition of positive contributions of migrants; empowerment of the vulnerable groups, including migrants; impact of humanitarian crises and forced displacement of people on development progress; access of the vulnerable to a long-life learning opportunities; eradication of all forms discrimination and violence against women and girls amongst others (UNHCR/Achilleas Zavallis, 2001-2021)

Theoretical Framework

In other to truly capture how women are affected by the environment and migration, we need to visit the Feminism theory as regards to the inequality in roles. Gender was first integrated

in migration studies and analysis in the 1970s and early 1980s with a conception of gender as an individual-level, static category determined at birth. This was referred to by Scholars as the ‘add women and stir’ approach (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000; and Indra 1999). This approach limited the empirical analysis of gender to an individual-level analysis of differences between women and men, using a binary variable of male versus female to measure gender. However, it was an improvement over studies that paid no attention to gender differences or studied only men and generalized those findings to all migrants.

As the field evolved into the mid- and late-1980s, feminist migration scholars shifted their analysis from studying women to studying gender, the difference being that instead of contrasting women to men, they focused on gender as a system of relations which was influenced by migration. The shift from studying women to studying gender is illustrated in the 1984 special issue of *International Migration Review*. While several articles maintain the focus on sex differences Boyd (1984); Kossoudji and Ranney (1984), many articles mark a transition to analyzing women’s experiences within a system of gender relations.

In her introduction to that issue, Morokvas´ic (1984) connects the decision to migrate and the post-migration experience with gendered systems of inequality in households, labor markets, and cultures. The theoretical frame that Morokvas´ic lays out for that issue continued to be utilized by feminist migration scholars through the remainder of the decade. Recently, there has been advances to the above and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2003:9) referred to gender ‘as a constitutive element of immigration’ which examines how ‘gender permeates a variety of practices, identities, and institutions implicated in immigration.’ This stage of gender and migration research has produced numerous and complex understandings of how gendered institutions and gender relations are reconstituted and transformed following migration through interactions of micro- and macro-level processes. The focus is explicitly on gender, not just women, so research focusing on men examines their experiences as gendered beings.

Gender, Mobility and Climate Change

A number of scholars including Dankelman (2010), Denton (2010), Djoudi and Brockhaus (2011), have established that climate change has gendered impacts. International policies note mass migration as an inevitable outcome of climate change impacts on livelihoods, although the extent of influence is difficult to establish (Boas et al., 2019). Gender is considered a fundamental variable in the decision-making process of migration (Miletto et al., 2017). Consequently, gender analysis and mainstreaming, particularly in climate change adaptation, has come to be recognized, so that gender inequalities are not exacerbated through institutions (Alston, 2014; Walby, 2005).

The failure to adapt line of inquiry considers mobility, particularly displacement and migration as a security issue at the destination, while the second conceptualization interprets migration as a form of risk reduction and adaptation strategy. The former inquiry is termed maximalist (see Morrissey, 2013) and alarmist (Gemenne et al., 2012) where climate becomes the prime factor forcing displacement and creating ‘environmental refugees’ (a contested term) due to failure to adapt to climate variability in situ. Such conceptualizations of the climate migration nexus give support to policies that curb migration or control the pattern (Boas et al., 2019; Kronlid, 2014). Predictions are made using migrant statistics to portray the magnanimity of the crisis-like situation. As a result of which single linear causation is assigned where failure to adapt and consequently migration becomes an outcome of a single biophysical stimulus, such as climate change or related extremities.

As a result, questions of how exactly climate change impacts are socially mediated (gender relations, socio-economic contexts; discourse on gender and migration) go unaddressed in an attempt to prove climate change as a cause of migration (Boas et al., 2019). In Nigeria, this gender divide is even more clear-cut. This is made worst by traditional and cultural biases against women.

Impact of Climate Emergency on the Female Gender

The impacts of climate change deepen existing gender inequalities. Due to socio-cultural norms, women may have less opportunity to influence household decision-making to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change, including on whether to leave home or stay. In rural regions where subsistence farming is common, women and girls are the primary providers of food, water and fuel. Climate change directly impacts resource scarcity, making these tasks increasingly difficult and dangerous. Women and girls are often prevented from pursuing education and economic opportunities.

Men are also exposed to structural vulnerabilities. For example, in Chad, farmers and pastoralists cannot easily find alternative livelihoods during times of drought, exposing them to recruitment by armed groups. Often, as the first in the family to be displaced, they face insecurity while seeking work and safety (United States Agency for International Development (2020). Indeed, women are more prone to gender-specific risks in disaster displacement contexts. Women displaced by disaster often face increased protection risks such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), exploitation and trafficking. Limited access to healthcare can also impede women's access to life-saving health services, including reproductive and mental health services.

As an example, more than 600 people died when Cyclone Idai struck Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe in mid-March 2019, followed only a few weeks later by cyclone Kenneth in the north of Mozambique, both affecting overall 2.2 million people. Thousands lost their homes and jobs and were relocated to safer sites further inland. UNHCR provided protection services, shelter and other relief items to those affected and continues to offer counselling and assessment for people still at risk – especially women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. Climate change is increasing risk related to weather hazards and the need for greater investment in prevention and preparedness for people living along the country's long coastline.

Challenges faced by women in climate change condition

The Nigerian woman like her counterparts in other parts of the world face severe migration and climate change challenges as can be seen from the following arguments. According to the UN, Women are often responsible for 50 to 80 percent of the world's food production, yet they own less than 20 percent of the land. Climate change-induced droughts, flooding, and disasters can cause crop failures, which can significantly increase women's workloads and threaten the food security of their families (United Nations Development Programme, 2014). It must also be pointed out that women are often denied a voice in making decisions about how to address environmental challenges facing their communities. Negative impacts of ecosystem deterioration and climate change are even greater for women who face discrimination due to other aspects of their identities. This includes women with disabilities, poor women, indigenous women, and transgender women.

Additionally, with regards to environmental challenges, the role of women as agents of change is often overlooked. This statement is not intended to negate the important role of men in environmental solutions. Sustainable environmental actions require the full engagement of all members of affected populations, and it is critical to understand and address local gender dynamics, which differ by context. However, due to the current reality of gender inequality across the globe, women are most often underfunded and underrepresented.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Women must be projected at the Centre of the solution: Since women are the most impacted when it comes to migration and climate crisis, they must be put at the forefront when addressing climate-related displacement. While progress on gender equality has been made, policies on planned relocation and displacement in the context of climate change and disaster risk are often insufficiently gender responsive. To reduce structural vulnerabilities and ensure displaced women's protection and wellbeing in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters, efforts are necessary to redress unequal access to resources across and within communities. At both the household and community levels, women's actions and

capacities are instrumental in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change (Arora-Jonsson, 2011). Against this backdrop, four related aspects should be at the core of gender-responsive approaches in the context of climate change and displacement.

Indeed, women across the globe are designing, implementing, and scaling up solutions to address the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, which are among the most urgent issues the world faces. Rising sea levels, changing weather patterns, and increasing pollution are threatening food security, causing loss of life and livelihoods, creating mass displacement, and exacerbating poverty and existing inequalities (United Nations, 2020). In Kenya's Rift Valley, for example, women are protecting biodiversity, improving food security, and helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions by contributing to the restoration of the Mau Forest. In the Peruvian Amazon, indigenous women are developing sustainable agriculture strategies to strengthen community self-sufficiency and protect their land from harmful extractive practices. These women, among many others, recognize that their actions are essential to improving not only their 'families and communities' lives, but also the health of the planet (<http://womenandclimate.org/> 2021).

Inclusion and leadership: Women are best placed to devise and drive responses that promote, inter alia, economic security and health in the context of disaster displacement. Women can play a central role to address inequalities in terms of both policies and day-to-day practices and thus contribute to resilient communities. The inclusion, meaningful participation and leadership of women's voices in climate research, adaptation and mitigation efforts is pivotal. Women's leadership and decision-making can strengthen preparedness and response in the context of disaster displacement (CARE, 2020).

Economic empowerment: Only 0.2% of all philanthropic giving is provided to women-led environmental programs. The promotion of women's economic empowerment is an effective way to promote gender equality, reduce vulnerabilities and improve the adaptive capacities of communities to climate impacts and in displacement situations.

Protection of rights: Protection of women’s and girls’ rights against systemic discrimination, gender inequality and gender-based violence is fundamental at all times and particularly in displacement situations, including those in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters, which exacerbate pre-existing risks of rights violations.

Well-being: As a multi-dimensional measure of human potential, well-being is part and parcel of gender equality. Well-being involves, among other things, the promotion of mental health, a sense of purpose and the capacity to manage social and environmental stressors. In situations of climate- and disaster-related displacement, the well-being of women contributes directly to life quality and dignity.

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ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND VOTER TURNOUT: EVIDENCE FROM NIGERIA'S 2023 GENERAL ELECTION

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ABSTRACT

This study contended that there is significant relationship between electoral violence during the 2023 presidential/national assembly elections and low voter turnout experienced during the governorship/state houses of assembly elections in Nigeria. To support this contention, the paper deployed Situational Action Theory (SAT) as its framework of analysis and generated primary data using Key Informant Interview (KII) while secondary data were collected from books, journals, newspapers, and online materials among others. Data collected via KII were analysed thematically using Atlas TI22. The study found that the major causes of violence during the 2023 general elections were election misconduct, desire for change, ethnicity, and malfunctioning of Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) machines. The study equally found that the turnout of voters during the governorship/state houses of assembly elections was very low due to electoral violence. The election also recorded attacks of people and their property leading to loss of lives in many parts of the country. Based on these findings, the study recommended that, electoral violence can be reduced by strengthening such institutions like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Also, there is an urgent need for governments at all levels to de-emphasis ethno-religious politics while focusing on issue-based politics in the country.

Keywords: Election, Electoral Violence, Voter Turnout, Independent National Electoral Commission and Politics.

Introduction

The political history of elections in Nigeria has been enmeshed with violence with its attendant consequences of loss of human lives, destruction of property, and low level of voter turnout among others. Generally, there can be elections without democracy, but there cannot be democracy without elections. Thus, election is the hallmark of democracy and the platform upon which peaceful transition to power is made possible. Despite the significant role that election plays in modern societies, its conduct in most plural societies such Nigeria is often affected with animosities and violence (Election Watch, 2013; Yusufu, 2021). Since the return of democracy in 1999, Nigeria's election has been fraught with violence involving political parties. During previous election cycles, partisan violence has escalated along ethnic and sectarian lines, resulting in multiple rounds of revenge killings.

Before the 2023 general elections, candidates and party leaders of the 18 political parties in September 2022 signed a peace accord committing to a peaceful campaign and elections. According to the chairman of the peace committee, Rtd Gen. Abdulsalani Abubakar and his members called on all political parties to refrain from using violent incitements and abusive words on opponents. Politicians as well as agents of the state have often been held responsible for promoting hate speeches against opponents and ethnic communities. In turn, the mobilization of armed militias, gangs and state security forces at the behest of local elite is intended to dampen voter turnout and maximize votes shared just as it happened on the 25th February during the presidential election in Nigeria (Christian, Andrea & Ladd, 2023).

Furthermore, before the elections in February and March 2023, members and candidates of APC and PDP, the two biggest political parties in the country were among the most frequent targets of violence. In one of the deadliest reported incidences, the PDP candidates for Ideato North and South Federal Constituency in Imo state was killed in his residence in Akokala community in January 2023. In some cases, women politicians were the victims of electoral violence. PDP leader in Abia state was among four people killed in Ohafia

Local Government Area (LGA) in March 2022. While a Labour Party (LP) leader in Kaura LGA of Kaduna state was murdered in November 2022 after gun men raided her house.

The enthusiasm displayed by Nigerians during the February 25, 2023 elections was unprecedented because of the change mantra the citizens yarned for. Unfortunately, the violence witnessed during the elections, adversely affected the turnout of voters during the March 18 gubernatorial and state houses of assembly elections. It is against this backdrop that this paper interrogated electoral violence in the February 25, 2023 presidential/national assembly elections and its effects on voter turnout during the March 18, 2023 governorship/state houses of assembly elections.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on Situational Action Theory (SAT) as its framework of analysis. SAT is a theory of crime developed in 2004 by Per-Olof Wikström. It attempts to explain what moves people to action such as crime by incorporating ecological, criminological, sociological, and behavioural sciences. SAT posits that crime is motivated by an individual's morality and the prevailing situation. People are responsible for their actions, but the causes of their actions are situational. Therefore, an act of crime is the product of a choice made after considering various alternative scenarios and stimuli presented by a particular situation. Crime is thus committed when it is perceived as a worthwhile and suitable alternative, given the prevailing situation, and/or when a person fails to apply moral restraint (Wikström, 2019).

The occurrence of crime, therefore, is the interaction between an individual's crime propensity and the setting's criminogenic incentive. A person with a low crime propensity due to a strong moral rectitude and/or the presence of government authority will be less susceptible to criminogenic incentives while a person with a high crime propensity is less likely to resist crime inducement (Wikström, 2019).

The following are the basic assumptions of SAT:

- i. People are essentially rule-guided creatures. They express their desires and respond to friction within the context of rule-guided choices;

- ii. Social order is based on shared rules of conduct. Patterns in human behaviour are based on rule-guided routines;
- iii. People are the source of their actions. People perceive, choose, and execute their actions;
- iv. The causes of an action are situational. An individual's particular perception of action alternatives, the process of choice, and execution of the action are triggered and guided by the relevant input from the person-environment interaction;
- v. Crimes are moral actions. Crimes are actions that break rules of conduct (stated in law) about what is the right or wrong thing to do in a particular circumstance (CAC, 2019).

When applied to violence during Nigeria's 2023 general elections, SAT expounds on the interaction between the person, setting, situation, and action. The individual (especially with a low crime propensity) is motivated by the situation to consider crime as a worthwhile alternate to realize the desired outcome. Because the individual is a product of the society they live in, they are likely to subscribe to society's norms. Following Wikström's postulations, crime results from an interaction between a person and the environment (Wikström, 2019).

Nigeria witnessed different degrees of violence during the 2023 general elections. The violence experienced was because of the situation the country was facing and is still facing. The economy is on its knees, there is high-level of youth unemployment and insecurity among others. Also, the various political parties and the politicians do not abide by the rules of the game as they criminally deploy the youths to help them manipulate the system by engaging in violent means to achieve their aim.

Review of Concepts

Election

According to Bello-imam (2015), elections are techniques where by citizens choose their representatives in accordance with mechanisms fixed by the Constitution or the established government of a state. In addition, an election provides the chance to decide who will govern

a particular society. According to Heywood (2013), elections are mechanisms through which individuals and groups of great political desire can be put in public offices to account and to be forced in introducing policies that reflect the general will of the people.

As Agbaje and Adejumobi (2006) rightly noted, elections are an expression of the sovereign will of the people that helps to confer legitimacy on political leadership. However, Akindele (2011) noted that elections are not just what happen on Election Day (ED), but are subsumed in the process that encompasses activities before, during and after elections. This process includes the legal and constitutional framework of elections; the registration of political parties; party campaigns; authenticity of voter register, campaign financing; the activities of security agents and government in power; independence or lack of electoral agencies; liberalism or otherwise of the political process in the country; and the independence of adjudicating bodies on elections (Adesola & John, 2014)

Electoral Violence

Electoral violence means different thing to different scholars. However, scholars are unanimous in their opinion that electoral violence is an attempt to destabilize the election process and also a physical attack on the election materials and the participants in election process. Past elections in Nigeria were characterised by both psychological and physical violence. Generally, violence involves the threat or use of physical force with the intention of injuring, killing and intimidating another person.

It also involves the destruction of property with a view to inflicting emotional or psychological injury and economic loss on another person. One of the major benefits of democracy is that it inhibits collective violence by providing mechanisms for non-violent competition for power and resolution of conflicts. Observance of the rule of law and respect for the courts are, however, necessary if these benefits are to be realised. Where citizens and government officials ignore the rule of law or disobey court orders, anarchy and violence are precipitated (Uwa & Ologunowa, 2013).

Review of Related Literature

Nigeria's Fourth Republic elicited concerns about history of electoral violence being repeated during the 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 general elections. Violence can also occur in party primaries where the parties are in the process of choosing candidate. Here, the party breaks into different groups in support of their aspirants. Prior to 2003 elections, Chief Bola Ige, a strong leader of Alliance for Democracy (AD) and Anthony General and Minister of Justice was assassinated. In Akwa Ibom, widespread protests trailed the July 19, 2002 PDP primaries in the state over allegation of imposition of candidates for local government council polls. In one of the LGAs in Cross River state, a lecturer at the University of Calabar, was arrested with firearms on the day of the PDP local government primaries on his way to the venue of the primaries to engage in a battle on behalf of his candidate who was contesting for the PDP chairmanship ticket (Jinadu, 2008).

NDI (2007) reported that in the build-up to the 2007 general elections, acts of violence were committed by supporters of competing factions within political parties, particularly during contests for party nominations, and against members of rival parties in the general elections. In Rivers State, on 17th of November 2006, two PDP members were shot dead in a gun battle during the PDP congress (Bello, 2015). The split between Chief Adedibu and Governor Ladoja of Oyo state resulted in the numerous clashes in the run-up to the 2007 elections, claiming several lives and destruction of valuable property.

European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM, 2019) reports show that that about 145 persons were killed in election-related violence, 84 of which were in the South-South zone. This figure is a comparable to that of the 2015 general elections where about 64 persons were allegedly killed in the campaign leading up to the February 23 general elections; 21 of these deaths occurred in the week following the postponement of the elections. No fewer than 35 persons were reported to have been killed between February 23 and March 9, 2019.

The 2011 election was reported to have been well-run relative to previous elections. Nonetheless, violence claimed 800 lives over three days in northern Nigeria and displaced

65,000 people, making the elections the most violent in the political history of Nigeria (Bekoe, 2011). In 2011 for instance, the results announced revealed that the PDP was victorious in both the presidential and gubernatorial elections in Kaduna state. This announcement sparked protests in the state by supporters of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and its presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari.

There were several cases of post-election violence in the 2019 elections. For instance, in Taraba north-eastern Nigeria, the Police Command confirmed the murder of five persons by political thugs a day after the presidential and national assembly elections in the state who were returning from election monitoring exercise (Alhassan, 2019). On a zone by zone basis, the total number of incidences and fatalities were recorded during the 2019 election period as presented by Situation Room (SR, 2019) as follows: north-central: 23 incidences and 111 persons killed, north-east: 16 incidences and 146 people killed, north west: 20 incidences, and 172 people killed, south east: 7 incidences and 14 persons killed, south-south: 59 incidences, and 120 killed; and south west: 36 incidences, 63 killed when the incidences and fatalities were reported on a state-by-state basis, Benue, Borno, Kaduna, Rivers and Zamfara states led the casualty figures.

Review of Empirical Studies

Shaapera and Yusufu (2019) sought to examine the implications of electoral violence on sustainable democracy in Nigeria using the 2019 general elections in Kogi state as a reference point. The study deployed an eclectic approach anchored on elite theory and Frustration-Aggression Theory (FAT). The study found that election rigging was the major factor responsible for electoral violence during the 2019 general elections in Kogi state. Based on these findings, the paper recommended, among others the provision of employment opportunities, poverty reduction, and discouraging election rigging through strict adherence to the use of electronic devices, electronic voting and intensive voter education as panacea to the problem of electoral violence in Nigeria.

Yusufu (2021) sought to examine the triggers of electoral violence in Nigeria and the implications for democratic consolidation in the country with specific reference to the 2019 governorship election in Kogi state. Findings of the study reveal that election rigging was the main trigger while ballot box snatching at gun-point by political thugs was the major nature of electoral violence during the 2019 governorship election in Kogi state. The study equally found the loss of human lives as the major implications of electoral violence on democratic consolidation in the country. Based on these findings, the paper recommended, among others that the government should come up with policies that will lead to the reduction of the premium placed on power politics that have nothing to offer to the people.

Research Methodology

The study is qualitative, and was carried out with using Key Informant Interview (KII). The choice of qualitative approach was to allow the participants speak freely based on their experiences on electoral violence and voter turnout during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The population of the study comprised registered voters, staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agents, and party members. Purposive sampling technique was used select the sample size. The justification for using purposive sampling technique was to allow participants express themselves based on their experiences regarding the issue in focus. The study also used secondary data collected from journals, books and online materials among others.

Data collected from the field survey were thematically analysed in line with the suggestions of Clark and Brown (2006) using the stages of thematic data analysis such as familiarization with the data, developing initial codes, developing themes, reviewing the themes and writing the report. Consequently, Atlas TI 22 was used to analyse primary data by developing codes, network, word cloud and three maps.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1.1: Demographic Data of the Informants

Code	Age (Years)	Occupation
R1	55	Public Servant
R2	42	Politician
R3	48	CSO

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1.1 shows the demographic data of the informants. Three informants were interviewed, their age ranges from 42-55 years old; their occupations include Public Servant, Politician and staff of a Civil Society Organization (CSO).

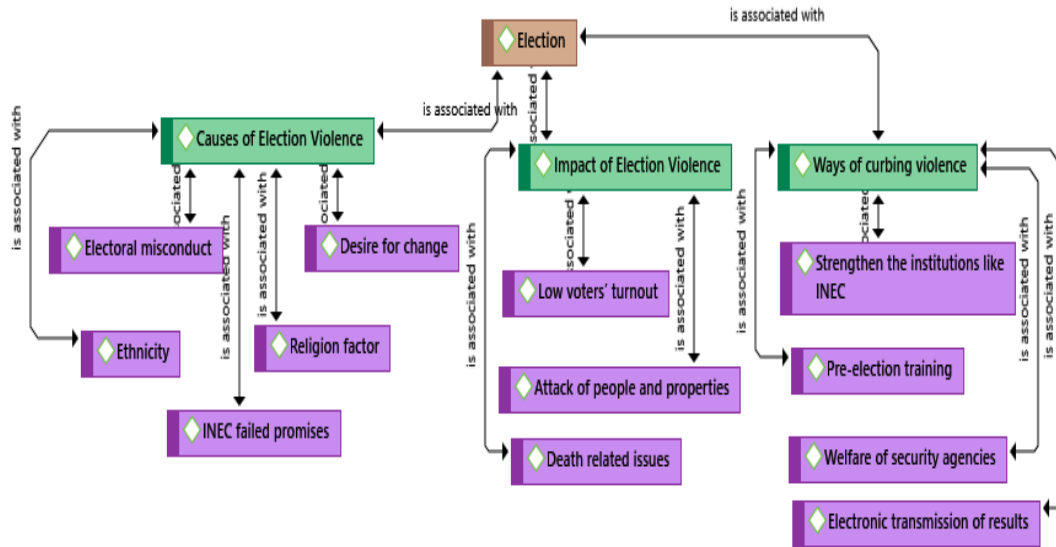
Figure 1.1: Word Frequency



Source: Field Work, 2023

Figure 1.1 shows word frequency which was used to developed themes and sub-themes.

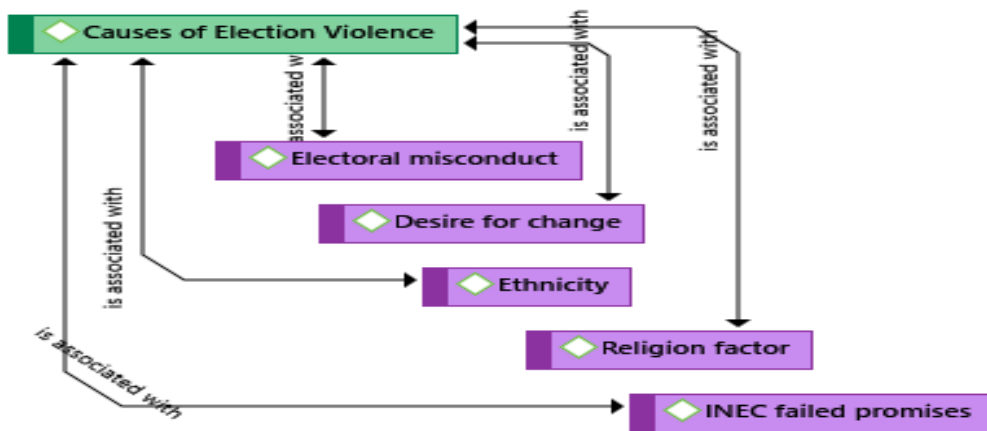
Figure 1.2: Concept Map



Source: Field Work, 2023

Figure 1.2 shows that three themes that were developed, namely the causes, the impacts and the ways of curbing electoral violence in Nigeria.

Figure 1.3: Causes of Election Violence in Nigeria



Source: Field Work, 2023

Figure 1.3 shows the causes of election violence in Nigeria, sub-themes such as electoral misconduct, desire for change, ethnicity, religion and INEC's failed promises as well as the malfunctioning of the Bimodal Voters' Accreditation System (BVAS) machines were developed.

Electoral Misconduct

Part of the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria is electoral misconduct; most of the candidate tried to conform to the electoral laws. However, there were accusations of electoral misconduct, especially by loyalists of Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC). It was a terrible situation in Kaduna state for instance, as an informant put it:

There were pockets of misunderstanding in some places. For example, there was an attack in one of the locations and another was a threat from the hoodlums where the elections did not take place due to some challenges. However, some measures were put in place by making these hoodlums to take under taken that there will be peace throughout the elections (R1).

Desire for change

Another informant added that:

Where I voted in Abia state, there was pockets of electoral violence during the presidential election, but the governorship election was highly violent. The reason is obvious; Abia state indigenes wanted a change by all means in the state. PDP having misruled the state for over 20 years, made the need for positive change imperative. So, violence during the election was expected (R2).

Ethnicity

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic but divided society; the country has three major ethnic groups with more than 360 sub-ethnic groups. In the words of a key informant:

I don't think that ethnicity played much role because the new party Labour Party gained good number of votes even though he was not from the zone. But that of the governorship candidates are from the zone. There is also the unwritten agreement of zoning and rotation (R1).

Similarly, an informant added that "Not at all. The Abians are Igbos, so the issue of ethnicity did not arise at all" (R2).

Religion as a Factor

In another development, religion also plays a vital role in Nigerian government and politics. A key informant also confirmed thus: “If there were any cases of religious colorations, it was not canvassed because the people focused more on the party and individuals’ track records (R1).

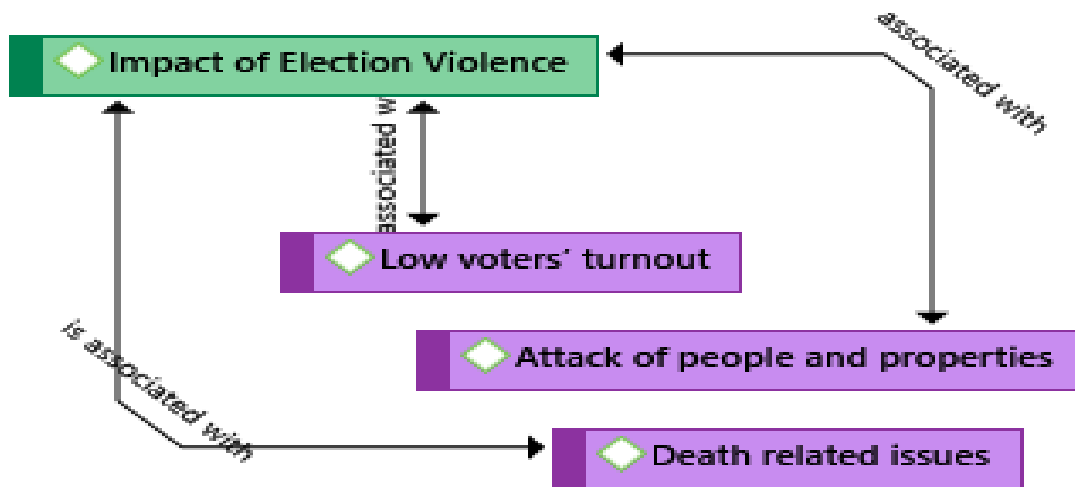
INEC failed promises as well as malfunctioning of the BVAS

The election also recorded cases of malfunctioning of BVAS machines which caused crises in many parts of the country. In the course of the interviews conducted, it was observed that:-

Not in Cross River state. In general, I can’t say. But the malfunctioning of the BVAS machines and poor network which resulted to late transmission of election results affected the outcomes of the election. This resulted to the electorate being pushed to the extreme which would have led to violence but it was avoided (R1)

Similarly, another informant said that “I think INEC failed promises on BVAS really caused violence in many parts of the country, especially Lagos state” (R2).

Figure 1.4: Impact of Election Violence on Voters turnout in Nigeria



Source: Field Work (2023)

Figure 1.4 shows the impacts of violence during election include Low voters' turnout, attacks on people and property and injuries/death of some people.

Low voter turnout

A major result of electoral violence was low voters' turnout. A key informant revealed that:

The turnout was very bad. In River state for instance, the state has a sitting governor from APC even though the state was PDP. The turnout of voters was very low. The turnout was very low during the governorship and state houses of assembly elections (R1).

Another informant observed that: "Voter turnout was relatively high during the governorship/state houses of assembly elections, but not like the presidential election (R2).

However, another informant observed that: "The turnout of voters was impressive during the presidential and national assembly election" (R3)

Attack on people and property

The election also recorded attacks on people and property, a key informant revealed that:

From report, the governorship elections had few cases of violence incidence. This is because one of the candidates came from the zone. The people did not want the candidate from the zone to lose to the opposition. So this resulted to violence (R1).

Another informant said that "I monitored the two elections. I believe the governorship election had higher incidences of electoral violence than the presidential election in most parts of the country" (R3).

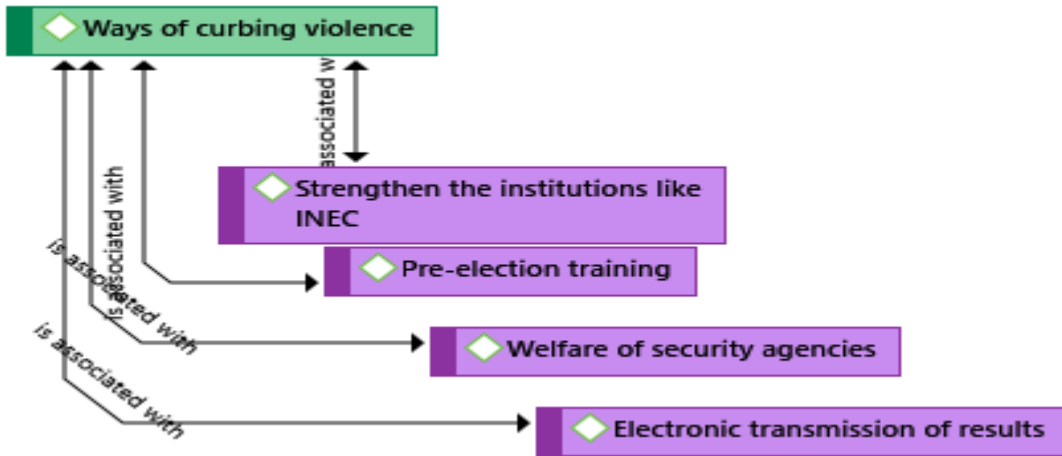
Injuries/Death to Voters

As a result of electoral violence, there were many cases of bodily injuries and deaths as observed by an informant:

I want to first commend the Nigeria Police for the election. There were records of about 20 deaths caused by electoral violence compared to other years where there are 100 or more persons confirmed dead as a result of violence. This is to say that there was a reduction in electoral violence (R1).

Similarly, another informant said "The enthusiasm shown during the presidential election diminished after the release of the doctored result. I'm sure you have seen the report of European Union (EU) and those of other Civil Society Organizations" (R3).

Figure 1.5: Ways of curbing violence



Source: Field Work (2023).

Strengthen the institutions like INEC / independent umpire

Some informants said that there can be an independent umpire as they put it:

First, we need a real electoral umpire. This last election showed clearly how biased INEC was. The politicians and political parties should play by the rules. Our electoral rules should be amended to capture swearing in after appeal court tribunal has given verdict to the real winner of the election. Finally, the electronic voting should be improved to allow people vote from any part of the country no matter where such person registered for (R2).

Another informant said that:

The country still has a long way to go. If the politicians decide that things should be done rightly; it will. I observed that strong individuals are stronger than the institutions, until that changes, it will be difficult to have any meaningful change (R3).

Another informant put it that “I will therefore recommend that the country should strengthen the institutions like INEC and others” (R3).

Pre-election training

Another informant said “Pre-election training, deployment of the officers with their basic allowances” (R1).

Welfare of security agencies

Also, the informant suggested that welfare of security agencies as he put it:

Force management gave out specific uniforms for police officers outside the regular uniforms to distinguish between the real and fake police officers. This helped to fish out hoodlums who disguised as police officers. It also prevented ballot box snatching (R1).

Another informant said that: “Deployment usually happens two days before the election. So the police officers need energy to be able to carry out their daily duty. This means that police officers’ welfare is paramount for optimal performance” (R3)

Electronic transmission of election results

Finally, an informant suggested electronic transmission of election results as he put it “It is equally advisable that electronic transmission of election results should be employed. This will help people to have the confidence to come out to vote” (R2)

Research Findings

From the analysis of data, the study made the following findings:

- i. Part of the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria is electoral misconduct.
- ii. Another cause of electoral violence is the desire for change.
- iii. The finding also shows that ethnicity played much role in triggering electoral violence.
- iv. The finding equally shows that religion did not play much role because the people focused more on the parties and individuals’ track records.
- v. The general election also recorded cases of malfunctioning of the BVAS machines which caused crises in many parts of Nigeria.
- vi. The finding further shows that the turnout was low due to election violence.
- vii. The general election also recorded violent attacks on people and their property.
- viii. The finding further shows that there were many cases of deaths.
- ix. The finding equally shows that electoral violence can be reduced by strengthening the of institutions like INEC among others.

- x. It was equally recommended that electronic transmission of election results should be employed

Conclusion and Recommendations

Obviously, elections conducted by INEC since the reintroduction of democracy in 1999 has always been characterized by one form of electoral violence or the other. Therefore, the 2023 general elections saw different magnitude of electoral violence both in the presidential/national assembly and governorship/states houses of assembly elections. The European Observation Mission that monitored the general election indicted INEC, political parties and politicians among other stakeholders for the electoral violence that occurred before, during and after the general elections, which led to the death of over 90 persons across the country. Furthermore, the Electoral Act of 2022 was not followed as promised by INEC before the general elections. BVAS could not function effectively in the uploading of the presidential election results on the INEC Results Viewing (IREV) portal in real time, but was able to upload poll results during the national assembly elections that were conducted on the same day.

Based on these findings, the paper makes the following recommendations:

- i. There is need to strengthen institutions like INEC and security agencies so as to reduce the incidences of violence during and after elections
- ii. Governments at all levels and institutions like INEC should de-emphasize ethnic politics in the country and focuses more on issue-base politics.
- iii. Any technology adopted for future elections should be able to perform optimally so as to reduce the incidences of electoral violence during the elections as experienced in the 2023 general elections, where BVAS malfunctioned in many parts of the country.
- iv. Security agents that participate in the elections should be provided with their welfare before going into the election. This is because the terrain of their operations differs.

These security agencies need enough energy and strength to perform their job professionally and maximally.

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COMPREHENSIVE INSIGHTS INTO MARITAL SATISFACTION: UNRAVELING THE MARITAL CHARACTERISTICS TAPESTRY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates marital satisfaction to untangle the complex tapestry spun by different matrimonial characteristics. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 498 randomly selected participants (249 husband-wife dyads) residing in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State, Northwestern Nigeria. Data were collected using a standardized structured interviewer-administered electronic questionnaire and were analyzed using the IBM SPSS version 23 computer statistical package. Respondents in polygamous marriage were two times less likely to have marital satisfaction than those in monogamous marriage (aOR = 0.478; 95%CI: 0.257 – 0.888; $p = 0.020$). Respondents who were not compatible with their spouse regarding sex were two times less likely to have marital satisfaction than those who were compatible with their spouses regarding sex (aOR = 0.463; 95%CI: 0.242 – 0.884; $p = 0.020$). Respondents who mainly had cordial communication with their spouses in the past six months were about four times more likely to have marital satisfaction than those who had mostly abusive contact with their spouses (aOR = 3.941; 95%CI: 2.326 – 6.678; $p < 0.001$). Respondents whose spouses were primarily loving and caring in the past six months were three times more likely to have marital satisfaction than those whose spouses were mainly hostile (aOR = 3.260; 95%CI: 1.532 – 6.940; $p = 0.002$). Therapists, marriage counsellors, educators and other stakeholders involved in marital issues should consider these factors in the design and implementation of their programs.

Keywords: Marital satisfaction, Marital characteristics tapestry, Couples

Introduction

As the cornerstone institution of society, marriage is essential to developing societal harmony and personal well-being. The idea of satisfaction is a crucial yardstick regarding the quality and fulfilment that couples experience in their marriages. For a considerable time, academics have acknowledged the complex relationship between marital satisfaction and various components inside the marriage (Unkule, 2023; Brown, 2022). The field of marital satisfaction research has changed significantly throughout the years, mirroring society's shifting expectations, values, and conventions. Early research frequently considered individual factors like emotional intimacy, communication styles, and conflict resolution separately. But more recently, academics have realised that a more comprehensive strategy is required since marital contentment results from many interrelated factors. Marital satisfaction is believed to be a complex phenomenon influenced by many factors that extend beyond individual behaviours to encompass broader contextual variables (Nunes et al., 2022; Kerney & Bradbury, 2020).

Marriage as a dynamic system impacted by many interrelated aspects has gained more and more acceptance among researchers in the past few decades. Research that recognises the influence of outside factors on the internal dynamics of the marriage relationship highlights the significance of looking at marital satisfaction within a larger ecological framework. This change in outlook corresponds with the realisation that marital contentment is a dynamic process driven by various factors rather than a static condition (Abreu-Afonso, et al., 2022; Persin, 2018; Hull et. al., 2010).

By exploring the complex network of marital traits that enhance couples' overall well-being, this study takes a holistic approach to understanding marital satisfaction. A "marital characteristics tapestry" is a concept that captures the variety and interdependence of factors influencing a married person's experience. It is acknowledged that every strand in this intricate arrangement symbolises a distinct facet of the marital bond, and a thorough analysis is the only way to fully comprehend the complex dynamics involved.

Why is it so essential to untangle the marital characteristics tapestry fully? Modern marriages' more dynamic and diversified nature is the key to the solution. Traditional marriage models cannot adequately reflect the intricacy of relationships in the present period. Finding the primary factors influencing marital satisfaction becomes essential as couples deal with many options and changing social norms.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore patterns among diverse marital characteristics to discern relationships contributing to overall marital satisfaction.
2. Examine the predictive value of specific marital characteristics in determining marital satisfaction.
3. Make recommendations to therapists, marriage counsellors, educators and other stakeholders involved in marital issues on improving marital satisfaction through focused initiatives and support networks.

To these ends, we speculate that a thorough analysis of marital traits will uncover complex relationships and offer insightful information about the variables affecting marital satisfaction. In our investigation, we hope to unearth strengths and challenges in the fabric of marital characteristics and provide a comprehensive viewpoint that adds to the continuing conversation regarding marital satisfaction in modern culture.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and the Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) as theoretical frameworks to thoroughly dissect the complex web of marital traits and their combined influence on satisfaction. According to this theoretical viewpoint, people are part of hierarchical systems, each impacting their development and behaviour (Guy-Evans, 2023; Crawford, 2020). The microsystem encompasses the local environment in which people interact directly. It is followed by the mesosystem, eco-system, and macrosystem, representing greater societal and

cultural effects. Using this paradigm to investigate marital pleasure, we hope to understand how different marital traits function within these nested systems, influencing the intricate dynamics of married relationships (Guy-Evans, 2023; Crawford, 2020).

The ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) supports the integrated methodology of our research by recognising that marital satisfaction is a complex phenomenon that is not only an individual or interpersonal phenomenon but also closely related to the larger ecological setting. The immediate marital environment, including shared living quarters, communication styles, and private elements like sleeping arrangements and sexual compatibility, are all included in the microsystem (Guy-Evans, 2023; Crawford, 2020). The mesosystem investigates how several marital traits interact inside a marriage, acknowledging that the interaction of variables affects overall satisfaction. The ecosystem recognises the impact of outside factors on marital dynamics and includes things like economic circumstances, cultural beliefs, and societal conventions. Lastly, the macrosystem considers larger cultural and societal circumstances, acknowledging the impact of overarching ideas, such as family size, kind of marriage, and shared religious beliefs (Guy-Evans, 2023; Crawford, 2020).

The Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) offers an additional perspective for analysing the dynamics of marital satisfaction in addition to the Ecological Systems Theory. According to the Social Exchange Theory, people get into relationships after carefully weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each option. This theoretical approach is based on reciprocity and the expectation of fair transactions. When Social Exchange Theory is applied to marital satisfaction, it becomes possible to investigate how couples assess their marriage's many aspects and experiences concerning the satisfaction they receive (Nickerson, 2023).

Regarding a happy marriage, partners constantly trade resources—be they material, financial, or emotional. The kind of relationship, length of marriage, and shared experiences like having children and living arrangements are examples of resources that support the

general equilibrium in the marriage trade. Applying Social Exchange Theory enables us to investigate how couples manage the advantages and disadvantages of various marital traits. The hypothesis might shed light on how couples balance the benefits of effective communication with the possible drawbacks of having different levels of sexual compatibility. By integrating Social Exchange Theory and Ecological Systems Theory, our research attempts to thoroughly grasp the complex dynamics that influence marital satisfaction. The Ecological Systems Theory emphasises the interdependence of individual, interpersonal, and social elements and offers a comprehensive framework for thinking about the many influences on marital fulfilment. In addition, Social Exchange Theory provides a framework for analysing the constant trade-offs that occur in married partnerships, focusing on how partners assess and compromise over the different aspects that lead to contentment.

Empirical Review

Due to its significant consequences for both societal harmony and individual well-being, the study of marital satisfaction has consistently piqued the interest of academics from various fields. Early studies ignored the complex interactions of many components that define marital satisfaction in favour of concentrating only on discrete aspects like communication styles, conflict resolution, and emotional intimacy. However, a paradigm movement towards a more holistic perspective has been observed in contemporary research, which acknowledges that marital satisfaction is a complex phenomenon influenced by a wide range of linked features (Karney & Bradbury, 2020; Oghihara & Uchida, 2014).

Karney & Bradbury (2020) introduced a significant approach that placed marital satisfaction in the larger ecological context in their groundbreaking work. They contended that studying marital dynamics requires investigating elements other than the couples' direct interpersonal interactions. The ecological model developed by Karney and Bradbury (2020) emphasizes how crucial it is to consider outside influences when attempting to comprehend the intricacies of marriage, including cultural norms, economic conditions, and societal

expectations. This viewpoint is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which stresses the interconnected networks of influence that surround individuals.

Whether a couple is married or cohabiting, one crucial factor in determining marital satisfaction is the nature of the connection. Studies conducted in 2006 by Stanley et al. revealed differences in marital satisfaction between married and cohabiting couples. They discovered that, in comparison to their cohabiting peers, married couples generally reported higher levels of commitment and satisfaction. Marriage's formal commitment, which frequently results in increased stability and investment in the relationship, could cause this difference. When attempting to piece together the qualities of marriage, this research emphasizes the importance of considering relationship type as a crucial factor.

Religion often plays a significant role in shaping marital dynamics, providing a shared foundation of values and beliefs. Previous studies have highlighted the positive association between shared religious beliefs and marital satisfaction. Couples who share a religious affiliation often experience a sense of unity and shared purpose, contributing to greater satisfaction in the marriage relationship (Aman et al., 2019; Mahoney et al., 2001). Exploring the role of shared religious beliefs within the marital characteristics tapestry is crucial for understanding how spiritual compatibility influences the overall well-being of couples.

The living arrangements of couples and their sources of financial support are integral components of the marital characteristics tapestry. Living with children and extended family members may introduce additional stressors and require intricate navigational strategies. Research has emphasized the impact of economic stress on marital quality, indicating that financial strain is a significant predictor of dissatisfaction (Neppel et al., 2016; Conger et al., 2002). Furthermore, the distribution of financial responsibilities within the marital unit can influence power dynamics and satisfaction. Examining how living arrangements and financial responsibilities interact offers valuable insights into the contextual factors shaping marital satisfaction.

Effective communication is widely acknowledged as a cornerstone of marital satisfaction. Research by Gottman and Notarius (2002) highlighted the significance of communication patterns in predicting matrimonial outcomes. Couples with positive communication, emotional responsiveness, and effective conflict resolution tend to report higher satisfaction levels. Conversely, abusive communication patterns can erode relationship quality over time. It is, therefore, crucial to comprehend the subtleties of communication within the fabric of marital characteristics to unravel the strategies that help couples overcome obstacles and promote marital satisfaction.

Methodology

Study Area and Population

A cross-sectional study was conducted among couples residing in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State, Northwestern Nigeria. The sample size was statistically estimated at 498, based on which 249 husband-wife dyads were selected by a stratified two-stage systematic sampling technique with enumeration areas (EAs) as primary sampling units. All couples who have lived in Sokoto metropolis for at least one year and consented to participate in the survey were considered eligible for recruitment into the study. At the same time, those who were too ill to participate were excluded.

Data Collection

A standardized structured interviewer-administered electronic questionnaire was used to collect data on the participants' marital characteristics and the quality of marital relationships. The questions on the quality of marital relationships were adapted from the "Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale." It has been demonstrated to have favourable psychometric properties in earlier investigations (Maoufizadeh et al., 2020; Busby et al., 1995; Crane et al., 2000). Couple dyadic adjustment measures the degree to which couples are satisfied with their relationship in domains such as cohesion, satisfaction, consensus, and affective expression, with high levels of dyadic adjustment reflecting better adjustment and better quality of couple relationship (Robles et al., 2014; Brandão et al., 2020).

Ten research assistants comprising Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs) were recruited to collect data. They were trained for two days, lasting two hours each, on the study's objectives, use of the research instruments, data collection with the Open Data Kit (ODK), and interpersonal communication skills. The questionnaire was pretested among 25 purposively selected couples in one of the Enumeration Areas (EAs) not chosen for the study to check for the appropriateness of the survey instrument and to familiarize the research assistants with its use. Appropriate modifications were made to the questionnaire based on the observations made during the pretesting.

Data Analysis

Completed forms were downloaded from the principal researcher's Ona server as an SPSS file and analyzed using the IBM® SPSS version 23 statistical computer package. Exploratory data analysis was done. The procedure involves running descriptive statistics of all variables and using graphs like histograms and box plots (for continuous variables) to identify missing values, outliers, and distribution/ skewness of the data.

Scoring and grading of responses on the quality of the marital relationship

The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) consisted of 14 items in which the respondent is required to rate their agreement or otherwise with each of them on some aspects of their relationship on a 5 of 6 points scale and assessed seven dimensions of couple relationships under three primary subscales including consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion (Crane et al., 2000). The score for each item on questions 1 to 6 ranged from 0-5 on the Likert scale (Always Disagree = 0; Almost Always Disagree = 1; Frequently Disagree = 2; Occasionally Agree = 3; Almost Always Agree = 4; Always Agree = 5). The score for each item on questions 7 to 10 ranged from 0-5 on the Likert scale as follows: All the time = 0; Most of the time = 1; More often than not = 2; Occasionally = 3; Rarely = 4, and Never = 5. The score for the item on question 11 ranged from 0 to 4 on the Likert scale (Never = 0, Rarely = 1; Occasionally = 2; Almost Every Day = 3, Every day = 4). While the score for each item on questions 12 to 14

ranged from 0-5 on the Likert scale (Never = 0; Less than once a month = 1; Once / twice a month = 2; Once / twice a week = 3; Once a day = 4; More often = 5).

The scores for the three subscales were computed as follows (Crane et al., 2000):

- Consensus in decision making (questions 3 and 6), values (questions 1 and 5), and affection (questions 2 and 4) with total scores ranging from 0 to 30
- Satisfaction in the relationship in terms of stability (questions 7 and 9) and conflict regulation (questions 8 and 10) with total scores ranging from 0 to 20; and
- Cohesion was demonstrated through activities (questions 11 and 13) and discussion (questions 12 and 14), with total scores ranging from 0 to 19

The higher the scores on any of these subscales, the greater the stability and satisfaction in the relationship, while lower scores indicate distress. The total score on the RDAS ranged from 0 to 69, and high scores indicate greater relationship satisfaction, while lower scores indicate more significant relationship distress. Also, those with total scores ≤ 47 were graded as having marital/relationship distress, while total scores ≥ 48 indicate non-distress (Crane et al., 2000).

Quantitative variables were summarized using mean and standard deviation, while qualitative variables were summarized using frequencies and percentages. Pearson chi-square analysis was used to test for associations between the respondents' marital characteristics and their experience of marital satisfaction. Binomial logistic regression analysis was used to determine the marital characteristics variables that predict marital satisfaction. All levels of statistical significance were set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Table 1: Respondents' marital characteristics

Marital variables	Frequency (n = 498)	Percentage
Type of relationship with the spouse		
Married	489	98.2
Cohabiting	9	1.8
Duration of marriage/cohabitation (years)		
1 – 5	148	29.7
6 – 10	132	26.5
11 – 15	80	16.1
16 – 20	31	6.2
≥ 21	107	21.5
Type of marriage		
Monogamous	380	76.3
Polygamous	118	23.7
Sleeping arrangement with spouse		
Mostly sleep together on the same bed	392	78.7
Mostly sleep in separate rooms	106	21.3
Compatible with the spouse concerning sex		
Yes	436	87.6
No	62	12.4
Reason for not being compatible with the spouse concerning sex (n = 62)		
My spouse's sexual desire is by far above mine	39	62.9
My spouse's sexual desire is by far below mine	23	37.1
Had experienced a delay in having a child in this marriage		
Yes	177	35.5
No	321	64.5
Number of children		
None	31	6.2
1 – 5	341	68.5
6 - 10	115	23.1
11 – 15	11	2.2
The living arrangement in the home		
Lives with spouse and child or children	386	77.5
Lives with spouse, children, and extended family members	112	22.5

Source(s) of the financial needs of the family		
Only me	123	24.7
My spouse only	114	22.9
My spouse and I jointly contribute	261	52.4
Monthly income sufficient to take care of family needs		
Yes	273	54.8
No	225	45.2
Communication with the spouse in the past six months		
Mostly abusive	130	26.1
Mostly cordial	368	73.9
Spouse's action towards you in the past six months		
Mostly hostile	49	9.8
Mostly loving and caring	449	90.2

Almost all 489 (98.2%) of the 498 respondents were legally married, and a more significant proportion of respondents (29.7%) have been married for 1-5 years. The majority of respondents were in a monogamous marriage setting (76.3%), mostly slept together with their spouses on the same bed (78.7%), and were compatible with their spouses concerning sex (87.6%). Whereas about a third of respondents (35.5%) had experienced a delay in having a child, the majority of them had 1 -5 children (68.5%) and lived with their spouses and children (77.5%).

The majority of respondents jointly contributed with their spouses for the financial needs of their families (52.4%) and reported that their monthly income was sufficient to take care of their needs (54.8%). Most respondents (73.9%) said their communication with their spouses has been primarily cordial in the past six months. Most (90.2%) reported that their spouses' actions towards them have been mainly loving and caring in the past six months [Table 2].

Quality of Marital Relationship Among Respondents

Table 2: Quality of marital relationship among respondents

Variables		
Quality of marital relationship	Frequency (n = 498)	Percentage
Marital satisfaction	374	75.1
Marital distress	124	24.9
Marital relationship subscales	Mean score	Standard deviation
Consensus (in decision-making, values, and affection)	25.22	4.11
Satisfaction in the relationship (concerning stability and conflict regulation)	15.82	2.81
Cohesion (as demonstrated through activities and discussion)	9.93	4.58

The majority, 374 (75.1%) of the 498 respondents, had marital satisfaction, while about a quarter (24.9%) experienced marital distress. The respondents enjoyed the highest stability and satisfaction in their marriage in having a consensus in decision-making, values, and affection (mean score = 25.22 ± 4.11), followed by being satisfied in their relationship concerning stability and conflict regulation (mean score = 15.82 ± 2.81), while the lowest strength was in cohesion as demonstrated through activities and discussion (mean score = 9.93 ± 4.58) [Table 3].

Table 3: Association between marital characteristics and marital satisfaction among respondents

Marital variables	Marital satisfaction		Test of significance
	No Freq. (%)	Yes Freq. (%)	
Type of relationship with the spouse			
Married	122 (24.9)	367 (75.1)	$\chi^2 = 0.035$, p = 0.851
Cohabiting	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	
Duration of marriage/cohabitation (years)			
1 – 5	23 (15.5)	125 (84.5)	$\chi^2 = 10.946$, p = 0.004*
6 – 20	74 (30.5)	169 (69.5)	
≥ 21	27 (25.2)	80 (74.8)	
Type of marriage			
Monogamous	71 (18.7)	309 (81.3)	$\chi^2 = 33.131$, p < 0.001*
Polygamous	53 (44.9)	65 (55.1)	
Sleeping arrangement with the spouse			
Mostly sleep together on the same bed	78 (19.9)	314 (80.1)	$\chi^2 = 24.368$, p < 0.001*
Mostly sleep in separate rooms	46 (43.4)	60 (56.6)	
Compatible with the spouse concerning sex			
Yes	90 (20.6)	346 (79.4)	$\chi^2 = 33.945$, p < 0.001*
No	34 (54.8)	28 (45.2)	
Had experienced a delay in having a child in this marriage			
Yes	51 (28.8)	126 (71.2)	$\chi^2 = 2.250$, p = 0.134
No	73 (22.7)	248 (77.3)	
Number of children			
None	6 (19.4)	25 (80.6)	$\chi^2 = 1.551$, p = 0.461
1 – 5	82 (24.0)	259 (76.0)	
6 – 15			
The living arrangements in the home			
Lives with spouse and child or children	87 (22.5)	299 (77.5)	$\chi^2 = 5.115$, p = 0.024*
Lives with spouse, children, and extended family members	37 (33.0)	75 (67.0)	

Source(s) of the financial needs of the family			
Only me	38 (30.9)	85 (69.1)	$\chi^2 = 6.307,$ $p = 0.043^*$
My spouse only	33 (28.9)	81 (71.1)	
My spouse and I jointly contribute	53 (20.3)	208 (79.7)	
Monthly income sufficient to take care of family needs			
Yes	50 (18.3)	223 (81.7)	$\chi^2 = 14.010,$ $p < 0.001^*$
No	74 (32.9)	151 (67.1)	
Communication with the spouse in the past six months			
Mostly abusive	67 (51.5)	63 (48.5)	$\chi^2 = 66.761,$ $p < 0.001^*$
Mostly cordial	57 (15.5)	311 (84.5)	
Spouse's action towards you in the past six months			
Mostly hostile	31 (63.3)	18 (36.7)	$\chi^2 = 42.779,$ $p < 0.001$
Mostly loving and caring	93 (20.7)	356 (79.3)	

□2= Pearson's chi-square; *Statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

The marital variables that were associated with marital satisfaction were being newly married, being in a monogamous marriage, sleeping together with spouse on the same bed, being compatible with the spouse with regards to sex, living with spouse and child or children, contributing jointly with the spouse for the upkeep of the family, monthly income being sufficient to take care of the family needs, having cordial communication with the spouse, and spouse being loving and caring (Table 4).

Table 4: Marital characteristics that predicted marital satisfaction among respondents

Marital variables	Adjusted Odds Ratio (aOR)	95% Confidence Interval (CI)		p-value
		Lower	Upper	
Type of relationship with the spouse (Married versus Cohabiting**)	2.391	0.301	19.018	0.410
Duration of marriage/cohabitation (years) (1-5 versus 6-15**)	0.758	0.497	1.157	0.200
Type of marriage setting (Monogamous versus Polygamous**)	0.478	0.257	0.888	0.020*
Sleeping arrangement with the spouse (Mostly sleep together on the same bed versus Mostly sleep in separate rooms**)	0.740	0.400	1.367	0.336
Compatible with the spouse concerning sex (Yes versus No**)	0.463	0.242	0.884	0.020*
Had experienced a delay in having a child in this marriage (Yes versus No**)	1.264	0.773	2.069	0.351
Number of children (1-5 versus 6-15**)	1.452	0.852	2.474	0.171
The living arrangement in the home (Lives with spouse and child or children versus Lives with the spouse, children, and extended family members**)	1.212	0.664	2.212	0.531
Source(s) of the financial needs of the family (Only me or My spouse only versus My spouse and I jointly contribute**)	1.019	0.752	1.381	0.905
Monthly income sufficient to take care of family needs (Yes versus No**)	0.857	0.520	1.413	0.544
Communication with the spouse in the past six months (Mostly abusive versus Mostly cordial**)	3.941	2.326	6.678	< 0.001*
Spouse's action towards you in the past six months (Mostly hostile versus Mostly loving and caring**)	3.260	1.532	6.940	0.002*

**Reference group; *Statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

The marital variables that predicted marital satisfaction among the respondents were being in a monogamous marriage, being compatible with the spouse regarding sex, having mostly cordial communication with the spouse in the past six months, and spouses being mostly loving and caring in the past six months. Respondents in polygamous marriage were two times less likely to have marital satisfaction than those in monogamous marriage (aOR = 0.478; 95%CI: 0.257 – 0.888; $p = 0.020$). Respondents who were not compatible with their spouse regarding sex were two times less likely to have marital satisfaction than those who were compatible with their spouses regarding sex (aOR = 0.463; 95%CI: 0.242 – 0.884; $p = 0.020$). Respondents who mainly had cordial communication with their spouses in the past six months were about four times more likely to have marital satisfaction than those who had mostly abusive contact with their spouses (aOR = 3.941; 95%CI: 2.326 – 6.678; $p < 0.001$). Respondents whose spouses were primarily loving and caring in the past six months were three times more likely to have marital satisfaction than those whose spouses were mainly hostile (aOR = 3.260; 95%CI: 1.532 – 6.940; $p = 0.002$) [Table 5].

Discussion

From previous research (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2006), people in monogamous marriages reported higher levels of marital happiness than people in polygamous marriages. Monogamous relationships (defined by one partner's exclusivity and exclusive attention) may provide a more secure basis for closeness and understanding. Contrarily, polygamous marriages bring in complications, including rivalry between partners and possible inequalities in resources and attention, which lowers satisfaction levels. This consistency with previous research underscores the universal challenges associated with polygamous marital structures, irrespective of cultural contexts. This study confirms that marital structure affects satisfaction; it is, therefore, important for therapists and marriage counsellors to customise their therapies to address the unique difficulties that come with monogamous and polygamous relationships. It's crucial to comprehend the subtleties of each structure to offer assistance that works.

Counselling that is attentive to cultural differences and recognises the variety of marital relationship types can lead to more significant outcomes.

Another significant finding in this study is the identification of communication behaviours as a determinant of marital satisfaction. The demonstrated impact of communication patterns on marital satisfaction in this study aligns with extensive literature highlighting the pivotal role of effective communication in relationship quality (Gottman & Notarius, 2002). Couples reporting mostly cordial communication exhibited higher levels of satisfaction. This result reinforces that open, constructive, and respectful communication fosters emotional connection and understanding within marital relationships. The negative impact of abusive communication on satisfaction emphasizes the detrimental consequences of destructive interaction patterns. It is, therefore, evident that couples from different cultural or contextual backgrounds might gain from workshops and interventions focusing on improving communication skills. Thus, therapists and educators should make tools and techniques available for promoting courteous, productive, and open communication. Couples should also be counselled to enhance their overall relationship pleasure by laying a foundation of understanding and connection through effective communication.

While the identified predictors of marital satisfaction in this study offer actionable insights for counselling and support programs, the study's findings highlight the relevance of interventions that enhance communication skills, foster emotional connection, and address sexual concerns. These findings bring to the fore the need for policymakers to consider how family support programmes are affected by marital structure and formulate policies tailored to the specific requirements of heterogeneous families. In addition, such policies should be designed and implemented with an awareness of the difficulties of various marital configurations. Also, the cultural context should be considered to tailor interventions effectively, and programmes for family assistance should be inclusive and culturally sensitive, considering the dynamics seen in different types of marriages.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study showed that most respondents were satisfied with their marriage. The determinants of marital satisfaction that featured on the marital characteristics tapestry were being in a monogamous marriage, being compatible with the spouse regarding sex, having mostly cordial communication with the spouse in the past six months, and spouses being mostly loving and caring in the past six months. Therapists, marriage counsellors, educators and other stakeholders involved in marital issues should consider these factors in the design and implementation of their programs.

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THE ROLE OF MORAL EDUCATION IN CURBING VOTERS' APATHY

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ABSTRACT

Nigerians have enjoyed uninterrupted democracy since independence. The election process is an essential ingredient of democracy. It involves all legal activities for the conduct of elections. The management of these electoral activities remains a challenge. An election is the process by which eligible citizens vote to elect leaders of their choice. In Nigeria, voter apathy is a recurrent phenomenon. No doubt many Nigerian newspapers, radio stations, and television channels were washed over by voter apathy in the 2023 presidential election. Voter apathy occurs when eligible voters lack the interest to participate in an election. It can also refer to electorates not voting in elections. Voter apathy is caused by election intimidation, lack of trust, unethical conduct of the electoral umpire, voter alienation, or fatigue, and when electorates feel that their participation in an election will not make a difference. The effect of political apathy is a threat to any democratic process, which would produce devastating growth in the electoral democracy. This paper argues that electorates should be properly reoriented on the importance of voting. The study concludes that the ethical formation of the electoral umpire and the citizens is not negotiable because the more eligible citizens participate in elections to exercise their right to vote, the more vital it is for elected officials to stand up for voters' welfare.

Keywords: Moral Education, Voter apathy, Electoral process, Ethics, Management

Introduction

No doubt the return of democratic rule in 1999 was a blessing to Nigerians, despite the economic hardships of democratic governance coupled with voter apathy. Dolapo (2019) maintains that "apathy is a term that is often used to describe an individual's lack of care, lack of concern, or nonchalance towards an issue. The act of apathy then manifests itself in a variety of ways. For example, regarding political participation, people often argue that we live in an

era where citizens lack the interest or encouragement to take on their civic duty within society and vote. This is known as voter's apathy." "Voter's apathy" has been defined as a lack of interest in participating in elections by certain groups of voters". Voters' apathy indicates a decline in electorates' involvement in or voting activities in a particular country (Temitope, 2023). Simply put, it is a decline in electorates' involvement in elections. Morally, the electoral process is to be free and fair, devoid of violence and voter apathy.

In the analysis of the Nigerian Fourth Republic, about 59 million Nigerians registered to vote, but in the presidential elections, about 32 million voted, that is, 54 per cent voter turnout. This grew to an enormous 70 per cent in 2003. However, as of the 2019 general elections, of the 83,354 registered voters, only 29,714,190 may have voted a decline of 35 per cent (Temitope, 2023). Furthermore, a critical analysis of voter turnout in Nigeria for the 2023 elections shows that it is marred by voter apathy because about "93.4 million registered voters this year, 87.2 million people collected their Permanent Voters Card, and the total number of actual voters on election day was only 24.9 million" (Kabir, 2023).

The rationale for voter's apathy is political alienation. Voter alienation is the process where the electorate feels like the government does not work for the common interest of the citizen and all attempts to influence the government remain fruitless exercise. Temitope (2023) argued that political alienation is a lack of political accountability, unimportance (powerlessness) of voters and many others that could trigger voters' nonparticipation. The most astonishing aspect is that voters suffer the effect of bad leadership yet stay away from voting. Political apathy is caused by political intimidation and harassment by political thugs. Political violence and ballot box snatching to voter intimidation are attributed to the cause of low voter turnout in Nigerian elections (Charles, 2023). Dolapo (2019) cited "Voter Apathy and Revival of Genuine Political Participation in Nigeria " and found that there are 4 causes of voter apathy in Nigeria. The following are a) INEC's incompetence, especially concerning organization at polling units and the process of voting (b) unemployment, (c) the political environment and d) electoral violence." These actions make the electorate timid or fearful,

frighten electorates, compel or deter from making their choice in an election or voters staying away from the polls. The ethnic profiling in Lagos by political thugs has also led to political apathy. Furthermore, Mataka and Nkandu (2020) maintain that lack of voter education, citizen-up with counterfeit promises from politicians, change of leadership, religious reasons, age eligibility and limited hours of voting contributed to voters' apathy.

The unethical conduct of INEC and multiple result declarations would contribute to future voter apathy in Adamawa state. For instance, in the 2023 governorship election the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Adamawa, declared a winner when the election was inconclusive. This action proved that the electioneering process in Nigeria has been greatly vulnerable to electoral misstatement and to question the integrity of no other than INEC itself, as confirmed in the Presidential elections of 2023 (Qosim, 2023). Some political watchers have maintained that the 2023 election especially in Adamawa state is a conduit for perpetrating electoral fraud. The unethical conduct of the Adamawa state Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), violated the provisions and values of the Electoral Act, Section 2 of the Electoral Act 2010 (As Amended) (Electoral, 2022) would lead to voters' apathy in subsequent elections because the integrity of the electoral umpire is under questioning by the electoral.

Voters Apathy of a Global Scale

The participation of voters in elections across the globe has declined by over 10 per cent since the 1960s and new research reveals that improper engagement of politicians with the voters, economic development and a change in citizen values is the cause of voters' apathy (Voter, 2022) scholars may have recounted voters apathy in Nigeria, United State, Australia, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa and many others (Odimayo and Kelechi 2019). Electoral intimidation of voters, vote-buying and many others operate under different logics to cause voters apathy (Frye, et al., 2019), (Mares, & Petrova, 2016).

In Nigeria, the declaration of multiple election results by INEC in the 2023 governorship election in Adamawa state is aimed to intimidate and cause voters apathy. In Haiti, the 2015 presidential election would have been an opportunity for ordinary Haitians to

have a say in the future of their country but their participation in the parliamentary elections only 18 per cent of the registered voters while 54 candidates ran for President, the rationale for the political apathy is attributed to lack of trust in the democratic process (Elena, and Gvaram, 2015).

The 2019 Afghan presidential election shows how governance and mismanagement caused voters apathy. Although several people headed to cast their vote despite the direct threats to civilians from the Taliban, the turnout was historically low; around 1.6 million registered voters showed up, down from 9.7 million (Michael, 2019). A critical analysis of this figure showed that less than a quarter of the Afghans who registered for the election cast their ballot. This steep decline, however, represents a decline from the approximate 60% of eligible voters who participated in the 2004 elections. The 2019 voter turnout is the lowest level since the 2001 US-led invasion (Michael, S. 2019). In Venezuela 2020, Nicolas Maduro wins total control of the legislature, but the opposition boycotts the election, saying it represents "fraud."

In 2020, the Jordanian elections were marked by poor voter turnout. The elections are a negative reflection of the limits of the kingdom's democracy; however, the number of "4.64 million eligible to vote was 29.88%, the lowest participation rate in many years. The poll coincides with deep public discontent as Jordan grapples with an economic crisis and unemployment and poverty aggravated by a surge in the COVID-19 pandemic" (Suleiman, 2020). 2017). In the 2014 election, the Egyptian government extended the voting process from two to three days to encourage additional turnout, but the final tally was a disappointing 47.5 per cent there was massive evidence of low voter turnout in the presidential election since the 2011 revolution that ousted President Hosni Mubarak (Elissa, 2018).

Again, Algeria's two years of mass demonstrations were followed by a presidential election in 2019, but the parliamentary election was boycotted by the long-running Hirak protest movement and marked by a high abstention rate (France24, 2021). The reason for the apathy is that political parties that dominated for decades were damaged by corruption charges

against Bouteflika's allies, creating space for independents and moderate Islamist parties to seek more votes (Lamine and Hamid 2021).

In a critical analysis of voters' apathy on a global scale, we maintain that electoral violence, intimidation, lack of trust in state institutions, electoral fraud, and a lack of value for citizens reduce competitiveness and have led to voter apathy.

The Effects of Voter Apathy

Voter apathy is one of the greatest threats to any democratic process, and it is devastating to the growth of electoral democracy because it leads to inaccurate representation of the citizens (Mataka and Nkandu, 2020). Furthermore, suppose the citizens fail to participate in voting and those who turn out to vote are systematically unrepresentative of the eligible citizens because minorities defeat majorities. In that case, Voter apartheid compromises the legitimacy of the government, and when the legitimacy of the government is compromised, it results in political instability (Mataka and Nkandu, 2020). The question that comes to mind is, "How can voter apathy be ameliorated if not eradicated? The continued decline in voting among voters would threaten to undermine democratic development in Africa and the Western world.

Moral Education

The discussions of education morality can be traced back to the ancient works of Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* and Socrates (Jingying et. al., 2023). Moral education is concerned with the teaching and learning of the appropriate ways to act toward other people (Mataka and Nkandu, 2020). Jingying et. al. (2023) argued that "moral education is an educational process of the continuation, construction, and transformation of moral and social norms and is an important guarantee for the sustainable vitality of human morality." In African society, the people's actions towards supernatural forces (gods, ancestral spirits), nonhuman beings (animals of specified types), and physical surroundings (sacred forests, mountains, and waterways)" are guided by ethical assertions (Mataka and Nkandu, 2020).

This systemic education is important for the general public to strengthen and conduct themselves from time to time. Jingying et al. (2023) argue that in moral education, "educators

transform certain social thoughts and virtue ethics concepts into the individual thoughts and morals of education with certain educational means in social activities and exchanges." Thus, moral education involves the process of implementing moral social inheritance and the continuous restructuring of school curricula to meet the present challenges affecting society. It is necessary for not only voters but also those who govern to have knowledge and skills about elections and their practices (Mataka and Nkandu, 2020). It promotes awareness or engages the general public towards right or wrong actions in the management of public resources. If moral education is implemented by policymakers through proper legislation and follow-up, it will produce a much more transparent and accountable result not only election but the act of governance. This will attract the average citizen to take up their civic duty for the good of society (Dolapo 2019).

Conclusion

This study dealt with voter apathy and recommended possible solutions, which centre on increased moral education. Moral education is important because it cuts across facets of life and helps to engage the citizens on the importance of voting and to encourage political leaders to do the needful that will produce high voter participation because the rationale for voter apathy is mostly centred on the failure of the political leadership. We hope that the implementation of moral education will help fill the gaps identified in this study for the common good of society.

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IDENTITIES AND CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND RESOLUTIONS FOR NATIONAL COHESION

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ABSTRACT

Identity is a major cause of conflict in Nigeria. This study therefore investigates empirically the linkages between identities and conflicts, with a view to understanding its consequences to ensure there is national cohesion. The study finds that the lack of tolerance, stereotype and ethnic profiling, Religious and political supremacies, Resources and colonial legacies are most of the causes of identity conflict in Nigeria. The consequences of identity conflict for national cohesion include ethno-religious conflict, tension and insecurity, sabotage and marginalization as well as the clamour for restructuring. The study also revealed that identity conflict can be mitigated for national peace and security when there is a national dialogue on the corporate peaceful existence of Nigerian identity-entities, when peacemaking initiatives like negotiation, mediation, and settlement is initiated at various levels to promote national peace and security, when leaders are accountable in the distribution of resources among the different segments. It was recommended that the policy of distributive justice should be vigorously pursued. This will ensure a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities among the different segments and classes of the society. As a heterogeneous society, the basis for Nigeria's national identity as enshrined in the preamble of the constitution should be revisited and redefined.

Keywords: Identities, Conflicts, National Cohesion, Ethno-religious conflict, Marginalization

Introduction

Conflicts are unavoidable aspects of human interaction. They arise from the pursuit of divergent interests, goals and aspirations by individuals or groups. Changes in the socio-political environment result in conflicts at the individual and groups levels. Therefore, the negative exploitation of ethnicity and religion results into ethnic-religious conflicts. These often arise out of mistrust, hostility, polarization of relations among groups and at times in a competitive setting. Conflicts, according to Elaigwu (2004), are regiment primordial identities of a group in a competitive relation with other groups are regarded as ethnic-religious conflicts.

One of the major challenges in Nigeria is preventing and resolving conflicts between different groups of peoples living in close proximity to each other within the territory of Nigeria. Long before the independence of Nigeria from Britain in 1960, the territory, of what is now modern-day Nigeria, witnessed insecurity and inter-group conflicts between people, groups and based on various long-standing rivalries. Many of these conflicts included periods of violence, and the pattern of conflict and violence has not been eliminated even after independence thus leading to the ongoing agitations which is presently producing disastrous effects in many cases.

Religious bigotry, adoption of extreme position by ethnic, tribal and communal groups have instigated alarming degrees of conflicts on the country to the extent that secularity posture enshrined in the Nigerian 1999 constitution is fast retreating and all national integration efforts seem bleak as the dividing lines are constantly redrawn by identity conflicts. An intriguing phenomenon about identity conflicts and terror in the country is that they span the entire length and breadth of the country, dominating all strata of the polity (all geo-political zones) and assuming both rural and urban dimensions.

The avalanche of conflicts, violence and terror that has rocked Jos Plateau in the last two decades, Ife-Modakeke, Ogoni and Okrika, Umuleri-Aguleri, Ijaw-Ilaje, Maitatsine uprising, Ijaw, Urhobo and Itshekiri crisis, the uprising over Nigeria's membership of the

organization of Islamic countries (OIC) pro and anti-Sharia conflicts in Kano, Bauchi, Jos and Kaduna, the Tiv - Jukun, Chamba-Kuteb conflicts, Isoko Delta conflict, activities of Odua Peoples Congress in the west, the Yandabas in the north, the Yobe Taliban, MASSOB, Niger Delta insurgency and most disturbing is the ongoing Boko Haram (Western education is sin) terror in the northern part of the country has not only threatened the nation's security and overall corporate existence as a single indivisible entity but has exposed the fragility of the nation.

Ethno-cultural identity this plays a major role in Nigeria's groups relations in all ramifications. And this is rooted in the dynamics of identity politics. These ethno-cultural identities are social construct designed by human communities to attempt to understand internal dynamics of social relations with other groups. It can be said to revolve around questions, discourse and movement of identities based on ethnic, religious, social, cultural and national characterisation of groups within a geographical boundary (Du Plessis 2001).

Identity conflicts have extremely and negatively affected the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria as a nation. This has negative effects on the country's national security, stability and integration. According to Robbins and Judge, (2009). The effect and consequences of unmanaged conflicts in the society will continue to promote violence. Identity can be a very good tool for fostering national unity, economic and political development when properly handled. On the other hand, it can also be a disruptive instrument and viable tool for conflict if negatively handled. Effective management of these identity conflicts will go a long way to enhance the development of any society. It is against this stark reality and concerns over the spate of identity conflicts and terror in Nigeria that this paper attempts to examine the causes, consequences and impact of identity conflict. In order to carry out this research, the under-listed research questions are raised.

- i. How do Nigeria's diverse identities cause conflict for the country?
- ii. What are the consequences of identity conflict for Nigeria's national cohesion?
- iii. How can the impact of identity conflict be mitigated for national peace and security?

Conceptual Underpinnings

Understanding the Term Identity

In the words of Arena and Arrigo, (2006) the word 'identity' is as much a cultural cliché as it is a technical term common to a host of social science disciplines. They assert that, 'there is something active about the word (identity) which cannot be ignored; identity is not just there, it must always be established'. Human relate in competition over the limited resources nature offers and those made by man himself. Identity is the qualities, beliefs, personality traits, appearance, and/or expressions that characterize a person or a group. Identity is shaped by social and cultural factors and how others perceive and acknowledge one's characteristics. Schmeck, Fegert, and Schlüter-Müller (2013) Swartz et. al. (2016) Identity encompasses various aspects such as occupational, religious, national, ethnic or racial, gender, educational, generational, and political identities, among others.

Identity serves multiple functions, acting as a "self-regulatory structure" that provides meaning, direction, and a sense of self-control. It fosters internal harmony and serves as a behavioral compass, enabling individuals to orient themselves towards the future and establish long-term goals. As an active process, it profoundly influences an individual's capacity to adapt to life events and achieve a state of well-being. Unruh (2014) However, identity originates from traits or attributes that individuals may have little or no control over, such as their family background or ethnicity.

Personal and social identities are often in tension with each other as people seek both individuation and inclusion (economic, political and social) all of which can exacerbate the risk of violence and terror. Identity conflict is often a competition for ownership of the state and control of its resources. The competition for the scarce resources is exacerbated when the state actively controls the distribution of important resources. Conflicts of identity are likely to escalate when groups and/or group members consider that the recognition accorded a competitor identity can threaten their own. Also, entrepreneurial leaders or elites whose

domestic supports are uncertain or threatened can manipulate identities and create myths to sustain political loyalty. According to the World Development Report (2010), domestic factors such as low incomes, high unemployment, inequality of some sort, injustice, horizontal inequality commitment and loyalty problem, greed, grievance and lack of respect for human rights are triggers of violence and terror in heterogeneous states.

Identity conflicts involve contest between and amongst groups in the society (ethnic, tribal, religious and cultural) over economic, political and social issues and resources, especially, where a group cannot or is prohibited from pursuing and/or achieving its goals within the state. Demonstration, riots and even rebellion or revolution are tactics usually utilized to pursue their goals. Identity conflict mostly arises from competition for ownership of the state and control of its resources, It also arises from the expropriation of the identity, symbols and resources of the state by one group to the exclusion of other structural violence, competition of state resources and relative depreciation, security dilemma on the part of groups. The ultimate goal of these contests is based on the need for allocation, reallocation, distribution of power, privileges and resources which are done and carried out within crucial distributive decisions (Baker, 1995; Ikelegbe and Okumu, 2010)

Concept of Conflict

Conflicts are inevitable part of an organizational life since the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and staff are often incompatible (Jones, 2000). Conflict is an unpleasant fact in any organization as long as people compete for jobs, resources, power, recognition and security. Organizational conflict can be regarded as a dispute that occurs when interests, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other (Henry, 2019). This results into a situation whereby they frustrate each other in an attempt to achieve their objectives. Conflict arises in groups because of the scarcity of freedom, position, and resources. People who value independence tend to resist the need for interdependence and, to some extent, conformity within a group. People who seek power therefore, struggle with others for position or status within the group (Henry, 2019).

Robbins and Judge (2019) defined conflict as ‘‘ a process that begins where one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect something that the first party cares about’’. This is a very apt definition, emphasizing that conflict is about perceptions, not necessarily real hard facts. It points to the emotional nature of conflict, by referring to a word like ‘‘care’’, it states that more than one party is involved and that there may be a future component attached to it.

Shapiro (2016) in relation to the above states that, conflict is a process of social interaction. It involves a struggle over claims to resources, power, status, beliefs, preferences and desires. Darling and Walker (2017) linked this idea to the organization by stating that, even when conflict is a natural phenomenon in social relations (as natural as harmony), it can nevertheless be managed within organizations. They add that conflict may have both positive as well as negative consequences within the organization, the submission above blend with the fact that, conflict can never be totally eliminated within organizations but can be efficiently managed in order to move organizations to greater height and performance level.

Unugbro cited in Osemeke (2001) defined conflicts as people striving for their own preferred outcome, which, if attained, prevent others from achieving preferred outcome, resulting in hostility and breakdown in human relations. Jennifer and Jones (2017) see organizational conflict as the struggle that arises when the goal-directed behaviour of one person or group blocks the goal directed behaviour of another person or group

Peace and Security

Peace is a companionship and agreement that is devoid of violence and rancour. In other words, peace is geared towards ensuring that citizens are not having any threat to life with the freedom of movement without any form of fear and intimidation. From time immemorial, leaders across the world have always desire that there should be peace through diplomacy to promote economic growth through the signing of various peace treaties.

In their views, Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) stressed that peace is about rest of mind and building a formidable atmosphere that will promote development. Apart from the

definition that peace is absence of war. Nehru noted that peace is the only variable that can only bring citizens together. The meanings of peace have been projected by many scholars to mean different things depending on the views of individual. Peace is also a development that is capable of promoting a harmonious relationship that will make citizens to stay out violent. Peace can also be described as a as an atmosphere that is devoid of tranquility that is capable of respecting and promoting justice and goodwill for the people. Psychologists have described peace as one of the precursors that is capable to establish a behavior that will bring development. Some have described peace as an expression of belief that is initiated to foster development. Others have described peace as a pillar of any society that is capable of bringing development in any society.

On the other hand, security has many concepts this makes (Stan, 2004) to posit that the issue of security has been a global. In the same vein, the word, insecurity connotes different meanings like lack of safety; threat; risk and so on. According to Beland (2005), lack of security is for citizens not to be protected against harm. Achumba, I. C., Ighomereho, O. S., and Akpan-Robaro, M. O. M (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. First, lack of security is for the government and other relevant authority to protect her citizens against danger. Secondly insecurity is the condition of exposing citizens to threat or nervousness and unpleasant emotion in the society. These definitions of insecurity have clearly spelt out that citizens that suffer insecurity may not be aware of what is happening but can be helpless in any of the intimidation and dangers that affect their lives. In this study insecurity is defined as a absence of peace as a result of historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic, and political that contribute to frequent conflicts that destroy lives and property.

The benefit of a secure nation includes development, peace and national cohesion. The concept of security is not new and has been a source of concern to many societies. The imperative of security to the peaceful development of any country has made many citizens to surrender to trust government in the protection of lives across the world. Stemming from this, Ake (2001) thus argued that the idea of development has become a problem because of the

conflict between its manifest and latent functions. He noted that anytime that development is the outcome of economic growth when there is peace. As Rostow (1952) and Harrod and Domar (1957), among others proposed that models of development have benefited many countries to be secure. This evident as there are structural changes, savings and investments as the source of economic development and growth of many countries (Otto and Ukpere, 2012:766). The theory assumed that economic growth is capable of generating more funds for investment to promote infrastructure that will guarantee better life for citizens. This makes Okolie (2009) to posit that when their human improvement in the potential and capacity human beings, poverty, inequality, and unemployment will be reduced. He noted development is all about taking adequate measures to empower the people to meet their daily needs at various levels.

In spite of its conceptual complexities, other benefits of a secure nation would enhance the understanding of national unity, serenity and sustainable growth. Ensuring a secured environment is for the citizens to be free from any danger which is capable of threatening the life of the people. When citizens are protected, it will help in promoting the values that will promote their interests and well-being of its people. It is imperative for the government to ensure that citizens are secure from any form of internal and external attacks.

Theoretical Framework

The Structural Conflict Theory

This theory has two main orientations. The first is the radical structural theory represented by the Marxist dialectical school with exponents like Marx and Engels, V.I. Lenin, etc. the second is the liberal structuralism represented by Ross (1993), Scarborough (1998) and the famous work by Johan Galtung (1990) on structural violence. The main argument of the structural conflict theory is that conflict is built into the particular ways societies are structured and organized. The theory looks at social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, disease, exploitation, inequity etc. as sources of conflict (Ademola, 2006).

The structuralists maintain that conflicts occur because of the exploitative and unjust nature of human societies, domination of one class by another etc. Structural theory is remarkably strong on the immediate and underlying factors that lead to conflict. It presents a large number of such factors that make the emergence and escalation of internal conflicts possible (Brown, 1996 as cited in Ademola, (2006). While economic and social factors are more common, political and institutional factors (the structure of the state, discriminatory political institutions, intergroup politics and elite cohesion or fragmentation); security factors (national security dilemma, regional military environment, refugee regimes, cross-border criminality, and civil-military relations); as well as ethnic factors are equally as critical. According to Ademola (2006), structuralists present factors such as those listed above as the major motivating factors that explain the emergence of destructive conflicts between individuals and groups.

Literature Review

According to Smyth and Robinson (2001), Nigeria has been characterised as a state that is deeply divided with many nationalities who identify vigorously and sometimes violently in majorly political contestations along complex identities lines including ethnic, religious, and regional divisions. They noted that these violent contestations are caused by majorly political issues that are juicy. Usman (1987) blamed identity crises of the country on elite's manipulation of ethnic and religious identity. These conflicts, according to him, fall within divisions, resulting in fault-lines such as politics at regional level is often play with ethno-religious identity since Nigeria's independence.

Obasi (2008) highlighted the linkages between religious and ethnicity this in his study and argued that there is no killings and destruction of properties is not inherent in the nature of true religions. He noted that it is the aberration in the way religious practices are carried out in Nigeria, pointing to the idea that it is the aberrations in religious practices that made Karl Marx sees religion as the "opium of the people." He also opined that despite the explosiveness of religious, it has continued to be supported by the elites.

To Kafa1 and Habib (2018), identity conflict comes mostly from cultural and religious difference. They consequently linked this clash of civilization as Samuel Huntington proposed to the Boko Haram insurgency. The study opined that the rise of the Islamic sect operates within the tenets of Salafist doctrine, is objectively aimed to counter the grips of Western cultural domination.

Lenshie and Abel (2012) exploring the resurgence of ethno-cultural identity in Nigeria, found that contestations associated with ethno-cultural identity are not recent, but date back to the creation of the modern state called Nigeria. It aligns with the fact that colonialism fostered various social, economic and political problems in Nigeria and highlights the manner in which the post-colonial political class has fed on the far-reaching effects of colonialism to complicate intergroup relations in the country. They also posited that Nigeria's return to civil rule on 29 May 1999, opened the space for the political class to exploit the resurgence of ethnicity and religion in a way capable of jeopardising the corporate existence of the country, especially in the current phase of democratisation. Chief amongst identified issues is the ameliorating of the enormous challenges arising from the mismanagement of ethno-cultural identity in Nigeria.

Inyokwe (2012) blamed identity crises on colonialism, noting that Nigeria is a product of colonialism that was nurtured by the post- colonial elites for their own selfish ends. He noted also that elements of progressive social engineering among the diverse ethnic groups was undermined in the formative years of the Nigerian state. This political alienation and political was the deciding factor in economic and socio-political relations. According to him, the result of such identity clash is unhealthy competition for scarce resources giving rise to dissension within and among indigenes and settlers. The attendant crisis is manifestation of poverty and political and economic inequality.

Methodology

This is used for the purpose of obtaining data to answer study research questions for this study, survey research technique was used. This technique has proved to be very efficient for social

science studies in view of the wealth of data and interpretation it can provide. The cluster sampling technique was adopted for the study. This technique was adopted because the technique was carried out based on size and proportions of the population. Therefore, the researcher followed the appropriate cluster groups that are residing within FCT Abuja. Sample size simply means a group of people selected through sampling to represent the entire population. The seminar sampled 100 respondents to represent the population of the study. Research instrument is the tool that the researcher uses to generate information for data analysis.

A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for gathering data for this study. The items were structure to provide answers to the research questions. They were be structured on a 4-point modified Likert Scale format. Data from the questionnaire were sorted, tabulated and a frequency computed using simple percentage and ratio in tables and percentages to sample the specific objectives and research questions of the research study.

Data Presentation and Analyses

The primary data collection/gathering instruments adopted in the study were questionnaires used in gathering relevant data. However, 100 questionnaires administered to the respondents, but 86 were returned. 9 questionnaires were not correctly filled while the remaining 5 questionnaires were not returned. Therefore, the data analyses were based on the 86 questionnaires that were correctly filled and returned.

Research Question 1

How do Nigeria's diverse identities cause conflict for the country?

Table 1: Ways that Nigeria's diverse identities cause conflict for the country

Causes of identity conflict	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
1. Lack of tolerance	40	31	11	4	2.75	0.753	Agree
2. Citizenship and ethnic profiling	8	30	15	33	2.43	0.428	Agree
3. Religious and political supremacies	43	28	8	2	2.88	0.821	Agree
4. Resources and colonial legacies	37	33	13	7	2.66	0.631	Agree
					2.84	0.858	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

From Table 1, it can be seen that the mean scores of 2.75, 2.43, 2.88, and 2.66, to support identities cause conflict for the country for items 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The overall mean scores of 2.84 and a standard deviation of 0.858 respectively to indicate that lack of tolerance, citizenship and ethnic profiling, religious and political supremacies, resources and colonial legacies are most of the causes of identity conflict in Nigeria.

This view is supported by Smyth and Robinson (2001), Obasi (2008) and Kafa and Habib (2018). In fact, a number of studies are unanimous in the position that politics and religion are the major drivers of identity conflict. Citizenship and ethnicity as also a major cause of identity conflict in Nigeria. Inyokwe (2012) affirmed this and blamed the citizenship crisis on the country's colonial legacy. This is in spite of the fact that the Nigerian state has obliged to secure full citizenship rights for everybody residing in any part of the country. This is contained in Chapter II section 15(3b) of the 1999 Constitution. The quagmire of the citizenship question, creates the sense of national identity and the rallying points for socio-political and economic gains. Citizenship is a product of political struggle among social forces

and groups - hence its use as a resource for identity mobilization by the state (Adejumobi, 2004:6).

Research Question 2

What are the consequences of identity conflict for Nigeria’s national cohesion?

Table 2: The consequences of identity conflict for Nigeria’s national cohesion

Consequences of identity conflict	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
1. Identity conflict will lead to ethnic-religious conflict.	36	29	14	5	2.75	0.754	Agree
2. Identity conflict is capable of promoting tension and insecurity in the country.	38	34	10	4	2.73	0.729	Agree
3. Identity conflict will lead to sabotage and marginalization the country.	34	28	16	8	2.88	0.821	Agree
4. The incessant identity-based agitations and clamour for the restructuring of the basis of the nation's existence weakens national cohesion and economic development	33	32	11	10	2.86	0.834	Agree
					2.73	0.758	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 shows mean scores of 2.75, 2.73, 2.88, and 2.86, to support the consequences of identity conflict for Nigeria’s national cohesion for items 9, 10, 11 and 12 respectively. The overall mean scores of 2.73 and a standard deviation of 0.758 respectively to indicate that the consequences of identity conflict for national cohesion include ethnic/religious conflict, tension and insecurity, sabotage and marginalization as well as the clamour for restructuring.

This position is affirmed by Olawale and Olarinde (2001) who pointed to the disastrous effects of this on cultural conflicts between particularly between indigene and settler such as was the case with Ife-Modakeke, Ijaw-Itshekiri, the Idi- Araba conflict.

Research Question 3

How can the impact of identity conflict be mitigated for national peace and security?

Table 3: On ways that the impact of identity conflict can be mitigated for national peace and security

Mitigation of identity conflict	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
1. The need for national dialogue on the corporate peaceful existence of the Nigerian identity-entities.	60	18	6	2	2.95	0.911	Agree
2. Peacemaking initiatives like negotiation, mediation, and settlement could promote national peace and security.	45	24	15	3	2.84	0.684	Agree
3. There should be accountability by leaders, equitable distribution of resources and opportunities among the different segments and classes of the society.	57	19	6	4	2.70	0.539	Agree
4. Genuine love and reconciliations irrespective of place and religion by both Christians and Muslims in the country.	39	28	13	6	2.54	0.402	Agree
					2.78	0.729	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows mean scores of 2.95, 2.84, 2.70, and 2.54 in support of ways that the impact of identity conflict can be mitigated for national peace and security for items 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The overall mean scores of 2.78 and a standard deviation of 0.729 to indicates that identity conflict can be mitigated for national peace and security when there is a national dialogue on the corporate peaceful existence of the Nigerian identity-entities, when peacemaking initiatives like negotiation, mediation, and settlement is initiated at various levels to promote national peace and security, when leaders are accountable in the distribution of resources among the different segments and classes of the society and when there is genuine love and reconciliations irrespective of place and religion by both Christians and Muslims in the country.

Identity conflicts have been a major problem in the history of Nigeria. These conflicts have negatively affected the social, economic and political sectors in the last three decades. During such conflicts, many lives were lost and properties running into billions of naira were lost. From the foregoing, we find that the lack of tolerance, stereotype and ethnic profiling, Religious and political supremacies, Resources and colonial legacies are most of the causes of identity conflict in Nigeria.

The study also found that the consequences of identity conflict for national cohesion include ethnic/religious conflict, tension and insecurity, sabotage and marginalization as well as the clamour for restructuring. The study revealed that identity conflict can be mitigated for national peace and security when there is a national dialogue on the corporate peaceful existence of the Nigerian identity-entities, when Peacemaking initiatives like negotiation, mediation, and settlement is initiated at various levels to promote national peace and security, when leaders are accountable in the distribution of resources among the different segments and classes of the society and when there is genuine love and reconciliations irrespective of place and religion by both Christians and Muslims in the country.

Concluding remarks

Identity is a major impediment to the peace, security and development in Nigeria. One of the major areas of conflict results from the citizens question and the way people perceive their neighbours. This is the reason many Nigerians lack patriotism and love for country and this is continually manifested with institutional arrangements, management and allocation of opportunities in the system. The consistent inability of the state to provide the people with opportunities to fulfil their socio-economic aspirations negates the very values that constitute the basis of the nation's identity as enshrined in the preamble of Nigeria's constitution. Though, the ethnic character of the crisis cannot be overruled, that is because it provides an alternative identity platform for the people's expression of their disaffection against state repression, the root of the national identity-based conflict in Nigeria is more of an economic than ethnic.

It is therefore imperative that the country should revisit the citizens question with the view to mitigating ethnic and religious differences must be eliminated by government and structures must be put in place to monitor such practices and punish perpetrators of violence. This therefore means that the basis for Nigeria's national identity as enshrined in the preamble of the constitution should be revisited and redefined.

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BIMODAL VOTERS ACCREDITATION SYSTEM AND ELECTION INTEGRITY

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ABSTRACT

The Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) plays a crucial role in ensuring the integrity of elections in Nigeria. However, its failure raises concerns about the accuracy, transparency, and inclusivity of the electoral process. This research study aims to analyze the key factors contributing to the BVAS failure and its implications for Nigeria's electoral process and election integrity, with a specific focus on the 2023 elections. The study employs thematic research design, addressing questions such as (i) the underlying factors contributing to the BVAS failure in Nigeria's 2023 electoral process, and (ii) the implications and consequences of the BVAS failure on Nigeria's 2023 electoral process and election integrity. The study adopted the Technology Acceptance Model Theory and Electoral Integrity Theory which surfaced in the analysis. The findings highlight technological vulnerabilities, inadequate infrastructure, operational challenges, political interference, and insufficient legal and regulatory frameworks as key factors contributing to the BVAS failure. The study reveals that the BVAS failure undermines public trust, compromises the fairness and inclusivity of elections, and poses risks to democratic governance. Based on the analysis, recommendations are provided to enhance technology infrastructure, strengthen cybersecurity measures, and draw insights from international best practices. Generally, this study contributes to the rebuilding of public trust, safeguarding electoral integrity, and fostering a resilient and inclusive democratic process in Nigeria.

Keywords: Peace education, Conflict, Violence and Communal Conflict.

Introduction

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, boasts a dynamic yet complex electoral system. Since its democratic transition in 1999, numerous elections have been conducted, shaping Nigeria's political domain and determining its leaders. Nevertheless, the electoral system struggles with transparency, credibility, and integrity. For a thriving democracy, free, fair, and credible elections are crucial; therefore, addressing these challenges is vital to Nigerian democracy and the strengthening of its institutions. Majority of the citizens who had giving up in Nigerian democracy due to its challenges, embraced hope as the 2023 elections mark a critical moment as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) introduced new technologies: the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IREV).

The Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) during the just concluded Nigeria 2023 presidential election aims to ensure electoral integrity but has faced significant challenges such as undermining trust, credibility, and transparency in the election process. Key concerns include technological vulnerabilities, inadequate infrastructure, complex integration, and privacy issues. Technological malfunctions and cyberattacks threaten the security and accuracy of voter accreditation. Addressing Nigeria's extensive geographic area and disparities in technological resources makes deploying a reliable system across the country difficult. Integrating traditional and digital methods within BVAS presents logistical and operational hurdles. Privacy and data protection concerns within the system pose ethical and legal challenges. Improving technological resilience, ensuring infrastructure inclusivity, streamlining processes, and protecting voter privacy are essential to restoring confidence in Nigeria's electoral process, safeguarding the integrity of elections, and upholding democratic principles.

The study on the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) in Nigeria is crucial for stakeholders in the electoral process. Its significance includes providing policy guidance, driving electoral reform, rebuilding trust, informing technological innovation, and contributing to academic understanding. The findings offer evidence-based recommendations

for addressing BVAS challenges and encourage comprehensive reforms to strengthen the electoral system. Increased trust in the electoral process fosters political participation and social cohesion. Lessons from BVAS can help develop secure and inclusive digital authentication mechanisms for future elections in Nigeria and beyond. Overall, this study aims to bolster electoral integrity, enhance public trust, and promote democratic values in Nigeria. This study provides answers to the following research questions;

- i. What are the key factors contributing to the failure of the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) in ensuring the integrity of elections in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the implications and consequences of the BVAS failure on Nigeria's electoral process and democratic governance?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Election

Election is essential to the functioning of a democratic society, as it enables individuals to choose their representatives and participate in decision-making. Through elections, candidates compete for positions of power, with the winner being determined by the highest number of votes or a majority. According to Raunak, et al (2006), the state-wide election process consists of Conduct of Election, followed by Canvass of Election, where state board officials aggregate precinct level election results, and a possible Recount if something major goes wrong. Raunak further elaborated that the conduct of Election is a number of parallel activities taking place simultaneously at each precinct. Conduct of Election at a Precinct includes the processing of individual votes for each voter throughout the voting period and preparation of two copies of a precinct result summary called “Statement of Result” (SoR). (Raunak, et al; 2006). Elections are conducted according to established rules and regulations, elections ensure fairness and transparency in the process. By enabling the peaceful transfer of power, elections hold those in authority accountable to the public they serve.

Election Integrity

Integrity is a difficult concept to define but an essential element of a democratic system. Integrity is the vanguard of free and fair elections to maintain the required electoral inherent in the principles of democracy. It contributes to the administration of free and fair elections, without which democracy would be compromised. Electoral Integrity is defined as a set of standards based on democratic principles, measures and mechanisms for protecting free and fair elections. (Nwankwo et al., 2017)

The concept of electoral integrity can be approached from either a broad or more narrowly defined perspective. Some scholars have defined it to mean the observance of international conventions and global norms as it relates to electoral cycle including pre-election period, polling day activities and post-election activities (Norris 2013a). Such international norms include fundamental freedoms, democracy promotion and human rights without which elections cannot be classified as free and fair. Consequently, these variables and others are germane to electoral integrity (Schaffer, F. C. 2008)

The Dynamics of Electoral Integrity

Americans face a potential crisis of faith in the electoral process. From allegations of voter fraud and voter suppression to Russian hacking, Americans are doubtful about the fundamental fairness and security of their elections. These developments are troubling because long-term democratic stability requires that citizens believe their elections are conducted fairly (Tyler 2013). Moreover, the perception that elections are just strengthens other forms of democratic legitimacy, producing confidence in institutions and leaders (Norris 2014). A lack of faith in elections is a lack of faith in the most fundamental of democratic principles.

Numerous factors contribute to citizens' perceptions of the quality of the electoral process, ranging from overt fraud and corruption, to the role of money in a country's electoral system, to the design of the ballot (Wand et al. 2001; Atkeson and Saunders 2007; Herrnson et al. 2008; Hall, Monson, and Patterson 2009). Concerns of this kind should influence perceptions of electoral integrity. Election outcomes are known to produce gaps between

winners and losers (those who supported the winning candidate vs. the losing candidate, respectively) in levels of satisfaction with democracy, perceived system responsiveness, and related measures of legitimacy (e.g., Nadeau and Blais 1993; Anderson et al. 2005; Esaiasson, 2011).

Bimodal Voter Accreditation System

Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) is a technology solution based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and is only as good as the both the age of the data and the training that the Algorithms receive. In Nigeria, BVAS first promenade was in the Isoko South Constituency bye-election in Delta State on 10 September, 2021 and has since been deployed in State wide contest #AnambraDecides2021, #Ekiti Decides 2022 and Osun Decides 2022. BVAS is reputed for combining voter enrolment, voter accreditation, and results interface capabilities in one device.

BVAS is a broadband driven technology, which places reliance on National Communication Commission (NCC) efforts, whose 2020-2025 National Broadband Plan discloses, that broadband penetration rate in the country at 2020 was about 37.8% and sets a target of 70% penetration 2023 of the next general election. There are instances where several presiding officers had to enlist local motor bike providers to take them to neighbouring communities where they could access the 4G Network to download BVAS updates. BVAS is geospatially dependent and worrisome is the fact that some Northern States like Zamfara State with 39,762 km² or in Taraba State's 54,473 km² has low geospatial sensitivities due to its wideness and concerningly, BVAS will only have been tested in three relatively small states of southern Nigeria before the 2023 elections but nowhere in the north. Complaints that the machine had difficulties capturing the thumbs and faces of some of the voters, particularly the aged also deserve attentions (Odinkalu, 2021).

Literature Review

BVAS Deployment and INEC preparedness for Election

Omotayo and Adekunle (2021) adopted Technology Readiness Acceptance Model to analyse the adoption and use of electronic voting system as an option to credible elections Oyo state, Nigeria. The study employed survey research design of a two-stage sampling procedure; random and convenience; to select 500 Nigerian citizens, who are of voting age, while data were collected with a structured questionnaire. Results that emanated from the study showed that the citizens are ready to use the e-voting system if adopted by the Nigerian Government. Optimism and innovativeness are positively correlated, and perceived discomfort and perceived insecurity are negatively correlated, with readiness to use e-voting system by Oyo state citizens. Badmus (2018) examined paradigms shift in election security and trilogy threats of ransomware, phishing and internet disruption in Nigeria.

Three of the four major political parties in the presidential election –the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the Labour Party (LP) and the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) – have rejected the results and called for the conduct of another election under a new electoral chair. Only the All Progressive Congress (APC) whose candidate, Bola Tinubu, was declared winner, commended the process. The PDP and LP have already been granted access to inspect all materials used for the election as they prepare to challenge the conduct of the elections and Mr Tinubu’s victory in court. Preliminary observations report of several observer groups have also noted that the commission performed below citizen expectations (Suleiman, 2023).

Deployment of BVAS and IREV Uncertainty

According to Suleiman, (2023), While Mr Yakubu stated that the BVAS would be deployed gubernatorial elections, he avoided the mention of whether the results will immediately be transmitted to the INEC elections viewing (IREV) portal before collation of results. INEC’s failure to upload the results on IREV before it continued with the collation of results was the first alleged breach noticed by agents of the PDP and LP who later staged a walk out of the collation centre in Abuja on Monday 27th February. The PDP Agent, Dino Melaye, said the

commission had on multiple occasions promised Nigerians an electronic transmission of results. Mr Yakubu only told the RECs that the deployment of BVAS has sanitised voter accreditation as seen from the result of 2023 elections. Since the week before the election, “the Commission has intensified the review of the technology to ensure that glitches experienced, particularly with the upload of results are rectified. We are confident that going forward the system will run optimally,” he said. Mr Yakubu also claimed that the commission planned well for the election but the implementation “came with challenges, some of them unforeseen.”

The INEC Chairman has, therefore, directed that all election logistics must be handled by the electoral officers at the local government levels, and must be finalised a day before the elections. He said while that has been the commission’s standard practice, centralising the process in some states resulted in delayed deployment of personnel and materials and late commencement of polls. Mr Yakubu said RECs will be held responsible for any tardy arrangement or the failure to deploy electric power generators to collation centres or polling units where such facilities are needed.

“The Commission has enough facilities in all the states of the federation. Failure to deploy them is simply inexcusable,” he said. “As we approach the Governorship and State Assembly elections, we must work harder to overcome the challenges experienced in the last election. Nothing else will be acceptable to Nigerians. “All staff found to be negligent, whether they are regular or ad hoc officials, including Collation and Returning Officers, must not be involved in forthcoming elections. RECs must also immediately initiate disciplinary action where prima facie evidence of wrongdoing has been established.”

Mr Yakubu appreciated Nigerians and election observers for their support, saying he looks forward to receiving their comprehensive reports on the election. (Suleiman, 2023).

Fallout from presidential election, did BVAS fail Nigerians

Several weeks before Nigeria’s 93 million registered voters were to cast their ballots for the country’s next president, a mock voter accreditation practice using the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), a novel technology, was conducted at select polling places throughout the nation. Nonetheless, the presidential elections would be the system’s first large-

scale deployment, and it initially seemed as though BVAS would be just another remarkable technological improvement to Nigeria's electoral infrastructure.

The Biometric Election in Nigeria

The commission's chairman, Professor Mahmoud Yakubu, was given the opportunity to address delegates in attendance at Chatham House, and he captivated the audience with an explanation of how well-prepared the organisation was for Nigeria's impending presidential election. "I think all of us were surprised that we enjoyed a speech on election management the way we all did," recalls the associate fellow of Chatham House's Africa Programme. Nevertheless, actual information on the logistics and training required to integrate BVAS into Nigeria's electoral system was scanty. Again, in the weeks leading up to the elections, it didn't seem like there was much reason for concern.

Also, there has been a push for digital ID systems across the continent. Examples include Malawi, where the National Registration and Identification System has been credited with generating significant cost savings in the delivery of services, and Cameroon, where a programme to issue biometric cards for refugees has given them access to mobile phone plans, health care, and education. Nigeria launched its own Personal Voter Card programme in 2014, embracing biometric verification. This is how BVAS came to the attention of Nigerians as a technology that, according to INEC, would speed up results publication and expedite verification.

Election Day

Then came the presidential election in February. On election day, it rapidly became apparent that many poll workers had underestimated the time required to authenticate voters using BVAS, which caused delays that essentially disenfranchised voters who showed up late to cast their ballots. Although Nigeria's election officials have come under fire for not using BVAS to announce results from specific polling places in a timely manner, the system appears to have done a good job of validating voters' identities.

Learning from Mistakes

In addition to the fact that INEC had repeatedly reassured the public that there was little risk of the system being compromised, the inability to use BVAS to access that black box is astonishing given that Nigeria is, by many standards, a very tech-savvy country. The public's faith in the use of technology to protect elections in the future would undoubtedly be impacted by INEC's inability to accomplish something comparable for Nigeria's elections. Furthermore, from countries all throughout Africa, there have been roughly a dozen recent examples of best practises in the use of biometric technology in elections. Nigeria did not designate its election systems as key national infrastructure prior to its most recent presidential election, despite the fact that it could have learned some major lessons from its 2017 polls. Yet, in order to guarantee elections across the continent, international organisations must also advocate for far more transparency in technology use. However, there is a continuing belief among Nigeria's civic institutions that they can quickly implement significant technical advancements in a society plagued by systemic issues with corruption, internet access, and national electrical grid accessibility.

In the meantime, Nigerians are still left wondering whether or not they can trust their institutions. This is a recurrent dilemma in a country that has worked so hard to establish democracy since it gained its independence, but many believe that the introduction of technology that safeguards the voting process should have begun to provide a solution. Given the hitches and experience with the BVAS on elections day, many Nigerians are sad that it did not achieve the expected target. They contend that they expected more than they got, and that so far, the new device as used by INEC was a near disaster. Many contend that it fell short of promises made by INEC and that for one, they had expected, given the explanations of the electoral body before the elections, that final results would be announced at most 24 hours after the close of voting.

The outcome of the elections showed also that the deployment of technology is not enough. While voter accreditation was largely carried out with the Bimodal device, the

electoral commission's failure to carry out real time transmission of the presidential election results created room for alleged result manipulation. Despite the electoral body's assurance that its decision to deploy the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System for voter accreditation and real time transmission of results to its result viewing portal was irreversible, the latter was disregarded. While the accreditation system was used, results were not transmitted to the viewing portal. It is not surprising that this is one of the issues before the presidential election tribunal in a petition filed by the Labour Party (Nwangwu, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Theory and Electoral Integrity Theory in examining the function of the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) in ensuring the integrity of elections in Nigeria.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), is a widely recognized theory in the field of information systems that explains how users perceive and adopt new technologies. According to TAM, the successful adoption and use of a technology depend on two main factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which individuals believe that using the technology will enhance their performance or provide benefits. Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which individuals perceive the technology as easy to understand and use. In the case of the BVAS, the theory can be applied as follows:

Perceived Usefulness: The failure of the BVAS may be attributed to a perception among voters, election officials, and other stakeholders that the system is not sufficiently useful in ensuring the integrity of elections. Factors such as technological vulnerabilities, operational challenges, and potential manipulations undermine the perceived usefulness of the system. If users do not perceive the BVAS as an effective tool for accurate voter accreditation and safeguarding election integrity, they may resist its adoption and trust alternative methods.

Perceived Ease of Use: The BVAS failure may also be influenced by perceived difficulties in using the system. Insufficient infrastructure, lack of training, and limited awareness about

the BVAS may contribute to a perception that the system is complex and challenging to navigate. This perception of complexity can deter users from fully embracing the BVAS, leading to non-compliance, errors, or manipulation of the system.

Electoral Integrity Theory

Electoral Integrity Theory was propounded by Pippa Norris, a political scientist. Norris developed this theory to measure the quality of elections around the world and to understand the factors that contribute to electoral integrity. The theory focuses on various dimensions of election process, such as electoral laws, voter registration, campaign finance, and media coverage, to assess the overall fairness and integrity of elections. These dimensions are considered crucial in evaluating the extent to which elections uphold democratic principles and provide equal opportunities for political participation. Norris's Electoral Integrity Theory has been highly influential in the field of political science and has paved the way for systematic analysis of electoral processes. It has been used to study and compare electoral systems in different countries, and has helped in identifying areas where improvements are needed to ensure greater electoral integrity. Overall, Norris's contribution to the field of political science through the propounding of Electoral Integrity Theory has been significant, providing a comprehensive framework for evaluating the quality and fairness of elections worldwide.

Methodology

This study adopts thematic research design; it tries to interrogate challenges faced in Nigerian 2023 general election by Electoral body INEC using the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System in an attempt for Election Integrity. Study engaged analysis of publicly available archive documents with reliance on secondary data. The research is conducted by examining literature on implementation of BVAS and Election Integrity in Nigeria. The literature was obtained through searches in publicly available material. Literature from non-serial publications, official reports, and conferences has been included particularly if they have been cited by other references in term of election. It also analyses the challenges using the theories adopted in the study.

Discussion of Findings

The reviews of literature reveal that the BVAS failed in its application to ensure the Nigerian 2023 general election integrity. The findings in of this study are analyzed through the application of the theoretical frameworks adopted. In applying TAM to the BVAS failure reveals the underlying factors that influence the acceptance and adoption of the system. It highlights the importance of addressing concerns related to usefulness and ease of use to ensure the effective implementation of voter accreditation technologies. By considering the perceptions and experiences of users, policymakers and election officials can identify areas for improvement, enhance system usability, and foster greater acceptance of technology-based solutions in the electoral process. It is important to note that TAM is just one of many theories that can be applied to analyze the topic. Other theories, such as Institutional Theory or Stakeholder Theory, could also provide valuable insights into the dynamics and challenges surrounding the failure of the BVAS in Nigeria's electoral process.

The Electoral Integrity Theory further suggests that electoral integrity is influenced by various key factors, including:

- 1. Legal Framework:** The existence of a robust legal framework that governs elections and protects the rights of voters is essential for electoral integrity. In the case of the BVAS failure, an analysis of the legal framework governing voter accreditation, its enforcement, and any shortcomings or gaps in the legislation can provide insights into the system's integrity.
- 2. Transparency and Accountability:** Transparency in the electoral process, including voter accreditation, is crucial for ensuring integrity. The failure of the BVAS may indicate a lack of transparency in its implementation, manipulation of data, or insufficient mechanisms to hold accountable those responsible for its operation. Analyzing these factors can shed light on the integrity of the electoral process.
- 3. Citizen Participation and Inclusivity:** Electoral integrity is enhanced when citizens have equal opportunities to participate in the electoral process. If the BVAS failure disproportionately affects certain groups, leading to exclusion or disenfranchisement, it

undermines the principles of inclusivity and equality in elections. Assessing the impact of the BVAS on citizen participation and inclusivity is crucial to understanding its effect on electoral integrity.

4. Impartiality and Independence of Electoral Authorities: The independence and impartiality of electoral authorities are critical for electoral integrity. An analysis of the BVAS failure should examine the role and effectiveness of the institutions responsible for implementing and overseeing the system. If there are indications of bias, lack of independence, or compromised decision-making processes, it raises concerns about the integrity of the electoral system.

5. Public Confidence and Perception: Electoral integrity is closely linked to public confidence and perception of the electoral process. If the BVAS failure erodes public trust in the accuracy, fairness, and transparency of voter accreditation, it undermines the overall integrity of the elections. Analyzing public confidence and perception can provide valuable insights into the impact of the BVAS failure on electoral integrity.

Factors responsible for the failure of Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) in ensuring the integrity of elections Nigeria

Technological Vulnerabilities: The BVAS relies heavily on technology, making it susceptible to technological vulnerabilities. Poor system design, inadequate cybersecurity measures, and potential hacking threats can compromise the accuracy, reliability, and security of voter accreditation. These vulnerabilities can lead to unauthorized access, data manipulation, and fraudulent activities, undermining the integrity of the electoral process.

Inadequate Infrastructure: Nigeria's vast geographic expanse and disparities in technological infrastructure present challenges in implementing and maintaining a robust BVAS. Limited access to reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and technological resources in remote areas hampers the effective deployment and functionality of the system. Unequal distribution of infrastructure exacerbates the digital divide, leading to exclusion and disenfranchisement of certain segments of the population.

Operational and Logistical Challenges: The BVAS requires efficient coordination and management of various components, including registration, verification, training of election officials, and the synchronization of online and offline processes. Inadequate capacity, logistical challenges, and insufficient training of personnel resulted in operational inefficiencies, delays, and errors, compromising the accuracy and credibility of voter accreditation.

Insufficient Civic Education and Awareness: The failure of the BVAS can be attributed to inadequate civic education and public awareness campaigns. Many voters may lack understanding of the BVAS procedures, their rights, and the importance of accurate voter accreditation. Insufficient voter education efforts can lead to confusion, non-compliance, or manipulation of the system, jeopardizing the integrity of elections.

Political Interference and Manipulation: Political interference and manipulation in the BVAS can undermine its effectiveness and integrity. Influential individuals or groups may attempt to manipulate the system by falsifying voter data, pressuring election officials, or engaging in voter suppression tactics. Such interference compromises the impartiality and fairness of the accreditation process, hindering the integrity of elections.

Inadequate Legal and Regulatory Frameworks: The absence of comprehensive and enforceable legal and regulatory frameworks can contribute to the failure of the BVAS. Weak legislation, loopholes, or inconsistencies in electoral laws can create opportunities for abuse, fraud, and electoral malpractices. A robust legal and regulatory framework is necessary to ensure the accountability, transparency, and integrity of the BVAS.

The implications and consequences of the BVAS failure on Nigeria's 2023 electoral process and election integrity are significant and demand attention

Undermined Election Integrity: The failure of the BVAS in Nigeria 2023 elections significantly undermines the integrity of the electoral process. It has risen concerns about the accuracy, fairness, and transparency of voter accreditation, casting doubt on the legitimacy of

election outcomes. This erosion of election integrity has led to political instability, social unrest, and a loss of public confidence in the democratic process.

Decreased Voter Trust and Participation: The failure of BVAS has resulted in a decreased voter trust and participation in the 2023 elections. This surfaces in the presidential election as some voters perceive the accreditation system to be flawed or susceptible to manipulation, some citizens choose not to participate during the gubernatorial elections, leading to lower voter turnout. This lack of engagement can weaken the democratic process and hinder the representation of the people's will.

Potential Election Disputes and Legal Challenges: The BVAS failure gave rise to election disputes and legal challenges. Political parties and candidates are contesting the validity of the electoral process, raising concerns about irregularities in voter accreditation. This has led to prolonged legal battles, delays in election results, and a destabilization of the political environment.

Risk of Political Instability: A flawed BVAS in the Nigerian 2023 general elections has posed a risk of political instability in Nigeria. Some citizens whom have perceived the electoral process as compromised; engaged in protests, demonstrations, and political unrest, if such unrest continue it may result to a far-reaching consequence, including disruptions to governance, economic uncertainty, and a negative impact on national stability.

Setback to Democratic Progress: The failure of the BVAS in the Nigerian 2023 just concluded elections has resulted to a setback to Nigeria's democratic progress. Which has raised questions such as the effectiveness of electoral reforms and the capacity of election management bodies INEC, to ensure free, fair, and credible elections in the future, this setback can hamper the country's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and practices.

Conclusion

Till date even as the present government assumed office and had began activates such performing its public duties as regards to both national and international matters, the opposition parties are still consistent in the tribunal seeking justice as declared by the parties

that the Nigerian 2023 general election was manipulated. This is as the result of the failure of the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) in Nigeria's 2023 electoral process resulting to significant implications for electoral integrity and democratic governance. The analysis of the key factors contributing to the BVAS failure reveals the challenges that undermine the system's effectiveness and compromise the integrity of elections. These challenges include technological vulnerabilities, inadequate infrastructure, operational difficulties, political interference, and insufficient legal and regulatory frameworks.

These factors undermine public trust, diminish election outcomes' legitimacy, and have the potential to result in social unrest and political instability. BVAS failure undermines transparency, fairness, and inclusivity principles, which are essential for maintaining integrity. It is crucial to address these challenges to confidence, strengthen democratic institutions, and ensure a credible and inclusive electoral process. Reforms such as enhancing technology infrastructure, improving cybersecurity measures, investing in operational efficiency, strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks, and conducting comprehensive civic education initiatives are vital to mitigate the BVAS failure and uphold integrity.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the failure of the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) and its implications for electoral integrity in Nigeria, the following recommendations can be made:

- i. To enable the successful adoption of voter accreditation systems, invest in enhancing technology infrastructure, particularly in remote and underserved areas.
- ii. This entails improving power supply, internet connectivity, and technology resources to support the BVAS and reduce operational difficulties. It is also important to implement a robust cybersecurity protocols to protect the BVAS from potential hacking threats, data manipulation, and unauthorized access.
- iii. Regular security audits, encryption techniques, and training for election officials on cybersecurity practices can strengthen the integrity of the system. Conduct rigorous

pilot testing of the BVAS to find and fix any technical or operational issues before full-scale implementation.

- iv. Utilize impartial audits and assessments to gauge the system's efficiency, usability, and integrity. Use stakeholder feedback and the knowledge gained from pilot initiatives to guide changes and improvements.
- v. Strengthen Legal and Regulatory Frameworks: Review and update existing electoral laws and regulations to address the loopholes and gaps that contribute to the BVAS failure.
- vi. Ensure the legal framework provides clear guidelines for voter accreditation, data protection, transparency, and accountability. Establish mechanisms for enforcing compliance and holding responsible parties accountable.

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RELIGION, REGION, ETHNICITY AND VOTING PATTERN IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC: A PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The politics of religion, region and ethnicity have permeated Nigeria's political landscape to the detriment of social relations, voting pattern and legitimate democracy. The history of voting pattern in Nigeria has shown that since the First Republic, religion, region and ethnicity have been the influencing factor in determining the voting pattern in Nigeria. Religion, region and ethnic cleavages have remained an integral part of political actions, with political parties/leaders and their supporters, being ruled by these factors. Politicians and adherents of religious movements; regional and ethnic groups have used religion, regional and ethnic platforms to achieve their political ambitions, thereby promoting ethno-religious groupism in Nigeria. This study examines the influence of religion, region and ethnicity on the voting patterns of the Nigerian electorate, especially in the Fourth Republic. It employed the exploratory, qualitative research design, using thematic analysis to analyze data collected from secondary sources of published and unpublished articles, journals and online resources. The study concludes that the political behaviour of the electorates and voting pattern, to a large extent is determined by their religious affiliation, ethnicity, regionalism and other issue-based politics. The study recommends that since election winning is a game of numbers, an enabling platform should be created to enable both the minority and majority ethnic groups to produce the President of Nigeria, by implementing the recommendation of 2014 Constitutional conference on the rotation of the office of the President among the six geo-political zones; this will eliminate the voting pattern that's influenced by religion, region and ethnic differences.

Keywords: Religion, Regionalism, Ethnicity, Voting Pattern and Politics

Introduction

In the history of politics in Nigeria, the country as a plural society has witnessed the reprehensible use of religious, regional and ethnic movements by politicians to achieve their

personal ambitions. Consequently, this has affected the voting patterns in Nigeria's elections. Democratic developments and elections have been characterized by a political behavior of rigging, the manipulation of religion, ethnicity, regionalism and nepotism as rightly observed by Olayode (2015), Metumara (2010) and Rufai (2011). Voting pattern during elections is based on voters' affinity with leaders that belong to the same religious groups, ethnic cleavages, region and other sentiments. The Fourth Republic elections are noted by the outrageous voting display of impunity, religious bias, ethnicity, regionalism, tribalism and violent rigging. The voting pattern is also based on the above characteristics instead of issue-based campaign and elections. The voters are not mindful of credibility, effectiveness and outstanding record of candidates' performance but their votes are casted on the basis of ethnic, regional and religious affiliation or belongingness.

The 1979 election was dominated by ethnicity and religion. The 1993 elections which had a Presidential Muslim-Muslim ticket of Abiola/Babagana Kinjibe witnessed a campaign of calumny. Ihonvbere (1999, p.115) opined that NRC campaigned that an Abiola presidency will impose Islam on Nigeria and also marginalized the Christians and further accused the SDP of not respecting the religious sensitivity of the country with a Muslim-Muslim ticket. It was depleted in 2019 and 2023 general elections. Thom-Otuya (2016, p.62) reiterated that 'our election into leadership or political offices is engulfed by cheating, fraud and violence. Any contestant who is rigged out of election is always frustrated and can easily rebel against the society due to injustice'. This situation could be worsened if both rivals belong to different religious organizations as noticed in the northern part of Nigeria in 2011 when a Christian defeated a Muslim opponent.

The dominant perception of politics and governance in Nigeria is that political positions are means of self-settlement rather than calls to national service (Oladipo, 2000). This suggests why people go to the extent of unnecessarily using religion, region and ethnic advantage and grouping to achieve their political ambitions. Religion, region and ethnicity play major roles as sources of identity in the polity than national identity in Nigeria (Opeyemi,

2016), and many politicians and electorates allow them to become determinant factors in their voting pattern.

According to Dung (2017), there are several factors which influence voting behaviour or pattern in Nigeria. They include: party identification model, social structure model, dominant ideological model and rational choice model. Others are ethno-religious factors, money-politics and vote-buying, perception of voters on political corruption, party ideology and affiliation; these and others have combined to affect the voting pattern and entire democratic process in Nigeria (Oloyede, 2015; Ibrahim, 2015; Owen & Usman, 2015; Anejionu et al, 2016; Ukase, 2016; Lawal, 2016; and Nwobashi & Itumo, 2017; Alfa and Marangos, 2016). This study therefore examines the influence of religion, region and ethnicity on the voting patterns of the Nigerian electorate, especially in the Fourth Republic. It employed the exploratory, qualitative research design, using thematic analysis to analyze data collected from secondary sources of published and unpublished articles, journals and online resources.

Conceptual Clarifications

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is more than just the composition of language, culture and history; it is about perception of identity by groups, family and community or attribution by outsiders (Agara & Ibebunjo, 2022). The feelings that one's social group or ethnic group has been marginalized due to preference given to an ethnic group against others simply defines ethnicity. Ethnicity is one of the keys to understanding Nigeria's pluralistic society. It distinguishes groupings of people who for historical reasons have come to be seen as distinctive by themselves and others- on the basis of locational origins and a series of other cultural markers. Ethnicity results from mere classification of people by others and it is assigned "according to the requirements of the classifiers" (Fowler, 1991; Staub, 1989 & Eriksen, 1996 p.8). Hence, "ethnic boundaries are between whoever people think they are between" (Fardon, 1987, p.176).

Three competing schools of thought have dominated the interpretations of the link between ethnic solidarity and the proclivity of voting pattern. Firstly, the primordialists see ethnicity as historically rooted and embedded in people's way of life and culture, and enforced by social institutions, collective myths and memories-developed from early socialization, and hence likely to continue over time. Secondly, instrumentalists perceive ethnicity as a platform for the trailing, mobilization, exploitation and manipulation to achieve individuals and groups vested interests. Thirdly, social constructionists portray ethnicity as an invention of the human imagination, an intellectual construct devoid of objective realities (Agara, & Ibebunjo, 2022). In whichever ways, ethnicity plays a major role in the voters' behavior and voting pattern in Nigerian elections. Ethnicity has the negative role in Nigerian politics where political behaviour and voting pattern is shaped according to such variable.

Religion

There is no scholarly generally accepted definition of religion; however, religion can be seen as a range of social-cultural systems, including designated behaviors and practices, morals, beliefs, sacred places, ethics or organizations, which generally relate humanity to supernatural and spiritual elements. Religion brings different people together. Religion is the worship of the supernatural; and it derives its force from man's observation that nature or the unseen appears so powerful, harsh and unfriendly. He therefore seeks harmony with it through prayers, worship and adulation (Ejituwu, 1995, p.97). According to Jacobsson and Lindblom (2016, p.78), Durheim posits that the role of the sacred in all societies makes "elementary forms of religious life pervade collective life to the extent that there is basic division of the world into the sacred and profane, the former being the shared sacrosanct ideals that unite a group, the symbols that represent it, and collective rites that strengthen group allegiance, and generate the capacity to act in unison".

Beyers (2015), argues that despite the vacillating relationship between religion and politics, religion plays a definite role in politics; he adduced the reasons for using religion as a political instrument to include: (i) religion and politics are emotional in nature and are

identity markers of human existence; politicians use it to prove their active religious commitment through religious gatherings and utilize political platforms for political meetings; (ii) religious communities are effective partners in the implementation of political policies because the voters are members of various communities, and religious considerations could become part of political decisions. Martin (2019) posits that politicians offer electorates desperate enticing and motivating benefits in form of material and cash gifts, with the aim of influencing their choice of who to vote for. This was so evident, even in the last concluded 2023 general elections. The religious nature of the Nigerian society advances the role that religion plays in the voting behavior and pattern of Nigeria's electorate. The religionization of politics since Nigeria's independence is perpetuated by the entrenchment of religion as a potent force in political party mobilization, regime legitimacy, and the formation of identity (Kastfelt, 1994; Fox and Sandler, 2003; Onapajo, 2012, 2016, and Vaughan, 2016).

Vaughan (2016) writing on the role and politicization of religion advanced that the divisiveness of religion manifests in its politicization, becoming a tool of struggle for the control of Nigeria state across religious boundaries, and this is rooted in the people's strong allegiance to religious affiliations than political parties. Hence, Opeyemi (2016) is of the opinion that the bond between politicians and religious leaders are inseparable in Nigeria. As long as elections in Nigeria are stage-based on the primordial sentiments, the electorates will be without the basics of political culture which will strengthen their determination of the choice of voting. Ethnicity, religion and regionalism become tools for acquisition of, sustenance and consolidation of political power at the Centre, in Nigeria. Let us see how politicization of religion in Nigeria creates negative perception and its consequences in the under listed table.

Table: Perception and Consequences of Religionization of Politics in Nigeria

S/N	Perception	Consequence
1	People see religion as a tool for political benefit	Endorsement of wrong candidates/vote-buying.
2	It makes people think politicians are more important than religious groups.	Motivates people to go beyond the boundary between politics and religion.
3	It portrays religion as a business.	Vote-buying.
4	Politicians think it is possible to hijack religion to create division in society.	Religious intolerance and disunity in the Country.
5	People think that electioneering is an opportunity for religious groups to capture power for the benefit of their adherents and to demonstrate superiority.	Threat to other religious groups.
6	It portrays religion as a platform for unhealthy rivalry.	Perception of hostility.
7	The involvement of politicians with different religious affiliations means mutual suspicion.	Electoral violence and hate speech.
8	Political power determines the destinies of people rather than the supernatural, and God is indifferent to the political mismanagement of national wealth.	Struggle for power, vote-buying, and endemic corruption.
9	Politicians know that religion is the easiest tool to use to get sympathy from their followers	Religious conflicts during elections.

1 0	It makes followers think that a person of the same faith as them can govern better than others, thereby causing conflicts among different group.	Religious intolerance.
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It is important to note that ethno-religious sentiments have negatively contributed immensely on the electoral process and social behaviour in Nigeria. As Nnoli (2008) succinctly explained why sectarians attack has manifested on an unprecedented scale in Nigeria, saying:

Religious differences have a high potential for separating people from one another. Throughout history these differences have been the basis of tension, animosity and even war. Many times, a certain fanaticism is associated with people of a different religion, or hampers mutual trust and confidence when such relations happen to exist. This is because religion tends to define what constitutes appropriate social behavior. When this definition is at cross purposes with another, normal relations become difficult (Nnoli, 2008).

Abimbola (2010, p.103) argued that it is a core value of Islam never to allow other religion to coexist together. Islam does not separate the state from the religion, therefore, must be transformed into an Islamic state formation by whatever means. This suggests the reason behind the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The Boko Haram sect perceives Nigeria as a by-product of western imperialism and its antics promoted through Christianity. Therefore, they consider the existence of the Nigeria as a secular state, permitting the operation of various religions and their philosophies as antithesis to Islam. In light of the following what do you think will be their voting pattern during elections?

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Rational Choice Theory, propounded by Downs (1957) and Arrow (1986). The rational choice theory of elections postulates that political behaviour and voting pattern of the electorates is a rational choice determined by certain indicators, such as economic benefit, resource allocation, distribution of goods and services, allocation of juicy political offices and favour (Downs, 1957; Arrow, 1986). The theory is either an evaluative or non-evaluative discourse. When the rationality is based on performance measurement, it becomes

evaluative because of the process of measuring and evaluating the regimes performance to determine whether the candidates deserve voter's choice or not.

The clientelistic considerations, such as favouritism, patronage, ethnicity, religion, regionalism and family-ties are non-evaluative aspect of rational choice theory. It is primarily sentimental and emotive. The theorists are of the opinion that elections in African countries, more especially Nigeria are mostly considered on clientelistic rationalism where the ethnic, religious and regional cleavages are determinants of voting pattern. They also identified what they termed "Swing votes" in developing democracies, where they asserted that ethnic, religious, patronage and clientelistic satisfaction of the voters when measured with evaluation of performance of the leaders in office can influence the voting pattern of any election. Therefore, by this implication the voting pattern in Nigerian elections is mostly being influenced by the non-evaluative form of rational choice theory.

Political Culture and Voting Pattern in Nigeria

Every polity exists with a belief system inherent in the people. The greatness of any nation is a product of the political culture and behaviour (beliefs, dispositions and orientations) which is prevalent in that society (Chandra, 2007). The acceptance of any political regime as legitimate is determined by the primordial orientation of the citizens of a given political community towards politics. Therefore, political culture is a pattern of shared values, moral norms, beliefs, expectations and attitudes that relate to politics and its social context. According to Chandra (2007), political culture involves the understanding and the commitment of a people to a shared way of organizing a political society. He further observed that political culture is broader than public opinion because it is transcendent and enduring. In the Nigerian political culture, it is difficult to separate the behaviour of the electorates from the influence of history, as traceable to the impact of the colonial rule. The development of political system in Nigeria still hinges on the platforms created by her colonial masters. As Ojie (2006) noted;

the inherent colonial legacies of merging multiethnic and multi-religious groups to form the present-day Nigeria gave the political elites the chance of usurpation of ethnic and religious variables in Nigeria's democracy towards their quest for power and this has made the political behaviour and voting pattern of the electorates to be divisive and sentimental towards the elite's manipulation of ethnicity and religion (Ojie, 2006).

Political behaviour and voting pattern in Nigeria are affected by an amalgam of rival ethnic groups that were set against each other in a fierce rivalry in a struggle for power and competition for control of scarce resources and this has been visible in the political processes, and sometimes even threatens the corporate existence of the nation. Dung (2017) identified some major factors that influence the voting behaviour in Nigeria to include: social structure model, party identification model, dominant ideological model and rational choice model. The social structure model emphasizes the voting behaviour which is affected by social group membership or affiliation. This is evident in Nigerian context where every citizen belongs to one religious association, ethnic group or regional affiliation.

Most political campaigns are in the rural areas where greater percentage of the electorate are social group based. Politicians use their local languages to convince voters and lure their votes based on religious and ethnic affinity. The Muslims use their mosques to influence their members, while the Christians on their own part openly request that votes must be cast along religious lines. Party identification informs voters' decision based on partisanship. Each party member is by his/her political allegiance expected to vote for candidates of their party.

General elections are generally marred by dominance of ethno-religious sentiments as determinants of voting behaviour and political participation across the country. From the presidential through gubernatorial, national and state assemblies' elections, aspirants were largely chosen on the basis of ethno-regional identities (Sule, Sani & Mat 2017). This has been the culture in Nigerian elections where votes are allotted according to ethnic allegiance and religious sentiments by each particular section or group in the country where their candidates emerge irrespective of whether he will win through their votes or he will loss (Lenshie, 2014).

Political behaviour and elections in Nigeria is affected by poor institutionalisation of democratic values and culture. Consequently, inter-ethnic competition or tribalism is a great weakness which leads to instability in Nigeria's democracy. Agbu (2004) in his study of political culture and voting behaviour of Nigerian voters advanced that ethnic militias turned into a constituted authority and an unofficial threat to the electoral process and democratic development in the country. He observed that, as a result of the entrenchment of the politics of ethnicity and regionalism, the three main ethnic groups and regions Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba dominating North, West and East formed a culture of establishing ethnic militias who became violent and intimidating during elections prompting for candidates of their ethnic belonging. Thus, voting pattern is forcefully imposed regionally by these thugs.

Apart from ethnicity, region and religion, other factors that determine political behaviour and voting pattern of electorates in Nigeria are rigging of elections, Pre-bendelism, manipulation and political violence. Nigerian democracy is identified as Pre-bendel where the leaders who control power use every means possible to maintain power at all cost while those outside the corridors of power are using every available means possible to capture power all for selfish interest. According to Olasupo (2015) Political Godfatherism is a major factor in determining who will get the platform of contest among political parties and to a larger extent, the emergence of the winner in the general election. Some powerful cabals constituted themselves into a gangster that influence who should be elected. They sponsor these godsons and manipulate the electoral process to ensure he emerges by hook or crook means. Vote buying is a new invention in the political system in Nigeria that influences the voting pattern of the electorates. Politics of money influence voters' behaviour to the extent that politics of give and take is much influential in the emergence of winners in any election in Nigeria. Politicians indulge in money-inducement during campaign and elections in order to secure the votes of the electorates and this culture has been normalized to the extent that, no matter how good a candidate is, if he could not give out money he may likely lose out in the elections. I will not conclude this part without examining the impact of media (print, electronic and social

media) on the political behavior of the electorates. Socialization through media and social media has influenced voters' behaviour. Socialization changes voters' orientation which leads to a shift in political, economic and social contexts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has examined the influence of religion, region, and ethnicity on the voting patterns of the Nigerian electorates in the fourth republic. Religion, ethnicity and regionalism have considerable influence on the voting patterns of the Nigerian electorates. Although there is constant emphasis on the need for the citizens of this nation to put efforts in promoting national interest above ethnic, regional and religious interests, yet there is no politician in Nigeria who will win an election devoid of the support of members of his/her ethno-religious affiliation.

Hence, politicians tend to give prioritized attention to the needs of their ethnic nationalities at the detriment of the national interest. Unfortunately, this groupism promotes the activities of anti-democratic forces and creates a platform for the democratic underdevelopment and sectionalism in Nigeria. This study therefore suggests that the nation Nigeria does not need the religionization, and ethnicization of politics for good governance and the consolidation of democracy.

- i. Since election winning is a game of numbers, an enabling platform should be created to enable both the minority and majority ethnic groups to produce the President of Nigeria, by implementing the recommendation of 2014 Constitutional conference on the rotation of the office of the President among the six geo-political zones
- ii. Similarly, a conscious programme be evolved to liberate the citizenry from the primordialistic mentality; this will eliminate the voting pattern that's influenced by religion, region and ethnic differences.
- iii. Politicians in Nigeria should make paradigm shift from the colonial political system in formation of party and create political ideologies that will suite the plurality of Nigerian society/

- iv. Nigerians should develop institutions that are “principle” and “Character” based rather than the religious theatre displayed in our worship centres (Mosque, Churches, etc).
- v. The religious leaders should focus on morality of the members, more than financial benefits, as proposed by a friend, when politicians come to seek our prayers and votes, religious leaders should rather speak to their consciences than praying for their successes.
- vi. There must be deliberate and constant efforts to restore the right societal values, in all strata of Nigerian society. The Power of the people which is an essential in democracy must be reclaimed by Nigerian citizenry.
- vii. Electoral umpire, INEC should be overhauled, and if possible, the ‘act’ that allows the appointment of the Chairman by the President to give way to the leadership grow-up, like the civil and public service, should be nullified.

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ROLE OF THE BRITISH PRESS IN THE POLITICAL CRISES, SECESSION AND POGROM OF THE NIGERIA CIVIL WAR (1964-1967)

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ABSTRACT

The political crisis of 1964 –1967 laid the foundation of the current political posture of Nigeria. What started as allegations of election rigging in the Western Regional election, dovetailed into election violence unprecedented in Nigeria. With the breakdown of law and order in the Western Region, Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa declared a state of emergency. The continued violence led to the January 1966 coup which killed some prominent politicians from the North and Western Region. Using the qualitative approach and the descriptive narrative style, some secondary sources and archival records revealed the seditious and vicious disinformation unleashed by the British press that created the division, tribal hatred, pogrom and ungovernability. It was the British press that started the media campaign of rigged election when the election had not even been conducted; secession of the Eastern Region when there was nothing like that and the killing of the Igbos in Northern Nigeria when the killing had not started. The study also found that the British press played one group against the other, Muslims against Christians, Igbos against Hausas, north against the east, party against party; which resulted in the bloodbath, two coups, genocide, secession and a civil war. It was not indeed the intentions of Nigerians to make their newly independent country be ungovernable, but the role of the British press heated the polity and deceived Nigerian people into violence, killings, secession and civil war.

Keywords: Disinformation, Propaganda, Secession, Pogrom, Nigeria Civil War, British Press

Introduction

The 1964-1966 political crisis in Nigeria was a period better not remembered because it is upon the tragic events of this period that lay the present political violence and uncertainty in the Nigerian State. It will remain relevant in defining the political future and survival of the Nigerian state. Nigeria's independence government was produced by the collaboration of the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC), while the Action Group (AG) of Chief Awolowo was in the opposition (Fashagba & Ajayi, 2015; Isife, 2020). The philosophy, political leadership and ideology of the three parties were incompatible. While the Action Group favours liberal socialism, the NCNC favoured Pan-Africanism and the NPC of Ahmadu Bello favours theocratic democracy with strong ties with the British Commonwealth (Brigaglia, 2017).

It was upon this inconvenient heterogeneity that Nigeria set up its first Republican government with the inconvenient marriage of the NPC and the NCNC. In 1963, just three years after Independence, Nigeria was plunged into a crisis of confidence, trust and harmony over disputed national census figures. With the anger, mistrust and smouldering bitterness of the census saga, the political class ushered in the Republic. In 1962, the foundation for the demise of the First Republic was laid with the eruption of the Western Region political crisis when the Action Group of Chief Awolowo expelled Chief Samuel Akintola from the party, who was at that time the premier of the Western Region (Haruna et al., 2023; LeVan, 2014).

The November 1965 legislative election in the Western Region was an opportunity for the UPGA to win a majority vote and have good control of the South, again, they were out-manoeuvred by the NPC which supported Akintola to defeat the UPGA amidst allegations of violence and voting rigging. The defeat of the pro-Action Group alliance in the Western Region with the backing of the pro-North NPC was seen as an insult to supporters of Chief Awolowo who was jailed by the same structure. The result sparked off the worst riot in the post-independent Nigeria. Over Two Thousand people were killed, properties destroyed, and the Western Region was ungovernable (Haruna et al., 2023; Yahaya, 2020). There was also

disaffection in Nigerian society over unfairness in the election, rigging and violence in the conduct of the 1964 and 1965 elections. Consequently, in January 1966, there was a military coup that killed the chief Akintola, Tafawa Balewa and Ahmadu Bello. Of the 5 main ringleaders of the coup, 4 were of the Igbo extraction while one is of the Yoruba extraction. Eventually, the head of the army, General Ironsi foiled the coup to restore discipline within the armed forces. After forming the Federal Military Government (FMG), General Ironsi suspended the constitution, and the regional governments, dissolved all legislative bodies, banned political parties, and appointed military governors in each region and assigned officers to ministerial positions.

In the bid to unite the country, Ironsi favoured the unitary government by promulgating the Unification Decree in March 1966, which dissolved the federation, and regions and unified the federal and regional civil service (Albert, 2013; Baxter, 2015). The reaction of the Igbos in Northern Nigeria to the January coup and the non-prosecution of the coup plotters created resentment in the north. There were rumours that the January coup was an Igbo plot to dominate Nigeria and that the Unification Decree was a Christian ploy to dominate Muslims (Teniola, 2017; Unya, 2022). These allegations and suspicions overheated the populace prompting anti-Igbo rhetoric. Eventually, in July northern military officers staged a coup, during which Ironsi and some other Igbo officers were killed followed by the killing of the Igbos in Northern Nigeria. After the Counter-coup, Yakubu Gowon emerged as the head of state.

Throughout 1966 and a few months in 1967 Gowon made frantic efforts to constitute a national convention to move the country forward but the violence grew in intensity. Eventually, in September, the violence against Igbos in the north was intense with soldiers of the northern extraction participating actively in the killings. Eventually over 30,000 Igbos were killed while over one million were forced to return to the Eastern Region. In reaction to the killings, some northerners were killed in some cities in the Eastern Region. The disintegration of the country was imminent as people could only be safe in their regions. The

Eastern Region's military governor, Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, refused to recognise Yakubu Gowon as the head of state citing the seniority issues as he was not the most senior in military traditions.

However, due to the killing of Igbos in other parts of the country, Ojukwu was under pressure to secede and assert total control of the Eastern Region. In the bid to find lasting solutions, governors convened in Lagos but could not resolve the thorny issues (Stremlau, 2015; Venter, 2018). Fearing for his life, Ojukwu refused to attend any meeting in Lagos. Consequently, in January 1967, the two delegations met in Aburi, Ghana at the invitation of the Ghanaian head of state. Eventually, the Aburi Accord provided for a loose confederation of the country (Moses & Lasse, 2018; Okoye, 2013). Unfortunately, on getting back from Aburi, the federal civil service rejected the Aburi Agreement. Still fuming with the anger of the pogrom, the Eastern Region felt secession was the best option to safeguard the lives and property of their people since the government of Nigeria could not guarantee their lives. Consequently, on 26 May the Eastern Region Consultative Assembly voted unanimously to secede from Nigeria. On 30 May, the Eastern Region breakaway region became the Republic of Biafra (Baxter, 2015). Gowon called for a state of emergency and thus started the 3 years civil war that caused the death of over 3 million people.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's gravitation from independence to political violence, acrimony, discrimination, coups and civil war is consistent with ex-British colonies. As people who yearned for independence from colonialism, independence would have been an event that would bring joy, happiness, progress, security and development, but in most British ex-colonies; there are constant happenstances akin to British colonies post-independence. Some of the post-independent British colonies have consistently been plunged into political violence, disunity, acrimony and sometimes civil war. A few examples will suffice. From the above instances stated, it was not surprising that Nigeria, a once British colony would fall into the same scenario as other British colonies that plunge into political crises, religious wars,

communal armed insurrection, power tussle, hate and end up with bloody civil wars and most times, secession. The Nigerian scenario is not different from the Ugandan, Sudanese or India/Pakistan where; at the exit of the British, the newly independent country goes into a vicious sectarian, political and religious bloodbath. Is this a coincidence?

Nigeria gained independence in 1 October 1960. The spirit of independence came with joy, unity and the urge to build a prosperous and united country. But within 6 years, Nigeria was on the verge of disintegration as a result of political violence, religious antagonism, power tussle, and cultural and historical incompatibility. It is doubtful that Nigerians set out to kill each other, and fight a civil war, preferring to annihilate each other than to create a prosperous and peaceful Nigeria. It is the conviction of many Nigerians that the first set of political class was naïve and untrained to recognise disinformation and subversive propaganda of foreign intelligence agencies who hoodwinked them to engage in self-destruct and prolong political crises that ended up in civil war. Nigerians are not alone in this predicament; Uganda, Sudan and India have been through this bloody path to nationhood. This investigation therefore must identify the complicity or otherwise of foreign involvement in the post-election crises within the timeframe 1966 – 1967.

Clarifications of Terms

In this segment, some of the terms used in the investigation will be clarified. In doing this, therefore, the following terms will be clarified; disinformation, propaganda and ‘divide and Rule’.

Disinformation

Disinformation is a form of communication intentionally designed to deceive the targeted audience (Guess & Lyons, 2020). Citing Bennett and Livingston, (2018), Diaz, (2023) defines disinformation as an orchestrated activity in which actors insert “strategic deceptions that may appear very credible to those consuming” (Diaz, 2023). Disinformation is deliberately orchestrated by the initiator to manipulate, confuse and disrupt public processes (Zelenkauskaitė, 2022). While trying to define disinformation, Fallis, (2009) quoted the

dictionary definition of disinformation as “deliberately misleading information announced publicly or leaked by a government or especially by an intelligence agency” (Fallis, 2009). In this paper, this dictionary definition of disinformation will be adopted.

Propaganda

The word propaganda as used today is different from the original meaning. Originated when Pope Gregory XV convened a board to convert unbelievers to Catholicism called “*Congregatio de progapanda fide*,” meaning “congregation for propagating the faith” of the Catholic church (Fitzmaurice, 2018). Propaganda was later popularised by writers as an organization, movement or group for the spread of a specific doctrine or ideology or organised spreading of information, in a biased or misleading manner, to promote a political cause or point of view (Fitzmaurice, 2018). In its original meaning, it has nothing to do with lies or deceit. Since then, propaganda has emerged as a political structure designed to coerce and persuade the general public to conform to a particular viewpoint or predetermined conformity. Politically, it has become the weapon of choice for governments to control, manipulate and encourage targeted audience to comply with certain directives or expected outcomes. That’s the reason most governments rely on propaganda to manipulate their citizens to accept their viewpoints, programs or actions.

During World War II Adolph Hitler and Josef Goebbels, through their obnoxious policies demonised propaganda in their use to be synonymous with words like ‘lies,’ ‘deceit,’ ‘manipulation,’ ‘mind control,’ and ‘brainwashing (Manzoor et al., 2019). While analysing the nature of propaganda, Koppang, (2009) describes propaganda as having the qualities of being covert, subtle and evasive, and posited that propaganda functions as a means of mass control by employing persuasion, and manipulation where the source is most times unanimous. In his most lucid modus operandi, Koppang, (2009) described propaganda as operating by circumventing individual reasoning and rational choice to prey on an individual’s emotions such as, fear, anger, grief, guilt and revenge (Koppang, 2009). While citing Lasswell (1927), Manzoor, (2019) defined propaganda as organised opinion using vital symbols, pictures,

rumours, stories, and various forms of communication to manipulate and influence public opinion (Manzoor et al., 2019). Furthermore, propaganda is communication targeted to persuade humans to do the bidding of the propagandist so that the audience will perform the role allocated to them to achieve the objectives of the propagandist (Manzoor et al., 2019). The definition of Koppang and Manzoor will be adopted in this paper.

Theoretical Framework

Framing Theory is the most appropriate theory to explain the role of the media in creating insecurity, division, violence and a civil war in Nigeria within the period under review. The Framing Theory in concept is the ability to frame messages and information to influence public opinion by bringing to the fore the information most desired by the media while masking the information deemed irrelevant to the general public (Chong & Druckman, 2007). So, the media in this manner chooses what the public reads. Within this study, framing in mass media consists of constructs, concepts and patterns on how public audience, perceive, understand and interpret the reality gleaned from mass media (Arowolo, 2017). Framing is therefore an important part of manipulating information within the public space. If information is properly framed, it has the capacity to keep the audience focusing on specific issues while also distracting them from other issues that are equally germane (Parveen, 2017). The Framing Theory originated from the works of Erving Goffman and Gregory Bateson. The Framing Theory was to gain traction within the academia with the works Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman who introduced the concept of information cognitive biases and heuristics. From the works of the duo, it was revealed that the general public could be persuaded and skewed depending on the framing of information. However, it was not until the 1980s that the seminal works of Robert Mathew Entman on News Framing revealed how media organizations selectively highlights specific issues while downplaying the others (Entman, 2007). Entman further revealed that the selective news frame had tremendous effect on the general public.

It is this framing technique that the British Press used in shaping the Nigerian public to think of political violence, ethnic superiority, religious intolerance, regional exclusivity and

secession. It is the framing of information by the British Press that pitted the Northern region against the Western and Eastern Region. The successful framing of information by the British Press created suspicion with the three major ethnic groups as well as incompatibility of political leaders in Northern Nigeria with those in Western and Eastern regions. The continuous framing of news and information by the British created the atmosphere for the Western Region political violence, the first military coup, the second military coup, the ethnic pogrom in Northern Region, the Biafra secession and the Nigerian civil war. This can be seen in the publications by the London Times, the Observer, the Telegraph as well as the Guardian newspapers published by the British press.

Nigeria and the British Commonwealth

Before independence, the British were uneasy about post-independent Nigeria not being within the Commonwealth orbit judging by the sweeping wave of Pan-Africanism championed by the Ghanaian Kwame Nkrumah and highly trumpeted by Nnamdi Azikiwe, the leader of NCNC. So, Zik's Eastern Region was very serious about taking Nigeria towards Pan-Africanism instead of the British Commonwealth. Similarly, in the Western Region, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was canvassing for democratic socialism, meaning that if Chief Awolowo had become the prime minister of Nigeria, the British Commonwealth would not have been an option. Meaning that the political leaders in the southern part of Nigeria were not contemplating any British overlord. According to Brigaglia, (2017), the apprehension within the British establishment about the global alignment of post-independent Nigeria was explained thus:

At independence, Nigeria was the richest, the most populous, but at the same time the most diverse and politically complex country in West Africa. The choices of the newly independent government in terms of its global alignments were less predictable than elsewhere and carried a greater stake. The British, relying on the influence of the old Muslim aristocracy, favoured the creation of a conservative power block that would thwart the spread of "radical" pan-Africanist ideas, tying the newly independent West African giant to Western economic and strategic interests through the Commonwealth (Brigaglia, 2017, p 13)

From the above, the British were concerned about Nigeria's future in the geopolitics of global politics. There was therefore the need to ensure that a post-independent Nigeria remained within the orbit of the Commonwealth. So, the British decided to create a conservative Muslim power block to fend off the rascality of Pan-Africanism. In trying to achieve this, the British saw in Ahmadu Bello and the Northern Region, as willing allies in the shared common interest. For the British to have Nigeria in the Commonwealth, it has ensured Ahmadu Bello's NPC become victorious in the forthcoming parliamentary elections to run the affairs of the country and assure Britain of being in the British Commonwealth.

With this strategic decision, Ahmadu Bello and his NPC became the "...conservative power block that would thwart the spread of "radical" pan-Africanist ideas tying the newly independent West African giant to Western economic and strategic interests through the Commonwealth". With this divide and rule tactics, the British ensured that the NPC ruled the post-independent Nigerian government to the exclusion of the Eastern and Western Regions. To ensure that NPC and Ahmadu Bello got the strategic advice needed to be in power, two British officials were deployed at the disposal of Ahmadu Bello According to Brigaglia, (2017):

M. Cook and David Muffett, ... was a member of the British Tory Party who had served for sixteen years as a colonial D.O. (district officer) before independence. Muffett had remained a close personal confidant of Bello after independence, being appointed as the Sardauna's "special duty officer" and permanent secretary in Kaduna (Brigaglia, 2017, .p 15)

The two British personnel were all highly connected to the seat of power in London as well as having long experience in Nigerian politics. From the foregoing, the British didn't trust anyone and were apprehensive of losing Nigeria. It was later discovered that the two British officers were planted on Ahmadu Bello to ensure he kept to his promises to the British and secondly, there were no Pan-African elements or sentiments that would infiltrate the NPC.

"... the central role of M Cook and David Muffett ... needs to be read in the light of British early post-colonial foreign policy. There can be no doubt, in fact, that ... the two British officers were worried about the potential "infiltration" of pan-Africanist

and anti-British ideas in the NPC ... Such a concern was explicitly voiced ... which stated that “as the Ex-Emir appears to have become a focal point for local Tijaniyya activity, it is necessary to ensure that he is not used as a pawn in Pan-African political activity (Brigaglia, 2017, .p 15)

The two British officers M Cook and David Muffet were part of the British structure to ensure Ahmadu Bello and NPC secured the reins of power in post-independent Nigeria. When the ex-Emir Sanusi of Kano was hobnobbing with Aminu Kano’s NEPU, the two British saw this as an infiltration of Pan-Africanism into the Northern Region since Aminu Kano was aligned to Zik’s NCNC. The British, M Cook, the resident officer in Kano wrote a secret letter to Ahmadu Bello complaining that Emir Sanusi was not loyal to his government. It was still the British who conducted the inquiry that led to the ousting of Emir Sanusi, thereby eliminating any Pan-Africanist structure within Ahmadu Bello (Brigaglia, 2017).

To ensure the loyalty of Ahmadu Bello, an intelligence leak purported to have been from the Action Group accused Bello of collecting funds from Abdel Nassar of Egypt, who was as at that time championing Pan-Arabism and secularity; two phenomena that were inimical to the British ally, Saudi Arabia. To prove his sincerity, Bello made public his loyalty:

“The NPC once again goes on record that its policy is and always has been to bring the Northern Region into fullest and closest membership of the British Commonwealth and states quite categorically that it has never at any time entered or sought to enter into negotiations or any other relations with President Nasser or the United Arab Republic” (Brigaglia, 2017).

Assured of his loyalty to ensuring that post-independent Nigeria remained in the Commonwealth, the British designed the political map for Ahmadu Bello and the NPC to control the government of post-independent Nigeria. It was no longer the sole duty of NPC to fight for power, the British had to covertly ensure that NPC won the election to keep Nigeria within the British Commonwealth. to achieve political victory for their ally, the British unleashed the weight of their press on the other two regions in a wave of propaganda and disinformation to create chaos within and between the opponents of NPC (NCNC and AG), regardless of the consequences. The combination of the British media and their desperate

manoeuvres to ensure NPC victory in the national legislative election created political violence, deaths, division, hatred and general insecurity preparatory for political violence, pogrom and civil war.

The British Press and the Destabilization Campaign

The huge offensive propaganda that the British press during the civil was perpetuated by the British media giants. It included the likes of *The Times*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Observer*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Sunday Telegraph*, and the *Financial Times* (Akinyemi, 1972). These newspapers were used to shape the minds of Nigerians to create division, ethnic hatred, intra-party squabbles and violence. Some of the strategies used by them are articulated below.

Prompting towards rigging and secession

The idea of rigging elections and secession of the Eastern Region was created in the minds of Nigerians by the British Press. This is clear from the document below:

State elections of October 1965 would be crucial' for the immediate political future of the whole Federation' was echoed by Walter Schwarz of the Guardian,¹ and by the Lagos correspondent of the Financial Times. Walter Schwarz, even before the election, accepted the fact that allegations of rigging were 'substantially true', and both he and the Lagos Correspondent of the Financial Times drew attention to the possibility of secession by Eastern Nigeria if the elections were rigged. The Lagos Correspondent of the Financial Times even suggested that it would be immaterial whether the elections were rigged or not: if the Nigerian National Democratic Party won, it was widely believed that the East would secede ((Akinyemi, 1972).

In the first instance, the British Press created an air of suspicion of election rigging amongst the political parties even when the election has not taken place as well as the idea of secession. This deliberate propaganda was to ensure that the Nigerian political class are disunited and divided, especially those that profess socialism and Pan-Africanism. In this regard therefore, while citing Machiavelli in his Book, the '*The Art of War*', Yahaya, (2020) posited that the British employed the divide and conquer tactics as stated Machiavelli thus:

“A captain should endeavour with every art to divide the forces of the enemy, either by making him suspicious of his men in whom he trusted, or by giving him cause that he needs to separate his forces and because of this becomes weaker” (Yahaya, 2020, .p 2).

Apart from employing the Machiavellian art of war principle, they also employed the psychology that any information from the British press was infallibly authentic. With this in mind, politicians believed that there was the plan to rig the election. Sixty years after this incident, it is clear that this was mere disinformation used by the British to create disunity and suspicion amongst the Nigerian people. Whether there was any rigging or not, the politicians were ready for violence because of the publication by the British press when the election had not even taken place. And indeed, there was widespread violence because the losers could not accept the result. After all, they believed their opponents rigged the election. A cursory look at the statement confirms that even before the 1965 elections, the British newspapers the *Guardian* and the *Financial Times* had started spreading disinformation about a rigged election that had not even taken place.

At the end of the 1965 elections, there was arson, mayhem and killings as a result of election rigging in the Western Region setting in motion offensive outcomes as auto-suggested by the British. As a result, the Western Region was destabilized as they became divided along party lines, or between arsonists and victims; either of which required reprisals. Thus, Walter Schwarz of the *Guardian*, and the Lagos correspondent of the *Financial Times* (1965) floating the idea of secession of the Eastern Region as a result of rigged election. It was difficult to ascertain the correlation between the rigged election in Western Region and the secession of the Eastern Region. It was intriguing to ascertain how the British media conjured secession of Eastern Region from no logical event. There was no political crisis in Nigeria as at 1965 before the elections. There were no utterances from Nnamdi Azikiwe or Michael Okpara as to consider the session when Eastern Region formed the majority of skilled workers across the country. It is either the British will plant the secessionist idea to the Eastern Region or create

the environment to crystallize their plan. This they did by hinging the secession of Eastern Nigeria on the election victory of United Democratic Party in the Western Region of Nigeria. The Eastern Region and Western Region were not sharing boundaries, so, how can the victory of a party in Western Nigeria cause the secession of Eastern Nigeria? According to the two British newspapers, the secession of the Eastern region will be caused by an election that was rigged, unfortunately, this election was never conducted before the British newspapers made their publication, so how did the British conclude that a yet-to-be conducted election was rigged and Eastern Nigeria wants to secede?

Noxious Tribalism Faultline

The British press, through their publication brought about tribal hatred that culminated into a coup by insinuating that a coup was a tribal plan without any evidence to show that a tribe met, held a meeting about the coup and executed it.

... the paper had already come to the conclusion that it was an Ibo coup, and its diplomatic correspondent, J. D. F. Jones, predicted on the very next day that the Northerners might 'already have begun to take their revenge for the death of 11. Editorial, 'Nigeria in Peril', 17 January 1966 their leader, the Sardauna of Sokoto, on the large number of Ibo who live in the North' (17 January 1966). Was this prediction of the possibility of an Ibo massacre journalistic irresponsibility or professional expertise? While it is true that Mr Jones showed a familiarity and understanding of the forces at work in the Nigerian political system, to suggest that the Northerners were already busy massacring the Ibos (which at that time they were not doing) was highly irresponsible. Anyone familiar with Africa, especially a journalist, is aware of how much attention African leaders used to pay to the British papers and to the BBC as sources of information, often accepting everything they read and heard as gospel truth (Akinyemi, 1972: pp. 3-4).

He further stated that “Thus, the Northern elite would naturally assume from the Financial Times article that not only must Mr Jones possess information which they did not have, but that the world expected them to react in this way. A prediction then becomes a call to action” (Akinyemi, 1972: p.4)

This was basically the press conducting vicious propaganda by inciting tribal hatred within Nigeria populace. It is a known fact that the effectiveness of disinformation depends largely on a thorough understanding of the social dynamics of Nigerian society such as tribal politics, social networks, religious influences, and cultural mores. The manipulation of these social dynamics for disinformation will produce bloody confrontations and casualties equivalent to any military operations. It thus became clear that the *Financial Times* (1966) had on 17th January 1966, had accused the northerners of massacring the Ibos living in the North when indeed there was nothing of such. Again, the *Financial Times* has, by that publication auto-suggested to the northern population to carry out the massacre of the Ibos in Northern Nigeria. This publication was eventually accompanied by ethnic cleansing that culminated in thousands of people being killed. This is the power of vicious propaganda designed to set up a bloodbath, hatred and division.

Civil War and Bloodletting

A major cause of war was the abolition of regionalism by General Aguiyi Ironsi as the British press put it. However, the decision to abolish the regions was possible was not the sole decision of Ironsi, it was the agreement of the ruling council which included Northern representatives. Blaming Ironsi was scapegoatism and invitation for unrest.

As Akinyemi (1972) pointed out that in spite of the fact that first outbreak of violence was in May, correspondent of *The Times* had, as early as April, cautioned that the Northerners would not accept a unitary form of government and that there were still suspicions that it was an Ibo affair. It is worthy of note that the unitary decree was issued on 24 May 1966, and three days after, the massacres started in that region.

Still on the same subject, the special correspondent of the *Sunday Telegraph*, David Loshak wrote 12 June 1966 that the violence was caused by the decision by the Federal military regime of Christian Ibos from the Eastern Region to make Nigeria a unitary state. He also wrote that the riots were well planned, and implicated also, discredited politicians, Arab

countries, and international commercial concerns (Loshak, 1966). It is instructive to note that Mr. Loshak was deported for his obnoxious piece of journalism. It can be seen from the above that these incitements by the press led to the religious and tribal bigotry in the country. Since then, religion and tribalism have become very incendiary factors that always consume the unity of Nigeria and have become factors that must be considered in national affairs. It will be difficult to unify Nigeria without closing the yawning unbridgeable faultiness of tribe, regionalism and religion in today's Nigeria.

While the British press was justifiably implicated in the conflicts of the Civil war, it is doubtful that the entirely represented the desires of the British government. On its part, the *Financial Times* made it clear that there was no need for Nigerans to exist as one country because the bond holding the country together was not in existence. Similarly, the *Observers*, stated that the massacre of the Ibos was a Christian/Muslim war without recourse to the incendiary and combustibility of such a publication. The *Financial Times* (1966) became pro-Biafra by insisting that the secession of Biafra was justified based on the pogroms experienced by the Ibos whipping up the emotional inducement of the Ibos by bringing in the massacres would undoubtedly have confirmed to the Ibos that secession was the best option and it explicitly warned Gowon not to fight.

Concluding remarks

The 1964-1967 political crisis was an unfortunate period that ushered in disunity, political violence, tribalism, religious conflict and unbridgeable fault lines that haunted the progress and peace of Nigeria till date. The rancour between the country's political and military leadership resulted in political instability, loss of lives and destruction of property and the declaration of a state of emergency. The British press capitalised on the political violence to unleash vicious propaganda that created more violence, division, suspicion and bloodbath by pitching one region against the other, one party against the other, tribe and religion against the other.

The seditious publications by the British newspapers were nothing less than disinformation and propaganda designed to railroad Nigeria into the abyss of violence. The British media publications suggested election rigging when the election had not even taken place, others auto-suggested secession of the Eastern Region when there was no reason for Eastern Region to secede. These publications created a lot of confusion, suspicion and bad blood within the country. To heighten the tension, after the January 1966 coup, the British media termed it an Igbo coup and a Christian coup against Muslims. One went so low to term it the Eastern Region coup designed to create Igbo domination in Nigeria called on Muslim nations to help Nigerian Muslims from the Christianization of the new regime.

In July 1966, northern officers carried out a coup and killed Ironsi. This coup brought Yakubu Gowon to power and started the killing of Igbos in the North. The mindless killing of the Igbos was upscaled again in the September Igbo pogrom, this time northern troops took part in hunting down Igbos. While the overall role of the British in the debacle may be unclear, the British press played a negative role before and during the brutal conflicts of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil war.

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ROTATIONAL PRESIDENCY AS A VERITABLE TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Countries ideally should fashion out a form of government that best reflect how they are constituted. Democracy is considered the best form of government that could accommodate the heterogeneity of countries. In Africa for instance, ethno-religious politics emanating from struggle over political power and fear of dominance has continuously threatened and truncated democratic governance. The sustainability of democracy in a heterogeneous context, like Nigeria with large number of ethnic groups, languages, cultures and religion become paramount. This paper considered rotational presidency as a veritable tool for sustainable democracy in Nigeria, thereby, as a charter of equity give all the constituted geo-political zones equal opportunity to contribute in the national project. The paper adopted qualitative method, while relevant data were accessed through secondary sources. Findings revealed that Nigerian democracy has suffered numerous threats that undermine its existence. The paper recommended constitutional amendment to enshrine the principle of rotational presidency.

Keywords: Rotational Presidency, Sustainable Democracy, Election, Nation Building.

Introduction

The challenge of nation building has bedevilled most African countries, and Nigeria is not an exception. Since the end of colonialism, marking the independence of most states, political instability, social conflicts, misery and underdevelopment have shown the poor governance

structure in the continent. Some African countries sadly were involved in genocidal war at the emergence of new political class. As a response these challenges, African countries engaged in activities on how best to fashion out a socio-political order that could entrench political stability and functioning system in their various states.

With regards to Nigeria, it has passed through the crisis of civil war, through several military incursions into politics, to election annulment that led to mass protest and local and international condemnation. In all, the sense of popular disenchantments, mutual suspicions and the fear of political domination as against the minority constituent units have been at the center of national discuss. The attempt in forming the best socio-political arrangement that would allay the fears and guarantee political stability has resulted in the practice of regionalism to federalism, yet there are still number of conferences and confabs, all in the attempt of ensuring political stability (Anyanwu, 2023). Regrettably, these endeavours have failed in curtailing or ameliorating threats and counter-threats wracking various parts of the country. It therefore indicates that democracy is fragile in a country that is heterogeneously constituted, thereby underscores the need to innovate a strategy that sustains democracy.

Against this backdrop, there has been renewed call by some citizens for the introduction of rotational presidency as a panacea to the threat to democracy in Nigeria. The paper therefore, emphasizes rotational presidency as key to sustainable democracy in Nigeria.

Sustainable Democracy – A conceptual discuss

Sustenance of democracy involves the process by which democracy becomes generally acceptable and legitimate among the citizens that it is strong enough to breakdown. It does not only consist behavioural changes but also institutional changes that normalize democratic politics and narrow its uncertainty. Normalization reflects in the expansion of citizens' access, development of democratic citizenship and culture, broadening of leadership recruitment and training, enhancement of national integrative instruments and other functions that civil society performs (Egbefo, 2014). In any case, the sustainability of democracy basically requires political institutionalization. Akinola (2014) argues that democracy is best sustained mainly

in situation where there is good reason to believe that it is capable of withstanding pressure or shocks without abandoning the electoral process or the political freedom on which it depends, including those of dissent or opposition. However, this argument cannot be realized within the need for a deep institutionalization that goes beyond the electoral process.

It is important to note that series of different components have been proposed in the literature that shows a sustained democracy. Egbefo (2014) acknowledges the role of election and its process in strengthening democracy. For him democracy is sustained when a government that has been elected legitimately is subsequently defeated in an election and defeat is conceded. The importance of this component lies on the fact that the test is not on winning an election by opposition but the incumbent conceding defeat, which demonstrate that political actors and their supporters are disposed to heed to the rules and respect the process rather than consolidating their stay in power. This component of democratic sustenance can be said to be counted only when such scenario occurs repeatedly at the point of being seen as a normal phenomenon. The second component is longevity of election in the state. Egbefo (2014) holds that regular competitive elections are sufficient to judge a democratic sustenance, even without a change of the ruling political party, since habituation to the electoral process would make any alternative method for appointing rulers unthinkable. Though this remark may not be complete on its own as the demonstration for dissatisfaction of the electoral process may take long to gather devastating momentum.

Apart from the two components, Egbefo sees the last component as not just the principled commitment to democratic norms, but when the top political actors see sufficient common interest in establishing electoral procedures and subsequently see that their interest in keeping to the rules of the game outweighs the costs to them of their being undermined. This therefore shows that the sustainability of democracy is a function of many factors or conditions working together. Onwudiwe (2005) subscribes to this point, opining that in sustainability of electoral democracy, no one condition is sufficient but an accumulation of facilitating conditions.

It is therefore very clear that the concept of democratic sustenance can be understood in different angle. This paper considers it as the ability and capacity of the polity to nurture and consolidate democracy with little or no threat of its collapse.

Rotational Presidency and Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria

Rotational presidency is seen as a mechanism designed by states (especially heterogeneous states) to ensure political stability among the various contending sub-nationals for the seat of president. Eboraka (2016: pp. 25-46) holds that rotational presidency has the potentials to address contentious issues of ethnic politics in Nigeria, put an end to the perennial cry of marginalization, curb extreme sectionalism and set the country on the path of nation building. This is similarly captured in a simple way by Iloka (2018) that rotational presidency consists of power sharing among the zones or federating units that make up the country.

Nigeria is made up of six (6) geo-political zones where all the ethnic groups are captured within the zones which provide the platform for easy rotation of power. Sirikah (2020) remarks that if Nigeria is a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-national society, one would have thought that power sharing must reflect the shared visions and aspirations of the variegated groups and nationalities that constitute Nigeria. This reflects what could be seen as the vision of democratic practice where the beauty of participatory democracy lies in creating equal opportunities for different people from different ethnic groups and different geo-political zones to meaningfully partake in running a government that would affect their destiny. Okoye (2022) views this as an unwritten principle, a child of necessity and moral imperative just to state an obvious and indispensable fact.

The reality of true people of Africans and indeed Nigerians cannot be suppressed. This reality is the values and what Nigerians cherish – indigenship, kinship, family lineage, community life, ethnicity, religion and so on. These undeniable cherished values cannot be wished away or glossed over. Non-recognition and acknowledgement of the reality of these values amounts to pretence and lack of willingness to confront the question of governance in Nigeria and the move for national peace-building. The existential reality of ‘who we are’ has

continued to make rotational presidency a national discourse, a path to national peace-building and a tool for sustainable democracy.

The political card of equity, rotational presidency along zonal and ethnic lines has been deployed in most cases when the country confronted political brick wall. The card was played in the June 12th saga of 1993. Okoye (2022) observed that Nigeria could have dismembered were the South West, Yoruba people not placated and compensated for the unlawful and unjust cancellation of the June 12th 1993 presidential election, with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo emerging as a president. It is in the same vein that Aniefiok and Udoudoh (2018) argued that rotational principle has always been resorted to at every given point of political cross-roads. Indicating the indispensability of this principle, they remarked that the first appearance of the word “rotation” in the Nigerian political lexicon was in September, 1975.

This was part of the official document tendered by the northern Nigeria delegates which opposed that there should be a central legislative council to co-ordinate the affairs of Nigerian, that the four regions of Nigeria as then constituted should be autonomous and the chairmanship of the central executive should rotate among the four autonomous states of Nigeria, namely – the East, North, West and Mid-West states. This is further portrayed by Ekweme (1995) that the next appearance of the word was in 1975/1976 as the constituted committee on executive and legislature of the Constitution Draft Committee (SAN) made a strong recommendation that in the practice of presidential system of government, Nigeria should be divided into four geographical zones, each should constitute a group (groups A and B) where the position of the president and vice president should rotate among the zones/groups (cited in Aniefiok and Udoudoh, 2018, Pp. 31-49). This fact is equally acknowledged by Ekeng (2000) that it was in recognition of the ethnic divert of the country that made the defunct NPN come out with the model of zoning that alternates the geo-ethnic origin of the party’s presidential, vice presidential and chairmanship candidates from one election to the other (cited in Ekot, 2011).

It is therefore seen that rotational presidency has always been a key principle which the country resorts to in every period the unity of the country is threatened. At the level of political parties, this has been seen and adopted as practical norm thereby captured in constitutions of some parties in zoning political offices within the parties, but yet to be given a constitutional backing at the national level. To ensure national integration, sustainable democracy and national peace-building, the country cannot continue to avoid accepting the reality of power rotation, mainly between the six geopolitical zones – North East, North West, North Central, South East, South West and South South.

This is echoed in the work of Ekot (2011) citing the applicability of rotational principle especially considering the six geo-political zones that is already in existence. For him, if the issue of rotation of the presidency should have credibility in the Nigerian political process, it has to be considered from the perspective of the six geo-political zones of the country; the six geo-political zones currently operating in the country will give a pragmatic applicability of the idea of zoning. In other words, the rotation of presidency within the zonal structure will give the diverse ethnic groups an opportunity to leadership and avoid that has become characteristic of Nigerian politics, that is, ethnic monopolies of political leadership.

Rotational Presidency and the Challenge of Nation Building

Supporters of rotational presidency as a principle maintain a common ground that it has the capacity to address one of the major issues of ethnic and religious politics in multi-cultural country, confronting the vexing issue of marginalization, mitigating extreme sectionalism, thereby repositioning the country on the path of nation building (Anyanwu, 2019). In discussing this assertion, it is considered important to first clarify the concept of nation building. Often times, both sociologists and political scientists apply the use of the concept interchangeably with national integration which has to do with the process of promoting inclusiveness among the sub-nationals that make up the country. In larger understanding, nation building consists of measures taken towards arranging a system that guarantees development, security and stability to the betterment of the citizens. This aligns with the

position of Ake (2001) and Mylonas (2012) as that which encompasses both the notion of national integration and socio-economic development of the country.

Following the conceptual discuss on nation building and integration, rotational presidency is therefore identified as a key ingredient for its actualization. This is not far from the position of Akinola (2014, p/15) and Nwaneri (2013) that rotational presidency is one of the most outstanding innovation of political arrangements in Nigeria that will help minimize conflicts during presidential election and promote equity, justice, fairness and stability in the country. This is corroborated by Ekot (2011) that the re-positioning of power can be affected through what is called rotational presidency. This is stressed by Anyanwu (2019) that this is the best option for Nigeria and should form a policy agenda for the federal government and any national conference that may be constituted.

Some scholars however have raised fear over sustainability of rotational presidency which could affect the socio-economic, democratic and political advancements of the country. Nwaneri (2013) pointed out that rotational presidency is not enshrined in the constitution and therefore not binding by law; it would create conflict within political parties and among ethnic, regional and political zones when it is time for power to rotate to another part. Bangura (2013) and Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007) added that adoption of rotational presidency will limit democratic space, making it less participatory, shrinking people's choices and alternatives as against democratic postulations. It is pertinent to note critically that the issues raised by the scholars do not inhibit the instrumentality of rotational presidency to sustainable democracy and national peace-building. However, the above scholars failed to note the number of lives lost out of non-recognition of rotational presidency in Nigeria. Among the death figures recorded in Nigerian election since independence, the 2011 election has the far highest figure which the violence was predominantly on issue of non-recognition of rotational presidency between the north and south. The Human Right Watch, and African Watch presented the figures as follows:

Table: Number of Lives Lost in Election Violence in Nigeria since Independence

S/N	Election Year	Number of Deaths Recorded	Percentage Contribution of Zoning
1.	1964/65	200	10%
2.	1993	100	7%
3.	1999	80	2%
4.	2003	100	43%
5.	2007	300	20%
6.	2011	800	95%
7.	2015	100	35%
8.	2019	150	7%

Source: Human Right Watch, and African Watch (2020).

The above statistical table indicates that failure to institutionalize rotational presidency has contributed to the election violence and deaths recorded in the country. The 2011 presidential election which was heated up clearly by issue of zoning between the north and south has the highest number of deaths recorded in the history of the country, which is 95% caused by lack of institutionalization of rotational presidency.

The fear raised by Nwaneri, Bangura, and Nzongola-Ntalaja are based on the constitutionality and limiting the space for democratic practice and range of people's choice, which if enshrined in the constitution will address the challenges of constitutionality and generation of conflict within and among political bodies. Also is the fact that the sub-nationals or geo-political zones that constitute the country are larger enough with good number of qualified persons to be presented and contest for the choices of the electorates, thereby not shrinking democratic space and alternatives for the citizens, and ultimately promote national cohesion, inclusiveness and peace-building.

Conclusion

This article focuses on rotational presidency as a vital instrument for sustainable democracy in Nigeria. It argues that, given the largeness and multicultural nature of Nigeria and its attendant challenge of struggle over political power by various ethnic and political zones that constitute the country, the call for adoption of rotational presidency will usher in an inclusive political arrangement that will address the country's peculiar problems. As an instrument that guarantees political equilibrium, it will foster sustainability of democratic practice and accelerate the process of national peace-building, development and national cohesion. It is a pacifist strategy that strengthens democratic postulations of inclusivity, participation, equity, equality and justice among the federating units, thereby inhibiting the fear of marginalization, dominance and eventual conflict and struggle over political power and control.

Recommendations

The paper thus recommends the following:

1. An amendment of the constitution that guarantees rotational presidency that will be operational among the six geo-political zones. This will give a constitutional backing to this arrangement and become binding to all political parties and the geo-political zones.
2. Adoption of a single term of five (5) years. This will help mitigate the tension that comes with periodic elections, and will enable government to concentrate on governance as against the politics of re-election.
3. Political parties should be re-oriented to encourage and institutionalize internal democracy as against the imposition of candidates, and will help to open up democratic space for the citizens.

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YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Since the return to democratic rule in 1999 in Nigeria, political participation also took a different dimension. Participation is presented in two folds (to vote and be voted for). Youth participation has become a problem especially having the vying for elective positions. This is owing to the system the political environment creates in Nigeria. It retards the involvement of the youth despite the 'Not Too Young to Rule' Act. The Youth Bulge Theory is used to expound this study. This inquest relies on secondary data. Therefore, content analysis is used to make end inferences. It recommends that Nigerian Government should reaffirm its commitment to 'Not Too Young to Run' Act. The study concludes that the more Nigeria continue to recycle old politicians, the more the youth are denied political participation and the nation loses vibrancy of hybridized young and the old in governance which will give desired holistic development.

Keywords: Youth, Political Participation, Democracy

Introduction

Young people between the ages of 15 and 25 constitute a fifth of the world's population but people under the age of 35 are rarely found in political leadership positions. The main challenges for youth are limited opportunities for effective participation in the decision-making process, limited opportunity and exposure to meaningfully participate in inclusive decision-making processes, young men and women feel excluded and marginalized in their societies and communities. There is a need for participatory structures and greater trust between youth and institutions and for greater capacity development. Thus, the emerging issues in Nigerian democracy today, are understood not only as an end to military rule but also

as the establishment of responsive, responsible, and credible political institutions which will promote a government that is accountable, transparent, responsible, prevent corruption, respect human rights and rule of law and ensure popular sovereignty (Jega,2007, p.287).

The roles of youths in democratic development should go beyond mere voting at elections to genuine and concrete political participation. The youth are to get involved in the choosing (freely) of those to govern them; contribute their quota in decision making and implementation; and freely express their opinions (i.e. assess, commend or criticize) government policies. Political participation is differently explained as the active involvement of citizens in matters of political interest which include formation and implementation of public policies, voting, contesting for political office, campaigning for a political party, contributing to community projects, lobbying for government projects, organizing demonstrations and expressing grievances even through violence (Oddih and Emeka, 2006:39, and Guaba, 2003:445).

Youth inclusion in politics becomes a curse when there is a higher population of youth without education in the political system; education is a tool for enlightenment and it must be given utmost priority by our leaders. Likewise, the war against poverty must be in place in order to make youth inclusion a blessing to our generation. In Nigeria today, youths are already aspiring to make a difference because they are much more enlightened. This is the right time for the youth to arise and challenge the status quo of being left to dance to the tune of unscrupulous elders who try to lure the youth into political vices like violence, rigging, ballot snatching, etc. without highly educated, highly literate, highly skilled, intellectually brilliant and self-confident youth.

Generally, youths have innovative ideas and are passionate for change in any capacity they find themselves, but the much-desired change in the political landscape can only happen if the efforts of the youth are encouraged by the larger society. The youth need to be given a chance to make use of their intellect. The young professionals from various educational backgrounds can make meaningful impacts in the economy by way of contesting for elections

and being appointed into political offices. A passion to serve and move their countries toward a sustainable future must be at the center of their hearts. While there may be numerous advantages of youth inclusion in politics, there are also few disadvantages to youth inclusion in politics. Many youths have been side-lined even though they have what it takes to be change agents in politics. The youth face poverty, barriers to education, multiple forms of discrimination and limited employment prospects and opportunities. The human capacity of any nation really lies in her youths; but because of the aforementioned challenges, many youths are now being used as political thugs in many countries. Educationally disadvantaged youth in the society will surely be a tool for political violence.

Conceptual Framework

Youth

The concept youth has been defined in a number of ways in the literature. For instance, the United Nations defined youth as anyone between the age brackets of 15-24, the World Bank defined youth as individuals aged 12-24. Commonwealth defined youth as 15-29 of age. Galstyan maintains that youth is a period of “transition from dependency to independence”, while Hilker and Fraser (2013) maintain that youth is a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, rather than as a rigid construct based on age. Meanwhile, due to the political, sociocultural and economic realities in Africa, these age brackets have been described as too narrow. As a result, Nigeria’s 2009 National Youth Policy defined youth as persons of age 18 to 35 years. Thus, the new revised National Youth Policy 2019 limited it to 18-29 years. Thus, youth as used in this study refers to persons between the ages of 18 and 35 years. As well, the terms youth and young people are used interchangeably.

In 1986, the International Year of Youth, it was estimated by the International Labor Organization that globally: there are some 50 million children under the age of 15 who are at work. Nearly 98 per cent of all these child laborers are found in developing countries. The striking increase in the urban youth populations of less developed regions has created the phenomenon of the ‘street children’ who live and work on the streets, doing anything that will

earn them and their families that little extra which enables them to survive . . . If ‘youth’ is understood as constituting the period between the end of childhood, on the one hand, and entry into the world of work on the other, then it is manifest that youth does not exist in the situations outlined above (United Nations 1986, p. 8).

Political Participation

Youth political participation is a concept made up of two distinct terms: youth and political participation, which requires explaining if the concept if to make any meaning. Political participation is yet another contentious concept in the literature. According to Verba and Nie (1972, p. 2), political participation refers to “those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take”. Van Deth (2014, p. 5) describes the concept using a range of features:

1. It is an activity;
2. It is voluntary and not ordered by a ruling class or required by law;
3. It refers to people in their role as non-professionals or amateurs; and
4. It concerns government, politics, or the state.

As Ibezim (2019) puts it that youth participation in politics in Nigeria is bedeviled by a myriad of challenges, chief among which is, a lack of understanding of the benefits that youth political participation holds. The author goes further to state that unemployment, social exclusion, limited capacity, resource, and tools are other problems facing youth. According to Luhrmann (2013), as the 2011/2012 Arab States popular uprisings have showed, the inclusion of youth in formal politics is essential. In countries in transition (i.e. Nigeria), novel ideas and innovate leadership can help to overcome dictatorial practices. It is also important to pay attention to individual capacity development. In doing so, the capacities of organizations and the degree to which an environment enables individuals and institutions to participate in political processes should be given utmost consideration. This argument is corroborated by Mengistu (2017) who asserts that due to abysmal youth political participation in Africa, and by extension Nigeria, the majority of young people are vulnerable to enlistment for violence

against a government. The complicity of young people in the establishment of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, is a case in point. The 2020 #endsars could also be seen conformity to the assertion made by those scholars.

According to Sida (2010), youth political participation refers to the involvement of young people in political activities, civic life, active citizenship, and policy making. This could take several forms, including serving on a local government council, voting in an election, or participating in the budget process of a local government. Youth political participation is beyond just voting in an election. Farthing (2012) argues, youth political participation could take the following forms: Participation as a rights-based practice; Participation as a mechanism of empowerment of young people; Participation as a guarantee of efficiency in policy, practice and services; and Participation as an instrument of young People's development.

Democracy

Democracy, adequately understood, is a theory that sets some basic principles according to which a good governance, whatever its form, must be run (Oluwole, 2003). Such principles include justice, equity, freedom, liberty, accountability, openness and transparency in government (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2015). The Athenians of the ancient Greece defined democracy as the government of the people by the people for the people. This simply means the government people freely put up to serve them without any discrimination on the basis of social status. Euripides, a Greek philosopher long before Plato, share the above view when he described a democratic state as one governed by people's representatives and for the many who have neither property nor birth (Sabine & Thorson, 1993) cited in (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2015a). Plato, another Greek philosopher, had a similar view of democracy when he defined a democratic state in his book, the Republic, as a state governed by the philosopher kings, who neither marry nor have personal property, but live together in the barracks (that is, equivalent to government house today) and enunciate policies for the general welfare of the people.

However, Plato, in his second and third books, the statesman and the laws, respectively modified his definition when he defined democracy as the government of the

people in which law is supreme, rulers and subjects' alike being subject to it. Essentially, a basis assumption of democracy is that it should guarantee the welfare of the citizens. In Nigeria however, Ojabor and Allen (2009); Okeke (2014); Gilbert and Ubani (2015); Ijere (2015) have noted that democracy neglects the welfare of the citizens. In recent times, democracy is increasingly becoming a disoriented political philosophy. Hence, in global perspectives, democracy is currently in decline.

The central procedure of democracy as noted by Huntington is selection of leaders through competitive elections by the people they govern. Okeke (2017) sees democracy as a people-centered system of government. This centrality is however often misconceived by misguided politicians (mainly in emerging democracies) as being election-supremacy. Once the elections are over, the strong-men politicians would begin to greedily personify democracy and chose to dictate what happens in the polity and in their shenanigans, succeed in dominating the political space in the name of democracy. However, a democratic system of government according to Egharevba and Chiazor (2013:18), ideally ensures that “the government in power is accountable to the people and that such a regime and its personnel obey the laws of the land”.

Theoretical Framework

Youth Bulge Theory

Youth bulge theory denotes a situation where a country hosts a large population, dominated by young persons who are mainly marginalized, excluded, and deprived in relation to the older adult population. This theory contends that such a large youthful population constitutes a high risk and threat in the country. In other words, a heavy youth population is a predictor of various forms of violence, including rebellion, warfare, criminality and other aggressive behavior. The Arab Spring and Islamic revivalism that occurred in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria are ascribed to a combination of youth bulge and limited economic opportunities (Aghedo & Eke, 2013).

Youth crisis combines with youth bulge to engender violent and criminal engagements. Youth crisis is a condition in which young people find it difficult to attain the requisite qualities of adulthood because of slim socioeconomic and political opportunities. Youth crisis arises from the irresponsiveness and insensitivity of the national government in addressing young people's genuine needs and aspirations through sound policies and programs. Thus, in desperation to navigate the difficult path of life, young people engage in aggressive and risky behavior. In the face of fading hope, they take their destiny into their own hands by engaging in various criminal behaviors, including armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom, bunkering, vandalism, and insurgency. ('Bunkering' means stealing fuel oil on board a ship.) The Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria is in part linked with scant economic opportunities and access (Aghedo & Osumah, 2014). Abject socio-economic conditions, manifesting in youth unemployment and poverty, have been linked with ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria (Jega, 2007). In Kenya, youth exclusion and marginalization from the political process is cited as contributing to youth participation in post-election violence in 2007–2008. About 70% of participants in the post-election violence were young adults (Mutisi et al, 2012).

Therefore, this work will adopt the youth Bulge theory in which suite the aim of this work. It clearly identified the struggles and set backs of youth and the reactional outcome of these actions. It linked various causes of the negligence and marginalization of youth in societies and how it has resulted in many forms of social vices. Thus, this theory has great influence on this work.

Literature Review

Reasons for Youths Participates in Politics in Nigeria

Citizenship participation in politics is a significant element of democratic governance all over the world including Nigeria. The structure and amount of citizenship in political participation can have influence on the degree and quality of government and governance. Quite a number

of reasons could be deduced for why many Nigerian citizens particularly the youths participate in politics or engage in governance related activities. They include:

To change the structure of leadership and governance.

Obsessed by the leadership styles of past leaders which do not impact positively on the lives of common people on the streets of Nigeria and the continued existence of poverty amidst plenty, the marginalization of some parts of the country and the inequitable distribution of resources, some Nigerian youths participate in politics in order to change the structure in order to herald effective political leadership and envisaged developments. The formulation of more than a hundred political parties and activities of the Civil Liberty Organizations and many interest groups is a pointer to this fact.

To influence government policies and programs

The revolution—Now by Omoyele Sowore and the various campaigns by organizations like the Social Economic Recovery and Accountability Project (SERAP) and Muslim Rights Concerns (MURIC), as well as demonstrations by Labour and Civil Liberty Organizations has forced government to be up and doing in socio-political issues affect the socio-economic lives of Nigeria. For instance, the agitation by Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) for minimum wage review and whistle blowing action by SERAP have forced government to review workers' salaries and recovered stolen funds. The revolution—Now, equally was a conscious expression by youths to intimate the government about the failures of its socio-economic policies and the need to have an inclusive governance capable of affecting peoples' life positively (Vite & Dibang-Achua, 2019a).

To participate in decision-making process.

The sponsorship of private citizen's bill, contributing during public debate of bills, protest, and demonstration by pro-democracy groups are all aimed influencing government decisions. For instance, the Bring-Back-Our-Girls campaigns by Obiageli Ezekwezi, Our-Mumu-Don-Do by Charles Oputa were efforts obviously tailored towards changing the status quo. The actions of the Bring-Back-Our-Girls Movement on the one hand forced government to do all

it could to rescue some of the Chibok girls that were kidnapped by insurgents. On the other hand, Our-Mumu-Don-Do Movement by Charles Oputa also forced the President to cut short his medical trip in Britain in order to attend to the security and other socio-economic challenges bedevilling the country (Vite & Dibang-Achua, 2019).

To solicit for leadership roles and representation.

Some youth who participate in politics do so in order to be given position of leadership be it through contesting and vying for political offices or being appointed into political offices. The-Not-Too-Young-To-Rule Bill is a welcome development as it affords youth the right to contest election into political offices they were excluded of by virtue of age. Regrettably, as laudable as the idea seems the socio-political structure and process in Nigeria is skewed in favour of the retired elites in military, the intelligentsia and the economic juggernauts.

To agitate for development and social well-being.

The activities of SERAP earlier mentioned and other regional pressure groups, such as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND), Niger-Delta Frontier Force (NDF), The Ijaw Youth Movements (IYM), Ohanaeze Ndigbo youth wing, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) youth wing, the Afenifere, and the Middle-Belt Forum youth wings have all engaged in one form of agitation and political engagement to draw development to their region. The intense agitation by the IYM through Kaima declaration and the need for government to pacify the youths of the region gave rise to the establishment of the Niger-Delta Development Commission and the creation of the Ministry of Niger-Delta Development. Of recent, efforts by the ACF as well as those of Northern Elders Forum have yielded the creation of North East Development Commission in view of the ravaging impact of terrorism and insurgency in the region. The Middle-Belt is also agitating for the creation of same commission in their region (Vite, 2018).

For political socialization.

Youths in Nigeria also engage in politics not only because of economic gains but for socio-psychological reasons. Some of them are subjects to charismatic and renowned politicians by so doing learn from them the attitude, principles and secrets of political successes.

Challenges of Youth Political Participation Democratic Nigeria

Socio-economic Barriers. Illiteracy: this implies inability to read and write by an individual. It is a state of absolute lack of education. Though mostly refers to lack of formal education, the concept denotes inability to read and write or to obtain western and/or other form of education e.g. Arabic/Qur'anic education. Education, on the other hand, embodied the entire process through which members of the society acquire necessary norms, values and skills which conform to societal standard or which make them fit to the society. In modern society like contemporary Nigeria, education is systematic and organised; characterised by the existence of organised structures and personnel, as well as, accorded criteria for grading of status or certificates in a school system (Umar, 1993).

Against this backdrop, the bulk of Nasarawa youths is illiterate. UNDP Human Development Report (1996 and 2004) observed that, "apart from the fact that the chunk of Nigerians (Nasarawas, inclusive) is grossly illiterate, the number of youths dropping out of school and graduate lacking skills has been on the increase". This has been a major setback to the ability of the youths to support and sustain genuine democratic processes. A considerable number of them are brainwashed and indoctrinated by the politicians to see their role in the democratic growth as thugs or political gangsters, popularly known as, 'Yanbanga' and 'Yankuge'. Their illiteracy status is being exploited by desperate politicians at the detriment of the youths and the young state. Worse still, the senseless and reckless educational policies, at all levels of governments, have prevented most youths, access to meaningful and sound education.

Unemployment and Poverty: unemployment indicates the situation where an individual or group of individuals is/are unable to be gainfully employed as a means of daily survival. It is

a state of joblessness where some societal members lack sources of income which is necessary for their social, economic and political integration into the society (Adelekun, 2008, cited in Umar, 2009:102). Lack of employment, which in most cases is attributed to lack of education, normally breeds poverty amongst the youths. UNDP (2001) avers that, “the number of youths who are out of work and out of school either as graduates or drop-out - are increasingly worrisome.” Perhaps, there is link between unemployment and poverty and the roles youths are playing in the democratization process in Nasarawa State. This means that joblessness and poverty pose a serious threat to the survival of the youths and their ability to play their expected roles in sustaining the nascent democracy in the state. Invariably, this has compelled them to engage in any dirty and unhealthy kind of work, the common of which is political gangster. Banga and Kuge has remained the most common and gainful jobs for illiterate and semi-illiterate youths in the State since the advent of this democratic dispensation in 1999.

Youngsters are in the payroll of all local government councils and development area councils as compensation for the role (i.e. thuggery) they played during 2002 local government election and 2003 general election, and the role they were expected to play in the subsequent election after 2003. In most cases the politicians supply these youths with arms to carry out this devilish role effectively. Unfortunately, however, genuine socio-economic and poverty alleviation policies that will open-up employment opportunities are not pursued or given due attention by the Nasarawa State Government just in order to maintain the status quo; hence making the youths susceptible to the dangerous idea of political thuggery.

Lack of Formidable and Genuine Youth Organisation and Leadership: most youths do not form a vibrant youth organization that can pursue youth development policies and support the bid to substantive and sustainable democracy in Nigeria and Nasarawa State, to be specific. Where there are so called youth organizations, they are spear headed by elders in the disguise of youth. Thus, this can be proven by the fact that most of the heads of youth organizations are persons aged above 40 or sometimes even 60 plus (Raman, 2007). This situation has been affecting the roles of youths in supporting and sustaining democracy in Nasarawa State. The

present president of Nasarawa State Youth Council and his predecessor, Haliru Wakaso and Umar U. Shehu, respectively; present youth leader of Nasarawa State Peoples Democratic Party (P.D.P.), Alhaji Abdullahi Baba Sale to mention but a few, are all example of youth leaders above 40 years of age. Thus, they may not necessarily give youth development programmes much priority or effectively pioneer the crusade for youth positive participation and contribution in Nasarawa State democratization process.

Not Too Young to Run and Guarantee of Youth Participation in Political Participation

A significant contextual investigation flagging endeavours being made for the reappearance of virile political support by the adolescents of Nigeria, relates to the Not Too Young To run (NTYTR) development and the alteration to the Constitution of the Government Republic of Nigeria 1999 that it roused and achieved. This has really been prefigured in the earlier area; however, it would be explained upon as of now (YIAGA Africa, 2019).

The Not Too Young To Run development is an alliance of over 100 youth and civil society groups trying to integrate the youths into the process of electoral politics in Nigeria. Depicted as "Nigeria's biggest and best youth development as of late" for its exceptionally careful, calculated and coordinated rally of political partners and foundations of governance towards the fulfilment of its motivation, the development considered a significant passage highlight re-established youth participation in electoral politics, as the chopping down of the age prerequisites for looking for elective workplaces in Nigeria, to advance more prominent consideration. Going before 2016 when it initiated its backing, the age necessities for contender to the workplace of the President was 40 years; for governorship, 40 years; participation of the Senate, 40 years; the government Place of Delegates, 30 years; and the state Places of Gathering, 30 years too. For the development, the satisfactory period of bid considering better consideration of the country's youths in the political process and designs of navigation, should have been: for President, 30 years; State lead representative, 30 years; Senate, 30 years; the government and state Places of Get together, 25 years. Urgent to the NTYTR development's contention is that youths have not just assumed an extremely huge part

in the democratic development of Nigeria, however that assuming that the Constitution perceives the period of qualification to cast a ballot as 18 years, and afterward the age necessity to be decided in favour of into elective office is 40 years, what the lawful ground standard has empowered is a fractional establishment of the youths. Also, this must be oppressive and unreasonable (Bamidele, 2021).

As per the NTYTR, more prominent youth participation in the electoral process is demonstrative of the development of the nation's majority rules government; and it is as of now not just about filling in as the reason for the electoral triumph of others, however having the option to partake in and win elections for themselves, and consequently having portrayal in designs of direction. The excursion towards the renegotiation of the space for the more extensive participation of youths in the Nigerian political process, began with the sponsorship of a sacred revision charge in May 2016, to eliminate the age limitation, by YIAGA Africa, a common society stage shows to the redoubtable pair of Samson Itodo and Cynthia Mbamalu, which was consequently ventured into a mass youth development, the NTYTR (Bamidele, 2021).

After a progression of lobbies across entertainers and partners in the public and state parliaments, and a walk on the NTYTR Public Day of Activity, the Public Gathering passed the age decrease bill in July 2017. Following this, 24 out of the 36 state places of Gathering (a prerequisite for sacred correction in Nigeria) passed the bill on February 15, 2018. By Walk 1 of that very year, the established alterations of 34 state places of Gathering had been sent to the Public Get together, for ahead transmission to the President for the last phase of the sacred revision. On May 31, 2018, President Muhammadu Buhari marked the bill into regulation. From that point, the development led to another mission, the Prepared to Run, which is to move Nigerian youths to look for elective workplaces, going ahead (Bamidele, 2021).

Factors Responsible for Youth non-Participation in Politics

- i. The pattern of political socialization and culture.

- ii. The incursion of military into politics which has destroyed democratic cultures and institutions. This has robbed the youths of having knowledge of what the ideal, proper and civil political processes should be.
- iii. Commercialization of politics which has turned it to investment, money spinning venture and the one sure way to quick wealth and riches. It is no longer seen as gateway to leadership.
- iv. Greed, Bribery, Corruption, and Negative influence of role models.
- v. Wrong political leadership structure. The above-mentioned factors could however be remedied and turn around by strategic groupings, political education, empowerment and enlightenment programs.

Conclusion

Youth offer a significant contribution to critical changes in the society. This is achieved via political participation in the areas of mobilization, voter awareness. With the resilience of the youth stand against misrule they help to keep government in check. The youth deserve concessions during political process. From reduction in the cost for political parties' nomination forms to appointive positions. The more Nigeria continues to recycle old politicians, the more the youth are denied political participation and the nation loses vibrancy of hybridized young and the old in governance which will give desired holistic development. Without active participation in politics, a nation is toys with its future, and undermine its existential capacity. The active participation of youths in politics must be seen as a beacon of hope for attaining purposeful and sustainable political leadership and stability.

Recommendations

- i. The Nigerian government should demonstrate commitment to the "Not too young to run" Act.
- ii. Effort should be made to entrench social inclusion in Nigeria by way of mitigating socio-economic problems like unemployment, poverty, inequality, deprivation and marginalisation.

- iii. Government should do this by investing more in human capital development of the youth.
- iv. School curriculum (primary, secondary and tertiary institutions) should carry Political, Governance and Leadership courses just like other compulsory courses.

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SECURITY CONCERNS IN ABUJA FEDERAL CAPITAL CITY: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND COUNTER-MEASURES

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ABSTRACT

Security concerns in Abuja have heightened in recent times. As a result, it becomes necessary to investigate its causes, consequences and counter-measures undertaken to mitigate its ugly menace. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the causes of crimes and insecurity in Abuja Federal Capital City; to assess the Perception of insecurity by respondents in Abuja Federal Capital City. The methodology of the study is survey while the instrument for data collection is questionnaire. The study revealed that some major causes of crimes in the city centre include poverty, unemployment, lack of skill, drug abuse, poor parental upbringing, poor economic situation, failure of religious institutions, and corruption in law enforcement agencies. This made the residents of the FCT to perceived insecurity in nation's capital to be high. The consequences of insecurity in the FCT include threat to lives and property, threat to education in the FCT, Increase in IDPs, hindering of business activities, discouragement of local and foreign investors. Slowing down of economic growth and development. The study indicated that some of the strategies that the Federal Capital Territory Administration can use to manage security include among others regular jingles on security tips, increased funding to security agencies, provision of CCTV cameras at strategic locations, provision of drones in crime-prone areas in nation's capital and above all, there should be accountability and provision of employment opportunities to the youths for them to be self-reliant.

Keywords: Security, Counter-measures, Poverty, Unemployment, Drug abuse, Corruption

Introduction

For socio-political and economic reasons, a state's capital must be secure. For these reasons, several States (especially post-colonial countries of the third world) have prioritized capital city relocation and State-building. State capitals host government buildings, domestic and international meetings and therefore have national security concerns which include the protection of government installations and officials. Additionally, state capitals are homes to ordinary citizens who require local services, and must in some cases engage in local political activity (Wolman, Chadwick, Karruz, Friedman, and Young, 2007: p.1).

All these exacerbated security issues, especially in national capital. In response to the disturbance from neighbouring countries and the flood of Nigerians from across the country, General Yakubu Gowon proposed moving the nation's capital to a more suitable site. His successor, General Murtala Muhammad, initiated the process on August 19, 1975, by forming the Eight Wise Men. The committee was led by T. Akintola Aguda. Using 13 criteria, the committee chose Abuja as the Federal Capital. Top factors were centrality, security, climate, accessibility, land availability, aesthetics, and good weather.

The basic goal of every government is to provide security and a calm (a semblance of protracted) environment where citizens and companies can prosper. A tranquil and safe state (nation) is one in which individuals and enterprises are not exposed to risk, threat, moral aggression, accident, human rights violations, thievery, or deterioration. The issue of security management is so important that any government that fails to guarantee the safety and security of its citizens is deemed to have failed. It is under this government responsibility that certain agencies are created to serve as instruments or mechanisms for the discharge of this responsibility. In the case of Abuja Federal Capital Territory (FCT), different security strategies/policies and procedures are employed by the FCT Administration and other stakeholders to combat crime and criminality to the minimum level, thus ensuring a peaceful environment where people conduct their lawful activities.

As the nation's capital and a beautiful city, Abuja FCC attracts individuals of many backgrounds, ethnicities, and races. As McMichael (2000) pointed out, people are usually drawn to cities because they are engines for economic development, opportunity for better employment, quality education, better health care, and culture assimilation, which are usually not found in other localities.

This is not without some consequences with regards to security. When asked to comment on the security challenges facing Abuja Federal Capital City and from the sources of reports, there was a consensus among informants that the prevalence of security challenges has increased drastically in recent years, with the most commonly cited challenges as armed robbery, theft, one-chance under conventional city crime, while banditry was the highest followed by terrorism among the serious crimes noted that in the FCC:

security challenges in Abuja Federal Capital Territory include kidnapping, banditry/kidnappers, particularly along the fringes of FCT, farmers/herder clashes, armed robbery, including activities of one chance drivers, drugs, vandalization of critical national assets, homicide cases, chieftaincy tussles. (KII: Security Stakeholder in the FCT, 2024).

As Ukanwa (2024) reported, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, which was Abuja, once renowned for its relative tranquility and security, has now become gripped by a growing sense of fear and unease as cases of kidnappings continue to surge. Generally, residents now living in constant anxiety, and therefore demand immediate action from authorities to restore safety and protect their lives and property. In Dei-Dei town, located off Kubwa-Zuba Road, under Bwari area council in Abuja, there was pandemonium at the past weekend when over 23 residents were abducted from the community, taken mostly from three housing estates in the area. As Ukanwa (2024) reported:

As if this was not enough, barely 48 hours after the aforementioned kidnappers' attack at Dei-Dei, also two children, alongside nine adults, were also whisked away at Gbaupe village, behind Aco Estate, along Airport Road in Abuja. At the same period, a similar incident took place at the nearby Arab Road residential area, in Kubwa town, also along the highway, on Sunday, where seven residents were abducted by kidnappers believed to be sharing the same base in the bush, with that of the Dei-Dei operators (Ukanwa, 2024).

In order to effectively carry out this study, the under-listed objectives were raised.

- i. To determine the causes of security concerns Abuja Federal Capital City
- ii. To analyse the consequences of insecurity in the study area?
- iii. To proffer solutions with regards to measures that must be taken by the Federal Capital Territory Administration to mitigate security concerns in the Abuja Federal Capital City (FCC)?

Conceptual Underpinnings

Conceptualising security

Hettne (2010), opined that security is a reasonable degree of predictability at all levels of the social system, from local communities to the global level. This is a broad and generalist way of understanding security (thus, at the international level). This idea implies that security depends on the predictability of other system members. On the state level, security involves the state's ability to forecast the impact of any given scenario on its population. This has nothing to do with the state's power to enforce law and order. However, that is crucial, but providing the socio-economic conditions that guarantee predictable behaviour from its citizens. In short, scholars like Beland (2005), and Ibebunjo & Okokhere (2014) sees insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety due to the absence or lack of protection.

Historically, this conception of security portends to the perspective of the State, which according to Mukhtar (2012), has always been and will continue to be associated with the safety and survival of the state and its citizens from harm, destruction, or dangerous threats. The narrative and practice of how security was envisioned within the UN system changed, altering the conceptual of security, giving birth to the concept of human security. This incorporates person-specific security issues for this study, which underlay the protection of lives in Abuja Metropolis. According to the Committee on Human Security (CHS, 2003: p.4), human security encompasses more than just the absence of violent conflicts, such as good governance, human rights, access to education and health care, and opportunities and choices for everyone to fulfil their potential.

National security

According to Carey (2000), the conception of security, “National Security” has been misunderstood. To Morgenthau (1985), the father of realism, national security, and national interests are interrelated; the former is seen in terms of power and therefore is the essence of politics. Similarly, Lipmann likened it to “a nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interest to avoid war and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war.” Freedman (2004) views it as anything that generates anxiety or threatens the quality of life in some respect; it is thus labelled a “security problem.” Economic security fosters a combative approach to trade policy, whereas "environmental security" encourages a hunt for adversaries, causing more confusion than clarity.

National security requires economic, diplomatic, power projection, and political authority to preserve state survival. According to Anyadike (2013), several measures can be taken to ensure national security, including using diplomacy to rally allies and isolate threats. Others include marshalling economic power to facilitate or compel cooperation; maintaining influential armed forces; implementing civil defence and emergency preparedness measures; ensuring the resilience and redundancy of critical infrastructure; using intelligence services to detect and defeat or avoid threats and espionage, and to protect classified information; using counterintelligence services or secret police to protect the nation from internal threats.

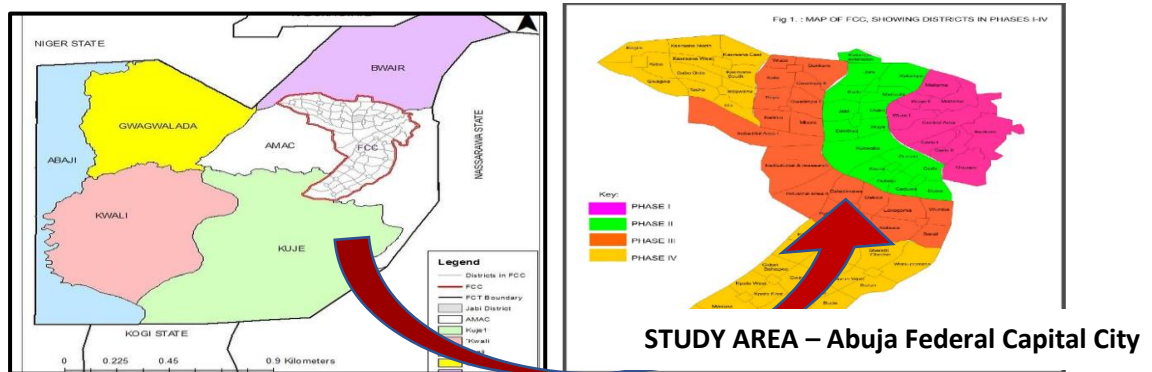
Abuja Federal Capital City (FCC)

The Abuja Federal Capital City (FCC) is a well-planned city in the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC). Established in October 1984, it is indeed one of the fastest-growing cities in the world. The town was intended to bring together all of Nigeria's diverse tribes, religions, and ethnic groups. It is one of the wealthiest cities, beautifully designed to be safe, peaceful, and united, unlike many other cities in Nigeria with high violence, security, and socio-economic issues. The town has a landmass of approximately 1000 square kilometers and a population of 1,235,880. (2011 estimate). The city's population is highly diverse, including members of the Gbagyi, Gwandara, Gade, Hausa, Koro, and other Nigerian ethnic

groups. The city's official language is English, although Hausa, Gbagyi, Yoruba, Ibo, and Fulani are also spoken.

Its FCC Phase I is the most developed, and FCC Phase IV is the least developed of the four phases comprising the Abuja FCC, which contains approximately 100 districts. In other Phases, only industrial areas and a few districts of mass housing have an infrastructure. This is since the development of the sections is phased as outlined in the Master Plan for Abuja, which considers changes and uncertainties, allowing for unanticipated growth and transition as in other global capitals.

Fig. 2: Map of FCT with the Six (6) Area Councils and Abuja, FCC



Source: Abuja Geographical Information System (AGIS, 2016).

Sustainability Development Theory

Sustainability Theory is yet another modern theory, traced to as recent as 1970. As Shi, Han, Yang, and Gao (2019) put it, the theory of Sustainable Development “has gone through three stages: the embryonic stage (before 1972), the moulding stage (1972–1987), and the developing stage (1987–present)” (Shi, Han, Yang, and Gao (2019: 1). The theory really evolved throughout human history but was later popularized by World Commission on Environment Development (WCED) a branch of United Nations.

The concept of sustainable development has been defined in various ways, as Pretty (1995) noted. However, it is essential because it shows the elements of ‘intergenerational

equity.’ This means that development should be configured and implemented in different ways so that the present generation's activities must not hinder future generations' ability to fulfil their own material needs (Batie, 1989). Thus, natural resources should be responsibly put to good use to avoid a potential decrease in the standard of living of future generations. Again, this may mean that there must be a consensus on the global view of sustainable development, pointing to two different interpretations of sustainability that may still exist, emerging from the ‘resource-constrained growth view’ and the ‘resource maintenance view’ of sustainable development (Batie, 1989).

UN-Habitat (2011) has outlined four main interlinking drivers underpinning the desire for sustainable communities. They are:

- i. Economic growth,
- ii. Urbanization,
- iii. Climate change,
- iv. Globalization.

It must also be noted that the simultaneous interactions and convergence of these factors have raised severe global concerns about the regenerative or carrying capacity of the worldwide environment (UN-Habitat, 2011). The concept was initially founded on the economic theory of environmental limit, whose brainchild was Thomas Malthus (1766-1834) and David Ricardo (1772-1823). Their approach argues that resource in the environment we live in is finite (WCED, 1987). In the WCED report, our shared future, sustainable development, and sustainability began to take shape and became popular with environmental conservation. According to WCED, sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987). In this study, sustainability means people can maintain and sustain a project or program with their assets or resources without compromising future generations' needs.

Sustainable development theorists say that community preferences and competing interests must be balanced to identify community needs and define priorities. In this regard, the entire Federal Capital Territory and Abuja Federal Capital City should be considered sustainable. In the Abuja Master Plan, this was done, but slums and other concerns were not

addressed. Other social institutions and planned development must be involved in community planning to maximize the likelihood of a successful and sustainable outcome. The lasting change comes from local involvement (Chaskin, 2001). So, for the Abuja Master Plan to be relevant, there must be continuous reassessment to consider current realities. As Carol and Cory (2001) noted, many good programs fail because the proponents have no access to community capacity or assets before rolling out the agenda. These must include long-term goals of sustainable development, which must empower people and foster social cohesion. By so doing, there will be enhanced cultural identity, strengthened institutional development, and promote equity and fairness (Carol and Cory, 2001).

Methodology

Research design

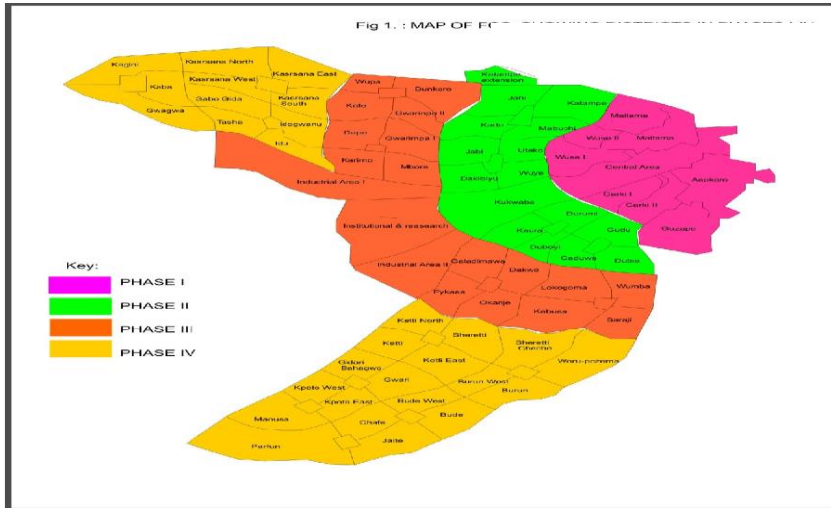
Mixed methods, survey and descriptive designs were used to carry out this study. It involves the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Creswell, Gutmann, and Hanson, 2003: 2012). Pinsonneault and Kraemer (1993: 77) defined a survey as a “means for gathering information about the characteristics, actions, or opinions of a large group of people.” Survey design is an excellent tool when extensive population-based data collection is required, making it a perfect choice for the study of security management of Abuja Federal Capital City. Sobowale (2006) tells us that it involves asking questions on various aspects of a subject on which selected population members are requested to react.

Study area

The Study Area was the Abuja Federal Capital City (FCC), as an enclave within the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC). It is located on the eastern wing of the Federal Capital Territory and comprises approximately 100 districts classified in four (4) Phases. However, the fifth was later added from land obtained from AMAC. Abuja FCC has the privilege of housing the federal seat of power, Aso Rock. It also has most embassies in its domain, and virtually most Federal Ministries are in the Area. Undoubtedly, Abuja Municipal Area

Council, where the FCC is situated, is one of the country's most affluent local government areas in revenue generation.

Fig: Map of Abuja FCC showing Districts in phases I-IV



Source: Abuja Geographical Information System (AGIS 2016)

Population of the study

The population of this study includes adult residents (made up of men, women, and youth from diverse professional and academic backgrounds who must have lived and worked in the FCC for upwards of 10 years, as well as relevant stakeholders in Security matters.

Sample size and sampling technique

The sample size estimation was determined from the 2006 estimate, which is a population 2,179,495. Six hundred and six (606) was arrived at through the following formula:

$$SS = \frac{SS}{100} \times PEO$$

Where:

- i- SS: Sample Size
- ii- 100%: Hundred.
- iii- PEO: Percentage for Each Organisation.

Sample was proportionately distributed to the following organizations: 36% to Policy makers and stakeholders in Security/defence in government, 28% to academia, and other professionals, Members of the Civil Society Organization (CSO), 20% representatives of the masses not covered by the CSO and 16% to Students.

Data Presentation and analyses

Issues of security concerns in the FCT are dealt with below in the following sections, using data gathered and analysed from field survey.

Objective No 1: Causes of crimes and insecurity in Abuja Federal Capital City

Table 1: Respondents' views on the causes of crimes and insecurity in Abuja Federal Capital City

S/N	The Causes of Crime and Insecurity in Abuja Federal Capital City	YES Freq.	Percent.	NO	Percent.	TOTAL percent
1	Poverty	468	77%	138	13%	100
2	Unemployment	492	81%	114	19%	100
3	Lack of skill	386	64%	220	36%	100
4	Drug abuse	315	52%	291	48%	100
5	Poor parental upbringing	328	54%	280	46%	100
6	Poor economic situation	387	64%	219	36%	100
7	Failure of religious institutions	312	51%	294	49%	100
8	Corruption in law enforcement personnel	314	52	292	48%	100

Source: Field Report, 2024

Table 1 above indicated that some major causes of crimes in the city centre include poverty, unemployment, lack of skill, drug abuse, poor parental upbringing, poor economic situation, failure of religious institutions, and corruption in law enforcement agencies. But most respondents considered lack of skill and unemployment to be the significant causes of crime in the FCC.

This is collaborated with interviews as recorded below. According to a respondent, Causes of crime are numerous, they can be physical, economical environmental and psychological. In the case of insecurity in Abuja FCC, most of causes are socio-economical such as poverty, unemployment, lack of skills and peer group influence amongst others (KII: Security Stakeholder/ Policy Maker in Security Matters in the FCT)

A member of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, FCT Command noted that:

Young people who were farmers relocated to the Federal Capital City due to insecurity, but on getting there they are unable to fit as they are unskilled and uneducated. Some then resorted to robbery and other forms of crimes". (KII: Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, FCT Command, 2004).

A Policy Maker in Abuja Municipal Area Council, in an interview, reported that

It might surprise you to know that the causes of most criminal activities in the FCT, both FCC and the other six of the Area Councils of the FCT is cultism, followed using drugs and other illicit substances. Cultism have become pervasive in the FCT where you can find a cult member as young as 6-7 years old. Their initiation makes them to be fearless and disregard the societal laid down rules and order. They possess weapons both local and sophisticated that they use in their operations. This is a call for the Administration to engage religious and traditional leaders to embark on massive campaign against the practice in the Abuja FCT. The campaign should be continuous till the residents attest to the reduction of the menace". (KI 6: A Policy Maker in Abuja Municipal Area Council, FCT, 2004).

Findings from questionnaires, interviews and secondary sources all agree with the perception of high and very high insecurity that is currently the situation in Abuja. This is seen in the table and bar chart below.

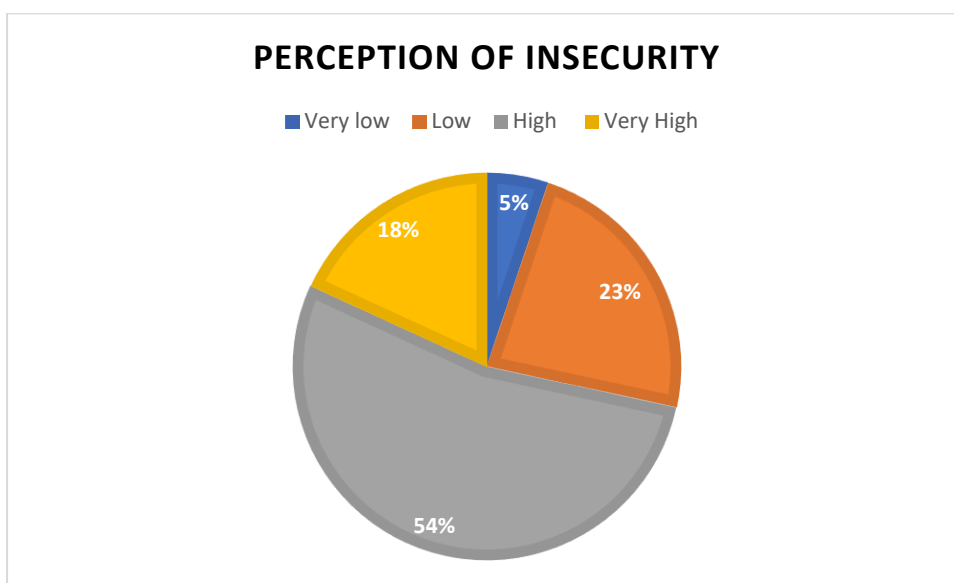
Table 2: Perception of insecurity by respondents in Abuja Federal Capital City

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Very low	31	5
Low	141	23

High	324	53
Very High	110	19
Total	606	100

Source: Field Report, 2024.

Fig. 2: Perception of Insecurity by Respondents in Abuja Federal Capital City



Source: Field, 2023.

Table 2 and fig. 2 shows that 53% of the respondents perceived insecurity in the FCT to be High, 23% of the respondents perceived insecurity to be Low, 18% of the respondents perceived insecurity to be Very High, while the remaining 5% perceived insecurity in the FCT to be Very Low. This indicated that most respondents perceived insecurity in the FCT as high.

Objective No 2: Consequences of insecurity in the study area in the Abuja Federal Capital City

Table 3: Respondents' views on the consequences of insecurity in Abuja Federal Capital City

S/N	The consequences of Insecurity in Abuja Federal Capital City	YES Frequency	Percentage	NO	Percentage	TOTAL percentage
1	Threat to lives and property	568	94%	38	6%	100
2	threat to education in the FCT	592	98%	14	2%	100
3	Increase in IDPs	486	80%	120	20%	100
4	Hinder business activities	415	68%	191	32%	100
5	Discourage local and foreign investors	426	70%	180	30%	100
6	Slow down economic growth and development	487	80%	119	20%	100

Source: Field Report, 2024

The table 3 above indicates that the consequences of insecurity in the FCT include threat to lives and property, threat to education in the FCT, Increase in IDPs, hinder business activities, discourage local and foreign investors. Slow down economic growth and development.

Objective No 3: Measures that must be taken by the Federal Capital Territory Administration to mitigate security concerns in the Abuja Federal Capital City

Table 4 Respondents' views on the strategies that the Federal Capital Territory Administration can use to manage security in Abuja Capital City

S/N	Strategies that the Federal Capital Territory Administration can use to manage security in Abuja Capital City	YES Freq.	Per cent	NO	Per Cent	TOTAL %
1	Regular jingles on security tips that individuals can adopt should be aired regularly by	372	61%	234	39%	100

	radio and TV stations and on prints					
2	Increase funding to various security agencies	391	65%	215	36%	100
3	Creation of a separate unit of the police force and civil defence corps for a rapid response like Lagos state RRS (Rapid Response Squad).	386	64%	220	36%	100
4	Provision of separate courts for minor criminal offences for easy and fast adjudication of cases.	322	53%	284	47%	100
5	Acquisition and deployment of high technology equipment such as remote sensing technologies, CCTV cameras, and drones in crime-prone areas of FCC.	328	54%	280	46%	100
6	Enhanced collaboration between various security Agencies within the FCT to foster intelligence gathering and information sharing should be promoted.	380	63%	226	37%	100
7	Involvement of community leaders such as religious and traditional leaders as stakeholders in the security architecture of Abuja Capital City.	311	51%	295	49%	100
8	Community policing is to be adequately funded and institutionalized.	314	52%	292	48%	100
9	Appropriate legal, financial, and administrative backing for non-conventional security outfits, e.g., vigilantes, hunters' associations, etc.	397	65%	209	34%	100
10	Timely budget release and implementation	318	52%	288	48%	100
11	Having comprehensive and updated data of all crimes reported for timely security policies.	354	58%	252	42%	100

12	More security personnel to be recruited by the Administration	382	63%	224	37%	100
13	More incentives to be provided to security Agencies	348	57	258	43%	100
14	The FCT Administration should provide more employment opportunities to the teeming youths.	398	66	208	43%	100
15	Creation and funding of cottage industries. Skill acquisition centres and accessible agricultural loans to interested people.	315	52	291	48%	100

Source: Field Report 2023

Table 31 above indicated that some of the strategies that the Federal Capital Territory Administration can use to manage security include regular jingles on security tips, increased funding to security agencies, creation of a separate unit of the police force and civil defence corps for a rapid response like Lagos state RRS (Rapid Response Squad), Provision of independent courts for minor criminal offences for easy and fast adjudication of cases and Acquisition and deployment of high technological pieces of equipment such as remote sensing technologies, CCTV cameras, drones in crime-prone areas of FCC.

Others are enhanced collaboration between various security Agencies within the FCT to foster intelligence gathering and information sharing should be promoted, involvement of community leaders such as religious and traditional leaders as stakeholders in the security architecture of Abuja Capital City, establishment and funding of community policing, and the need for appropriate legal, financial, and administrative backing for non-conventional security outfits like vigilantes and hunters' associations. Timely budget release and implementation, having comprehensive and updated data of all crimes reported for convenient security policies. Recruitment of more securities with adequate incentives, provision of employment opportunities to the youths, and Creation and funding of cottage industries, skill acquisition centres, and accessible agricultural loans to interested people.

Conclusions

There is no doubt that since the beginning of this democratic dispensation in 1999, Nigeria has been facing many security challenges that has slow down development at various levels. In every government especially democracy, the importance of adequate security of lives and property in ensuring good governance and other socio-economic development of any country cannot be overemphasized. This is because the existence of security situation gives citizens the green light to go about their normal legitimate business in any part of the country without fear of molestation, intimidation, anxiety, harassment and threat to their lives and property in different parts of the country including the FCT, Abuja. The study revealed that some major causes of crimes in the city centre include poverty, unemployment, lack of skill, drug abuse, poor parental upbringing, poor economic situation, failure of religious institutions, and corruption in law enforcement agencies. The development made the residents of FCT to perceived insecurity in the nation's capital to be high.

The consequences of insecurity in the FCT include threat to lives and property, threat to education in the FCT, Increase in IDPs, slowing business activities, discouraging local and foreign investors. Slowing down of economic growth and development.

5. 3 Recommendations

The study recommends that:

1. There is the compelling need for the security agencies to leave up their responsibilities of securing lives and property of citizens in the FCT and other parts of the country. This can be adopted through adopting modern approach of combating insecurity.
2. Community and opinion leaders' roles in promoting security and sustainable development should not be underestimated especially in the satellite towns area of the FCT where residents' co-habits in multi-ethnic and multi-religious enclaves.
3. Elected representatives of the people at the national and local government levels should be accountable and responsive to their constituencies. There should be

opportunities for periodic dialogues between the elected representatives, their constituencies and other stakeholders.

4. The urgency of such actions facilitating and ensuring community participation in the governance and leadership process at all levels, implies the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups should be encouraged.
5. Capacities of Non-Governmental Organizations and other civil society groups need to strengthen to enable them function effectively in the area of holding government accountable and to be more responsive to the citizens.

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GENDER ISSUES AND DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

Amakiri Famous Ngozi

ABSTRACT

Gender equality is a fundamental condition for democracy and good governance. which need to respond to the lives of women and men accordingly. disqualify women. In the same sense, women in politics are often more closely scrutinized and criticized than men. This paper, therefore, examined the impact of gender issues/dimensions and democracy. The paper further explores gender issues/dimensions and democracy, body, identity, and society. Due to the patriarchal nature of our society, it is evident that women's inclusion in governance and politics will not be actualized without institutionalizing and enforcing policies and practices to make it happen. But in the context of this paper, there is a gap in gender and democracy because on average, women's participation in democracy is around 15%, implying that their few nature is a function of their poor participation in democracy. The paper thereafter, highlighted numerous barriers to their effective participation, the fulfilment of genders' electoral rights, and contribution to democracy; funding is one of them, violence, sexual harassment, and bullying are other major challenges faced disproportionately by women, particularly young women, lack of gender blind legal framework, lack of formal or political education and limited access to information, glass ceiling, glass wall, and cement ceiling. The following suggestions were made among others that political parties should create a support network for prospective aspirants by pairing them with established women politicians who will be playing key roles as mentors and provide capacity building for young or aspiring female politicians to enhance and develop them ahead of subsequent elections.

Keywords: Gender, Issues/Dimension, Democracy, Politics.

Introduction

Today, there are as many different forms of democracy as there are democratic nations in the world. No two systems are the same and no one system can be taken as a "model". There are presidential and parliamentary democracies, democracies that are federal or unitary, democracies that use a proportional voting system, ones that use a majoritarian system, democracies that are also monarchies, and so on. One thing that unites modern systems of

democracy, and which also distinguishes them from the ancient model, is the use of representatives of the people. Instead of taking part directly in law-making, modern democracies use elections to select representatives who are sent by the people to govern on their behalf. Such a system is known as representative democracy. It can lay some claim to being "democratic" because it is, at least to some degree, based on the two principles above equality of all (one person-one vote), and the right of every individual to some degree of personal autonomy (Council of Europe, 2020).

The evidence further suggests that issues of gender increase with increased democratic quality among more established democracies, and that high democratic quality is a necessary but not sufficient condition to solve gender issues. This suggests that strong institutions capable of enforcing regulatory policies against gender discrimination, as well as the prevalence of specific subsets of values, norms, or practices, can have a positive effect on gender equality (Council of Europe, 2020). Possible explanations behind the relationship between democracy and gender equality are wide-ranging. The most prominent view is that democratic systems tend to strengthen gender equality through increasing civic space for equal gender activism in the political process through voting, women's engagement in the political process through voting, and political representation. Others, however, reverse the link, seeing gender issues as drivers of democratization through increased economic and political empowerment by a broader sector of society.

Within the specific Nigerian context also, there appears to be the assumption of patriarchy as the dominant causative factor of gender disparities in politics. In all of this, however, the core issue is that power belongs to the people in a democracy, which is much more than representation. Democracy also refers to a generic community attitude toward freedom through equal opportunities. Equality is accordingly an important value of democracy, and quality in this sense must not be seen in absolute terms but more plausibly as equality of opportunities, manifested in inclusion, and open competition, particularly in the creation of room for equal chances in governance. The notion of democracy (and

democratization) therefore also implies that every effort by the citizen, regardless of colour, sex, religion, and so on, must be rewarded equally (Ayeni & Ajibogun, 2013). Gender is therefore important in the democratic process. Overall, research shows that democracy and gender equality form a mutually reinforcing relationship in which higher levels of liberal democracy are a necessary but not sufficient condition for higher levels of gender issues (Idike et al., 2020).

Gender equality is an integral part of thriving democracies, but few think of it as a prerequisite for democracy. At the same time, democracy is being undermined by the same forces that are pushing back on women's rights, participation, and representation in public life. This event contributes to and sustains the efforts to sustain gender equality on the global agenda for democracy. Democracy-building processes and institutions remain partial and flawed if they continue to exclude or marginalize based on gender. Systemic and systematic marginalization and exclusion of any segment of the population in democracy-building processes and institutions undermine the architecture and promise of democracy. The need to address patterns of exclusion, structural barriers, stereotypes, and unequal power relations that produce and reproduce exclusionary practices and outcomes in societies is a democratic imperative that cannot be over-emphasized. It is against this backdrop that the paper examines gender issues/dimensions and democracy.

Conceptual Clarification

Gender

Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, as well as relationships with each other ((World Health Organization, 2020). As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities. Gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors of discrimination, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, geographic location, gender identity, and

sexual orientation, among others. This is referred to as intersectionality. Hornby (2005) defined gender in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as 'the fact of being male or female'. But this is more than just physical differences. It includes the totality of what makes a man, a man, and what makes a woman, a woman. Thus, it includes psychological orientation and physiological differentiation. Gender may be referred to as a system of roles and relationships between women and men that are determined not only by biological traits but by the social, political, and economic context (World Health Organization, 2020).

Gender can equally be seen as the process by which individuals, who are born into biological categories of male and female, become the social categories of men and women through the acquisition of locally defined attributes of masculinity and femininity (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 2016). This is the fact of being male and female. The pursuit of equal rights for women through international law has been a slow process. The principle that everyone is entitled to rights 'without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, or sex was given voice in Article 2 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, the declaration was non-binding and it took over 30 years for the international community to create a robust legal framework against gender injustice. The Convention to eliminate all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 (Ayeni & Ajibogun, 2013).

However, when 'gender issues' as a term is used, it often connotes issues bordering on women since society has long been seen as a man's world. Ukhun (2002) puts it succinctly when he states, 'Gender remains a cardinal element in our humanity, which cannot be wished away with any form of gusto.' Yes, despite the attempt by gays and transsexuals, gender remains a natural gift that cannot be short-changed, even by technology. Gender influences people's experience of and access to healthcare. The way that health services are organized and provided can either limit or enable a person's access to healthcare information, support, and services, and the outcome of those encounters. Health services should be affordable, accessible, and acceptable to all, and they should be provided with quality, equity, and dignity. Gender inequality and discrimination faced by women and girls include restrictions on

mobility; lack of access to decision-making power; lower literacy rates; discriminatory attitudes of communities and healthcare providers; and lack of training and awareness amongst healthcare providers and health systems of the specific health needs and challenges of women and girls (World Health Organization, 2020).

Democracy

Democracy from conceptual clarification is explained as a form or system of government under which people exercise the governing power, either directly or through the representatives that they elect periodically (Bernal, 2013). The popular Abraham Lincoln definition of democracy is germane here. He sees democracy as the government of the people by the people and for the people (Schmidt, 2013). In this case, a state is said to be democratic if it provides institutions for the expression and, in the last analysis, the supremacy of the popular will in basic questions of social direction and policy. The popular will is what the people want the government to do for them. People here do not exclude women, the policy emphasizes the participation and involvement of sane people in the state (Harris et al., 2010). From the explanation above, democracy is seen as a system of government through elected representatives. It also refers to an attitude of a set of people yearning for freedom through equal treatment and equal recognition. And in fact, equality is an important democratic value, though not in an absolute sense as in the Athenian model.

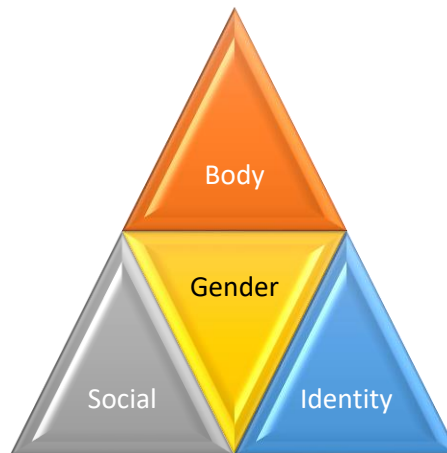
Equality, in this sense, must be seen as equality of opportunity in an open competition, creating room for equal participation and recognition in governance. The notion of democracy and democratic process emphasize that every effort by the citizen irrespective of colour, sex, religion, etc. must be rewarded equally. Thus, the democratic system is built on treating equals equally and unequally (Ayeni & Ajibogun, 2013). Here, the principle of justice and fairness is ensured. Gender Issues in Nigerian Democratic Experience Violence against women is widespread in the world. This is a burning issue of human rights often swept under the carpet as if it does not matter, especially in Africa and particularly in Nigeria. This is not limited to physical violence. There are also sexual, psychological, and economic abuses women suffer

at home, on the streets, and in the workplace. It is worse in conflict situations or even in peace-keeping situations as women are often raped on a massive scale and later left to bear the child alone and care for the child without any assistance from the ‘unknown soldier’.

Gender Issues/Dimensions and Democracy

Gender is innately personal to each of us, this is not a ‘one size fits all’ situation. Whilst some aspects of our gender may be shared with others, the way that we perceive our own identity and the influencing factors on this is unique. It is also important to note that whilst gender is important to take into consideration, it is only one part of us, and we might also strongly identify with our race, ethnicity, faith, sense of geographic place, family history, sexuality, etc.

As can be seen in the figure below, there are three dimensions of gender: body, identity, and social.



Source: Researchers Conceptualization, 2023.

Body: Our body, our experience of our own body, how society genders bodies, and how others interact with us based on our body. As stated earlier, most societies view sex as a binary concept and equate a person’s sex with their gender. So a baby designated as female at birth is assumed to be a girl/woman and a male is assumed to be a boy/man. The relationship

between a person's gender and their body goes beyond one's reproductive functions. Research in neurology, endocrinology, and cellular biology suggests a broader biological basis for an individual's experience of gender. Research increasingly points to our brains playing a key role in how we each experience our gender. Bodies themselves are also gendered by cultural expectations. Masculinity and femininity are equated with certain physical attributes, labelling us as more or less a man or woman based on the degree to which those attributes are present. This gendering of our bodies affects how we feel about ourselves and how others perceive and interact with us. In other words, our own body, how society genders bodies, and how others interact with us based on our bodies contribute to democracy.

Identity: The name we use to convey our gender based on our internal sense of self. Identities typically fall into binary (e.g., man, woman), non-binary (e.g., genderqueer, genderfluid), and ungendered (e.g., agender, genderless) categories; the meaning associated with a particular identity can vary among individuals using the same term. Gender is an inherent aspect of a person. Individuals do not choose their gender, nor can they be made to change it. However, the term someone uses to communicate their gender identity may change over time. A person's gender identity can correspond to or differ from the sex they were designated at birth.

Gender identity is our internal experience and naming of our gender. It can correspond to or differ from the sex we were assigned at birth. Understanding of our gender comes to most of us fairly early in life. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "By age four, most children have a stable sense of their gender identity." This core aspect of one's identity comes from within each of us. Gender identity is an inherent aspect of a person's make-up. Individuals do not choose their gender, nor can they be made to change it. However, the words someone uses to communicate their gender identity may change over time; naming one's gender can be a complex and evolving matter. Because we are provided with limited language for gender, it may take a person quite some time to discover, or create, the language that best communicates their internal experience. Likewise, as language evolves, a person's name for

their gender may also evolve. This does not mean their gender has changed, but rather that the words for it are shifting.

The two gender identities most people are familiar with are boy and girl (or man and woman), and often people think that these are the only two gender identities. This idea that there are only two genders—and that each individual must be either one or the other—is called the “Gender binary.” However, throughout human history, we know that many societies have seen, and continue to see, gender as a spectrum, and not limited to just two possibilities. In addition to these two identities, other identities are now commonplace. Youth and young adults today no longer feel bound by the gender binary, instead establishing a growing vocabulary for gender. More than just a series of new words, however, this shift in language represents a far more nuanced understanding of the experience of gender itself. Terms that communicate the broad range of experiences of non-binary people are particularly growing in number. Genderqueer, a term that is used both as an identity and as an umbrella term for non-binary identities, is one example of a term for those who do not identify as exclusively masculine or feminine. This evolution of language is exciting, but can also be confusing as new terms are created regularly, and since what a term means can vary from person to person (Gender Spectrum, 2020).

Social Gender: is the third dimension. This includes gender expression, which is the way we communicate our gender to others through such things as clothing, hairstyles, and mannerisms. It also includes how individuals, communities, and society perceive, interact with, and try to shape our gender. Social gender includes gender roles and expectations and how society uses those to try to enforce conformity to current gender norms.

Practically, expectations regarding gender are communicated through every aspect of our lives, including family, culture, peers, schools, community, media, and religion. Gender roles and expectations are so entrenched in our culture that it is difficult to imagine things any other way. Because expectations around gender are so rigid, we frequently assume that what someone wears, or how they move, talk, or express themselves, tells us something about their

gender identity. But the expression is different from identity. One can assume that a person's gender identity is based on their gender expression. For example, a boy may like to wear skirts or dresses. His choice of clothing does not define his gender identity; it simply means that he prefers (at least some of the time) to wear clothes that society has typically associated with girls. How we interpret a person's gender and the assumptions we make about them are related to our understanding of gender and the norms and stereotypes we have integrated it is not about them.

Finally, norms around gender change across societies and over time. As mentioned, cultures from around the world have long held more nuanced understandings of gender. Whether discussing the "brother boys" and "sister girls" of Australia, the Muxe in Mexico, or the incredible diversity of nonbinary understandings in many indigenous communities of the Americas (often grouped umbrella term "Two Spirit"), the rich diversity of gender has always existed. It is not a new phenomenon, but rather a new conversation in which many of us are only just now engaging (Harcourt, 2012).

Table: Gender Distribution in Democracy from the Fourth Republic in Nigeria

Year	Nigeria Senate		House of Rep.		Bayelsa State HoA	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
1999-2003	106	3	348	12	24	0
2003-2007	105	4	339	21	24	0
2007-2011	101	8	337	26	23	1
2011-2015	102	7	334	26	23	1
2015-2019	101	8	341	19	21	3
2019-2023	92	17	336	14	22	2
2023-2027	106	3	333	17	22	2

Source: Statista Research Department (2023).

The above table shows that Women in Nigerian politics are incredibly too few. In the Nigerian Senate, Federal House of Representatives, and the Bayelsa State House of Assembly. This implies that their few numbers are a function of their poor participation in democracy.

Gender and Democracy in Nigeria

Nigeria has been recording low participation of women in both elective and appointive positions this is a growing concern to many Nigerians. However, concerted efforts have been made by government and non-governmental organizations to increase the level of participation of women in politics, in line, with the declaration made at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which advocated 30% affirmative action (Oluyemi, 2016). However, in Nigeria, the extant National Gender Policy (NGP) recommended 35% affirmative action instead and sought a more inclusive representation of women with at least 35% of both elective political and appointive public service positions respectively (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The underrepresentation of women in political participation gained root due to the patriarchal practice inherent in our society, much of which was obvious from the pre-colonial era till date. However, the re-introduction of democratic governance has witnessed once again an increase in women's political participation both in elective and appointive offices in Nigeria (Agbalajobi, 2009).

Various reports on the gender equality index have consistently ranked Nigeria extremely low both globally and in Africa. Many have attributed this situation to what they described as a common patriarchal practice across the country's societies. This inherent culture, they said, has impeded various efforts, including deliberate government policies to right the wrong. For instance, a recent report by the Gender Strategy Advancement International (GSAI), a non-governmental organization, revealed that women's political participation in Nigeria falls below the world and African continental standards. The data showed that Nigeria ranked 181 of 193 countries on the Gender Equality Index, for countries with low women representation in governance (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The report links the situation to reasons such as "poor resource allocation in the economic and

social sectors, frequent conflicts, forced displacements and inadequate inclusion of women and girls' perspectives in policy-making decisions.

Regarding women's inclusion in governance, Nigeria can take a cue from Rwanda, Tanzania, Botswana, and Senegal, to mention a few (Daniel & Faith, 2013). And more than ever, women supporting women is gradually gaining ground, and the government of Nigeria should sustain the momentum. As women, they have the numbers: they should throw their weight behind the few women who made a list. Women in power should also hold their offices and spaces in honour of the millions of Nigerian women. A win for one is a win for all. Women constitute over half of the population of the world and contribute in vital ways to societal development generally. They assume key roles, which include; mothers, caregivers, educators, entrepreneurs, and political activists, just to name a few. But despite that, women are still being excluded, marginalized, and underrepresented in political realms and other sectors of society, due to some cultural stereotypes, abuse of religion, traditional practices, and patriarchal societal structures (Oluyemi, 2016).

As such, generational relationships among women through mentorship are key in Nigeria and democracy, so Nigerian women should not wait till election season to be "genuinely committed to making a real impact at the grassroots (Kolawole et al., 2013). This would help guarantee the rights of women to equal opportunities in employment, equal rights to inheritance for both male and female children; equal rights for women in marriage and divorce, and equal access to education, property or land ownership, and inheritance as well as protect the rights of widows; guarantee appropriate measures against gender discrimination in political and public life and prohibit violence against women (Oluyemi, 2016).

Barriers to Genders' Effective Participation in the Democracy

Throughout the electoral cycle, women can face numerous barriers to their effective participation, the fulfilment of their electoral rights, and their contribution to democracy. Beaudoux (2017) highlighted the followings:

Funding: campaigning can be expensive and a lack of funding for young women is a significant barrier for young women to compete for elected seats. Political parties are sometimes reluctant to support young women because of the perception that they will not be able to win.

Violence, sexual harassment, and bullying: These are other major challenges faced disproportionately by women, particularly young women. Sexism and a common focus by male colleagues and the media on appearance and gender stereotypes such as having or raising children, rather than on policy. These challenges are often exacerbated by social media. There are traditional gender roles, gender-based stereotypes, and discriminatory attitudes and norms.

Lack of Gender Blind Legal Framework: Discrimination against women and violation of women's dignity that is strictly prohibited is lacking thereby limiting gender from participating fully in democracy process.

Lack of formal or political education and limited access to information: There is always the issue of poor political education and limited access to information where some genders see politics to be the affairs of few. For this, they thereby limit their participation in the democratic process. Women politicians frequently encounter the “glass ceiling”, an organizational barrier understood as the “obstacles faced by women who aspire to hold high positions under equal pay and working conditions.

Another organizational barrier is the “glass wall”, consisting of the horizontal segregation that relegates women to minor roles or denies them access to certain fields.

The “cement ceiling”, a barrier of psychological nature, refers to women’s refusal to accept leadership positions because they think it would be difficult to balance personal and work life. Finally, the “sticky floor” is a cultural barrier that pushes women to deal with domestic chores and caregiving roles, which hinders their professional development.

Conclusion

Gender democracy is a normative idea related to gender mainstreaming. It aims to achieve democratic conditions between men and women within society as a whole. Gender equality is

a crucial feature of democratic societies. Public institutions must provide services that advance the human rights of women and men equally and consider their specific experiences and needs. Women's political participation is crucial to ensuring decisions are credible and legitimate. When women and men share the power to make decisions and lead, the benefits are felt throughout their society as they contribute to democracy. It is worth noting that Nigerian women are still being marginalized due to the style of leadership inherent in the country. Despite the challenges women are facing, women's activism and advocacy, education of women, positivity on the part of successive governments towards women empowerment, and interest of women to participate in politics are getting a lot of positive energy. This is an indication that the participation of women in politics has a bright future. Therefore, the relevant stakeholders are advised to advocate for the protection of women from abuse, empower them economically and politically and review the necessary legislations to accommodate the growing interest of women in politics both elective and appointive positions

Recommendations

Following the trends and happenings around the political environment in Nigeria, it is becoming clearer that women may never achieve the mandated 30% affirmation as enshrined in the Beijing plan of action except the following recommendations are adhered to:

- Political parties should create a support network for prospective aspirants by pairing them with established women politicians who will be playing key roles as mentors and provide capacity building for young or aspiring female politicians to enhance and develop them ahead of subsequent elections.
- Government should create a legal framework that empowers women in the decision-making process sustainably and effectively and that is free from violence and harassment of any kind.
- Government should ensure the establishment of legal funds to assist women politicians to challenge electoral malpractices of any form at all levels of political processes.

- Government should introduce a quota system at all levels of government and identify and engage relevant stakeholders such as the Independent National Electoral Commission and political parties to ensure strict adherence to it.
- There is a need to redress women's under-representation calls for political will and commitment, strong policy measures, multi-stakeholder support, and partnerships.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO INSECURITY IN SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH-CENTRAL STATES OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Since 2014 when the Chibok Girls in Borno State were abducted by the Boko Haram terrorist group, several other kidnappings have occurred in the Northern part of Nigeria. The North-Central states have not been left behind in this dastard act of using school children as bargaining chips to score nefarious political points. This study examines government responses to the challenges of insecurity in the North-Central States. Survey Research Design was adopted for the data gathering. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized. Questionnaire were used for the quantitative method, while Focus Group Discussions and In-depth Interviews were used for the qualitative segment of the study. The study was conducted in four (4) selected public primary schools in Niger and Nasarawa states. Descriptive Survey Design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprises of 586 teachers and 1250 parents, totaling 1836. Taro Yamane formula was used for the selection of sample size of 70 teachers and 130 parents from four schools. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that absence of Closed-Circuit Camera (CCTV) to monitor the school environment and lack of school fence, were some of the factors responsible for the insecurity in schools. The study recommends that government and school managers provide adequate manpower security for schools in North-Central states. Peace and Security studies should also be introduced at all levels of the educational system in the region.

Keywords: Government Responses, Security, Insecurity, School.

Introduction

Insecurity in Nigeria is being heightened by the renewed attacks in schools by kidnapers under the guise of bandits and or Islamic State for West Africa Province (ISWAP). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2022) reports indicated that Nigeria is now home to 20 million out-of-school children. Perhaps the worst globally. No thanks to the nefarious act of kidnapers. The latest wave of kidnapping in the country began on February 25, 2006 with the abduction of foreign workers of an oil company in the Niger Delta region, which was seen as an open message to the world, and according to the kidnapers, it was meant to draw attention to what they described as marginalization, injustice, exploitation, and underdevelopment of the region by the oil companies (Ibrahim, Ahmad & Shehu, 2021). Since then, the threat has been brazenly "commercialized" in many sections of the nation. Today, locals, both the rich and the poor, the elderly, and children, are now victims of kidnapping. For instance, school attacks and kidnapping have progressively escalated after the infamous 2014 Boko Haram abduction of 276 girls from a school in Chibok, Borno state.

In the north, no fewer than 300 boys from the Government Science Secondary School in Kankara, Katsina State, were abducted by armed persons on December 11, 2020. They were held captive for six nights before being freed (Okunola, 2021). The students of Government Science Secondary School in Kagara, Niger State, were kidnapped on February 17, 2021. Ten days later, they were freed. On February 27, 2021, less than a month later, hundreds of schoolgirls were kidnapped from the Government Girls Secondary School in Jangebe, Zamfara State. Almost 279 of the schoolgirls, on the other hand, were freed after four days. Two different schools were attacked in Kaduna State in March 2021, including the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization where 30 students were abducted (Obiezu, 2021).

The English terms "Kid" and "Nap," which both refer to infants, were combined to create the phrase "kidnap" (Sleep). Literally, it involves holding hostages as part of a kidnapping plot in exchange for a ransom. Kidnapping can be dated back to 1874, when

wealthy families' children in Britain were being kidnapped for "ransom while asleep (nap)" in the 17th century (Tzanelli, 2019). Thus, school kidnapping can destabilize school activities, disrupt government efforts and discourage international and regional economic development. It's a shameful act performed by a criminal with the idea of kidnapping students for a ransom (Zannoni, 2017).

While there have been numerous researches on kidnapping, there are virtually little or no research works on the kidnapping in the North Central of Nigeria, and specifically on government responses to kidnapping in schools in the region under study. This paper therefore seeks to interrogate and fill the gap.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine government responses to security challenges in schools in North-Central of Nigeria

- i. Examine factors that make schools vulnerable to insecurity in the North-Central states of Nigeria.
- ii. Find out the effectiveness of government responses to insecurity in schools in North-Central region of Nigeria.
- iii. Evaluate policy options for enhancing government responses to insecurity in schools in North Central Region of Nigeria.

Federal Government Responses to kidnapping in schools

One of the immediate steps taken by the government at all levels in tackling insecurity in Nigeria is school closures when an incident occurs. This has been seen in Abuja, Nasarawa, Niger, Borno and Kaduna, among other states where security of schools was compromised (UNICEF, 2022).

Similarly, there have been several efforts by the government to address the issue of kidnapping and allied crimes in Nigeria. This has been shown in government's determination to outlaw some of the regional and militant groupings like the: OPC, MASSOB, MEND, and more significantly, Boko Haram and bandit groups, known as *yan bindiga* and *yan taada*, in

Hausa. However, because some of their covert and overt actions are motivated by politics and ideologies, they go unchallenged.

These political and ideological underpinnings are what make them powerful and a serious challenge to successive governments. Since 2006, when abduction first gained traction, governments at all levels had attempted to pass legislation outlawing it. For instance, the sentence for abduction can be anything from 21 years to life in prison in states like Lagos, Imo, Abia, Enugu, Rivers, Ekiti, and Ebonyi. The law against kidnapping is particularly strict in the state of Anambra. In addition to receiving the death penalty, kidnappers are subject to property destruction and hotel demolition (Verjee & Kwaja, 2021).

Amnesty programme

Another strategy used by the government to control militancy in Nigeria was the amnesty program that the administration of President Umaru Yar'Adua used in the case of the Niger Delta militants. Over 20,000 Niger Delta youth had the chance to obtain training in a variety of professions through the amnesty program, while others were sent abroad to pursue higher education in a variety of fields. The program contributed to reducing tension and reestablishing calm in the Niger Delta. President Goodluck Jonathan made a similar overture to Boko Haram insurgents, but no one in the group's leadership dared to make an appearance. This was due to the fact that Boko Haram's activities were distinct from those of other Nigerian militant groups because they represented a declaration of war against the Nigerian government. The problems associated with MASSOB and IPoB have not yet been resolved, let alone the Boko Haram and the scattered armed bandits in Northern Nigeria (Ugah, Ortserga & Degarr, 2022).

Building Schools for the Almajiris

Given indications that the Almajiri pupils were used as foot soldiers for the Boko Haram terrorists, the Goodluck Jonathan administration-built schools for their education, (Agwanda & Nyaburi, 2020).

Foreign Donations and Increased Defence Budget

Despite support from the international community, including the United States, the Nigerian military recorded minimal success by entirely eradicating the terrorist threat. For instance, the United States alone donated US\$3 million annually to Nigeria as security assistance in addition to other logistical and technical support (LeVan, 2013). There is no doubt that recent years have also seen the country's increased security budget, which seems not to reflect the military's ability to counterterrorism effectively. The military counterinsurgency in Nigeria has been subject to various criticisms. Onuoha et al. (2020) argue that the criticism spans three main perspectives: the political, the strategic and the tactical. At the political level, Onuoha et al. (2020) and the International Crisis Group (2016) contend that lawmakers extort money from commanders and service chiefs under the auspices or pretext of approving their budgetary allocation. At the strategic level encompassing military leadership and oversight, the procurement of relevant weapons and ammunition has been criticized because it is shrouded in secrecy (International Crisis Group, 2016).

Negotiation with the Terrorists

Although there have been coordinated efforts to deploy security forces, successive governments have also participated in conversation and negotiation, with what appears to be minimal success. For instance, to end the crisis, the administration of President Jonathan has entered into negotiations. The Jonathan administration tried unsuccessfully in 2012 to negotiate an agreement with Boko Haram through Datti Ahmad, the National Supreme Council on Sharia's President at the time. In the same vein, President Goodluck Jonathan declared on May 2, 2014, that his administration had launched a concerted effort to free the kidnapped Chibok girls. (Osasumwen et al., 2017).

De-radicalization Program

The Nigerian de-radicalization program was launched in response to repeated appeals for an alternative to the government's dominating military-based counter-terrorism strategy over the

last decade. Excessive use of force has clearly contributed to not only additional fatalities and instability, but also to the push factors for extremism in the combat zone.

Coded Operations

The Kinetic technique, which employs state security forces, has been the mainstay of the federal government's efforts to decapitate the armed organizations in the North. The federal police have carried out a number of "anti-banditry" operations since 2016, concentrating on roving criminal gangs and armed groups with ties to herders. The army increased troop presence in the area at the beginning of 2016 by turning the Falgore forest in Kano state into a permanent training area, setting up three new forward operating bases there, and launching five operations with "anti-banditry" objectives in the Kafanchan and Kachia Local Government Areas of Kaduna state. Since 2017, the air force has started many aerial operations targeting the camps of armed groups and criminals with ties to herders in the forests, as well as deploying new forces, including members of the Special Forces.

National Counter Terrorism Strategy

The 2014 National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) served as the foundation for Nigeria's response to the waves of terrorist attacks and conflict that afflicted the nation. Nigeria lacked a comprehensive strategy to combat terrorist threats until the President Goodluck Jonathan government released NACTEST. When the BokoHaram danger first materialized, the nation mainly depended on conventional military tactics to combat and restrain the group's operations. What was referred to as "kinetic strategy" stood at the top of this traditional military approach (Solomon, 2013).

Foreign mercenaries and support

All these counter terrorism measures failed to contain the activity of the group. By 2015, Boko Haram had succeeded in wresting two Northeastern states (Borno and Yobe) from Nigeria and established the administrative, social, political and religious rump of its desired Islamic caliphate (Sarh et al., 2016). In 2015, Nigeria employed foreign mercenaries from South Africa to help in its fight against Boko Haram (Caroline, 2018). By this period, Boko Haram

had already established bases of operations on territories in Chad, Niger and Cameroon. This meant in essence that it became easier for the group to launch trans-border attacks into Nigeria and vice versa. The realization that Boko Haram now has transnational capability pushed Nigeria to expand the mandate and operational activity of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in 2015 (Lauren, 2016).

Terrorism Prevention Act

In the nation's counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, the MNJTF, which consists of forces from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, was heavily involved. Nigeria was able to turn the tide against Boko Haram with the aid of foreign mercenaries and the MNJTF. Nigeria was able to successfully retake most of the territory it had lost to Boko Haram. The war's insurgent phase, which began in 2015, can be said to have ended in 2017. After this time, Boko Haram resumed its use of guerilla warfare and terrorist assaults as tactics. On the legislative front, Nigeria hurriedly passed the "Anti-Terrorism Act" in 2013 to give the government the authority to kill convicted terrorists and insurgents and stop terrorist fundraising operations.

The ONSA falls under the supervision of the Federal Ministry of Interior and serves the President as the chief advisor on national security issues, particularly in terms of counterterrorism. The ONSA's primary responsibility is to harmonize and ensure synergy among security forces operating in the realm of counterterrorism which include the Department of State Service (DSS), the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), the Police, the Armed Forces, and other government authorities.

Terrorism Prevention Act, 2013(Amendment)

The MNJTF, which is made up of troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, was heavily involved in the nation's counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. Nigeria was able to defeat Boko Haram thanks to the MNJTF and international mercenaries. Most of the territory that Boko Haram had taken over from Nigeria was successfully reclaimed. One may conclude that in 2017, the insurgent phase of the conflict, which began in 2015, came to

a conclusion. The techniques of guerilla warfare and terrorist assaults were once again used by Boko Haram after this time. On the legal front, Nigeria hurriedly passed the "Anti-Terrorism Act" in 2013 to provide the government the authority to execute terrorists and rebels who have been found guilty of terrorism-related crimes and block terrorist financing operations.

States' Response to insecurity in schools

Hisbah Islamic Vigilante Group

The Hisbah Islamic vigilante group dominates the North West Nigeria, dispensing justice using the Islamic legal system without recourse to the traditional law enforcement agencies. This parallel security institution has always created friction with the constitutionally recognized Nigeria Police Force (Omede, 2011, Onifade, Imhonopi and Urim, 2013; Adeniyi and Olusesan, 2019). Several clashes with herdsmen and members of the communities have been reported, thereby endangering the lives of people they were commissioned to protect. This situation has intensified interest by concerned citizens and various organizations particularly the human rights group for the regulation or outright abolition of vigilante activities in Nigeria.

Amotekun Security Outfit

It is however believed that a single security unit either formal or informal cannot ensure the overall security needs of more than 200 million Nigerians including foreigners living and doing business in the country (Inyang and Abraham, 2013). Every security outfit have their deficiencies; hence the need for partnership between all the security groups and organizations for effective security system in the country. This recognition cumulated into the regional establishment of the Amotekun security outfit of south western Nigeria to curb crime rates and secure the region (Olaitan, 2020; Egbunike, 2020).

Community Protection Guards (CPG)

By the same token, Zamfara state has also introduced Community Protection Guards (CPG) which aims at fighting bandits and terrorism. The CPG were established by the state Governor of Zamfara State government with additional measures for combating insurgency in the state,

among which is recruitment of the guards in each of the 19 emirate councils of the state. The decision to establish the outfit was informed by his administration’s desire to work out all possible options to deal with growing banditry and consequent loss of lives in some parts of the state (Bello, 2022).

Ebube Agu Security Outfit

In South East, the recent formation of Ebube Agu, the joint South East security outfit, by the South East Governors’ Forum was described as yet another effort of government in the restoring peace and security. The regional security outfit coordinates the activities of all the vigilante groups in the South East with the aim of tackling the rising spate of abductions, armed robbery, kidnapped, cultism and other sundry crimes in South East. The most disturbing trend is the recent killing of security men in the region. With the exception of Enugu State, all the South East states have experienced these savage attacks. The height of it was the recent audacious attacks on the Imo State Police Command headquarters and the Correctional Centre in Owerri (Gibson,2021).

Benue State Community Volunteer Guards (BSCVG)

On August 4, 2022, Benue State launched a security outfit called the Benue State Community Volunteer Guards (BSCVG) in Makurdi, the state capital. According to the state government, the members of BSCVG would work with the federal police and other security agencies to enhance the security of life and property in Benue state.

Table: Summary of Major incidences of Kidnappings in Schools in Northern part of Nigeria

Date	Name of School	State	No. of Students Kidnapped
April 14, 2014	Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok	Borno	276
Feb 2018	GGSS Daptchi	Yobe	113
December 11, 2020.	Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Kastina State.	Kastina	344
December 20, 2020	Islamiyyah School, Mahuta, Kastina State.	Kastina	80

February, 17, 2021	Government Science College Kagara, Shiroro Local Government Area	Niger	27
March 12, 2021	Federal College of Forestry, Mando, Kaduna State.	Kaduna	39
April 20, 2021	Greenfield University	Kaduna	20
May, 30, 2021	Salihu Tanko Islamic school, Tgina, Niger State.	Niger	169
March 15, 2022	Universal Basic Education (UBE) Primary School, Rama, Kaduna State.	Kaduna	3
Feb 26, 2021	Government Girls Secondary School, Jangebe, Talata Mafara Local Government	JZamfara	317

Source: Compiled Daily Trust Reports

School Safety Initiatives from Public and Private Sector

The abduction of 276 female students in Chibok, Borno State, obviously elicited sustained concerns and strident remarks on the safety of schools in war-torn Northern region. Hence, security and policy measures emerged in this regard. In response to the Chibok incidence, the government launched National Safe School Fund. To synergize in the realisation of the specific targets of the Fund, Nigeria Safe School Initiative and Multi Donor Trust Fund, MDTF were established to leverage the benefits of UN support.

Methodology

This study adopted survey method. According to Gall (2011), a survey study design is a method of data collection using questionnaire or an interview to collect data from a group or sample that has been selected to represent a population to which the findings of the data analysis can be generalized. This method involves the collection of data from a group of people from part of a study to describe the condition of the population using the variables under survey. The North- Central region of Nigeria is made up of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, and Federal Capital Territory. But the researcher used only four public primary schools in two states. They are: Niger and Nasarawa states. The population of the school

teachers in Niger and Nasarawa stood at about 586 teachers, while the population of the parents were 1250 to make up 1836 population (World Bank Report, 2022).

However, Taro Yamane formula was used for the selection of sample size of 70 teachers and 130 parents during the PTA meeting in the four primary schools in the area (i.e two public primary schools in Niger and two public primary schools in Nasarawa state). Quantitative source of data through questionnaire were used to measure the outcomes gathered from the survey. The instrument consists of two section, Section "A". Section A consists of personal data of the respondent, while Section "B" sought information on government responses to security challenges in North central region of Nigeria. The items were developed on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree with values of 1,2,3, and 4 respectively. Mean scores were used for the analysis of data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage and mean scores were used to analyze the data generated. Numerical values 4, 3, 2 and 1 were assigned to the options respectively. The mean scores analysis was subjected to value for acceptance is $X \geq 2.5$ otherwise rejected. For each cluster the acceptance point is above 2.50.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Research Question one: What are the factors that make schools vulnerable to insecurity in North-Central Region of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Teachers and Parents on Factors that Make Schools Vulnerable to insecurity

S/n	Items	TEACHERS			PARENTS		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Lack of security in the school.	3.16	1.77	Accepted	3.57	1.88	Accepted
2	Scarcity of CCTV camera to monitor the school environs.	3.43	1.85	Accepted	3.02	1.73	Accepted
3	Poor management.	3.61	1.9	Accepted	3.30	1.81	Accepted
4	Manpower deficiency and lack of school fence.	3.43	1.85	Accepted	3.07	1.75	Accepted

Table 1 indicates that all the 4 items are accepted and are above 2.50 which is the cut-off for accepting an item. This implies that teachers and parents are in a positive agreement that lack of security in the school, scarcity of CCTV camera to monitor the school environs, poor management, manpower deficiency and lack of school fence are the factors that make schools vulnerable to security challenges.

Research Question 2: How effective are government responses to insecurity in North Central Region of Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers and Parents on the Government Responses to Security Challenges

S/n	Items	TEACHERS			PARENTS		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Government responds to victims abducted.	3.01	1.41	Accepted	3.16	1.55	Accepted
2	Provide CCTV camera in all schools in northern region.	2.01	1.16	Rejected	2.10	1.18	Rejected
3	Employ security to monitor the affairs of schools in northern region.	2.05	1.01	Rejected	2.02	1.15	Rejected
4	Work with different teams on fight against terrorism.	3.02	1.73	Accepted	3.04	1.74	Accepted

Table 2 shows that item 1 and 4 were accepted and are above 2.50 which is the cut-off for accepting an item. The item stated that government to some extent respond to victims abducted and work with different teams on fight against terrorism, while item 2 and 3 which stated that government provide CCTV camera in all schools and employ security to monitor the affairs of schools in Northern region were rejected and have a mean score below 2.50. Therefore, it can be deduced that government work with different teams on the fight against terrorism, but are not adequately equipped and committed to counteract the security challenges in the country.

Research Question 3: What are the policy options for enhancing governments’ responses to security challenges in schools in North-Central region of Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of teachers and parents on Policy Options for Enhancing Governments Responses to Security Challenges

S/n	Items	TEACHERS			PARENTS		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Adequate Policing.	3.07	1.75	Accepted	3.41	1.84	Accepted
2	Employment/empowerment.	3.30	1.81	Accepted	3.32	1.82	Accepted
3	Proper Youth Socialization.	3.45	1.85	Accepted	2.88	1.69	Accepted
4	Provision of CCTV all over the schools.	3.53	1.87	Accepted	3.02	1.73	Accepted

Table 3 shows that all the 4 items was accepted and are above 2.50 which is the cut-off for accepting an item. Therefore, this shows that teachers and parents accepted that adequate policing, employment/empowerment, proper youth socialisation and provision of CCTV all over the schools are the policy options for enhancing governments’ responses to security challenge in north central region of Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in table 1 were accepted and have mean score above 2.50 which shows that teachers and parents are in a positive agreement that lack of security in the school, scarcity of CCTV camera to monitor the school environs, poor management, manpower deficiency and lack of school fence are the factors that make schools vulnerable to security challenges. The findings is in line with the findings of Nwobodo & Udenbunu, 2017) who confirmed that progress and reducing challenges in schools will not be met until school management define and accept to provide adequate security guards, school security fence, CCTV camera to monitor the school environs, manpower in schools among others.

The findings in table two shows that government work with different teams on the fight against terrorism, but are not adequately equipped and committed to counteract the security challenges in the country. Evidence from the findings shows that item 1 and 4 were

above 2.50 which is a positive response, while 2 and 3 is below 2.50 which is a negative response. This findings is in corroboration with the study of Nwabuisi and Adewale, (2020) who observed that the persistence of these problems amid efforts to stem the tide may be attributed to; lack of commitment on the part of government to ensure effective realisation of the lofty ideals of school safety programmes enunciated by the Nigeria Safe School Initiative, Multi Donor Trust Fund, MDTF and Safe School Declaration action-plan and failure of adequacy of security of public schools and armed offensives against insurgency in the North amongst others.

The findings in table 3 were accepted and have mean score above 2.50 which shows that teachers and parents are in a positive agreement that adequate policing, employment/empowerment, proper youth socialisation and provision of CCTV all over the schools are the policy options for enhancing governments' responses to security challenge in North central region of Nigeria. These findings is in support with the findings of Montee (2018) who stated that schools are faced with numerous issues involving school safety and the management needs to ensure they prevent the occurrence of school violence and protect pupils from illnesses by receiving attention to the responsibility of schools for providing a safe environment so that pupils and teachers can maximize the education experience.

Recommendations

Based on the finding, the paper suggests the following:

1. The government should employ only trained school managers who are security conscious, to head government schools and make it mandatory for private schools to do same.
2. Government and school managers should provide adequate securities towards enhancing peace and safety from primary schools to tertiary institution in the North-central region of Nigeria.
3. Security training and workshops should be organized from time to time and as frequent as possible to prepare students and staff of educational institutions for any security threat that may occur in future.

4. The government should employ competent, agile, permanent and well-trained school security guards in all schools and beyond.
5. Finally, Ministry of Education should carry out frequent security inspection to ensure schools implement security policies as well as introduce security curriculum.
6. Teachers, students and parents should receive security training. Proper school fencing should also be enforced

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**CHALLENGES AND DIALOGUE OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN
NIGERIA: A STUDY OF TAFAWA BALEWA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA,
BAUCHI STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

There is the need to regularly interrogate the challenges associated with and dialogue processes of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria. This will enable policy makers and peace practitioners mitigate conflict in heterogenous communities. This study of same phenomenon in Tafawa Balewa local government Bauchi State adopted a survey design, using three hundred and eighty-four residents this number was sampled out based on the principle of determining sample size by research advisors 2006. Multistage sampling technique was used in the study. The instrument for data collection was an adopted structured questionnaire titled 'ethno-religious conflict and dialogue processes questionnaire (ERCDPQ). The instrument has a liability coefficient of.80 Mean scores were used in answering research question. The criterion mean score for the 5 point Likert scale was 3.00. Items with mean scores greater than or equal to ≥ 3.00 were accepted while mean scores below <3.00 were rejected. The study found out that all the stated dialogue processes were significant to the tackling of conflict in the study indicating the mean range above 3.00. it also found out that all the challenges face by the key stake holders stated in the study were agreed by the respondent and finally the study also found out that the items stated on the other alternative measures that could be adopted to effectively tackle conflict were agreed on the mean score above 3.00. based on the above the study recommended among other thing that there is need to adopt the report of the dialogue committee by the government, Government at all levels in the state should ensure they do not take sides in the conflict rather equal treatment should be observe.

Keywords: DIALOQUE, Conflict, Peace, Ethno-religious Conflict, Violence

Introduction

The incidence of Ethnic and religious conflicts has been continually reported in the mass media over the years. For example, these incidences occurred in Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area over the past two decades and have seriously and negatively affected the socio-economic and political development of the Local government in particular and the country's national security, stability and integration in general. The local government area comprises of different ethnic groups that are also divided along religious lines mostly Muslims and Christians. The historical relationship between the various ethnic and religious groups is one that has been fraught in contestation over political, economic and social rights. These contestations have regularly resulted in bloody confrontation that has resulted in the loss of lives and properties. The manipulation of religion and ethnicity has been a major obstacle to the country's efforts towards attaining greater height of national development.

Sule (2015) noted that ethno-religious conflicts in Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area, Bauchi State of Nigeria have become major boundaries that create divisions among people. Ethnicity and religion have also become potent tools for mobilization and manipulation in the country. They have been so manipulated that virtually all institutions in the public and private sectors have been polarized along ethnic and religious lines. Civil servants, community and social workers are most victims of intimidation and oppression in their places of work. Survival and job security are strongly based on ethnic or religious affiliations. These are ideologies that do not promote peaceful and harmonious co-existence among the people in communities. Our ethnic and religious values should have been a force that will encourage people to appreciate the great benefits derivable from working together as citizens in honesty and for a better future irrespective of our ethnic and religious differences.

According to Robbins and Judge, (2009). conflict is considered an inevitable phenomenon in many societies. The effect and consequences of unmanaged conflicts in the society will continue to promote violence. They maintained that in order to manage or develop effective key conflict management strategies through dialogue, it is essential to know the

underlying causes. In view of the above reasons therefore, there is need to investigate the ethno-demographic identities and conflict in Tafawa Balewa local government area of Bauchi state and to proffer solution through dialogue in order to ensure a sustainable peace and safety of lives and properties among the people of various communities in the local government area.

Research Questions:

1. What are the dialogue processes introduced by the stake holders to tackle ethno-demographic identities and conflict in Tafawa Balewa local Government?
2. What are the challenges of dialogue processes face by stake holders in tackling the conflict in Tafawa Balewa local Government?
3. What are the alternative measures that can be adopted to effectively tackle the conflict?

Conceptual Framework

The Concept of Conflict and Peace

The term conflict refers to the disagreement between one person and the other or a group of individuals. Various definition has been on the concept of conflict by different scholars. According Collins dictionary Conflict is a serious disagreement and argument about something important. Sule (2015), in his work, describes conflict as ‘a situation or condition of disharmony in an interactional process’. Rahim (2012) opined that conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organizational setting. Competition over economic resources between different ethnic groups is seen as a potential factor that could generate disagreement and conflict within a society.

Hence, political disparity and competition over economic resources are among the factors that lead to ethnic tension and conflict within a society, especially a plural state such as Nigeria, which is characterized by a diversity of co-existing but different cultures and religions. According to Galtung (1990: 292), the term peace and violence are linked. Peace is

the absence of violence and should be used as the social goal. Galtung further stated that like a coin peace has two sides: negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace is the absence of personal violence; positive peace is an absence of structural violence or social justice.

Dialogue

Dialogue refers to an effective communication that takes place in-between the conflicting parties. According to Ugorji (2017), dialogue could be a means to solving the dispute or may constitute a basis for bargaining. Using dialogue demands the recognition of the core values of conflicting parties and the free flow of communication. Dialogue in itself is aimed at enabling people with different views and perceptions to work together. Dialogue is a culturally and historically specific way of social discourse accomplished through the use of language and verbal transactions. It suggests community, mutuality, and authenticity—an egalitarian relationship. So understood, dialogue provides a meeting ground and manifests itself in a variety of spontaneous and ritual modes of discourse in which nature and structure meet.

Yahaya (2011) opined that etymologically, dialogue means a speech across, between, though two or more people. Dialogue comes from the Greek dialogos. Dia is a preposition that means “through,” “between,” “across,” “by,” and “of.” Dia does not mean two, as in two separate entities; rather, dia suggests a “passing through” as in diagnosis “thoroughly” or “completely.” Logos comes from legein, “to speak” Logos means “the word,” or more specifically, the “meaning of the word,” created by “passing through,” as in the use of language as a symbolic tool and conversation as a medium. Logos may also mean thought as well as speech—thought that is conceived individually or collectively, and/or expressed materially. Consequently, dialogue is a sharing through language as a cultural symbolic tool and conversation as a medium for sharing. (Ugorji, 2016).

Literature Review

Many factors have been advanced by scholars as the causes of conflict, whether ethnic, religious or otherwise, among various groups within a society. Coser (1956) and Geoff (1974) enumerated the following factors as the causes of conflict within a society, including economic

dissatisfaction among various groups within a society; political manipulation in various forms such the imposition of an alien ruler from outside the community; demand for greater authority; rights and recognition; religious differences; mutual mistrust; hostility; fear among members of conflicting parties; land acquisition; consolidation of economic discontent by peasant farmers; unequal distribution of resources and political offices; rapid mobilization of new groups in politics; general insecurity in the country and inability of the security agencies to bring about effective security; unfair handling of past incidences of conflict in the country; and ineffective national cohesion programmes capable of promoting patriotism and harmony (Rummel, 1975, Otite and Ogionut 1979).

Natural resource or primordial cleavage are major causes crises in Africa. These include land, water, forest, religion, ethnicity, power sharing deals in governments, revenue sharing formula, location of local government headquarters will be sited, universities admissions spaces' allocations, etc.; all actively cause conflicts in the continent. The above explains why ethno-religious crises have attracted scholars' interrogations profoundly.

Similarly, ethno-religious conflicts may also combine both religion and ethnicity as the bases for disagreement (Sule, 2015) or a state of affairs in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation. Ethno-religious conflicts are notable from other types of social conflicts in the dimension that they involve ethnic groups, which are of different religions and have become "annual rituals" in some states in the northern parts of Nigeria, like, Kano, Katsina, Bauchi, Plateau and Kaduna states, now, Nigeria's hottest beds of religious upheavals. The states have assumed notoriety in harbouring violent ethno-religious effusions which constitute serious threat to lives and property (Salawu, 2010).

Owutu (2012) noted with particular reference to Nigeria that "most inter-religious conflicts usually develop into inter- ethnic conflict seven where they began as a purely religious disagreement. The reverse is the case: namely, some socio-ethnic conflicts are

defected and fought out under inter-religious banner”. It is hardly surprising because there is a very strong correlation or overlap between ethnic and religious boundaries in Nigeria’s plural setting. According to Egwuas cited in Sule (2015) “this tendency for the boundary between the two forms of identity to collapse during moments of conflicts ...has been captured in the phrase ‘ethno-religious violence.’”

Frequent and persistent ethnic conflicts and religious clashes between the two dominant religions (Islam and Christianity) present the country with a major security challenge (Okah, 2014: 5). As Adagba et al (2012) have noted, claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government council, control of markets and sharia among other trivial issues have resulted in large scale killings and violence among groups in Nigeria. Scholars like Khalid (2004) maintained that the conflicts in the north western part of Nigeria take the form of Muslim/Christian communal clashes and farmers/pastoralists dispute, and they are fought along both ethnic and religious divide. In Nigeria, so far, the universalistic religions like Islam and Christianity did not succeed in containing or transcending the tensions of parochial and ethnic rivalries. On the contrary, the universalistic religions have sometimes reinforced the parochial loyalties.

Indeed, all the inter-religious violence that took place in the North-West zone, the Sharia inspired conflicts inclusive, could be subjected to ethno-religious interpretations. At least five major ethno-religious violence took place (two in the North-West, two in the North-East, and one in the South-East Zones) over the introduction of Shari’ah legal system between February 2000 and June 2000 alone. In each instance the conflict was remarkably similar (Khalid, 2004). The pastoralists/farmers conflict is the major type of conflict that have hit the southern Kaduna in recent past. This conflict takes the form of competition over ownership and control of natural resources, especially land, between the Hausa/Fulani herdsmen and the local farmers which has led the conflict to take an economic dimension.

Onyekwelu, Maundeni and Mandiyanike (2022: 130) Studied the link between state culture and political violence in Nigeria. They demonstrated that pre-colonial Nigerian groups

instituted state cultures that were not only divergent, but also hostile and violent to each other. They further argue that the roots of political violence in Nigeria stems from the violent pre-colonial and colonial state cultures that have endured up to the present period. However, it is pertinent to note that the writers link Nigerian cultural, socio-economic and political differences had contributed not in small quantity the incessant violence in the country.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework adopted for this study is the structural conflict theory as discussed below:

Structural Conflict Theory

The Structural Conflict Theory was adopted to explain the ethno-religious conflict in Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi state. This theory has two main sub-orientations. The first is the radical structural theory represented by the Marxist dialectical school with exponents like Marx and Engels, V.I. Lenin, etc. the second is the liberal structuralism represented by Ross (1993), Scarborough (1998) and the famous work by Galtung (1990) on structural violence. The main argument of the structural conflict theory is that conflict is built into the particular ways societies are structured and organized. The theory looks at social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, disease, exploitation, inequity etc. as sources of conflict (Ademola, 2006).

The structuralists maintain that conflicts occur because of the exploitative and unjust nature of human societies, domination of one class by another etc. Structural theory is remarkably strong on the immediate and underlying factors that lead to conflict. It presents a large number of such factors that make the emergence and escalation of internal conflicts possible (Brown, 1996 as cited in Ademola (2006). While economic and social factors are more common, political and institutional factors (the structure of the state, discriminatory political institutions, intergroup politics and elite cohesion or fragmentation); security factors (national security dilemma, regional military environment, refugee regimes, cross-border criminality, and civil-military relations); as well as ethnic factors are equally as critical. According to

Ademola (2006), structuralists present factors such as those listed above as the major motivating factors that explain the emergence of destructive conflicts between individuals and groups.

Following from the above assumptions, the structural conflict theory is apt and relevant for the appreciation of the incessant ethno-religious conflict in Tafawa Balewa. It offers deep insights to the interlocking factors that sustain the conflicts being basically because the people of Tafawa Balewa are divided along the lines of religion and ethnicity, and the socio-cultural factor of indigenes and settlers' dichotomy. It presupposes those once conflicts occur, they lengthen and become challenging to restore peace on account of a number of factors stated above.

Inter-ethnic and inter-faith diplomacy model follows: let us acknowledge our differences, but in so doing, the way we engage each other is significant. Instead of viewing each other as enemies and perpetrating harmful forms of conflict, let us pursue our contest over ethnic and religion in more positive and healthy ways. By practicing ethnic and religious peace-building and inter-ethnic and inter-faith dialogue, we can still disagree with one another but also come to build trust and see each one another as rivals in competition in some senses who can also come together to work together for the common good of the community.

Research Methodology

Research design used for this study is the survey design. This technique is used because of its efficiency for social science research in view of the wealth of data and interpretation it can provide. The area of this study is the Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area of Bauchi State. It is situated at the rocky southern part of Bauchi state. It has an area of 2, 770.00 square kilometers and a population of about 221,310 (NPC, 2016). It then comprises of two districts, namely Lere with headquarters at Tafawa Balewa and Bula with headquarters at Bununu.

Tafawa Balewa local government area comprises of the various ethnic groups Fulani, Hausawa, Jarawa, Sayawa, Dugurawa, Sigidawa, Zaksawa, Banshawa, Barawa, Angasawa, Tapshinawa, Boyawa, Warawa, Badawa, Burmawa, Bankalawa, Kanuri, Rafawa, Bijimawa,

Lerawa, Folci, Kaduk, Kantanawa. To Wimmer and Dominick (2017) is useful in researched that project particular characteristic segment or stratum of the population, such as the classifications according to age, sex, education, level of income and so on.

Sample size of 384 was used from the total population, based on the principles of Research Advisors (2006) sample size table. The instrument used for the purpose of this study was an adopted questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained this shows that the instrument is reliable.

Data Presentation and Analyses

The data collected from the respondents were used to answer the research questions raised in this study. They are presented in the following sub-heads below:

Research Question One: What are the dialogue processes introduced by the stake holders to tackle ethno-demographic identities and conflict in Tafawa Balewa local Government?

Table 1: Dialogue processes introduced by key stakeholders

Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1. There should be peace agreements among the various ethnic and religious group in the area.	384	4.20	0.94	Significant
2. Relocation of the local government headquarters to the nearby most peaceful area in the local government	384	4.46	0.65	Significant
3. Organize open discussion on conflict and grievances that may involve the engagement of relevant community stakeholders	384	4.36	0.84	Significant
4. Committee for peace and harmony should be setup to comprise a delegation from across the various ethnic and religious group in the area	384	4.04	0.90	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table above shows that the respondents in the study area agreed with the items in the instrument on what are the dialogue processes introduced by key stakeholders to tackle the conflict in Tafawa Balewa LGA of Bauchi State. This is because their mean responses were above 3.0 benchmark for this study. The findings reveal that all the stated strategies were significant to the tackling of conflict in the study indicating the mean range from 4.04 to 4.46. However, relocation of the local government headquarter to the nearby most peaceful area in local government is the most significant strategy among the conflict prevention strategies implemented by the key stakeholders in the study area

Research Question Two: What are the challenges of dialogue processes face by stake holders in tackling the conflict in Tafawa Balewa local Government?

Table 2: Challenges encountered by the stakeholders in intervening in the conflict

Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1. There is a hatred and mistrust between Christians and Muslims during and after religious conflicts.	384	3.92	1.142	Significant
2. Failure of government to implement the recommendations of committee's report cause challenges to stakeholders in talking the problem.	384	4.09	1.146	Significant
3. Communication gap and poor coordination between government, stakeholders and various community members pose a great challenge.	384	4.44	.646	Significant
4. Financial problem is one of the challenge encounters by the stakeholders in talking the problems.	384	4.21	.792	Significant

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table above discloses the significant challenges encountered by the stakeholders in intervening in the conflict and the respondents in the study area agreed. This is because their mean responses were above the 3.0 benchmark for this study. The findings signified that all the stated challenges encountered by the stakeholders intervened in conflict resolution in Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area of Bauchi state, especially, the issue of communication gap and poor coordination between government, stakeholders and various community members pose a great challenge where all the mean range were from 3.92 to 4.44 which is above average. However, thus there are strong strategies used to tackle the conflict by stakeholders, but they suffer from many challenges when they intervene in conflict resolution and peace-building in the study area

Research Question Three: What are the alternative measures that can be adopted to effectively tackle the conflict?

Table 3: Alternative measures that can be adopted to effectively tackle the conflict

Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1. Religious bodies and leaders should facilitate and adopt the moral values of forgiveness and reconciliation.	384	4.31	1.011	Significant
2. Religious bodies and different ethnic group leaders should help to foster mutual respect and art of dialogue as a personal and social process.	384	4.27	0.607	Significant
3. The conflicts result to many damages to both sides leads to lose of life and properties turning many to orphans and widow	384	4.38	0.835	Significant
4. All ethnic and religious leaders should encourage their followers to silence the music of hatred and the guns of war to embrace peace and tolerance with one another.	384	4.18	0.978	Significant

Source: Field research data, 2023.

Table above shows that the respondents in the study area agreed with the items in the instrument on the alternative measures that can be adopted to effectively tackle the conflict in Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area of Bauchi State. Since their mean responses were above the 3.0 yardstick for this study. The findings signified that more than average of the respondents agreed with the stated strategies to be adopted for effective conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the study area since their mean responses range from 4.18 to 4.38 respectively. Therefore, when these strategies dialogue will be adopted in Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area and the state, in general, the ethno-religious conflict occurrence will be tackled and promote peaceful living among the people of this area.

Discussions of Findings

The findings reveal that all the stated dialogue processes were significant to the tackling of conflict in the study area indicating the mean range from 4.04 to 4.46. However, relocation of the local government headquarter to the nearby most peaceful area in local government is the most significant strategy among the conflict prevention strategies implemented by the key stakeholders in the study area. This finding corroborated with Adeleke and Jimoh (2021). However, key Stakeholders stand a better position in promoting and fostering ethnic organization, religious peace-building, crisis management, conflict resolution, and ethno-religious dialogue than security forces.

The Stakeholders also faced some challenges of extremism, fanaticism, ignorance and lack of support from members of their faith and ethnic group in the course of fostering ethnic organization, religious peace-building and promoting ethno-religious dialogue. Another challenge is that of poverty where it creates societal problems particularly when many people cannot afford their needs like shelter, clothing and feeding. Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area lacks structural economy to cater for large population the consequent poverty creates societal problems. Extremely poor people can do anything to sustain themselves. Thus, the poor youth in Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area are manipulated with small amount of money to cause ethno- religious disturbance. The finding also reveals that some

Stakeholders despite their position they are given to selfishness. They employ fowl means to perpetrate ethno-religious violence knowing that they will be invited by the Government in power to seek their consent. That will give them the opportunity to get closer to the Government of the day to achieve their personal interest.

The study also finds that challenges encountered by stakeholders in intervening in the conflicts. The findings of the study revealed that there is hatred and mistrust between Christian's and Muslims during and after religious conflicts, failure of Government to implement the recommendation of committee reports, communication gap and poor coordination between Government, stakeholders and various community members pose a great challenge. Financial problem is another challenge. Other alternative measures that can be adopted to effectively tackle the conflicts the findings revealed that religious bodies and leaders should facilitate and adopt a moral value of forgiveness and reconciliation, religious bodies and different ethnic groups leaders should help to Foster mutual respect and art of dialogue as a personal and social process, ethnic and religious groups that are at logger heads should bury their difference and cooperate with one another. All ethnic and religious leaders should encourage their followers to silence the music of hatred and the guns of war to embrace peace and tolerance with one another.

The dialogue processes introduced by key stakeholders to tackle conflict in Tafawa Balewa include peace agreements among the various ethnic and religious group in the area. Relocation of the local government headquarters to a nearby peaceful area, organization of open discussions on conflict and grievances with relevant community stakeholders as well as setting up of committees by the stakeholders in intervening in the conflict include the hatred and mistrust and harmony comprising of various ethnic and religious group in the area. The challenges encountered by Christians and Muslims during and after religious conflicts. Failure of government to implement the recommendations of committee's report cause challenges to stakeholders in talking the problem. Communication gap and poor coordination between government, stakeholders and various community members.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it has been thus established that dialogue is key in the peace process in heterogeneous communities such as Tafawa Balewa Local Government, Bauchi State. Effort to effectively solve the problem through dialogue involved the following: peace agreements among the various ethnic and religious group, relocation of the local government headquarters, organization of open discussion on conflict and grievances engagement with relevant community stakeholders, and establishment of committee for peace and harmony comprising a delegation from across the various ethnic and religious group in the area.

In spite of the challenges outlined above, moderate peacebuilding has been achieved through the dialogue process. To further enhance these gains, the underlisted are recommended.

Recommendation

1. There is need to adopt the report of the dialogue committee by the government
2. The committee should not be disbanded as the peace achieved remain fragile
3. Government should have the political will to relocation of the local government headquarters to appropriate location as recommended
4. There is need by the ethno-religious leaders to build peace and preach the gospel of tolerance and love to their followers
5. Government at all levels in the state should ensure they do not take sides in the conflict equal treatment should be observe
6. Report and lessons learned should be gazetted and used to solve similar problems around the country.

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ETHICAL REFLECTION ON THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR IN ABAK AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

Political rallies in recent time have taken the semblance of religious gatherings where religious rituals like praying, singing of religious songs and other activities meant to be done in church and other religious programmes have become political rituals. This study therefore, examined how the religious orientations and moral values of the people of Abak reflect in their political behaviours and activities. Ninety-two copies of the questionnaire were used to elicit information in addition to bibliographic sources. The findings reveal that religion has influence on the people's participation in political meetings and rallies, voter registration and motivation to vote. However, the study reveals a minimal influence of religion on the choice of candidate or party to vote for, electoral malpractice, motivation for attending political campaigns, on the part of the electorates. On the side of political aspirants, the study reveals that despite their religious inclinations and orientations, they engage in financial inducement of voters and unethical act of not keeping to their campaign promises. The study concludes that the relationship between religion and politics in Abak reveals a disturbing scenario of people using religion as an umbrella to cover their greedy political ambitions and choices. Since both religion and politics speak ethical language, religious people should imbibe those shared values.

Keywords: Peace education, Conflict, Violence and Communal Conflict.

Introduction

The question about religion and politics and the nexus that exist between them have engaged the attention of scholars. According to Wogaman (1988), religion tends to be important to people who care about politics; likewise, politics often matters most to those who care about religion. And often, these are the same people. The question here is: what then, uniquely and specifically, might be the influence of religion on political behaviours? According to Colson (2010) human politics is based on the idea that society must be changed in order to change people, but Christians understand that the other way round: people must be changed in order to change the society. But in the case of Abak being a socio-political and religious community, the problem is, to what extent are the moral lives of the Christians influencing the political leadership recruitment process?

The terms free, fair and credible election, are often repeated especially during electioneering periods. However, whether or not the political actors in Abak adhere to these values during the elections needs to be scholarly interrogated. Though researches have been carried out on the interaction between religion and politics but emphases were not given much on the influence of religion on political behaviours of the people of Abak. Even previous works on Abak have not paid enough attention to examine the level of influence religion has on political behaviour. These constitute scholarly vacuum which this work addresses.

Religion is meant to promote the moral standard of the society both politically and socially but today it seems religion has become an umbrella that people use to cover their greedy political ambitions. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate how the religious moral values of the people of Abak reflect in their political behaviour against the background of the increasing level of religiosity among the people.

Concept of Political Behaviour

The current state of political behaviour, as some scholars now claim, is typically concerned with individual behaviour in the society. One of such scholars is Richard Rose (2007), who claims that political behaviour is the study of the behaviour of political actors such as voters,

lobbyists, and politicians. Eldersveld and Katz (1961) affirmed that political behaviour “identifies the behaviour of individuals or group of individuals as the primary unit of analysis”. It seeks to examine the behavior and actions of individuals, rather than characteristics of institutions such as legislature, executive and judiciary. Political behaviour has been seen as political processes and behaviour at the level of the individual.

Religious Influence on Political Behaviour

Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) posit that churches are great places to learn the skills needed for participating in politics, providing attendees (and especially active members) with experience in leading meetings, organizing events, recruiting volunteers, and so on. This, the authors posit, is because religion fosters good moral behaviour in one’s life. In the opinion of Wald, Owen, and Hill, Huckfeldt, (1999), religious life equips people for political engagement; here the literature has consistently shown that attending church is positively correlated with political behaviour and activity. In other words, religion serves as an enlightenment or mobilization agent to the people helping them to know their role in the political environment.

Values Common to Religion and Politics

I. Accountability

Accountability ensures actions and decisions taken by public officials are subject to oversight so as to guarantee that government initiatives meet their stated objectives and respond to the needs of the community they are meant to be benefiting. This in turn, contributes to better governance and poverty reduction (Bovens, 2006). Therefore, the concept of accountability involves two distinct stages: answerability and enforcement.

Job (2012) emphasizes that accountability in governance ensures that elected and appointed government officials render account of their stewardship and justify their persistent stay in office. It must be noted, however, that accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law. Tinubu (2008) argues that accountability is the responsibility

to be answerable to the people and to the constitution, who and which both constitute the fundamental authorizing agencies of public action.

Theoretical Perspectives on Interaction between Religion and Politics

Omoregbe (2003) asserted that religion can bring about sustainable good political behaviour through the inculcation of high sense of morality, sense of duty, selfless service, public accountability, respect for human lives, love of one's neighbour, sense of humanity, abhorrence of violence, love for peace, contentment with what one can legitimately have, justice etc. in the citizens as well as the leaders. And that if a religion fails to inculcate a sense of morality in the people, then it has failed in its creed and is not in a position to help bring about good governance and sustain political development in a country or state where it has failed to raise the moral standard of the people. He further opines that adherence to religious tenets by the leaders and followers will greatly enrich political activity. Embedded in each religion are the beliefs, practices and ethics that serve as check for excesses in human behaviour. Thus, values in religion are possible mechanisms for good political activity and political development.

Adeleye (1998) in his opinion also argues that religion is an idealistic set up which serves as oil to lubricate politics. This according to him means that religion bears peace and love, both of which are vital ingredients that can sum the interests of societies together for an ideal and a very healthy and purposeful politics. Therefore, in achieving good governance and good political behaviour, religion should serve as a guiding factor in all political activities that the state engages in. He further opines that the teachings of religion are expected to guide politicians to be able to lead their people aright with the fear of God. They are not to consider themselves first; rather, they are to be servant leaders focusing on the interest or welfare of the people.

Neuhaus (2009) is of the view that, once God is removed from civic life, we are left with two principal actors: the individual and the state. With God out of the picture there is no mediating structure to create moral values. Without religion, there is no counterbalance to the

state’s ambitions. According to him, it is not government’s job to promulgate moral law; rather the duty belongs to other social institutions, especially the Church. When the state steps beyond the bounds of its intended authority, the Church becomes an “effective source of moral resistance.” But it does not resist for its own sake; it does not resist gathering power or broadening its own following; it resists for the common good of the state. Carl Henry (1998) avers that Christians, as citizens, have a duty “to work through civil authority for the advancement of justice and human good”.

Methodology

The work adopted descriptive research method. The questionnaire was employed as instrument for data gathering. A total of 110 copies of questionnaire were distributed among residents of Abak and 96 copies were retrieved, 92 were correctly filled and used for analysis. The results were analysed using simple percentages.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The respondents were asked to tick the following options in the questionnaire: A-Agree, SA-Strongly Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, N-Neutral.

Table 1: Our political leaders hold meetings with the community to give account of their stewardship.

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	4	4.4
SA	3	3.2
D	64	69.5
SD	21	22.8
N	0	0
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Taking from the data in table 1, 4.4% of the respondents agreed that political leaders in Abak hold meetings with the community to give account of their stewardship, 3.2% opine that they strongly agree. A total of 69.5% of the respondents claim that the political leaders in Abak do not hold meetings with the community to give account of their stewardship while 22.8% said

they strongly disagree while 0% was neutral. From the findings, majority of the correspondents agree that the political leaders in Abak are not accountable because they do not give records of their political deeds. This means that despite the religiosity of the leaders in Abak, these political leaders are not accountable to the people. However, Job, (2012) has argued that politicians who are accountable will not take offence at being asked to explain an action taken or decision made. The fact that the political leaders in Abak are not answerable to the electorates strongly suggests that there is irresponsibility in the political system of Abak.

II. Tolerance

Tolerance is to make allowance for other people's beliefs, opinions, behaviours, choices, and so forth. In the national life, there are cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, social, educational and developmental differences. Tolerance is recognition of the fact that there can never be uniformity in a plural community. Also, tolerance is a straightforward attitude that allows people to have freedom of expression even though one may feel that their ideas are incorrect or even immoral (Dzurgba, 2003).

Political tolerance is the action of allowing those with whom you disagree to practice their constitutionally asserted civil liberties including the promotion of their own views (Bobo and Frederick, 1989). It implies a willingness to 'put up with' those things one rejects or opposes; a willingness to permit the expression of ideas or interests one opposes. Political tolerance is a fair, objective and permissive attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality et cetera, differ from one's own. Avoidance of discrimination amongst people of different groups, race, tribes, nationality and political party can help foster tolerance in the democratic system of government that is practiced in Nigeria (Sullivan and Marcus, 1982).

Tolerance is an ethical term, which entails the quality of being long-suffering in disposition; the putting up with something with which one disagrees. Also, tolerance means to allow without opposing; to acknowledge the right of another to hold contrary opinions. Hence, religious toleration, in turn, is the condition in which beliefs or behaviours especially

religious or political behaviours, that does not conform to that of the majority or dominant group in a society, are allowed to be present and perhaps propagated without opposition in the form of legislation or the use of force (Grenz and Smith, 2003).

Tolerance is a by-product of cooperation. It simply suggests accommodation of views, opinion and people different from us. It implies that people are not the same in terms of trait, opinion, sentiment and thought. It is one of the beauties of nature. It therefore implies that everyone is equally talented but no one is a monopoly of knowledge and wisdom and such, there is need to give allowance for every opinion and even sentiment in social interactions. In religious setting, tolerance is recommended as a course of action because of its potentiality in promoting cordial relationship. In Islam, religious tolerance, presupposes toleration of other faiths. Likewise, in Christianity, tolerance is recommended as a factor enhancing cordial, human and social relation (Ayantayo, 2009).

III. Transparency

Transparency according to Job (2012) means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows established rules and regulations. Also, it means information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement; that enough information is provided and in easily understandable forms and media. It is the transparency in the opinion of the commonwealth that enhances public participation in public affairs, promotes the accountability of public agencies and officials and provides a powerful aid in the fight against corruption. Transparency is a government's obligation to share information with citizens or the obligation of the elected to share information with the electorate devoid of deceit. It is at the heart of how the citizens hold their public officials answerable. Governments exist to serve the people; as such information on how officials conduct and spend public funds must be readily available and easily understood. This transparency promotes good governance (Gavazza and Alessandro, 2006).

IV. Honesty/Truth Telling

In most political systems, extensive powers are granted to the leaders and thus many far-reaching decisions are shaped by their virtues, or lack thereof. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to choose politicians who, when in power, will advance the common good. Yet, a widely shared perception is that most politicians are dishonest and have low ethical standards (Hellinger, 1978). Making things even more complicated for voters, dishonest candidates typically try to appear honest by mimicking honest candidates' behaviour in the election campaign (Mondak and Huckfeldt, 2006). Ayantayo (2009) considers honesty as an act of sincerity; that is, being sincere to oneself and to others in the course of one form of interaction or the other at every given time. He opines that honesty goes with truthfulness, uprightness, sincerity and straightforwardness in deed. Religious basis of honesty is that social relation is based on trust. Every form of relationship is based on trust. Trust and honesty have to do with relying or depending on someone about one's immediate and future course of action. According to him, religious tradition and religious practitioners are admonished to be honest in their relationship with God and their fellow men. It also extends to relationship with all categories of people at different levels of social, economic, political, religious, technological and everyday interaction. Therefore, honesty as Ayantayo puts it is a 'do' course of action which religious people must demonstrate and actualize in all their daily interactions.

V. Free, Fair and Credible Election

Free, Fair and Credible election is a current understanding of an election process that provides substantive choice, accurately reflects the will of the people, and establishes an accountable government. The process by which the votes of the people are gathered and counted is critical to the government's claims of legitimacy, and to the continued faith of the people in their government (Dekel, et al., 2008). Kapuya (2004) says a free, fair and credible electoral process is one where fundamental human rights and freedoms are respected and where the playing field is reasonably level and accessible to all electors, parties and candidates. Tables 2 and 3 below tried to find the extent this reflect in the political process in Abak

Table 2: I Vote for the Candidate that Gives More Money.

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	28	30.5
SA	14	15.3
D	30	32.6
SD	12	13.0
N	8	8.6
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table 2 above, the respondents that agreed that they vote for the candidate that gives more money were 30.5%, 15.3% said they strongly agree, 32.6% said they disagree and 13.0% strongly disagree while 8.6% were neutral. Therefore, the perception that an election has not been free, fair and credible seems to be true from the above findings. Kitcher (2001) has noted that election has not been free, fair and credible where there is fraud, violence and intimidation at any of the stages critical to the electoral process. It is therefore correct to say that any electoral process that is characterized by financial inducement of voters or other stakeholders is not free, fair and credible. It is a compromised process and the leaders that emerge from such process cannot claim legitimacy.

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	39	42.3
SA	24	26.4
D	18	19.5
SD	9	9.7
N	2	2.1
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Practical Relationship between Religion and Political Behaviour

Factors that Influence Political Behaviour in Abak

One fundamental form of political behaviour is voting behaviour. Voting behaviour pertains to the actions or inactions of citizens in respect of participating in the elections that take place for members of their local, regional, or national governments. The behaviour results either in

support for political candidates or parties or abstention from the voting process. The behaviour of voters can be traced to the benefits or disadvantages to their quality of life that they perceive would be a consequence thereof. Understanding voters' behaviour can explain how and why decisions were made either by public decision-makers, which has been a central concern for political scientists, or by the electorate. A number of attitudinal and social factors are related to individual voting behaviour. Among attitudinal factors, assessments of the personal characteristics of the candidates, evaluation of government performance, orientations on specific policy issues, party identification, and ideology are the primary determinants of one's choice of a candidate. (Dekel, et al., 2009). There are basis upon which voters decide how they cast their ballot. An indication in table 2, show another basic factor which influence the people of Abak in their choice of candidates and why they cast their vote as well.

When one adds the number of those who agree and strongly agree, it shows that about half of the study population or respondents, vote based on monetary ground. As such when the people vote based on monetary ground it implies selling of one's right. Voting ought to be the right of every citizen but when the people sell their votes it also means that they will have no ground to hold their political representatives accountable. Consequently, the religiosity of the people of Abak does not reflect on their voting behaviour.

Party Affiliation/Membership

Table 4: I do not participate in political activities due to my Religious Affiliation

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	20	21.7
SA	20	21.7
D	32	34.9
SD	8	8.6
N	12	13.1
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From table 4 above, almost half of the respondents agree that they do not participate in political activities due to their religious affiliation. This shows that some people in Abak pay more

attention to the membership of their religious groups so much that sometimes they do not participate in the political activities like campaign/rallies and voting. Therefore, the religiosity of the people of Abak has affected their participation in politics in this instance. It is clear that not all religious groups do participate in politics in Abak relying on this finding.

Motivation for Attending Political Campaigns/Rallies

Table 5: Sometimes I Participate in Political Campaigns and Rallies because there is Money to be shared at the end.

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	40	43.4
SA	16	17.5
D	22	23.9
SD	8	8.6
N	6	6.6
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 7 shows that majority of the respondents participate in political campaigns and rallies because of the money they are given but not to promote a credible candidate. This is against the socio-political, religious and ethical standard of politics. This is one of the ways in which the people contribute to corrupt governance, because political campaigns and rallies supposed to be a ground where people go out and hear or listen to the candidate’s motivations for aspiring for any political position. Since majority of the people of Abak agree to the fact that they participate in political campaign because of the money candidates give at the end of the rallies, it suggests that, the people are not been guided by their religious values.

Motivation for Voting in Elections

Below is the result of the findings made to know what motivates the people of Abak in participating in politics.

Table 6: My Religious organization/group preaches and encourages members to register and vote.

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	34	36.9
SA	26	28.4
D	17	18.5
SD	8	8.6
N	7	7.6
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Majority of the respondents agree that their religious organization/group preaches and encourages them to register and vote. Therefore, it is noted here that religious organizations/groups do encourage and motivate the people to get themselves involved in governance processes. The quality of decisions taken by any religious individual depends very much on the accuracy of information provided or received, and the quality of advice given in the church by their religious leaders. Therefore, religious persuasion serves as a motivational force influencing people’s political orientation and participation.

Making and Keeping of Electoral Promises

Campaign promises matter if and only if candidates turn in from renegeing on their campaign promises. That is, we obtain different election outcomes following a failure to fulfill a promise than after a promise has been fulfilled. For the outcome of future elections to differ following fulfillment or non-fulfillment of promises, voters’ strategies must depend on the relationship between a campaign promise and the policy choice of a candidate (Simon, 2002).

Table 7: Our Political Representatives (politicians) in Abak Keep to their Electoral Promises

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	13	14.2
SA	12	13.2
D	49	53.2
SD	17	18.4
N	1	1.0
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Through this research, the above table point out that majority of the people in Abak disagreed that their political representatives (politicians) keep their electoral promises. Therefore, it is clear that despite the religiosity of the politicians in Abak, they do not keep to their electoral promises that they make during campaigning for citizens votes and endorsements. This has gone a long way to contradict the ethics of honesty which implies truthfulness and sincerity. The religiosity of the leaders has failed to reflect in keeping to their words and promises. Therefore, the people of Abak should ensure that candidates with high probability of running for office in the future are more likely to fulfill their promises and that voters are more likely to believe promises from these candidates.

An honest man or woman is one who keeps to his/her words or promises. He/she is not deceptive. Honesty deepens trust and when it is lacking in the relationship between the leaders and the led, distrust sets in. Distrust can trigger lack of confidence in the leaders by the people. This can as well lead to complaints, protests and civil disobedience. However, it is possible that the irresponsibility of voters, who collect financial inducements to vote candidates, is part of the cause of the emergence of dishonest leaders. If the people of Abak and indeed Nigeria must elect honest and accountable leaders, they must shun politics of "cash and away" and embrace politics guided by moral considerations.

The Interplay between Religion and Politics

Table 8: My opinion and attitude to politics has been influenced by the teachings I received in my Church

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	52	54.1
SA	20	20.5
D	16	17.0
SD	5	5.2
N	3	3.2
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 9: We pray during political meetings and campaigns

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A	40	43.4
SA	22	23.9
D	16	17.5
SD	8	8.6
N	6	6.6
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The findings reveal that political campaigns in Abak have taken a religious shape where prayers are offered to God during political meetings and campaigns. It is hypocritical that these same people who offer prayers to God during campaigns, are the same people who collect money from the candidates to vote, and majority also engage in multiple voting to ensure their choice candidates win at elections. On the same way, candidates also involve in bribing the constituents and at the end, fail to keep to their electoral promises which they make on the same campaign and rally where they prayed and sought the presence of God. This is

against the religious ethics of honesty. The act of singing songs and praises, and praying during political campaigns without corresponding practice of religious and political values go further to prove that some politicians hide under the cover or umbrella of religion to advance their selfish and greedy political ambitions. It is man's attempt to mock God and shows how people could be religious but not godly.

Conclusion

The heart of this study aimed at identifying and discussing religious influence on the political orientation and behaviour in Abak. This study has offered religious and political perspectives on the values of accountability, tolerance, transparency and free, fair and credible election with a view to establishing the nexus between religion and politics in promotion of values needed for a sustainable socio-political order. These discussions or ideas advocated here have shown that politics is not an immoral phenomenon as some believe. Rather, politics, well understood and practiced, thrives on and promotes values shared by many religious traditions. The findings reveal the practical relationship between religion and political orientation in Abak. The findings have shown that the people of Abak are both religious and politically inclined but the religiosity of the people do not show moral rectitude in their political behaviours for example, their voting pattern. From the attitude and behaviour of politicians in Abak, it is clear that most of their values are not in line with their religious lives.

Christians going into politics should not imbibe the values of the average Nigerian politician, but have their values transformed through their religious lives and by the renewal of their thought-form. For a Christian to be effective in politics and make a positive difference, he or she must imbibe religious values. Politicians who are influenced by their religion are expected to be fair, honest, accountable, transparent, tolerant, teachable and humble. The guides to political processes should be based on these religious cum political values in order to achieve good political behaviours. Democracy and governance will be more meaningful and sustained if they are cultivated along these ethical lines.

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THE NATURE OF INTERVENTIONISM AND ITS THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS FOR AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Intervention in the affairs particularly weaker states is a fact that modern scholars in international security will continue to grapple with contemptuously and even in the foreseeable future. The nature of interventionism and its theoretical foundations need more examination, with particular reference to Africa is therefore investigated using survey and descriptive research design were used. Purposive sampling was used on covered the Federal Territory Abuja, Nigeria, with homogeneous sampling aspect chosen as it focuses on one particular sub-groups, from which 150 Respondents were evenly selected from the diplomatic corps, security agencies, academic. It was found that the nature of intervention in Africa often is security, economic, political and socio-cultural intervention. Interestingly, these elements are recurrent decimals in the theoretical underpinning of this study, where are realism, social contract theory and dependency theories. From the realist point of view, relationships amongst states in the quest for interest and distribution of power frequently lead to conflicting national interests in the committee of nations. This obviously can often times lead to interventionism. While the social contract theory is not often viewed from the periscope, it is an undeniable fact that Western powers need to fulfil their social contract in the protection of their citizens, and defend them against threats, local and foreign, exemplified by such foreign interventionism as the Global War on Terror that has roots in Africa. Lastly, in spite of the fact that dependency theory is hardly examined as a cause for intervention, it leads to both overt and covert interference in affairs of other state. It is therefore important that African politico-military leadership understand these dynamics so as to be able to adequately deal with the menace as they as projected in various forms.

Keywords: Interventionism, theory, Africa, Security, Economic, Political and Socio-cultural

Introduction

In spite of the documented sovereignty of states within the committee of nations, the practice of governments interfering politically in the affairs of other countries, through military, trade or humanitarian grounds is more common than most watchers of international affairs would like to admit. Indeed, there is a legitimate reason for countries to intervene in the affairs of other countries. A reason for intervention is as expressed in UN Security Council Resolution 1973, is “to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack.” This resolution was adopted on March 17, 2011, and formed the legal basis for military intervention in the Libyan Civil War. In 2015, the U.S. cited Resolution 1973 in assisting Libyan forces in fighting the militant terrorist group ISIS.

The principle of non-intervention in internal affairs appears to have been modified, thereby legitimizing UN/Great Power intervention for humanitarian purposes in conflicts of an essentially domestic nature (Harris, 2001). Resolution 688, for example, was adopted on 5 April 1991 in connection with Iraq's suppression of Kurdish civilians following the Kurdish rebellion of March 1991 after Iraq's defeat at the hand of the Gulf War coalition. For Iraq, the Resolution itself amounted to a "flagrant, illegitimate intervention in Iraq's internal affairs and a violation of Article 2 of the Charter." Resolution 688, was the first Security Council Resolution to determine the existence of a threat to international peace and security as a result of a state's violation of its citizens human rights. The atrocities committed by Idi Amin of Uganda, or Pol Pot of Cambodia, did not elicit such a determination, response, or use of force by either the UN or the powerful states.

Thus, positivist exceptions to non-interventionism resulted from these humanitarian considerations that superseded the security of national borders. As Agrawal (2016) put it, since governments are viewed as instrumental institutions that exist to uphold the domestic rights of civilians, it follows therefore that a violation of it may warrant an intervention on behalf of the citizens of the state. This position is also promoted by Walzer (1977) in *Just and Unjust Wars*, with the argument that it is only in extreme cases of rights violations “that shock the moral

conscience of mankind”, can interventions be supported. He gives the examples of genocide, mass murder or enslavement. Rights violations above this level, he implies, are not grounds for interventionism (e.g., removal of free movement, freedom of the press, etc).

It can thus be affirmed that strong arguments made for the support of foreign intervention in the affairs of a country is usually made based on humanitarian grounds. It is assumed that human beings have a moral, if not legal, obligation to stop gross violations of human rights and inhumane treatment of innocent people. Often, this standard of humanitarian civil conduct can only be enforced through intervention with the use of military force. Usually, countries with larger military might may threaten other weaker countries in order to have military, economic or political influence over them. Such actions may be justified primarily with the excuse that the smaller state was unable to protect or guarantee the safety of its foreign residents, including the citizens of the intervening power or other major powers. The premise may also be based on the inability of such small countries to govern itself, due to weak institutions and possibly posed a threat to other countries within its region (Downes, 2021). Examples of such situations may arise from intra-State conflicts such as civil wars, communal clashes, terrorism, banditry and other such violent conflicts.

All these may lead to circumstances for intervention that may be engineered, or forced from a very distorted perspective in order to justify aggression and colonization or economic dominance through forced treaties and agreements. Since sovereignty has never been an absolute, the phenomenon of intervention is certainly not new, depending on the powers at play. Additionally, international law, which primarily is concerned with the protection of individual’s human rights now, has as its focus on collective rights. Lassa (1995) Members of the United Nations are obliged to preserve these collective rights within their territories. Therefore, where these rights are breached within the internal territories of a particular member-state, as it is often the case during internal conflicts, it automatically becomes an international concern.

From all perspectives, interventionism in the affairs particularly weaker states is a fact that modern scholars in international security will continue to grapple with contemptuously and even in the foreseeable future. While many aspects of it have been investigated, the nature of interventionism and its theoretical foundations need more examination, with particular reference to Africa. To carry out this task, the underlisted research questions are raised.

1. What is the nature of international intervention in African and by extension, Nigeria? and
2. What are the theoretical fundamentals of interventionism in Africa?

Conceptual and literature Review

Like many important concepts, intervention has been defined variably by scholars and practitioners alike. Its definition has been broadened enough to include even something that may have been seen as meaninglessly insignificant as the verbal remarks of government or its actors concerning another state's affairs (Vincent, 2016). Intervention can be defined as the use of force across State borders by an intervening State. It may be a dictatorial interference by a State in the affairs of another State for the purpose of maintaining or altering the actual conditions of things (Lassa, 1995). It is aimed at preventing or ending widespread grave violations of the fundamental human rights of individuals, citizens, with or without the permission of the State within whose territory, force is applied. Holzgrefe (2003) Intervention refers to organized and systematic activities directed across recognized boundaries. It is the effort aimed at affecting the political authority and structures of the target State (Oran, 1994).

The importance of this is underscored in contemporary definition of national security, adequately expanded to include other aspects of a nation's strategic objectives such as economic security; energy security; environmental security, health, gender, food security and the likes. This means that national security includes both national defense and the protection of a series of geopolitical, economic, in addition to other interests (Holmes, 2015: 23).

Generally, any cross-border act by an external party to an internal conflict, however limited in scope, which involves the mobilization of actors having the potential to apply

physical force that does not constitute a pure peacekeeping operation, is an intervention under international law. However, intervening in the internal armed conflict of a nation, and internal insurgents often gives rise to complex problems across different disciplines. Eliav (2009), In recent times in Nigeria, the activities of the Islamic Sect known as ‘Boko Haram’ had claimed the lives of thousands of people. Bombing of churches, mosques, public car parks became rampant while several buildings were set ablaze. Other activities such as sporadic shootings, kidnappings are constant issues which threaten the lives and properties of the people in the northern parts of Nigeria. At the height of this recently, is the recent kidnap of about 300 students of the Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State. This has generated serious concerns nationally and consequently, attracted the attention of the international community for intervention. Apart from the United Nations, the United States of America, Britain, China and Israel are a few countries that have offered to intervene in the northern Nigerian situation. This, however, may not be without its consequential aftermaths as seen in other countries that have received foreign interventions in the past.

As Finnemore (2004), opined, interventionism has played major roles in the foreign policies of Western powers. This according to him, was particularly during and after the Victorian era. In recent times however, the new imperialism era witnessed great and numerous interventions by Western nations in the affairs of the global South. Modern interventionism became more daring, stemming from the Cold War policies of Bipolarism, which saw the United States and the Soviet Union intervened in nations around the world to counter any influence held there by the other nation.

Methodology

Research design used for this study is mixed methods, using survey and descriptive survey research designs. This was carried out using Abuja Federal Territory (Nigeria), as the study area. Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria. Due to the nature of the specialized population of this study, purposive sampling was used in order to enable us sample of a particular population to participate in the study. This technique also is useful as it usually can help a researcher to

obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment, saving time and money (Black, 2010). Therefore, of the six categories of purposive sampling (typical, extreme, critical, heterogeneous, homogeneous, and theoretical sampling), homogeneous sampling was chosen as it “focuses on one particular subgroup in which all the sample members are similar, such as a particular occupation or level in an organization’s hierarchy” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

Stemming from the above, appropriate groups by snowballing into others which are diplomats, security agencies and peace ambassadors within the FCT, Abuja. Since the researcher do not have the total number of populations to sample. The sampling will be carried out thus:

Table 1: Distribution of respondents

S/No	Agencies	Sampled
1	Diplomats	50
2	Security agencies	50
3	Academia	50

Therefore, the sampled population is 150 respondents to represent the entire population of the study.

Questionnaires obtained were analysed quantitatively using Likert scale, with the aid of tables and computations. Also, simple percentage and ratio in tables and percentages. Similarly, data obtained from interview was analysed using descriptive techniques and triangulated with secondary materials.

Data presentation and Analyses

In the sections below, data gathered from questionnaires and interviews were analysed using Likert Scale and descriptive techniques. From the total number of 150 questionnaires administered to our sub-grouped of respondents, 100 per cent was returned. This was due to the closed nature of the group; it was therefore easy to monitor and get back all responses.

In the section below, causes of foreign intervention in Nigeria was analysed from our questionnaires, and presented in the table below.

What is the nature of international intervention in Africa and by extension, Nigeria?

Table 4.8: Nature of international intervention in Africa and by extension, Nigeria

Nature of intervention	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
1. Insecurity and internal conflict have often led to international intervention	86	78	13	6	2.87	0.813	Agree
2. Economic intervention	73	57	37	16	2.52	0.573	Agree
3. Political intervention	83	72	21	7	2.65	0.533	Agree
4. Socio-cultural intervention	91	60	24	8	2.90	0.847	Agree
					2.78	0.704	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2024.

Table shows mean scores of 2.87, 2.52, 2.65 and 2.90 in support of the nature of international intervention in Africa and by extension, Nigeria for items 1, 2, 3 and 4. The overall mean scores of 2.78 and a standard deviation of 0.704 respectively to indicate that the nature of international intervention in Africa and by extension, Nigeria are insecurity and conflict, economic, political and socio-cultural interventions. These results were collaborated by interview session with respondents as presented below.

A respondent, who happens to be a diplomat, says Nigeria’s foreign policy in the West African sub-region has many dimensions that seeks to achieve national interests which are anchored on national security, national welfare and prestige. A development that seeks the attention of foreign interventions on insecurity, the economy and interest on who becomes the president of Nigeria. He observes that its all-encompassing that the dominance and interest

include the culture of Nigeria and Africa as a whole. The various interventions are carried out with interest.

An academic responded that the nature of foreign intervention and Nigeria's interest includes: political stability, security, export promotion, access to external resources and technology, foreign aid, protection of its citizens, the cultural and moral expressions for Nigeria and a fair, effective and rigorous presentation of Nigeria's points of view on regional and global issues. Even though Nigeria is not free from domestic conflicts ranging from devastating civil war, oppressive governance under successive military regimes, the Niger Delta crisis and the current Boko Haram insurgency, the country has not wavered in her commitment to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa in general and West Africa in particular. Various regimes since independence in 1960, whether military or civilian democracy have committed huge resources (both human and material) to conflict resolution and prevention in Africa, especially in the West African sub-region, the insecurity is still going on.

Respondent four is a Peace Ambassador argues, that the path of a state's foreign policy is always informed by the core value of her national interest. These are interests which states cherish and sacrifice a lot to realize. In the context of the Nigerian state, the foreign interventions is appreciated in her Afrocentric foreign policy on one hand, and on the other hand, by her national interest predicated on internal security, political stability, economic development which the country realizes can be attained within the context of regional peace and harmony, economic development and wellbeing of her citizen. But questions have been asked by Nigerians on Nigeria's involvement in the domestic conflicts of states in West Africa when there are numerous unresolved conflicts at home, including the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northern part of the country.

Theoretical Underpinning of Interventionism

As Goldstein (1999: p. 53) noted, there is no single theory that can be used to explain the wide range of international interactions, in terms of both conflictual and cooperative. Therefore, a

number of reasons have been advanced to theoretically explain reasons why countries invade or get involved in the internal affairs of one another.

Realism Theory

Realism theory is one of the traditional theories of politics, international relations and world power. It takes root from the background of Realpolitik statesmanship of early modern Europe, affirming that global politics and the resultant conflict is about powerplay among actors. Jonathan Haslam explains realism to be the spectrum of ideas that revolves around some rules, including i. states are the central actors in international politics and not leaders or international organizations; ii. The international political environment is anarchic, as there is no supranational authority to enforce rules; iii. states will always act in their rational self-interest within the international system; and iv. states desire power to ensure self-preservation (Goodin, 2010: p. 32).

One of its early proponents is Hans J. Morgenthau (1904–1980), who developed the theory into a comprehensive international relations theory. It has this been established that it is the theory is the State, the principal actor in international relations, which exist along with other states to form the core bases for power rivalry. There are also additionally the non-State actors and other powerful individuals who contest or the same power. it therefore means that there will be interests, and conflicts in the pursuit of power, especially in war times. According to Stewart (1989) realism suggests that all leaders, no matter what their political persuasion, recognise this as they attempt to manage their state's affairs in order to survive in a competitive environment. Finally, states live in a context of anarchy – that is, in the absence of anyone being in charge internationally. The often-used analogy of there being 'no one to call' in an international emergency helps to underline this point. Within our own states we typically have police forces, militaries, courts and so on. In an emergency, there is an expectation that these institutions will 'do something' in response. Internationally, there is no clear expectation of anyone or anything 'doing something' as there is no established hierarchy. Therefore, states can ultimately only rely on themselves.

Hunt (1989) noted that as realism frequently draws on examples from the past, there is a great deal of emphasis on the idea that humans are essentially held hostage to repetitive patterns of behaviour determined by their nature. Central to that assumption is the view that human beings are egoistic and desire power. Realists believe that our selfishness, our appetite for power and our inability to trust others leads to predictable outcomes. Perhaps this is why war has been so common throughout recorded history. Since individuals are organised into states, human nature impacts on state behaviour. In that respect, Niccolò Machiavelli focused on how the basic human characteristics influence the security of the state. And in his time, leaders were usually male, which also influences the realist account of politics. In *The Prince* (1532), Machiavelli stressed that a leader's primary concern is to promote national security. In order to successfully perform this task, the leader needs to be alert and cope effectively with internal as well as external threats to his rule; he needs to be a lion and a fox. Power (the Lion) and deception (the Fox) are crucial tools for the conduct of foreign policy. In Machiavelli's view, rulers obey the 'ethics of responsibility' rather than the conventional religious morality that guides the average citizen – that is, they should be good when they can, but they must also be willing to use violence when necessary to guarantee the survival of the state.

As can be seen from the foregoing, power or the contestation for power is central to the realists explanation of relationships amongst states in the quest for interest and distribution of power in the arena of international relations. These struggles, according to realist, is to secure frequently conflicting national interests in the committee of nations. While we do not eliminate entirely the place of morality, diplomacy and law in the pursuit, realist laid greatest stress on armed might as an instrument of maintaining peace. High premium is placed on the use of the balance of power as a central mechanism for regulating conflict (Halliday, 1994: p. 11). This is a valid explanation for power play in international relations that leads to interventionism.

This is the reason Weber (2005) has opined that international intervention arises mostly from the relatively powerful states in the world, or from regional hegemons. He further noted that interventions reflect structural inequality in the international system and intervenors are dealing with the manifestations of problems that arise partly from their dominance of the global economy. It is thus no coincidence that the ‘targets’ of intervention, are those countries that are overwhelmingly from the poorer parts of the world, that are marginalized or excluded from the capitalist West that are now to be rescued or policed by those who organize the intervening. Weber (1995) noted that although a particular intervention may be portrayed as liberating people from oppression, and can achieve immediate results in this respect, its function is generally to contribute to an international order that maintains a global political economy formed according to the ideologies of the most wealthy and formative actors.

As Sherwood (2021) put it, the reason behind the 2011 involvement in Libya by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France was their ultimate desire to obtain political capital in an election year. It was also to avoid a humanitarian crisis, especially in a location so close to Europe’s southern border. Similarly, NATO had its own political reasoning for its involvement, which was to prevent the alliance from fracturing in a time of defense cuts and to prevent coalitions from forming that could undermine the long-term health of the alliance. Ultimately, if Libya is also an oil rich nation, this surely increased the interest in the peace and stability of the country by countries in the West.

Social Contract Theory

In order to have a better theoretical understanding of this study from the perspective of the state in relations with its citizens, the Social Contract theory is also a necessity. In the Global War on Terror (GWOT), UN began highlighting how “states in the periphery were moved to the center” of the world (Rotberg 2002: p. 128). This made the US, UN and other global leaders in the arena of policy to develop negative attitude towards the Third World where such modern but potent terrorist activity and transnational organized crime emanated from. The failure of such state as Afghanistan and Pakistan to police their internal border and the

terrorist/criminal elements which in turn led to the great dangers posed to regional and international stability. This led to the postulation of the Failed State thesis (Rotberg, 2003).

Another aspect of the duty of the state with regards to the protection of the rights, privileges and security of the individual is traceable to the social contract theory as put together by Thomas Hobbes, who according to Lemos (1978: p. 3), was the first post-renaissance philosopher, to present it as an original and comprehensive system of political philosophy. Hobbes' (2008) posited that anarchy is by far worse than the tyranny (or potential tyranny) of any government because life outside the State would be one of "continual fear, and danger of violent death where life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." Other scholars such as John Locke, Baruch Spinoza, Samuel Pufendorf, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others have contributed to the development of the social contract theory.

Social contract in this case is between the citizen and the state. The idea is that the citizens give allegiance to the state, while the state is duty bound to protect the citizens. Quiggin (2007, 7) highlighted the practical national security objectives that a state must fulfil so as to be able to discharge its social contract to its citizens, rather than failing. They include:

- i) measures taken by the state to ensure the security of itself, and its citizens;
- ii) understanding the interests of the state in political, military, socio-cultural, economic, and environmental terms;
- iii) the need to balance between needs and resources, and also rights and duties'
- iv) the need to provide equilibrium between the peace and order needed for a functioning society and the tolerance required for the citizens to be able to function; and
- v) the increasingly complex and uncertain series of traditional and emerging threats.

When the state is unable to protect its citizens from such insecurities as those from other state and non-state actors such as trans-national organized crimes that we can begin to see aspects of state failures. If national security is adequately executed within the new thinking to become centered on humans within the boundaries of the state, people will have less frustrations and become less aggressive towards the state to the point where they can carry out

trans-national crimes of economic nature. Thus, as Ogoh (2008:30) has pointed out, national security should be applied to individuals instead of states. This notion that must cover the whole gamut of human needs, including economic vulnerability, ecological threats and natural disasters. National security must therefore move from state-centric realism (the mere protection of territories/boundaries) to human and infrastructural development “and also maintain a high level of cohesiveness, egalitarian and technological advancement” (Ogoh, 2008: p. 30).

It is this of utmost importance for a state to live up to its duties of protecting its citizen and ensuring the integrity of its borders as this is one of the major reasons of external interventions. the dependency of the countries of the West is often masked under the guise of state failure and other such lies to give some of them excuses to interfere in the affairs of other countries. The Global War on Terror, headed by the US is another case to consider. In the wake of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre that was orchestrated from Afghanistan, President Bush stated:

The attack took place on American soil, but it was an attack on the heart and soul of the civilized world. And the world has come together to fight a new and different war, the first, and we hope the only one, of the 21st century. A war against all those who seek to export terror, and a war against those governments that support or shelter them (Bush, 2011).

It therefore follows that a number of the mostly covert interventions in Africa under the guise of the war on terror can be attributed to the attempts of Western powers to fulfill their national the social contract they have with their citizens, which is to help defend them against threats, local and foreign.

Dependency Theory

Dependency theory is hardly considered when reasons for interventions are given. The truth however is, it quite applicable as can be seen in the arguments that follow. Dependency theory takes root from the reaction to modernization theory, which was an earlier theory of

development that presupposes that every society progress through similar stages of development at one time. This also follows that developed countries must help the underdeveloped countries to get out of poverty by different means possible, including technology transfers, investment, and economic integration. Dependency theory relates to the idea that resources usually flow from a "periphery" of poor underdeveloped states to the "core" or wealthy states, and this results in the enrichment of the latter at the detriment of the latter. The basic contention here is that the poor states are impoverished and rich ones enriched due to the integration of these poor states in the "world system" (Ahiakpor, 1985). Dependency theory thus rejected outrightly this view with the argument that underdeveloped countries are not primitive versions of developed countries, but they are the weaker members in a world market economy caused by forces beyond their control.

The origin of Dependency theory is traceable to two papers published in 1949, by Hans Singer and Raúl Prebisch. The authors submitted that that trade relations for underdeveloped countries with regards to the developed countries had deteriorated over time. The consequence is that the underdeveloped countries were able to purchase fewer and fewer manufactured goods from the developed countries in exchange for any given quantity of their raw materials supplied. The general idea is that the Poor countries of the global south provides cheap labour, natural resources, recipient markets, destination for obsolete technology and so on. In contrast to this, wealthy nations continually perpetuate a state of dependence by means such as media control, politics, banking finance, education, sports (Deji, 2012: p. 20). Other notable associates of the theory include prominent Marxist scholars, Andre Gunder Frank, Paul A. Baran, and Paul Sweezy, and world systems theorists, Immanuel Wallerstein.

Rich countries of the West can perpetuate interventionism covertly through economic means using their International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It can also take direct form of threat of not supporting poor countries with required aid and loan unless they, the poor countries accept certain goods, services or conditions. African states have on some occasion or the other turned to these

institutions for financial help. The International Development Association (IDA) (an agent of the World Bank has been said to have approved a total value of US\$677 million in credit and grant to Angola from 1991. Similarly, Nigeria also got a package from the World Bank, designed to help the country work towards achieving economic growth and reduction in poverty is valued at US\$3.6 billion (World Bank, 2009). The “Shock Therapy” as these loans are called, serve mostly to increase indebtedness as these IFI’s give stringent measures and policy conditions that enslave Africa further, in what Kwame Nkrumah has termed neo-colonialism. It appears that the leadership of Africa is waking up. Eberechi (2009) noted that the

on-going resistance by the African Union (AU) to the prosecution of Sudanese president, Umar al Bashir, by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for international crimes is, in part, borne out of a legitimate feeling among the states of the African region that the international criminal justice system is an institution driven by those who are responsible for the conflicts in the continent (Eberechi, 2009: p. 55).

Thus, the dependent (poor) nations will come to owe the developed (rich) nations such money and capital that it is not possible to escape the debt. They thus continue to perpetuate dependency for the foreseeable future (Crossman, 2020). It can also come in more direct terms like the resource war that led to the Libya crisis, the invasion of Kuwait and so on. Under the subject of foreign involvement, questions have been raised as to how a local extremist religious group could have developed to the point of sustained attack on the country since 2009.

As it has been noted above, Vincent (2016) opined that interventionism may include something insignificant as the verbal remarks of government or its actors concerning another state's affairs or even direct policy. This was the case when the Obama administration directed African countries to accept sex marriage and enshrine gay rights. The Nigeria Senate on its part passed the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill that stipulates up to 14-year jail term (with no option of fine). Notably, the UK government threatened to stop its financial assistance

to any country that legislates against gay marriage. The government of the UK was told categorically to hold its aids as the practice of same sex marriage remains strange to the Nigerian cultural values and practices (Akogun and Ohia, 2011).

Concluding Remarks

From the foregoing, it can be seen that interventionism, regardless of the form it may take (overt or covert) is real and continuous in particularly, the poorer countries, particularly Africa. Often times, these take the form of security, economic, political and socio-cultural intervention. As was found in this study, these elements are recurrent decimals in the theoretical underpinning used in this study, where are realism, social contract theory and dependency theories.

This is in line with the realist point of view, inter-State relationships amongst states in the quest for national interest and the distribution of power can lead to conflicting national interests in the committee of nations. This obviously can often times lead to interventionism. The social contract theory is not popular in the discussion for interventionism. However, it is undeniable that Western powers need to fulfill their social contract in the protection of their citizens, and defend them against threats, local and foreign, exemplified by such foreign interventionism as the Global War on Terror that has roots in Africa. Similarly, dependency theory is also hardly examined as a cause for intervention, it can translate to both overt and covert interference in affairs of other state. It takes many forms including economic, political and even policy imposition. It is therefore follows that Africa's political and military leadership must understand these dynamics and know how to be able to adequately counter these machinations so as to be able to protect the continents interests.

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ICRPC JOURNAL OF CRISIS RESOLUTION AND PEACE BUILDING

[IJCPB]

VOL. 1, NO. 1, February, 2024

Published by the Institute for Crisis Resolution, Peacebuilding and Conciliation,
Febson Mall, Suite S5, Herbert Macaulay Way, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja, Nigeria

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The Editorial Board of the journal welcomes well-researched original papers, for publication in the Journal which is released in the Months of February and July-August every year.