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Submission of Articles must comply with the following guidelines:

- Times New Roman ’12 Font size including references, and manuscripts should be formatted using 2.0 or double line spacing
- Referencing format is the American Psychological Association (APA) 6th or 7th Edition
- Abstract should not be more than a maximum of 250 words with at least three or four (3 or 4) key words clearly stated
- The entire article including ***references*** and ***footnotes*** (where applicable) should NOT be more than a maximum of eighteen (18) pages
- Manuscripts should bear author(s) name(s), affiliated institution(s), current addresses, GSM Numbers and email addresses
- Articles sent for consideration must be accompanied by **a non-refundable assessment fee of N7,500 only**. Only articles accepted for publication after a meticulous blind peer- review will be expected to pay the **publication fee of N25,000 only.** (***NOTE: Articles accepted for final publication will be expected to pay the publication fee within a week of the offer of the letter of acceptance)***

SUBMISSION OF PAPERS AND DATELINES

Completed articles should be sent as an attachment to the Editor-in-Chief via the following email address: mogwuche@noun.edu.ng or matogwuche@yahoo.com on or before March 25, 2024 with evidence of payment via the Journal’s Temporary Account: Matthew Ogwuche, Acc. No; 2005596621, UBA. Evidence of payment of both assessment and publication fees can be posted to this WhatsApp No: 07082191270. For further enquiries: Dr. Matthew Ogwuche, HOD, Political Science/Editor-in-Chief (08051617647, 07082191270 (WhatsApp).

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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS ON DIPLOMACY AND GLOBAL INTEGRATION

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Abstract

The study explores the complex relationship between international politics, diplomacy, and global integration. As globalization increases, it becomes increasingly influential in shaping diplomatic relations and global economic, social, and political integration. The research examines how power dynamics, geopolitical strategies, and international conflicts impact diplomacy and global integration. Key case studies reveal that international politics can both facilitate and hinder global integration, often disrupting processes due to conflicting national interests, power imbalances, and ideological differences. The study also discusses the role of international organizations like the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and regional blocs in mediating political disputes and promoting integration. However, it also notes the limitations of these institutions in overcoming entrenched rivalries. The study concludes that a nuanced understanding of international politics is essential for effective diplomacy and global integration. It recommends enhancing multilateral diplomacy, fostering inclusive dialogue, and promoting international norms that prioritize cooperation over conflict. Addressing political tensions is crucial for achieving global integration.

Keywords: Diplomacy, International Politic, Global Integration and Peace

Introduction

International politics plays a pivotal role in shaping the global landscape of diplomacy and integration. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the influence of political decisions and geopolitical dynamics on diplomatic relations and global integration has grown significantly. This complex interplay between international politics and diplomacy affects the ability of nations to collaborate on global challenges

such as trade, security, climate change, and human rights. Understanding this relationship is crucial for fostering a more cooperative international environment.

Historically, diplomacy has served as a key tool for managing international relations and resolving conflicts. However, the effectiveness of diplomatic efforts is often constrained by political factors such as power struggles, ideological differences, and strategic interests. The post-Cold War era, characterized by the rise of globalization, has seen a significant shift in the nature of international politics, where economic interdependence, technological advancements, and the emergence of new global actors have redefined the rules of engagement (Fukuyama, 2018). These changes have not only created new opportunities for collaboration but also introduced new challenges that complicate the pursuit of global integration.

Regional organizations such as the European Union, African Union, and ASEAN also illustrate the dual impact of international politics on diplomacy. While these entities promote regional integration and collective diplomacy, internal political differences and national sovereignty concerns can hinder their ability to act cohesively on the global stage (Rosamond, 2016). The Brexit referendum, driven largely by domestic political considerations, exemplifies how internal politics can disrupt regional integration efforts and have broader implications for global diplomacy (Clarke et al., 2017). The impact of international politics on diplomacy is further complicated by the growing influence of non-state actors, including multinational corporations, international non-governmental organizations, and transnational advocacy networks.

The interplay between international politics and diplomacy plays a critical role in shaping the global order and influencing the extent of global integration. Despite the growing interconnectedness of the world, international politics often acts as a significant barrier to effective diplomacy and seamless global integration. Political conflicts, power imbalances, and divergent national interests frequently undermine international diplomatic efforts, resulting in stalled negotiations, ineffective international agreements, and fragmented global governance structures (Fukuyama, 2018). This complex reality poses a critical problem: while diplomacy seeks to promote cooperation and resolve conflicts, the influence of international politics often disrupts these processes, hindering the potential for a cohesive global community.

The rise of non-state actors, including multinational corporations, international NGOs, and terrorist groups, adds complexity to the diplomatic landscape. These actors often operate outside traditional state diplomacy, exerting significant influence on international politics through lobbying, advocacy, and even violence. Their actions can either support or derail diplomatic efforts, complicating the pursuit of global integration (Keohane & Nye, 2001). For example, multinational corporations often lobby against

environmental regulations, undermining global climate agreements that are crucial for sustainable development.

The problem is compounded by the increasing impact of domestic politics on international relations. Nationalistic and populist movements in various countries, driven by anti-globalization sentiments, have led to protectionist policies, withdrawal from international agreements, and a general decline in cooperative international behavior (Rodrik, 2018). These internal political pressures challenge the ability of states to engage constructively in diplomacy, further hindering global integration efforts. However, the impact of international politics on diplomacy and global integration is a significant problem that needs urgent attention. While diplomacy has the potential to mitigate conflicts and foster international cooperation, the prevailing political dynamics often obstruct these processes, creating a fragmented global order. Addressing this issue requires a renewed focus on strengthening multilateralism, promoting international norms, and finding innovative ways to navigate the complex political landscape of the 21st century.

Research Objectives

1. Examine the Role of Power Dynamics in Shaping Diplomatic Relations
2. Analyze the Impact of International Politics on Multilateral Institutions
3. Assess the Role of Non-State Actors in International Politics and Diplomacy
4. Identify Strategies to Mitigate the Negative Impact of International Politics on Global Integration

Conceptual Review

The field of international politics examines how countries interact, negotiate, and sometimes conflict, seeking to achieve their national interests in a complex and interconnected world.

Defining International Politics

International politics is traditionally defined as the study of political and strategic interactions among countries, focusing on issues such as power dynamics, diplomacy, conflict, cooperation, and the impact of global governance (Morgenthau, 1948). It is driven by the fundamental concept of sovereignty, where each state maintains supreme authority within its borders while interacting with other states on an equal footing.

However, the scope of international politics extends beyond state actors to include non-state actors such as international organizations, multinational corporations, and transnational advocacy networks, which also wield significant influence on global affairs (Keohane & Nye, 2001).

Diplomacy

Diplomacy is a fundamental practice in international relations that involves the management of international relations through negotiation, communication, and representation among states and other global actors. It is the primary tool through which nations interact, resolve conflicts, build alliances, and pursue their foreign policy objectives. Over time, the concept and practice of diplomacy have evolved significantly, adapting to changes in the international system, technological advancements, and the increasing influence of non-state actors.

Diplomacy can be defined as the art and practice of conducting negotiations and maintaining peaceful relations between states. It involves the use of dialogue, negotiation, and representation to manage international interactions and achieve specific foreign policy goals (Berridge, 2015). Diplomacy is not confined to state actors; it also includes international organizations, regional entities, and even non-state actors that participate in global governance and conflict resolution.

Other Key Concepts in International Politics

Sovereignty: Sovereignty is a core concept of international politics, referring to the authority of states to govern themselves without external interference. It forms the basis of the modern state system and international law (Krasner, 1999).

Power and Influence: Power is central to international politics, encompassing military, economic, and soft power resources that states use to influence others. Power dynamics shape alliances, conflicts, and the overall balance of power within the international system (Nye, 2004).

Global Governance: Global governance refers to the institutions, rules, and norms that guide international interactions, such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and other multilateral frameworks. It seeks to address global challenges like climate change, security, and human rights (Weiss & Wilkinson, 2014).

Geopolitics: Geopolitics examines the influence of geography on international politics, including strategic locations, natural resources, and territorial disputes. It plays a critical role in shaping foreign policies and military strategies (Kaplan, 2012).

Contemporary Issues in International Politics

- **Geopolitical Rivalries:** Rivalries among major powers, such as the United States and China, dominate contemporary international politics, influencing global trade, security, and diplomacy (Allison, 2017).
- **Globalization and Interdependence:** The increasing interconnectedness of economies, cultures, and societies has transformed international politics, creating new opportunities and challenges for states (Held & McGrew, 2007).
- **Rise of Non-State Actors:** Non-state actors, including multinational corporations, terrorist organizations, and international NGOs, are increasingly influential in international politics, challenging the traditional state-centric model (Strange, 1996).
- **Climate Change and Environmental Politics:** Environmental issues, particularly climate change, have become significant in international politics, prompting new forms of diplomacy and international cooperation (Keohane & Victor, 2016).

Evolution of Diplomacy in the 21st Century

Digital Diplomacy: The rise of digital platforms and social media has transformed how states conduct diplomacy. Digital diplomacy, or e-diplomacy, involves the use of online tools to communicate with global audiences, engage in real-time diplomacy, and manage international relations (Manor, 2019).

Crisis Diplomacy: Crisis diplomacy deals with managing and resolving international crises through negotiation and conflict resolution. It is often characterized by urgent, high-stakes diplomatic engagements aimed at preventing escalation (Boin et al., 2020).

Environmental Diplomacy: As global environmental issues such as climate change gain prominence, environmental diplomacy has emerged as a key area. This form of diplomacy seeks to negotiate international environmental agreements and foster cooperation on sustainable development (Keohane & Victor, 2016).

Challenges to Contemporary Diplomacy

Rising Nationalism and Populism: The rise of nationalism and populist movements has posed challenges to diplomacy, often leading to protectionist policies and unilateral actions that undermine international cooperation (Rodrik, 2018).

Geopolitical Rivalries: Ongoing geopolitical rivalries, such as those between the United States, China, and Russia, complicate diplomatic efforts and create an

environment of strategic competition rather than collaboration (Allison, 2017).

The Role of Non-State Actors: The increasing influence of non-state actors, including multinational corporations and international NGOs, challenges the traditional state-centric model of diplomacy, requiring new approaches to engagement and negotiation (Strange, 1996).

Theoretical Frame work

Understanding the impact of international politics on diplomacy and global integration requires a theoretical framework that captures the complex interplay between states, non-state actors, and global governance structures. Several theories provide valuable insights into how international politics shapes diplomatic interactions and influences the broader process of global integration. This section discusses relevant theories, including Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, and the Theory of Complex Interdependence, and their application to the topic.

Realism

Realism is one of the most dominant theories in international relations, emphasizing the anarchic nature of the international system, where states act primarily in their self-interest to ensure survival and maximize power. Realism posits that international politics is a struggle for power among sovereign states, where diplomacy often serves as a tool for managing conflicts and securing strategic advantages (Morgenthau, 1948).

Application to International Politics, Diplomacy, and Global Integration:

- Realism helps explain how power dynamics among major global actors, such as the United States, China, and Russia, impact diplomatic relations and hinder global integration efforts. For instance, power rivalries often lead to strategic competition rather than cooperation, affecting the success of multilateral diplomacy.
- The theory underscores why states prioritize national interests over collective global goals, often leading to unilateral actions that disrupt international agreements and undermine global governance institutions (Mearsheimer, 2019). This perspective is evident in the breakdown of trade negotiations and the use of sanctions as tools of statecraft.
- Realism also explains the limitations of international organizations in managing global conflicts, as powerful states frequently manipulate these institutions to serve their interests, leading to decision-making paralysis and ineffective enforcement of international norms (Waltz, 1979).

Liberalism

Liberalism offers a contrasting perspective to Realism, focusing on the potential for cooperation among states through international institutions, trade, and democratic governance. It emphasizes the importance of international norms, rule of law, and multilateral diplomacy in promoting peace and global integration (Keohane, 1984).

Application to International Politics, Diplomacy, and Global Integration:

Liberalism provides a framework for understanding how international organizations, such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund, facilitate cooperation and conflict resolution. It highlights the role of these institutions in mediating political disputes and promoting global integration through collective decision-making (Ikenberry, 2011).

The theory emphasizes the significance of economic interdependence and free trade as drivers of diplomatic cooperation, reducing the likelihood of conflicts by creating mutual economic benefits (Doyle, 1986). For example, regional trade agreements like the European Union and ASEAN illustrate how liberal principles promote integration by fostering economic collaboration.

Liberalism also underscores the role of non-state actors, including international NGOs and multinational corporations, in influencing international politics and supporting diplomatic efforts to address global challenges such as climate change and human rights.

Theory of Complex Interdependence

The Theory of Complex Interdependence, developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, argues that states and their fortunes are inextricably linked through multiple channels, including economic, environmental, and social connections. It challenges the realist assumption of a purely conflict-driven international system, suggesting that increased interdependence reduces the likelihood of military conflict and encourages states to resolve disputes through diplomacy (Keohane & Nye, 2001).

Application to International Politics, Diplomacy, and Global Integration

Complex Interdependence highlights how globalization and economic interdependence have transformed international politics, making cooperation more beneficial than conflict. This theory explains why diplomatic negotiations often prioritize economic issues, such as trade agreements and investment treaties, over military confrontations.

The theory underscores the importance of multilateral diplomacy in managing global issues that no single state can address alone, such as climate change, pandemics, and cyber security threats. It provides a rationale for the growing relevance of international institutions and regional organizations in facilitating global integration. Complex Interdependence also explains the impact of transnational actors on international politics, as multinational corporations, international NGOs, and other non-state entities increasingly participate in diplomatic processes and shape global agendas (Keohane & Nye, 2001).

These theories collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of how international politics influences diplomacy and global integration. Realism emphasizes the challenges posed by power politics and strategic rivalries, while Liberalism and the Theory of Complex Interdependence highlight the potential for cooperation through institutions and economic ties. Constructivism adds depth by explaining the impact of norms, identities, and social constructs on diplomatic interactions. Applying these theories helps to analyze the complexities of international politics and offers insights into strategies for enhancing diplomatic effectiveness and fostering global integration.

Key Findings

The complex landscape of international politics profoundly affects diplomacy and global integration, shaping the dynamics of cooperation, conflict resolution, and economic interdependence. The interplay of power politics, national interests, and ideological rivalries often complicates diplomatic efforts, while global integration faces challenges from shifting alliances, protectionism, and geopolitical tensions.

1. **Rise of Power Politics and Nationalism:** The resurgence of power politics and nationalism has significantly impacted diplomacy, often prioritizing national interests over collective global goals. Countries like the United States, China, and Russia frequently engage in strategic maneuvers that emphasize sovereignty and competitive advantage, leading to strained diplomatic relations. This shift away from multilateralism to unilateral actions has weakened international institutions, undermined collective problem-solving efforts, and heightened global tensions (Nye, 2017).

2. **Impact on Multilateral Institutions and Agreements:** International politics have increasingly strained multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization (WTO), and international climate agreements. Political rifts and divergent national interests impede the ability of these institutions to function effectively, diminishing their roles as mediators of global conflicts and stewards of international law. The withdrawal of key countries

from agreements like the Paris Climate Accord reflects how political disagreements can stall global initiatives aimed at addressing critical challenges like climate change (Keohane, 2019).

3. **Diplomatic Strains and Economic Sanctions:** The use of economic sanctions as a tool of foreign policy has become more prevalent, impacting international relations and global integration. Sanctions imposed by powerful states, often unilaterally, create diplomatic rifts and economic disruptions that affect not only the targeted nations but also global trade networks. The sanctions on Iran, Russia, and North Korea, for example, have led to strained diplomatic relations, reshaped global alliances, and impacted international markets, illustrating the broader consequences of politically motivated economic measures (Pape, 2020).

4. **Shifting Alliances and Strategic Partnerships:** The dynamic nature of international alliances reflects the changing political landscape, with countries frequently reevaluating their diplomatic and economic partnerships based on shifting interests. The emergence of blocs such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) highlights a move towards alternative power centers that challenge the traditional dominance of Western- led alliances like NATO. These shifting alliances impact global integration, as countries navigate a multipolar world where influence and partnerships are constantly renegotiated (Ikenberry, 2018).

5. **Challenges to Global Integration and Trade:** Rising protectionism and trade wars, fueled by geopolitical rivalries, pose significant challenges to global integration. Policies that favor domestic industries over international cooperation disrupt global supply chains, increase trade barriers, and contribute to economic fragmentation. The U.S.- China trade war exemplifies how international political disputes can lead to broader economic consequences, affecting global markets and slowing down economic growth (Frieden, 2020).

6. **Impact of Ideological Conflicts on Diplomatic Efforts:** Ideological conflicts, particularly between democratic and authoritarian regimes, complicate diplomatic engagements and global governance efforts. These ideological divides influence international norms, human rights agendas, and the functioning of global institutions. The divergent political values often hinder cooperation on pressing global issues, such as cybersecurity, climate change, and pandemic response, as seen in the strained relations between Western countries and Russia or China (Diamond, 2021).

7. **Digital Diplomacy and Cyber Conflicts:** The rise of digital diplomacy and cyber conflicts represents a new frontier in international politics, where state and non-state actors engage in digital propaganda, cyber-attacks, and misinformation campaigns to influence global narratives and political outcomes. These activities undermine trust between nations, complicate diplomatic efforts, and challenge international norms regarding state sovereignty and cyber governance (Nye, 2020). International politics profoundly influence diplomacy and global integration, often complicating efforts to foster cooperation and address global challenges. Power politics, economic sanctions, ideological divides, and shifting alliances contribute to a fragmented international environment where diplomacy is increasingly transactional and reactive. For effective global integration, there needs to be a renewed commitment to multilateralism, dialogue, and cooperative governance, recognizing that the interconnected nature of global challenges requires collective, rather than competitive, solutions.

Conclusion

The impact of international politics on diplomacy and global integration is profound and multifaceted. While diplomacy remains a crucial tool for managing global relations, its effectiveness is increasingly challenged by power politics, economic nationalism, ideological conflicts, and technological advancements. For diplomacy and global integration to thrive, there must be a renewed commitment to multilateralism, the development of new norms for digital and economic governance, and a focus on addressing the root causes of geopolitical tensions. Only through collaborative and innovative approaches can the international community navigate the complexities of global politics and foster a more stable, integrated world.

Shifting alliances and strategic realignments reflect the dynamic nature of international politics, creating a fragmented global system that complicates efforts to build consensus on global governance and economic policies. Digital diplomacy and cyber conflicts introduce new challenges to traditional diplomatic practices, undermining trust between nations and complicating efforts to establish norms for cyber governance. Geopolitical tensions have fueled protectionist policies and trade disputes, disrupting global supply chains and economic interdependence. This retreat from free trade principles poses risks to international economic stability and slows down global growth.

International politics often turn local conflicts into arenas for broader geopolitical rivalries, complicating peace negotiations and conflict resolution efforts. Proxy wars, fueled

by competing interests of major powers, demonstrate the limitations of current diplomatic frameworks in achieving lasting peace. In conclusion, the impact of international politics on diplomacy and global integration underscores the need for renewed commitments to multilateralism, cooperative governance, and innovative approaches to address the complexities of a multipolar world.

Recommendations

1. There should be the strengthening institutions like the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund is crucial to enhancing their ability to mediate conflicts and address global challenges.
2. While economic sanctions are a common tool of coercive diplomacy, their overuse can lead to unintended humanitarian consequences and long-term diplomatic rifts. Nations should prioritize diplomatic engagement, dialogue, and negotiations over punitive measures to resolve conflicts and disputes.
3. In order to reduce tensions and build trust, countries should engage in confidence- building measures such as joint military exercises, arms control agreements, and cultural exchanges. These initiatives can help de-escalate conflicts and foster a more cooperative international environment.
4. In light of the increasing role of digital diplomacy and cyber conflicts, there is a pressing need for internationally agreed-upon norms and rules governing state behavior in cyberspace.
5. Nations should invest in digital literacy programs and cybersecurity measures to better protect against digital threats. Strengthening cyber resilience can reduce vulnerabilities and promote safer digital interactions among states.
6. There is should be **e**nhanced support for developing economies through fair trade policies, financial aid, and technology transfers can reduce global economic inequalities and contribute to more balanced economic integration.

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CLIMATE CHANGE AS A DRIVER OF CONFLICT IN AFRICA: CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

There is no gainsaying the fact that the challenges of climate change have over the years affected the socio-economic prosperity of the African continent when compared to its counterparts across the globe. Thus, the primary objective of this paper is to interrogate the linkage between climate change and conflict trends in Africa. Deploying the qualitative method of research, through the use of text books, journals, magazines, monographs and official documents, the paper revealed that climate change has no doubt contributed greatly to the myriads of conflicts bedevilling Africa. It notes further that climate change in Africa is beyond just conflict as it has over the years, caused breeding of vector-borne disease such as malaria, and hygiene related illness like cholera, etc. It destroys the economy by disrupting the transportation system such as roads and bridges, railway lines, waterways, air transport as a result of bad weather. As a corollary, the adverse effects of climate change in Africa have triggered spontaneous migration in some parts of the continent. The paper further revealed that Africa's tropical weather patterns have exacerbated the continent's current climate conditions. It concludes that climate conditions coupled with the continent's partial dependence on agriculture and the direct consumption of natural resources, create the potentials for dramatic negative consequences for global or continental change in climate. The paper therefore, recommends among others, the need for African nations to strengthen state capacity to create specific agencies charged with the responsibility of providing equal level of support to herders and pastoralists affected by climate change as well as put in place mechanisms for mitigating antagonisms between ethnic groups and communities locked in competition and feud over scarce resources.

Keywords: Climate Change, Conflict, Africa, Economy, resources

Introduction

Africa is the second largest continent and it is bounded on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, on the north by the Mediterranean Sea, on the east by the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean while on the south by the blending waters of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans (Mabogunje, Kroner, Smedley, McMaster, Nicol, Middleton & Steel (n. d), National Geographic Society, 2012). Africa's total landmass is around 11,724.000 square miles (30,365.000 square km), and the continent is measured approximately 5,00 miles (8,00 km) from the north to south and around 4,600 miles (7,400 km) from the east to west (Mabogunje et al., n.d.). Africa's population has been increasing from its estimated 478 million in the 1980s to the recent estimate of nearly 1.2 billion and is predicted to rise to 1.5 billion by 2025 and 2.4 billion by 2050 (United Nations, 2016). Climate change is a global test that has prompted various convention and mitigation measures being put in place. However, Africa is among the affected continents on global sphere.

Climate change can no longer be ignored as studies suggest that inaction could cost the global economy between 5 and 20% of GDP annually, depending on the severity of climate change damages (Stern, 2006). Resource- and carbon-efficient development, alongside adaptation mechanisms, is the only sustainable long-term option (Hickel and Kallis 2020). Climate change has presented cities with new challenges and opportunities for improving their liveability. If well-managed, cities offer both adaptation and mitigation benefits, as well as sustainable development opportunities, that other forms of living cannot. Thus, the effects of the climate change have resulted to serious dry periods in East Africa, extraordinary floods in West Africa, exhaustion and deforestation in woodlands of Central Africa and an increase of oceans causticity and typhoons in southern coast of Africa.

Direct effects can be envisaged in the increase of violent behaviours associated with higher temperatures given that people become more nervous, or in the conflicts for access to water when extreme drought conditions directly harm human livelihood. Indirect effects are explained by the impacts on anthropogenic activities as in the case of agriculture, or reduction in land fertility or diseases diffusion, which in turn, foster competition over scarce resources and at the end cause battles and wars. In the context of developing countries, agriculture is unquestionably the sector most exposed to climate variability (Raleigh et al., 2015). Together with agriculture, the joint increase in temperature and changes in precipitation patterns often leads to more severe drought conditions, also influencing the livestock sector by inducing changes in prices or pastoralism displacement with a consequent increase in competition on land-use (Maystadt & Ecker, 2014).

Water access is another channel responsible for linkages between conflicts and weather-induced water scarcity since the control over water resources is an instrument of war for both offensive and defensive purposes (Gizelis & Wooden, 2010). The occurrence of climate-related shocks increases the risk of armed-conflict outbreak under certain socio-economic conditions, for instance, a high degree of ethnic fractionalisation (Schleussner et al., 2016), or the cultural specialisation of the affected ethnic group into activities that are particularly vulnerable to climate risks (van Uexküll et al., 2016). Thus, there is no gain saying that West Africa is a hotspot of climate change and insecurity due to changes in temperature, rainfall pattern and extreme weather events across the region with Nigeria inclusive. Unfavourable climate condition has created worsening livelihood condition; increasing migration and changing pastoral mobility pattern; tactical considerations by armed groups.

It is against the foregoing that this paper examined climate change and how it serves as a driver of conflict in Africa thereby revealing the challenges it poses and how the challenges can be curtailed.

Conceptual clarification.

This section deals with the clarification of the basic concepts interrogated in this study. Such concepts include Climate, climate change, conflict as well as conflicts in Africa.

Climate and Climate Change

Climate is the average weather condition of a place over a long period of time, usually about or even over 30 years. Climate is the average weather usually taken over a 30-years period for a particular region and time. It is a large-scale, long-term shift in the planet's weather patterns or average weather condition. To ascertain the climatic condition of a place, there is always a systematic observation, recording and processing of the climatic elements such as temperature, rainfall, atmosphere, pressure, humidity, wind, sunshine and clouds. Climate differs from weather in that, weather reflects short-term condition of the atmosphere while climate is the average daily weather for an extended period of time. The climatic elements are normally observed and measured over a period of time by weather instruments.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992) defined climate change as a change which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activities that alter the composition of the global atmosphere and which are in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods. UNFCCC further explained that change in climate is one of the most serious environmental and human threats in the 21st century, undermining the achievement of the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs) and the international communities' efforts to reduce extreme poverty. In another development, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2007) defines climate change as a change in the state of climate that can be identified, (possibly through statistical analysis) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its proper- ties, and that persists for an extended period typically decades or longer.

According to the Global Humanitarian Forum (2009), climate change impact is hardest on the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. Many of the worst affected live in fragile states. Their vulnerability is shaped not only by the persistence of poverty, the lack of good infrastructure, the difficulty of getting a foothold in the world market, and thus the intractability of underdevelopment, but also by the fragility of state institutions, and the instability of political arrangements.

Conflict and Conflicts in Africa

Conflict has been defined variously by different scholars. To Holsti (1983:350), conflict is a particular relationship between states or rival factions within a state which implies subjective hostilities or tension manifested in subjective economic or military hostilities. Coser (1998) on his part views conflict as a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are to injure or eliminate their rivals. Conflicts could however, be violent or uncontrollable, dominant or recessive, resolvable or insolvable. This presupposes that violence is not an inherent aspect of conflict but rather a potential form that conflict may take (Omotosho, 2004:4) but then, unfolding events in world history suggest that most conflicts are violent, inflicting life-long injures on their victims apart from monumental loss of lives.

This state of affairs creates conditions of inequality in the society as posited by of Otite (2004:34). Sharing the same view with Karl Marx, Akpuru-Aja 2007:20 argued that with the great gulf, between the haves and have-nots, revolution is imminent and inevitable. The have-nots are oppressed, repressed and traumatized into a revolution-like behaviour and action to seek liberation from man's exploitation by man. The revolt of the exploited class against the exploiters will lead to a conflict situation but to which at the end, the have-nots would win and thereafter take over the affairs of the state. A critical study of the postulations of this school of thought brings to the fore the change from a struggle to have fair and equal share of resources to that of bringing about a democratic society where equality and the rule of law thrive.

Africa is one of the poorest continents of the world. This is largely due to harsh environmental conditions, corruption and huge foreign debt that exacerbate the conditions of poverty (IIiffe, 1995:253). For instance, desertification has contributed to

famines in a number of African states such as Ethiopia and Mali. As a result, the number of people living in extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa grew from 217 million in 1987 to more than 300 million in 1998 (Corbett 2005). If therefore the saying is true that a hungry man is an angry man, then conflicts may for long be a part of Africa's life owing to this situation of absolute poverty prevalent across the continent.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the environmental scarcity theory. The environmental scarcity theory is also known as Eco-violence. The theory was developed by an environmental security scholar Thomas Homer Dixon (1991). He uses the term "environmental scarcity" to refer to the scarcity of renewable resources, population pressure is link to the scarcity of the renewable resources. He argued that the larger amount of population in various developing countries are solely, dependent on four key pivotal resources that is significant to their livelihood. These include the following: freshwater, farmland, forest and fish, constricting of these fundamental resources as a result of mismanagement or misuses, population growth and climate change lead to competition over the scarce ecological resources among groups, and under certain challenges trigger ecological conflict. In line with the above, therefore, resources scarcity is the product of lack of enough to supply, too much needs or unequal distribution of resources due to political, social and environmental factors.

This pushes various groups into conditions of deprivation, and hence subjected people to competition, violence over meagre resources available. Environmental scarcity subjected groups into competition, hostility, and host of others which in turn metamorphous to cause ecological marginalization and thus, armed conflict among resources users. Homer Dixon remarked that environmental scarcity promotes an initial social strife and armed conflict, ethnic clashes and insurgencies. Decrease in the quality and quantity and renewable resources population growth and unequal access to resources increase the environmental scarcity for certain population that depends on farming, water and forest. The affected people usually migrate to other environment for survival.

An Overview of the issues surrounding Climate Change in Africa

Climate change affects different aspects of the African states, such as infrastructure, ecosystem and economic development. The effects depend on the characteristics, location and adaptive capacity of the city. Urban cities depend on various types of infrastructure such as roads and bridges, power stations and water. Environmental conditions such as flood, landslides and heavy rainfalls can ravage city's infrastructure. Existing literature provided insights about the possible economic-wide consequences of

harsh climate events that affect road networks in Africa, mostly consequences for food security (Cervigni, Losos, Chinowsky, & Neumann, 2016). For instance, in Burkina Faso, maize price fluctuation is found to be utmost in rural markets with poorly connected roads (Ndiaye, d'Hôtel Elodie, & Le Cotty, 2015).

As climatic change intensity decreases connectivity, this raises the possibility of food shortage and economic shocks to vulnerable communities (Cervigni et al., 2016). Power stations are not spared when climate change hit any parts of Africa. Between 1999 and 2002 in Kenya, droughts extremely affected hydropower generation, and in 2000 capacity with down by 25 percent (Besada & Sewankambo, 2009). In Ghana, the water level at the Akosombo dam decreased to the minimum level of 240 feet and this resulted in a reduction in power generation. Just like Ghana, Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania experienced droughts which affected the water levels in their dams and which led to low hydropower generation (Besada & Sewankambo, 2009; Karekezi, Kamani, Onguru, & Kithyoma, 2012).

Similarly, Lake Chad lost more than 50 percent of its water some years back. In the meantime, it is an important source for fresh water and other resources that support human, livestock and wildlife communities in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria (Onuoha, 2010). Nevertheless, Climate change impacts might also lead to the displacement of people and consequently increased internal and international migration. There is growing evidence of impacts such as flooding, drought, deforestation and land degradation leading to migration in Africa (Abebe, 2014; Science for Environment Policy, 2015; UNEP, 2011; Warnecke et al., 2010; Werz & Conley, 2012). According to the ICPP, sea-level rise, wetter coasts and drier midcontinent areas might instigate the gravest impacts of climate change by compelling sudden human migration (Abebe, 2014). Severe drought, shoreline erosion or river and coastal flooding have displaced millions of people (Abebe, 2014). For instance, unfavourable weather conditions caused severe flooding and landslides in 2010, as a result, around 48,000 people in Uganda and 55,000 in Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and Zambia were provisionally displaced (Abebe, 2014).

Challenges of Climate Change as a Driver of Conflict in Africa

According to Barnett and Adger (2007), climate change-induced conflicts can be grouped into two broad categories of analysis: (a) conflicts triggered by changes in energy and economic policies aimed at mitigating anthropogenic climate change, and (b) conflicts due to changes in those social systems directly or indirectly impacted by climate variations. The latter category particularly refers to social systems in which a change in the availability, distribution and/or utilisation of natural resources can drive conflict at communal, state or interstate level. These causes and effects are unlikely to be

distributed evenly across the globe and Africa; researchers have found that resource scarcity in a globalising world affects those on the margins of the global economy first and hardest (Matthew 2008).

It is important to note that, the southward migration of herders and the northward expansion of farmers have increased conflict over agricultural fields, grazing areas, and water points (Bassett & Turner, 2007, p. 34). Blocked resource access and crop damage are perceived as unjust and provocative, particularly when perceived as intentional and not adequately compensated financially (Brottem, 2016). Individual farmer–herder encounters occasionally escalate into violent confrontations over land access, land rights, and social relationships, identity, and citizenship (Bukari, Kesseler, Menter, & Maass, 2017). However, pastoralists have a history of coexistence and cooperation with sedentary farmers over shared resources. Whether conflict or cooperation prevails depends on multiple factors such as political processes, actor constellations, power relations, land politics, external processes and group mobilizations, state failure, and institutional deficits in conflict resolution (Bukari et al., 2017; Bukari, Sow, & Scheffran, 2018).

Climate change potentially affects several variables relevant for conflict but is difficult to attribute in the nexus of multiple factors (Breusers, Nederlof, & van Rheenen, 1998; Shettima & Tar, 2008; Osawe & Ibebunjo, 2010). Violent conflicts between herders and farmers are often associated with resource scarcity and local environmental change, crop destruction, and cattle rustling and killing, which are sensitive to climate change (Bukari et al., 2017). Droughts have a particularly severe impact on crop damage and livestock mobility. Expansion of intensive agriculture and a shift from perennial to annual grasses modifies land cover and grazing resources (Brottem, 2016). Even if violent conflicts "manifest themselves as competition over natural resources such as conflicts over crop damage, the underlying conflicts may not be primarily about resource scarcity, even when participants publicly express them as resource-related conflicts" (Moritz, 2010, p. 4). Violent conflicts are aggravated by the proliferation of modern arms (Aning & Atta-Asamoah, 2011, p. 354),

For instance, since 2011, one of the bloodiest conflicts is the war between the Islamist group Boko Haram and the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (cf. the section "Central Africa"). Side effects were the destruction of the water infrastructure, disrupting access to clean water for 3.6 million people, severe food insecurity for 5 million people in northeast Nigeria, and displacement of 1.8 million people (HIIK, 2018). Other violent conflicts are the civil war over arable land in Nigeria's Middle Belt between farmers and Fulani nomads. As climate adaptation is difficult to realize in a conflict-prone environment, the effects of climate change contribute to societal destabilization. Northeast Nigeria has experienced drastic reductions in rainfall and

increased dryness and heat, making it a fast-growing arid environment. Consequences are a depletion of water, flora and fauna resources, and a chain between resource pressure, population movements, and farmer–herder conflicts (Nyong, Fiki, & McLeman, 2006).

Environmental conflicts over grazing land, cattle, water points, and cultivable land are mostly local, sometimes with international repercussions around borders (Obioha, 2008). For instance, violent clashes between Christian Tarok farmers and Muslim Fulani nomads started with cattle theft, resulting in more than two thousand deaths and the flight of 20,000 nomads (Moritz, 2006, p. 3). To contain conflict, outside institutions may be less suitable than traditional institutions legitimized in family, chieftaincy, village councils, and native court systems (Nyong et al., 2006). In the same vein, Mali has turned into a violent conflict zone after the Arab Spring when the Tuareg, who had been in Ghaddafi's forces, returned to Mali after the war in Libya, and the government was unable to control remote locations against jihadist rebel groups of the north (HIIK, 2018). Farmer–herder conflicts are widely spread in Mali, following disastrous droughts in semi-arid West Africa in the 1970s and mid- 1980s. Herders in search of pasture and water moved much further south for extended periods (Tonah, 2006), aggravating resource claims and conflicts over crop damage.

Zimbabwe experienced one spike of 253 deaths during the 2008 presidential elections (see Brayton, 2011; UCDP, 2017). By far the most violent year in Southern Africa was 1993, for which more than 13,300 conflict deaths were recorded in Angola's civil war (UCDP, 2017). The country is often portrayed as "a classic case of the resource curse" (Hammond, 2011, p. 348), which draws the link between resource wealth, in this case oil, and the likelihood of civil war (Auty, 2004). There are few studies that explore (potential) linkages between climatic and conflict variables in Southern Africa. A study on the impact of socioeconomic changes on integrated water resource management of the Okavango catchment concludes that "an outbreak of violent conflict between the riparian states is currently unlikely" (Weinzierl & Schilling, 2013, p. 75).

In contrast, Algeria, Egypt, and particularly Libya has an elevated conflict risk because they have experienced violent conflicts, particularly since 2011 (UCDP, 2017). Other factors that affect conflict onset include ethnic diversity and political marginalization, which have been determined for Morocco (Rössler, Kirscht, Rademacher, & Platt, 2010) and for Tunisia (Mougou et al., 2011). There are only a few studies on individual climate–conflict linkages, often related to the impact of climate variability on agricultural production and the food–water–energy nexus (see Schilling & Krause, 2018, for a recent review of the literature). For instance, simulations suggest declining yields of durum wheat in Algeria (Chourghal, Lhomme, Huard, & Aidaoui, 2016) and adverse impacts on olive oil production, which necessitate changing management schemes and

possibly more drought-resistant olive species (Zaied & Zouabi, 2016).

Conclusion

Africa is dominated by tropical weather patterns which make for highly variable climate under current climate conditions. This climate variability couple with high dependence of African economies on agriculture and the direct consumption of natural resources, creates the potential for dramatic negative consequences of global or continental climate change. Climate change in Africa is beyond just conflict but it has over the years, imposed breeding of vector-borne disease such as malaria, and hygiene related illness such as cholera, etc. climate change in Africa impose costs to the economy, disrupt the transport system by destroying roads and bridges, railways lines, waterways, disrupted air transport due to increased precipitation or bad weather. The adverse impacts of climate change in Africa have triggered spontaneous migration for some part of the continents. Indeed, without urgent intervention from within and beyond, in term of financial and technical aids Africa would be unable to manage the issues surrounded by climate change.

The Way forward

Based on the findings, the study recommended the strengthening of state capacity and creation of specific government agencies to provide equal level support to herders and pastoralists affected by climate change. Strengthen mechanisms to mitigate antagonisms between ethnic groups and communities who find themselves competing over scarce resources.

Encourage economic diversification within and beyond the agricultural sector, by providing specific support and credit schemes to small-scale farmers. Pay attention and react to the impact of climate change on the allocation of scarce resources, and to the situation of marginalised groups. Strengthen local level government institutions and conflict-resolution mechanisms. Improve food security by stockpiling reserves and keeping prices stable during times of drought. This can go beyond just price stability to having a better nutrition for all, irrespective of social status.

Enable “adaptive migration” by way of new institutions for regulating environmental migration, by strengthening consultative mechanisms between incoming immigrants and citizens in the “receiving” areas, as well as enhancing support for both. Buffer income-shocks by providing support and securing access to credits for farmers, and by extension, improving irrigation systems to reduce dependency on rain-fed agriculture. This is important to heed to especially in a continent like Africa where majority of the populace are into agriculture.

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SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS, VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND CONFRONTATIONS IN AFRICA

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Abstract

Activities of separatist movements in Africa have become serious issues of concern. This is because violent extremism and conflicts are posing a threat to the post-colonial state. The Objectives of this paper are to identify the major causes of separatist agitation in the continent, to analyse the challenges posed by separatist agitations and to discuss experiences of regional and international confrontations from Nigeria perspective. The author adopts the conflict theory and Galacius theory of insurgency as the theoretical framework. Secondary sources were used to generate data. The author identified ethnic marginilisation and discrimination, competition for resources, external interference, lack of rule of law as some of the major challenges in curbing separatist agitations and violent extremism in Africa.In recommending solutions, the author considered the experience of Sinn Fein and its armed wing, the IRA). African Government must also evolve effective peace building mechanisms and open up channels of dialogue with separatists movements. The Nigerian formula of amnesty for repentant militants is another viable option. Longer term solution is to develop our democracy and culture of good governance. At the international level, the United Nations and the African Union should facilitate the efforts of regional integration through which economies of African states could grow and thus ease socio-economic hardship and poverty.

Keywords: *Separatism, Separatist movements, violent extremism, Confrontations Anti-*

Introduction

Africa has been a continent that has to contend with the growing and latent threat of separatist agitations, championed by separatist movements that have unleashed violence and devastating terror on many post-independent states in the continent. These disruptions are precipitated deliberately to alter existing boundaries, which African countries accepted at dawn of independence to forestall incessant border conflicts.

This spate of violent insurrections has become a source of power struggle between many African governments and self – proclaimed messianic liberation movements. The separatists movements such as the UNITA in Angola, RENAMO in Mozanbique, the Dergs in Ethiopia, Tigray Peoples Liberation Front also in Ethiopia, IPOB in Nigeria and Ambazonia in Cameroon just to mention a few, hide under the cloak of liberation struggle to fight existing governments, sometimes with external support. They manipulate ethnic and religious sentiments to mobilise mass appeal and resort to violence and war.

According to Charles Thomas and Toyin Falola (2018), Separatism seeks the separation of a demarcated group, be it ethnic, cultural, religious, or racial from the pre-existing political body. Separatism may simply seek limited or full autonomy under the existing political group without going so far as to seek total separation.

Separatist movements are worrisome because of the impact of violence on national development. The African union, ECOWAS, Arab League, SADC, East Africa Economic Community, amongst others have tried to use various platforms and initiatives to curb the activities of separate groups in Africa by opening channels and providing platform for dialogue. Despite these interventions the agitations persist and have remained a major clog in the developments of many African states.

The key objectives of this paper are to identify the challenges African governments face in curbing violent separatist extremism, to examine regional and international efforts to mitigate separatist violence and to proffer workable solutions to violent extremism perpetrated by separatist movements in the continent. The critical question this paper seeks to answer: what have been the experiences of regional and international confrontation and how it can be replicated across the African continent?

The Concept of Separatism

Separatism is the quest for secession by a group of people from a sovereign political entity. Separatist therefore want a new state for themselves and shrinking of the larger sovereign political entity to which they belong. separatism and secession to this paper are one and the same. This is because both seek to balkanize an existing corporate entity. Some countries voluntarily disintegrate as witnessed in the former Soviet republics, but most disintegration or separations in Africa are as a result of widespread disagreement emanating from belief held by people of a particular race, religion or groups within a country seeking independence to have their own government or live apart from other people. (Cambridge dictionary.org).

Horowitz (2006) opined that separatism can be situated within the intersection of ethnic identity, group development, and regional development. He sought a connection between separatist impulses and the relation between advanced and backward groups and regions. In terms of advanced groups, he defined an advanced group as appearing to have "benefited from opportunities in education and non-agricultural employment''. This notion equates separatist movements with liberation movements, as they are seen as fighting for liberation of their people from years of oppression.

On the other hand, separatist movements are organizations set up or formed to drive the quest for separatism. Usually an organized body, they recruit members mostly from among the separatist region and those that live in the diaspora and seek financial and military support from foreign governments. They mostly start with isolated protests but grow up to wage full scale armed struggle. In Africa, most of the separatist movements have been largely ineffective and many have not been able to actualize their set objectives. For example, the Movement for the actualization of Biafra (MASOB) has existed for decades, but its goals are still far from being realized even though the Biafran agitation has refused to die even after the bloody civil war of the 60s. The recent rise of the Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB)has introduced some vibrancy into the Biafran, agitation for separation from Nigeria.

The fact is that separation in those two countries mentioned above has not provided the desired effects. It has not translated into economic prosperity given the experiences of South- Sudan and Eritrea. It has in reality retarded the growth and development of many of those new enclaves. Horowitz (2016) contends that the occurrence of separatist agitations gives credence to the power of ideas in the political sphere. For him, agitations with separatist motives can be appropriately conceived as the playing out of the essence of "political self- expression" usually on a territorial basis, as a necessary accompanying feature of group distinctiveness. Notably, the IPOB separatist agitation in Nigeria is professed in political self- determinism for the cultural distinctive and homogeneous Igbo ethnic group of the South - East. Other factors that provide explanation for secessionist threats with special reference to Nigeria are: colonial legacy, lack of ethnic homogeneity, large landmass, elite fragmentation, unemployment and lack of infrastructure, constitutional controversies as well as lopsided federalism.

This further explains why majority of the unemployed, low-class citizens align with IPOB in their activities. Unfortunately, the flame of conspiracy is raging as every ethnic group is suspecting the other of covert motives of political dominance. The emphasis in Nigeria especially from the South - East is that of political marginalization and inequality in the political affairs of the country. In shedding more light, Boyle and Englebert (2014) assert that separatism is mostly a response to political conditions rather than the manifestation of cultural differences or the exploitation of economic

opportunities.

The Rise of Separatism in Africa

The agitation for separation by component units of many African countries is on the increase. The demand for a new sovereign nation based on a unique national identity and historical relations continues to rise rapidly on the continent from independent era of the 1960s, as witnessed in Nigeria with the Biafran agitation for independence from Nigeria. Other ethnic nationalities such as Yoruba nation and Niger Delta, have also joined the agitation for a separate sovereign state from Nigeria (Omale, 2022). The separatist Movement of Democratic Force of Casamence (MFDC) continues violent confrontation with Senegalese Forces. In addition, a separatist group called Ambazonia in the Anglophone northwest and South-West Cameroon continues to demand for a separate sovereign state from the French speaking Cameroon. Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon were part of the Southern Nigeria Protectorate before they were joined to French Cameroon. Due to perceived injustice through language differences, the separatist group has resorted to arms struggle to press their demands for independence.

The Concept of Violent Extremism and confrontations

Violent extremism connotes the use of violence to pursue goals; it is the actions embarked upon by agitators for a cause to make their agitation felt and put in the front burner of national and international discourse. The menace of violence extremism has become a source of worry. According to the United States council for reign relations the Persistent and growing strength of violent extremists organization has threatened to ex acerbate the humanitarian crisis and spreading of instability across Africa. ((www.cfr.org) for example notable organizations such as the Islamic State in Greater Sahel (ISGS), The Islamic State in West Africa province (ISWAP), Boko Haram, just to mention a few have been designated violent extremist groups on the African continent.
Violent extremism and confrontations pose a serious threat to peace and security of the globe as it is highly prevalent in marginalized areas that seek liberation and independence and radicalization of the young population, violent extremism therefore is rooted in deep ideological disposition that could be encouraged by religious or political objectives. (UNDP 2016 report on preventing violent extremism)

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts the Galula theory of insurgency, to analyse separatist movements and challenges emerging from violent extremism. Galula's Counter insurgency framework acknowledges the importance of the use of conventional military tactics with regards to

counter-insurgency and handling separatist agitations. It however, emphasizes building an effective "political machine" to gain the people's support. The theory opines that counter- insurgency should be based on well-planned, deliberate political programs targeted at pacifying the insurgents. He pointed at the primacy of political solution to military solution, which he says can be achieved through committees and integrated military-civilian hierarchies.

In view of the foregoing, Galula thus provided a "compass" for counterinsurgency operations, giving them laws as well as defining the corresponding strategy and tactics, his central idea was the development of a "political machine" capable of capturing public support for the state, thus emphasizing the fact that the success of a counterinsurgency operation is hinged on the population. Put differently, as long as popular support is on their side, an insurgency can hold out indefinitely, consolidating its control and replenishing its ranks, until their opponents simply leave. The theory is relevant to this study because it explains the counter insurgency strategies used by African states and how it can be effective in addressing the spate of separatist movements in the continent. As Agara & Ibebunjo (2022: p. 27), noted, ideas and ideologies are important element that help to bind together divergent groups and classes within a society and form their affiliations. Despite the seeming abundance of factors promoting the spread of separatist and secessionist conflicts in Africa over 60 years after most of Africa became independent, most of the post-colonial African states are characterized by weak economic development and instability arising from military coups and counter coups as well as ethnic and religious tensions.

Challenges of Violent Extremism in Africa: Experiences from Regional Confrontations Marginalisation and Discrimination

One of the major motivations for separatist groups is marginalization and discriminations across. many African states, there are deliberate and systematic alienation of some ethnic nationalities. Marginalization could be in the area of access to power and leadership of the country, economic and social discriminations in terms of access to state contracts and patronage and even in terms of employment and recruitment into the public service and military and security apparatus of state. The marginalization is also seen even in provision of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, electricity and other public institutions like schools and industries.

The separatist Sudan Liberation Movement, led the agitation for independence of South Sudan, It accused the Government in Khartoum of oppressing non-Arabs and neglect of the Dafur region. The government has been unleashing violence on them through use of military force. The government uses the dreaded Janjaweed militia which have been accused by the international human rights bodies of gross human rights violations, rape

and other dastardly acts. The cessation of hostilities ended with a peace treaty signed in Nairobi Kenya in 2005, recommending autonomy to South Sudan for six years before a referendum for secession. Other highlight of the deal include, both sides merging their armies if the referendum was negative, oil to be evenly shared between North and Southern Sudan, Jobs to be splited in ratio of 70-30 for central administration Abeyei/Blue Nile state/ Nubia Mountains. 55-45 in favor of Government and finally Islamic laws remain in the North while Sharia in the south was to to discussed by elected assembly. (Mohammed 2016). This agreement culminated in signing of ceasefire in 2010 and eventual independence for South Sudan in July 2011. The major issue today is whether South Sudan fare better economically as an independent country. Has independence solved the problem of ethnic and religious differences? Has the region stabilized in terms of conflicts? the answer to these questions is a resounding NO. African stability therefore does not lie in secession but in mutual union based on agreed terms.

Inequitable Resource Distribution

Resource control and distribution is one of the major factors responsible for separatist agitations in Africa. Many of the communities with mineral resources complain of not adequately benefiting from such resources. African political leaders have often been insensitive to demands for host communities of mineral producing companies thus fuelling widespread agitations. In Nigeria as far back as 23 February 1966, Isaac Adaka Boro led a separatist protest against oil exploration in the Niger Delta at a young age of 29. Also, movements such as the Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) dominated by ethnic Ijaws and Urohbohs have been leading the Niger –Delta agitation for resource control and more proactive action by Nigerian government to the plight of the people. Beregha (2006) The activities of these insurgent groups have forced the government to grant amnesty to repentant militants and set up amnesty programme in 2009, which is one of the sucessful programmes by any African state in terms of curbing separatist agitations. Though agitation still persists, it is no longer as violent as it used to be. Other measures put in place include the creation of ministry for Niger-Delta affairs, the Niger-Delta Development Commission(NNDC), the granting of 13% derivation for oil producing communities and the Ogoni cleanup programme.

Lack of political will to carry out Reforms

There is a conscious and deliberate attempt to maintain the existing status quo in several African states. There is need to integrate and harmonized many African states put together by colonial interests. In the case of Nigeria, the North and southern Nigeria were amalgamated by Lord Lugard in 1914. Since then, Nigeria has still not been fully cemented as an indivisible entity. Constituents units still hold on to their regional and

ethnic cleavages and successive government has not been able to cement the cracks and mobilize Nigerians collectively to achieve national development. This scenario is prevalent in several African states. The state has not been able to muster courage and will to carry out reforms that will address colonial demarcations and dislocations and necessary reforms that will address issues raised by separatist movements across the continent. That is why in Nigeria's political lexicon today there is cry for restructuring of the federation to correct perceived imbalances and address the feeling of domination and marginalization of many groups. African countries should institute the necessary reform mechanisms to contain growing resentments. It is sad that several political reform conferences have been held in Nigeria.

External interference

External interference in African affairs has always existed since colonial times. However, support for separatist agitations across Africa and other parts of the world by external interest is often responsible for the successes or failure of separatist movements. In the case of Eritrea, foreign support was very critical in its successful secession from Ethiopia. Somaliland was not so successful. In the case of Biafra, Britain Nigeria former colonial masters did not support her hence the failure of the secessionist movement.

Forces from within Africa can also aggravate separatist agitations as in the case of Morocco where Algeria gave and is giving strategic support to the POLISARO Front, a move that has continue to complicate the resolution of western Sahara issue. Foreign support could come inform of arms procurement, funding, mobilization of foreign support at international fora, safe haven for insurgents in exile and providing shelter to displaced people. The role of external interests in many secessionist movements has emboldened most of them and led to prolongation of the conflicts and a clog in the attempts to find amicable compromise and resolutions of the conflicts.

There is also the lack of sincerity on the part of international organization such as the AU, ECOWAS and United Nations as a result of conflicting interests among members who take sides with either the separatist movements or the states concerned. The experience of morocco which left the AU in protest to the recognition of Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is worthy of mention. International bodies should as much as possible be neutral and provide all parties a level playing field.

Lack of rule of law

African countries experienced a wave of democracy in the 90s sweeping away unelected and undemocratic governments, however, with the preponderance of democratic government in the continent notwithstanding, African leaders continue to rule with

impunity negating some of the basic principles of democracy such as free and fair elections, inclusive governance, respect for term limits, participation in decision making and protection of minorities in line with constitutional provisions. In Nigeria, unsuccessful attempts were made by Ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo to elongate his tenure which overheated the polity, term limits were successfully increased in Burundi, Cameroun and others. Former President Lauren Gbagbo of Cote d' Ivore refused to hand over power to the winner of elections until civil unrest forced him to. These developments, including brazen disregard for dissenting views and use of state security apparatus to unlawfully stifle dissent and general lack of good governance and purposeful leadership on the continent pose a serious challenge to taming and isolating separatist groups. In many African countries, court decisions and pronouncements are disregarded if they are unfavorable to governments. for example there was court ruling that Nnamdi Kanu the IPOB leader, be granted bail but the Nigerian government refused to honour the court ruling. (www.independent.co.uknigeriaseparatistleaderacquittedofterrorismcharge) .

Leaders of separatist movements are hunted and jailed without recourse to law thus making reconciliation and dialogue difficult. Excessive use of force on separatist agitators continues to wage a wall for reconciliation and dialogue.

Conclusion

The paper has discussed separatist movements in Africa and concludes that most of the separatist movements were born out of the prevalent injustice, marginalization and domination of some groups in many African states, and that African leaders should provide purposeful leadership as a panacea to some of the agitations across the continents by embracing democratic tenets and inclusivity. They should also summon courage to address genuine agitations of separatists through constitutional reforms.

This reality is premised on the fact that separation in international system is no longer in vogue as nations are better off tolerating and living with their differences and respecting each other as seen in the UK where the constituent units live together and maintain some degree of independence rather than outright secession. African countries should therefore engage with separatist groups with the aim of resolving contentious issues. Peace is the only panacea to development of the continent. Some countries in the international system have the penchant to support and cause insurrections in African nations by fuelling separatist movements and agitations, this conduct is done for their selfish interest and African separatist movements and government should distance themselves from these countries and their foreign policies.

Recommendations

i. **Strengthen Regional and International Co-operation:** Troubled African Nations grappling with separatist challenges should embrace initiatives to strengthen regional and international co-operation aimed at addressing the grievances of the separatist agitators by establishing non-violent modes of resolving present and future conflicts and fostering reconciliation among the various parties to a conflict.

ii. **Restructuring of African States:** African countries need to urgently carryout the much- needed restructuring of their societies by correcting some of the mistakes made with colonial delineations of territorial boundaries in Africa.

iii. **Dialogue as the most viable option:** Separatists' movements should eschew violent confrontations and embrace dialogue rather than resort to use of violence. Separatist agitators should constructively engage government with the aim of addressing grievances and Government is under obligation to create the enabling environment for dialogue.

iv. **Promotion of Rule of law and Democratic ethos Cross Africa:** African countries should promote the rule of law and other tenets of democracy such as free fair electoral process, adequate protection of minority groups, so as to reduce to the barest minimum issues that may encourage the formation of separatist groups across the continent

v. **Existing Separatists Movements should embrace Peace and amnesty option be considered for repentant separatists:** African Government should explore the wise and pragmatic policy of the Nigerian Government to grant amnesty to Niger- Delta ex- militants and insurgent groups like Boko-Haram which has really given some level of respite in the efforts of Nigerian government to contain these groups. This option is only open to those who may be willing to embrace peace and lay down their arms.

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ANALYSIS OF THE COMPARATIVE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE- INDUCED RESOURCE CONFLICT IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

There is a dearth of empirical studies on the comparative effects of climate change-induced resource conflict within a locality. Hence, this study was carried out to test this in Shiroro, Gurara and Munya LGAs. The following research questions were raised: i. What are the types of climate change induced resource conflicts in Shiroro, Gurara and Munya LGAs? ii. How does climate change exacerbate resource conflict? and iii. What are the comparative effects of climate change-induced resource conflict in the study area? The study employed descriptive survey research design, with a combined population of 363 respondents. It was found that conflict over arable water and land, banditry/kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts, and conflicts over natural resources are predominant in the study area. Comparatively, it was found that Gurara is most challenged by climate change induced conflict. It is home to Gurara Dam, a significant infrastructural project, that urbanised it and attracted a larger population and infrastructure. This is followed closely by Shiroro LGA, notable for the presence of the Shiroro Hydroelectric Power Station, which also causes significant displacement of communities and competition over the remaining arable land. Munya LGA is more rural and has significant populations engaged in agriculture and pastoralism. It also suffers from significant stress due to the backlash of displacements and other environmental

crises from the other two LGAs. In sum, the three localities are characterised by increasing erratic rainfall, prolonged dry spells, and short-duration rainfall events. This unpredictable situation leads to a decline in agricultural productivity and increased farmer-herder conflict. It was recommended that the local conflict resolution mechanisms, particularly traditional and community-based approaches, be strengthened. Also, there is a need to enhance climate change adaptation strategies, such as the use of climate-resilient agricultural practices. Additionally, climate change education is necessary to raise awareness about the impacts of climate change and the importance of sustainable resource management within local communities.

Keywords: Conflict, Climate change, Resource conflict, Banditry, Niger State.

Introduction

Climate change remains one of the most pressing contemporary global problems that plagues the world. It has far-reaching implications for economies, ecosystems, and human societies (IPCC, 2021). Resource conflict, food insecurity, water resources, health issues, and overall developmental and economic challenges are manifestations of this (Niang et al., 2014). Significantly, the prevalence of rural households in Nigeria, where agriculture and livestock rearing serve as the primary sources of livelihood, naturally amplifies the impact of climate change. Prolonged drought, desertification, rising temperature and heat wave, and decline in rainfall and soil moisture brought about by climate variability necessitate the trans-migration of herders in search of pasture and water points, spurning deadly clashes with sedentary farmers as a result of livelihood overlap, encroachment of herd size into and damage to crop farms, cattle rustling, and a breakdown of dispute resolution systems (Oruonye et. al., 2020).

Niger State, located in the central region of Nigeria, is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts due to its heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture and pastoralism as primary economic activities. The Munya, Shiroro, and Gurara Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Niger State have witnessed an increasing number of resource conflicts, often involving disputes over access to land, water resources, and grazing areas. This background section aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the context in which these resource conflicts occur, the role of climate change as a driver of conflict, and the broader implications for sustainable development and human security in the region.

Climate change-induced conflicts between farmers and herders have resulted in several deaths, displacement, and full-blown banditry, leading to the classification of herders as notorious terrorists (Lebary, 2022). The three local governments were selected because

of the prevalent insecurity in the 25 local government areas of Niger State. Crop farming and animal rearing are essentially the major occupations of the people in Munya, Shiroro, and Gurara Local Government Areas of Niger State (Babajo, 2018). The Daily Post (2022) reported that herdsmen have killed over one hundred people, with several others sustaining gunshot injuries during separate attacks in some villages. According to the same report, the assault on sixteen (16) villages within the same local governments resulted in the deaths of over 150 people, primarily farmers, as well as the displacement and loss of numerous properties. This mayhem has led to many socio-economic challenges for people in the affected LGAs. Also, the Vanguard newspaper of February 12, 2023, reports that a DPO and four police officers were killed in Gawu and Paiko police stations in Gurara LGA before taking over many communities. Bandits also targeted communities from Bassa in the Allawa district of Shiroro LGA.

Indeed, literature suggests a growing recognition of the linkages between climate change and resource conflicts. However, there is a dearth of localised studies that specifically compare how these dynamics play out within an area. Existing studies often treat Niger State as a homogenous entity, thus overlooking the unique environmental and socio-economic characteristics of its various LGAs (Edeh et al., 2020). Similarly, other study areas are tilted towards theoretically investigating the nexus between climate change and conflicts, or the scarcity of resources and conflicts in other parts of the country (Wakdok and Raimund, 2021; Samuel and Bamigboye, 2022). Two related studies in our study area, Umenze, Ibebunjo, and Oaikhena (2024a) and Umenze, Ibebunjo, and Oaikhena (2024b) are other good examples. The former dealt specifically with the management of climate-induced conflicts in local communities in Shiroro LGA, while the latter later studied the effects of climate change on communal conflicts in Gurara LGA. This gap in the literature underscores the need for a comparative analysis of the effects of climate change-induced resource conflict in Shiroro, Gurara, and Munya LGAs.

Research Question

The following questions were formulated to guide the study.

In order to adequately investigate the comparative effects of climate change induced resource conflict in selected LGAs of Niger State, the following research questions are raised.

1. What are the types of climate change induced resources conflict in Shiroro, Gurara and Munya LGAs of Niger State?
2. How does climate change exacerbate resources conflict in Niger State? and
3. What are the comparative effects of climate change-induced resource conflict in

the study area?

Conceptual Analyses Communal Conflict

Conflict may be said to be a naturally occurring disagreement or clash within individuals or groups. It may arise from differences in values, goals, interests, and belief systems. These conflicts can come from incompatible goals that may be exacerbated through communication breakdowns and power imbalances (Rahim, 2021). Similarly, communal conflict: these are violent clashes and hostilities that occur between different ethnic, religious, or cultural groups, usually within the same community or region. These conflicts frequently arise intermittently due to deep-seated historical competition, social inequalities, grievances, and competition over group identity, resources, and political power (Pruitt, 2022).

Pruitt (2022) has highlighted the multifaceted nature of communal conflicts, noting that such conflicts often escalate due to perceived threats to group entities and the competition for economic and/or political resources. Historical narratives and collective memories often exacerbate this perception of threat as they portray inter-group relationships. Additionally, Paden and Smith (2022) argue that government policies and interventions can significantly influence the dynamics of communal conflicts. Thus, the state can play a role in either mitigating or exacerbating these conflicts. The perception that the state is biased or failing to address the needs of all groups equitably, often leads to a loss of trust and increased tensions.

Climate change

This is the significant and extended change that occurs in Earth's average weather conditions and temperatures. It usually arises from human activities, including deforestation, fossil fuel burning, deforestation, and other industrial processes. Climate change can lead to activities that increase the overall concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, resulting in the depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, and other environmental challenges. Climate change may affect natural systems through an increased frequency of extreme weather elements, including floods, hurricanes, and droughts (Smith and Anderson, 2023).

Regrettably, this affects the total environment, which includes all naturally occurring living and non-living things on Earth, such as water bodies, air, water, soil, and total ecosystems. It is the natural provider of essential conditions for life and supports the complex web of interactions among organisms, and the eco-system. It is therefore the totality of the factors that surround and affect a living entity within an interaction process (Osawe, & Ibebunjo, 2010).

Literature Review

Researchers have proposed several mechanisms to explain the relationship between resource conflicts and climate change. Theisen (2017); Barnett and Adger (2007); Ide (2018), and (Ide et al., 2021; Koubi, 2019), all studied how climate-induced environmental degradation and natural disasters can reduce the availability of essential resources, leading to competition and conflict. Similarly, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2023) has noted, evidence for climate change is unequivocal, as there are observable increases in global temperatures, rising sea levels, and more frequent and severe weather events.

According to Johnson et al. (2023), the adverse effects of climate change disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including those in developing countries, further marginalising them. Incidentally, these same populations are the ones that have the least capacity to adapt to environmental changes. This leads to heightened risks of displacement, economic deprivation, and health challenges. Based on the above, it becomes clear that mitigation and adaptation strategies are critical in addressing climate change. Additionally, as Brown and Taylor (2023) argue, adaptive measures, such as building resilient infrastructure and developing early warning systems for extreme weather events, are vital for minimising the impact of climate change on communities. In addressing resource conflicts in Nigeria, scholars have emphasised the need for comprehensive and inclusive approaches that address the root causes of these conflicts, promote sustainable resource management, and strengthen governance structures (Obi, 2014; Ajayi & Torunji, 2019). This includes implementing policies and programs that address environmental degradation, promote equitable resource distribution, and provide alternative livelihood opportunities for affected communities (Majekodunmi et al., 2014).

Abaje et al. (2015) carried out an empirical investigation into the causes and effects of environmental degradation in Niger State. Through field observations, interviews, and the analysis of remote sensing data, they documented the impacts of deforestation, overgrazing, and soil erosion on the state's ecosystems. The study revealed that environmental degradation had contributed to resource depletion, land degradation, and increased competition for scarce resources, fuelling conflicts among different user groups.

Theoretical Framework

Climate-Conflict Compound Risk

The Climate-Conflict Compound Risk Theory proposed by Detges (2017), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interplay between climate change and the potential for conflicts, particularly in regions where resource scarcity and environmental degradation intersect with social, economic, and political vulnerabilities. This theory gained relevance as scholars and policymakers have increasingly come to accept the complex interactions between climate change and conflict. It is premised on the belief that climate change can act as a risk multiplier, compounding certain vulnerabilities and tensions that already exist in societies.

This theory is highly relevant to the study of the effects of climate change on resource conflicts in contemporary Nigeria, specifically in the Shiroro, Gurara, and Munya local government areas of Niger state. It acknowledges that climate change can act as a threat multiplier, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and stresses within a system, which in turn increases the risk of conflict. Detges (2017) emphasises the importance of considering the compound nature of risks, in which multiple risk factors interact and amplify each other, leading to potentially severe consequences. In the context of the study area, the theory can be applied to analyse the various risk factors that contribute to the potential for resource conflicts and how climate change can compound these risks.

Climate Change as a Risk Multiplier: The foundational idea in this theory is that climate change is a "risk multiplier (Uexkull & Buhaug, 2021). Changes in rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, and frequent extreme weather conditions can reduce agricultural productivity and lead to food and water shortages. This in turn can fuel competition over limited resources and conflict, particularly in communities where governance structures are weak and social cohesion is already fragile, such as in Shiroro, Gurara, and Munya LGAs. Another example is the Shiroro Dam, a major source of water for irrigation and hydroelectric power generation, which has experienced significant declines in water levels due to reduced rainfall and increased evaporation rates. This supply-induced scarcity of water resources can have cascading effects on agricultural production, energy generation, and access to water for domestic and industrial purposes, potentially fueling conflicts among different resource users.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design to deal with research questions raised for the study. Surveys are efficient in the collection of data from large populations and in their ability to provide a broad overview of trends and patterns (Creswell, 2014).

On the other hand, the descriptive aspect of this study is aimed at collecting detailed, in-depth descriptions of the social phenomena that are being studied. The study areas are Shiroro, Munya and Gurara Local Government Areas of Niger State. The state has a generally tropical climate and belongs to the tropical wet and dry (AW) category of the Koppen system of climatic classification, with rainfall varying between 1100mm in the north and 1600mm in the south. The rich, fertile land of the area largely contributes to the predominant occupation of farming, while the presence of the Shiroro dam along the Kaduna River allows other inhabitants to earn their livelihood through fishing. It is in this locality that the famous Gurara Waterfalls are found.

The population of the study is both male and female residents of Shiroro, Gurara, and Munya LGAs of Niger State who have lived at least 15 years in the study area. The population of the study is composed of residents of Shiroro, Gurara and Munya Local Government Areas of Niger State. Residents of these communities were sampled using Taro Yamane's statistical formula (n=N/1+N(e)2). The projected population of the three (3) local governments is 690,121: Shiroro with 404,200, Gurara with 155,900, and Munya local government with a population of 330,021 (National Population Commission projection, 2023). This is displayed below.

Table 1: Distribution of sampled population based on Local Government Areas

Variables (LGAs)	Population	sampled	Percentages (%)
Shiroro	404, 200.	140	35
Gurara	255, 900.	125	31
Munya	330, 021.	135	34
Total	990,121	400	100

The cluster sampling technique was adopted for the study. This technique was adopted because it was carried out based on the size and proportions of the population in each of the local governments in Niger State. Therefore, the researcher followed the appropriate cluster groups, which are the residents of Shiroro, Gurara and Munya LGAs.

Results and Analyses

The primary instruments used in the study were questionnaires used to gather information from residents of Shiroro, Gurara and Munya LGAs in Niger State. 400

questionnaires were administered to the respondents, including 140 from Shiroro local government, 135 from Gurara LGA, and 125 from Munya LGA, but only 263 were returned. The respondents incorrectly filled out 22 questionnaires and did not return the remaining 15. Therefore, we based the data analyses on the 363 correctly filled and returned questionnaires. Therefore, we returned 91% of the questionnaires. 5% of the questionnaires were not correctly filled out, while the remaining 4% were not returned. The primary instruments used in the study were questionnaires used to gather information from residents of Shiroro, Gurara and Munya LGAs in Niger State. 400 questionnaires were administered to the respondents, including 140 from Shiroro local government, 135 from Gurara LGA, and 125 from Munya LGA, but only 263 were returned. The respondents incorrectly filled out 22 questionnaires and did not return the remaining 15. Therefore, we based the data analyses on the 363 correctly filled and returned questionnaires. Therefore, we returned 91% of the questionnaires. 5% of the questionnaires were not correctly filled out, while the remaining 4% were not returned.

Research Question 1

What are the types of climate induced resource conflicts that are prevalent in Munya, Shiroro, and Gurara Local Government Areas of Niger State?

Table 2. Types of resources conflicts that are prevalent in Munya, Shiroro and Gurara Local Government Areas of Niger State

	Types of resources conflict	SA	A	D	SD	X	Sd	Decision
1.	Banditry and kidnappings	247	54	46	16	2.97	0.915	Agree
2.	Water and Land Conflicts	233	97	19	14	2.85	0.828	Agree
3.	Farmer-Herder Conflicts	200	98	47	18	2.75	0.735	Agree
4.	Natural resources conflicts	192	85	54	32	2.53	0.647	Agree
					2.87	**0.804**	**Agree**	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table above shows mean scores of 2.97, 2.85, 2.75, and 2.53 in support of the types of resource conflicts that are prevalent in Munya, Shiroro, and Gurara Local Government Areas of Niger State for items 6, 7, 8, and 9. The overall mean scores of 2.87 and a standard deviation of 0.804, respectively, indicate that the types of resource conflicts that are prevalent in Munya, Shiroro, and Gurara LGAs of Niger State are banditry and kidnappings, water and land conflicts, farmer-herder conflicts, and conflicts over natural resources.

Research Question 2

How does climate change exacerbate resources conflict in Niger State?

Table 3: Ways that climate change exacerbates resources conflict in Niger State

	Ways that climate change worsen resources conflict	SA	A	D	SD	X	Sd	Decision
1.	Water scarcity and land degradation	98	69	59	37	2.95	0.924	Agree
2.	Disruption of Traditional Migratory Patterns.	144	84	12	23	2.82	0.873	Agree
3.	Food insecurity	86	75	58	44	2.80	0.860	Agree
4.	Environmental challenges and Population Displacement.	76	107	44	36	2.73	0.759	Agree
						2.76	**0.721**	**Agree**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows mean scores of 2.95, 2.82, 2.80, and 2.73 in support of ways that climate change exacerbates resource conflict in Niger State for items 10, 11, 12, and 13. The overall mean scores of 2.76 and a standard deviation of 0.721, respectively, indicate that climate change exacerbates resource conflict in Niger State by creating water scarcity and land degradation, disrupting traditional migration patterns, creating food insecurity, increasing environmental challenges, and displacing citizens of the study area.

Research Question 3

What are the comparative effects of climate change-induced resource conflict in the study area?

Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents base on Natural resource conflicts in the affected Local Government Areas

Variables	Shiroro LGA	Gurara LGA	Munya LGA	Percentages
Strongly Agreed	97	93	88	77
Agreed	20	14	17	14
Disagreed	10	4	8	6
Strongly Disagreed	3	4	5	3
Total	130	115	118	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table and chart above show that Shiroro LGA leads with a frequency of 97, closely followed by Gurara LGA at 93 and Munya LGA at 88. This indicates that conflicts over natural resources such as forests, fisheries, and mineral resources are more prevalent in Shiroro LGA.

Table 5: Distribution of the Respondents based on Water scarcity and land degradation in the affected Local Government Areas

Variables	Shiroro LGA	Gurara LGA	Munya LGA	Percentages
Strongly Agreed	86	96	91	75
Agreed	20	11	17	13
Disagreed	15	5	8	8
Strongly Disagreed	9	3	2	4
Total	130	115	118	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table and chart above show that climate change has worsened water scarcity and land degradation in Gurara local government with a frequency of 96, closely followed by Munya local government with 91 and Shiroro local government with 86. This indicates that water scarcity and land degradation are more prevalent in Gurara Local Government Area. As noted earlier, Gurara LGA is home to the famous Gurara River

and the Gurara Dam.

Discussion of Findings

The study aligns with that of Iro (2022) on banditry in Niger State. Iro (2022) investigates the rise of banditry in Niger State, as well as the socioeconomic drivers and implications of this security challenge. It is important to note that Gurara LGA is located in a relatively more developed and urbanised area compared to Shiroro and Munya LGAs. More importantly, it is also home to the Gurara Dam, a significant infrastructural project that has the objective of providing water for hydropower, irrigation, and urban water supply. Okoye & Achakpa (2017) support this assertion when they note that there is a much larger population and infrastructure. This will naturally lead to competition over land and water resources, as urban planners, agricultural communities, and other stakeholders will have to vie for available resources. Therefore, the middle range conflict experienced in Gurara LGA is exacerbated by more administrative factors.

On the other hand, Shiroro and Munya LGAs, are more rural and have significant populations engaged in agriculture and pastoralism. These areas are thus more prone to violent conflicts over land and water resources. Shiroro LGA, in particular, is notable for having the Shiroro Hydroelectric Power Station between the two areas. According to Ademola and Ekundayo (2020), this has caused displacement of communities and competition over the remaining arable land. According to Olaniyan, et al., (2015), the influx of displaced persons, which exacerbates the scarcity of resources amplified by environmental changes including desertification and erratic precipitations, often leads to more intense conflicts in these areas, as compared to Gurara and Munya LGAs. This is consistent with the tenets of the Environmental Security Framework (Okpara et al., 2016) and the Climate-Conflict Compound Risk Framework, where, as Mach et al. (2020) emphasized, the interdependent nature of climate and conflict risks intersect, heightening the overall risk of instability and conflict.

Supporting the view, Alhaji Sanusi, a community leader in Ungwan Karaga, noted in an interview that banditry and kidnappings have been raging in the area, thereby displacing many citizens in Shiroro local government. Another attack occurred just last week, affecting communities such as Kemaka, Roro, Unguwan-Usman, Karaga, Rumace, and Bassa. The displaced residents, who spent Sunday night hiding in the bush, reported that the attackers were about 200. Before the Sunday night attacks in Shiroro, bandits had blocked the Zungeru- Tegina road on May 12 and kidnapped an unspecified number of traders who were on their way to the Zungeru weekly market. A youth leader in Lambata explained that terrorists have attacked people in the community and abducted two construction workers along the Lambata- Izom in the Gurara local government area of Niger state.

Similarly, Munya LGAs' mid-position in this parameter has to do with their predominantly rural nature and heavy reliance on agriculture and pastoralism. Climate change, as noted in the Climate-Conflict Compound Risk Framework (Mach et al., 2020), has severely affected this factor. As Ademola and Ekundayo (2020) have noted, the locality is characterised by increasingly erratic rainfall, with both prolonged dry spells and short-duration rainfall events. This unpredictable season has made traditional farming and grazing less viable. It has thus led to a decline in agricultural productivity and increased farmer-herder conflict. Furthermore, Olaniyan, Francis, and Okeke-Uzodike (2015) added that a lack of reliable water sources has forced many farmers and pastoralists to overuse the available land, compounding deforestation and resulting in the loss of natural vegetation, which in turn accelerates soil erosion. Despite being the least prevalent, Shiroro has also reduced the availability of water for irrigation, partly due to the presence of the Shiroro plant, which has forced farmers to exploit marginal lands. This also causes deforestation and soil degradation. Omotosho (2021) supports this assertion when he notes that the displacements due to the dam's construction also resulted in increased pressure on the remaining arable land.

The study area is experiencing food insecurity, rising environmental challenges, and the displacement of its citizens. Residents and stakeholders revealed in an interview and focus group discussion that climate change has led to prolonged droughts in the eastern parts of the state, erratic rainfall patterns, and reduced water levels in rivers and the Shiroro Dam. This water scarcity intensifies competition and conflicts among farmers, pastoralists, and communities over access to limited water resources for irrigation, livestock, and domestic use. The rising temperatures, irregular rainfall, and desertification have contributed to land degradation, soil erosion, and reduced soil fertility in Niger State. This environmental degradation reduces the availability of arable land and grazing areas, fuelling conflicts between sedentary farmers and nomadic pastoralists over access to productive land. Okpara, Stringer, and Dougill (2018) conducted an examination of the contextual vulnerability of communities in Niger State and found that the impacts of climate change necessitate consideration of these local contexts in climate change adaptation discourse and strategies.

Conclusion

The critical challenge facing these regions facing the northcentral region of Nigeria is adequately underscored by the effects of climate change on resource conflict in Shiroro, Munya, and Gurara LGAs. The multi-faceted link between environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and social conflict is largely pronounced in these areas, as the livelihoods of the population are rather heavily dependent on natural resources such as agriculture and pastoralism. The study revealed that the types of resource conflicts that are prevalent in Munya, Shiroro, and Gurara Local Government Areas of Niger State

are banditry and kidnappings, water and land conflicts, farmer-herder conflicts, and conflicts over natural resources. Without doubt, climate change exacerbates resource conflict in Niger State by creating water scarcity and land degradation, disrupting traditional migration patterns, and creating Also, the Shiroro hydroelectric and Gurara dam projects, although originally intended to foster development, providing needed water resources and hydroelectric power, brought about new dynamics into the existing resource conflicts and further exacerbated conflict. The spillover effects of these two localities compound displacements and resource conflict in Munya LGA.

Recommendations

From the above, the underlisted recommendations are profiled.

1. There is a need to strengthen local conflict resolution mechanisms, particularly traditional and community-based approaches. This will help mitigate resource conflicts since the cultural practices of the communities involved.
2. There is also the need to enhance climate change adaptation strategies, such as the use of climate-resilient agricultural practices.
3. The above can be carried out by the government in partnership with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international agencies. This should include practices that involve the use of drought-resistant crop varieties, agroforestry systems, and improved irrigation techniques.
4. Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) should be used to address the challenges posed by the Shiroro hydropower project and Gurara Dam.
5. Communities in these climate-sensitive areas should be encouraged to include the development of alternative income-generating activities, including but not limited to beekeeping, aquaculture, and small-scale manufacturing, as these are less vulnerable to climate change impacts.

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SUPRANATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND EMASCULATION IN AFRICA: ASSESSING ECOWAS' SABRE-RATTLING IN NIGER REPUBLIC

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges of supranational institutions and how they are emasculated in global politics, even though their significance has never been in doubt. For the West African sub-region, ECOWAS' sabre-rattling on the coup d'état in Niger Republic reveals the depths of dependency of the institution on external powers, and the lack of local initiatives to independently resolve the political impasse. The study uses content analysis method and data derived from secondary sources. The study finds that ECOWAS' threat of use of force in Niger was predicated on the arm-twisting of powers that stand to lose economic interests and strategic influence if the junta stays in power. Therefore, ECOWAS' reaction to the coup was not from the standpoint of an independent sub-regional institution battling to provide solution to a problem, but of a weak, feeble, and controlled institution stampeded to become reckless and indiscreet. More so, the study notes that ECOWAS 'intended use of force would have prevailed if not the deluge of local and international pushback, and the fundamental support Niger Republic received from Russia as a resurgent superpower rolling back Western influence in the Sahel. The study concludes by stating that had ECOWAS' sabre-rattling was futile but would have created crisis in the sub-region, and further deepen socioeconomic and political dislocations in the sub-region.

Keywords: Supranational institution, ECOWAS, Coup d'état, Global Power-play

Introduction

A supranational organisation is a multinational union or association in which member countries cede authority and sovereignty on at least some internal matters to the group, whose decisions are binding on its members (Hargrave, 2024). There is no classification of supranational institutions according to size, scope, or function. The assemblage of states with expressed aim and objective and legal recognition to represent and defend members of the institution in sub-regional, regional, or continental engagements could properly designated as supranational institution. The institution therefore collates the wishes and aspirations of its members and presents it as a common front.

States concede portions of their sovereign rights by domesticating treaties and charters that formed some supranational institutions in a bid to homogenize it with local laws. Therefore, the principles of supranational institutions become indistinguishable with states' law, and adherence is expected as a mark of duty. Supranational institutions have emerged as active players in the international politics helping society to collectively solve and provide solutions to challenges affecting states and the globe.

There are obvious weaknesses of supranational institutions in West African sub- region, following the outbreak of coups. The sub-region's foremost supranational institution, Economic Community of West African State (ECOWAS), established in 1975 by Nigeria and states in the sub-region, engaged in needless sabre-rattling aimed at ousting the junta in power and restores the democratically elected president. ECOWAS' handling of the Nigerien coup exposes gaps on the institution's ability to independently manage its affairs and resolve its problems without pandering to the dictates of external power, which appear to lose economic and strategic interests if the military refuse to relinquish power. Indeed, ECOWAS' position towards the disruption of democratic government in Niger showed the superficiality of West Africa's diplomatic capital and proved the dependency postulation of the sub-region is ultimately not the figment of the imagination of its proponents.

Conceptual Clarifications Coup d'état

Coup d'état is the forceful removal of a government from power whether elected or a military regime. Africa has witnessed series of violent disruption of the political process in a manner that led to the dislodgement of leaders from power. Egypt in 1952 foreshadowed the destruction of the dynasty of Muhammad Ali, and the gale military seizure of power was further ignited after gaining independence from European powers in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s (Barka & Ncube, 2012), and has continued to influence the continent and its people.

The establishments of supranational institutions in West Africa in particular and Africa in general have proven incapable of stymieing the proliferation of coups, even as these institutions display visible signs of dependency that exposes the weak the diplomatic capitals and influence in the face of global power-play.

Global Power-play

Global power-play speaks to the unfortunate reduction of West Africa as the playground of competing global powers of the West and Russia, which assiduously invest resources to support the removal of governments through the use of force, and the attempt to use supranational institution to unleash greater amount of force in order to return the status quo.

Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical frameworks have been propounded on Africa's struggle to achieve independence in a manner that wards off external aggressors and their schemes, including the weakness of institutions to be firm, assertive, and tractable. The weak posture of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) in managing the fallouts of the coup in Niger speaks to the nature of its founding as an institution modelled alongside European concept and practice, and one inherently seeks ideological support and endorsement. Therefore, the position of the Dependency theory (Frank, 1966, Dos Santos, 1970, Amin, 1976) offers a useful explanatory framework in its depiction of the emptiness and hollowness states and institutions in Africa encounter in framing independent views that appear secure the continent's interests.

Supranational Institutions in Africa

In Africa, indigenous supranational institutions emerged immediately states start gaining political independence from European powers. Independence was supposed to imbue Africans with all the diplomatic powers to establish supranational institutions that would properly articulate their interests and aspirations as a distinct people. Many independent leaders like Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah were boisterous in the conviction that the continent should establish a supranational institution that won't be tied to the apron-string of the west.

Majority of the supranational institutions established in the continent is predicated on the fact that African voices needed to be heard in articulate in a saturated atmosphere where developed states monopolise information and which problem the world should focus on. Organisation of African Unity (now African Union) was established in a period where European powers aimed to misdirect the decolonisation struggles in the continent and created realities that would make independence a mirage.

With the OAU come other supranational institutions that were formed to tackle specific challenges in the continent, and paving the way for regional and sub-regional supranational institutions in Africa. OAU continued to battle naked western interference on African issues using well-structured platforms established and making the institution appear effeminate the asserting its influence and authority on issues that affect Africa. The attempts of figure like late Libyan leaders Maummar Gaddafi to rein western control and emasculation of OAU proved futile as he was gruesomely murdered by everyday Libyans who had enjoyed North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) backing. More so, compliant leaders in the continent find it attractive to secure western interests at the detriments of their states, as well as the continent's epic supranational institution.

The horde of supranational institutions in Africa includes the East African Community (EAC), South Africa Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other institutions established to tackle specific challenges for states in the continent. The specialised supranational institutions like Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union sometimes subsume their operations under regional or sub-regional organisations from which the decision to become members of these specialised institutions are derived.

The problem of lack of funds to pilot the affairs of the institution strikes at the heart of the institution's ability to effectively perform its functions, and opens it up for manipulation in the guise of assisting the institution solve its financial challenges. Since he who pays the piper dictates the tone, supranational institutions in Africa don't own the positions they profess, are careful to not offend its donors, and thereby undermine their operational mandate of providing services to their members (Fagbayibo, 2023).

The non-implementation of key integration initiatives has bearing on the institution's finance capital, which impedes the implementation of initiatives collectively agreed. Agreements reached by a section of leaders are routinely rejected by another set of leaders who may not align with the principles of the agreement, and demand for recalibration of the agreements. The delay caused by this back-and-forth quibbling imperils the reputation and standing of the supranational institutions (Fagbayibo, 2023).

ECOWAS, Military Rule, and Democracy in West Africa

Nigeria did not make any pretence of ECOWAS being a democratic model in the period of its formation. What is more, it is unlikely that the military administration of Gen. Yakubu Gown couldn't have inspired a democratic institution that counteracts its base foundation of accessing power in Nigeria. Even at the time of its founding, ECOWAS had a lot of military leaders who disrupted democratic system in their states. More so, the mission statement of ECOWAS as crafted by Nigerian military government before presenting it to governments in the sub-region did not create room for democratic responsibilities to be handled by the institution.

ECOWAS' existence from 1975 when it was founded to the 21th century when adopted democratic principles show it was pandering to the dictates of western power's power-play of using coups to change leaders in the sub-region. The imprints of the secret police of the west were emblazoned on almost all coups that occurred in the sub-region. It was a permissible means of regime-change in West Africa, which contradicted the purported stance of west powers as forerunners of democracy.

The contagious attributes of coups in Africa expressed in western academic circles speak of the ability of the west to disrupt political process in Africa, cause political instability, and entrench their stooges in power to do their biddings. Leaders who were foisted on their people through western-sponsored coups often devise schemes to perpetuate themselves in power, expose their states for more exploitative plundering by western businessmen, loot the treasury with vicious tenacity, and promote ethnicity as a cover to further divide the state and divert attention from their misrule.

This Supplementary Protocol was signed in 2001 in Dakar by the Heads of State and Government of 14 of the 15 ECOWAS member States (ECOWAS, 2001). Since July 2005, it has been ratified by 9 of the signatory States, the figure required for the Protocol to enter into force for all States (ECOWAS, 2005). The Supplementary Protocol's main issue is the development of a constitutional State based on rule of law, strengthening of democracy and adopting common principles of good governance within ECOWAS' 15-member States.

The Protocol marks a turning point in ECOWAS' political construction. This regional institution saw itself mainly in economic terms when it was founded in 1975. It complements a chapter specifically devoted to governance - the 1999 protocol which created an ECOWAS- level mechanism along with bodies responsible for dealing with issues of conflict prevention, maintaining and building peace and developing a regional security system. The Supplementary Protocol represents both a defining point and an important dimension in the regional process of building a democratic political governance framework for supporting economic and social development in West Africa (Diallo, 2005).

The turning from an economic integrative body to one that espouses democratic ideals showed a fantastic reading and understanding of global politics which states that military rule has become outdated. However, leaders in the sub-region lack the required credentials to purse this new form of governance diligently, because it is focused on the people's mandate to elect who govern them, and not shamelessly kowtowing in western capitals to be crowned leaders through the barrel of the gun. Even so, the pilgrimage to western capitals continued, since the democratic model ECOWAS adopted was susceptible to western manipulation and abuse, a kind of coup d'état executed through the ballot box.

Niger Coup and ECOWAS' Reaction as Sabre-rattling

The threat of use of force or the intent to instill fear was evidently clear in ECOWAS' reaction to the removal of President Mohammad Bazoum from power in Niger. The concept of sabre- rattling denotes the ostentatious display of power, in diverse forms, to

be ruthlessly unleashed if certain concessions are not immediately made in order to secure a goal. The entire message of ECOWAS points to the fact that, the rampant military coups in the sub-region poses severe threats to weak and ineffective civilian regimes, and therefore vicious measures are necessary to mitigate what has already become a plague.

West Africa has witnessed different coup d'état since states in the sub-region acquired political independence from European powers. The concept of "coup belt" is used to explain the prevalence of coup in a particular region or continent. However, the coups executed in twenty-first century West Africa have steeped difference from coups of the 20th century. This is why it is necessary to situate the response and reaction of the Nigerian government and its people, and through it examine what values ECOWAS holds as a supranational institution that has adopted democratic system in a space the tenets of democracy are conspicuously non- existent.

As expected, there are many people in Nigeria who claimed it is injurious for a democracy to allow the existence of military administration some 200 kilometres along its borders. This notion did not explain how military rule in Niger Republic would incite the militaries of Nigeria, for instance, to remove the elected government of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu. There is no evidence that military rule in Niger Republic would lure the Nigerian military to contemplate removing the civilian administration**.** "We all want democracy and we do better under democracy. And so, we will continue to support democracy," said Gen. Chris Musa during the inauguration of the 6 Division, Nigerian Army, and Officers Transit Accommodation, in Port Harcourt, Nigeria (Punch Newspaper, 2024).

The concept that coups are contagious in Africa is not novel and events have proven this conclusion to be inaccurate even in the 1970s and 1980s when almost all parts of Africa had coup d'état, yet some states that had similar socioeconomic situation did not witness military coups. This concern was included in the revise Treaty of the sub-region in 1993, and the Mechanism later developed which serves as the blueprint for intrastate intervention. ECOWAS' reaction to the coup in Niger was predicated on its 1999 Mechanism that clearly allows the deployment of fact-finding and mediation missions and, indeed, for "all forms of intervention," including military intervention (ECOWAS, 1999). Furthermore, the 2001 Protocol, which is supplementary to the Mechanism, outlines progressive sanctions, culminating in membership suspension, which ECOWAS can impose during a political crisis (Article 45, ECOWAS, 2001). And the 2012 Supplementary Act on Sanctions further expands on the range of available political sanctions (ECOWAS, 2012). Finally, the Mechanism stipulates the nature of crisis that would demand the involvement of ECOWAS as an institution to battle humanitarian crisis and reinstate an elected government removed from power. The Mechanism argues

that a "Member State in Crisis" refers to Both to a Member State experiencing an armed conflict as well as a Member State facing serious and persisting problems or situations of extreme tension which, if left unchecked, could lead to serious humanitarian disaster or threaten peace and security in the sub-region or in any Member State affected by the overthrow or attempted overthrow of a democratically elected government (ECOWAS, 2012).

The response of ECOWAS to all intent and purpose is the Nigeria's reaction of Nigeria to the ousting of President Bazoum. The emergence of President Tinubu of Nigeria as ECOWAS' chairman two weeks before the coup, and Nigeria's well-noted roles in the activities of ECOWAS ensured that President Tinubu has to work with stakeholders in the sub-region and beyond to engage the junta and his apparent foreign backers.

ECOWAS' response to the coup was articulated via a statement issued by the ECOWAS Commission, released on July 26—the day the military seized power—condemning the "attempted coup" (ECOWAS Commission, 2023). This was followed by condemnation and a commitment to restore order from Nigerian President Tinubu in his capacity as ECOWAS Chair (Mathur, 2024). Condemnatory statements constitute a standard response— nearly all international and regional organizations make such statements in the event of a coup. Notably, ECOWAS labelled the takeover as an attempted coup, fearing that calling it a coup would accord a degree of recognition to the junta (Mathur, 2024).

First, in an extraordinary summit convened in Abuja, ECOWAS explicitly threatened to use force to restore constitutional order in Niger if the coup leaders did not hand power back to Bazoum within one week (ECOWAS, 2023). Second, to display its willingness to use force to achieve its wish in Nigeria, ECOWAS leaders directed the ECOWAS Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff (CCDS) to immediately prepare to deploy troops. Third, the imposition of diplomatic, economic, and financial sanctions were unprecedented in the history of the Commission's intervention to cases of military coups in the sub-region. Fourth, the communiqué reached at the summit called for the appointment of a special representative of the ECOWAS Chair, but only to deliver the Authority's demands, with no explicit mediation mandate (Mathur, 2024). By creating an envoy to convey ECOWAS' decisions to Niger without effort to establish communication with the military leaders, shows ECOWAS' adoption of sabre-rattling as a tool to restore democracy in Niger.

The decision of ECOWAS leaders to employ the use of force to compel compliance in Niger, with an August 6 deadline inspired condemnation from different quarters. For instance, the West African Civil Society Forum, an umbrella network of regional civil society organisations partly founded by ECOWAS led the charge by advocating for

peaceful resolution of the conflict instead of restoring to the use of force (Kogbe, 2020, p. 7). The Alliance of Sahel States' position is that the coup in Niger has been secured, together with ones in Mali and Burkina Faso, seen in the declaration of five-year extension of military rule in Burkina Faso – and the seemingly helpless position of ECOWAS to redeem its fast diminishing status as the foremost supranational institution of the sub-region. Leaders in northern Nigeria expressed displeasure in ECOWAS' position and declared the brotherhood bound between northern Nigeria and the people of Niger (Sahara Reporters, 2023). There were protests in Kano against attempt to invade Niger by ECOWAS forces spearheaded by Nigeria, (Aremu, 2023) and Nigeria's Senate advocated for a peaceful approach and denied approving President Tinubu's demand to sanction troop's intervention in Niger (Umoru, 2023).

In subsequent engagements, ECOWAS underscored the futility of sabre-rattling as an approach to restore democracy in Niger, and decided to prioritise dialogue as the tool to resolve the political impasse, since the prospects of military intervention had become an unattractive option, making one observer to state that ECOWAS was "trying to pretend like they never threatened the use of force—like it never happened" (Mathur, 2024).

Supranational Institutions as Tools of Global Power Play

The military coup in Republic of Niger has exposed the impotency of supranational institutions in developing world as mere tools readily used by developed states to achieve their economic and strategic objectives. The diplomatic capitals of the entire states in ECOWAS pale in comparison to the influence of France, the Western power that suffered the greatest loss. France's loss in the Sahel had triggered some form hysteria and signs were palpable that Nigeria's President was doing the biddings of the French government in his obsession to deploy the military in Niger, in a guise to restore democracy.

Democracy, according to west, is the tool of interference, of domination, and of control of the people of the global south. The West has no interest in African states or its supranational institutions becoming truly democratic because that would counteract their decades-long pillaging of the continent and its resources – and give Africans and its supranational institutions a voice that it is conspicuously lacking in the global stage. This lack of bold and courageous voice was responsible for the prevalence of coups in the sub-region, and the interests it served, before it becomes a threat to Western interests in the continent.

The anarchical description of the world by realist proponent holds true in view of the alternative cooperation and dialogue model of the liberalist school. The liberalist school views the globe as the plaything of the West, and fundamental event that threatens the

interests of the west is viewed as an existential threat to the world. In other words, the West and the world are indistinguishable and the resources of the resources of the world, especially those of developing states in Africa must be appropriated at all cost. There is neither dialogue nor cooperation with western powers that would elevate Africa's dismal conditions, and help them become independent states that would assert their sovereignty – which almost all the supranational institutions in the continent have failed to achieve, and have no clout whatsoever to stand up to these powers.

The recent coups in the Sahel cannot be separated from Russia's resolve to harm western interests anywhere in the world. Russia's support has emboldened military officers to stage coups and overthrow democratic leaders that enjoy support and protection of the western powers in the sub-region. The speed at which the junta in Niger allied with Russia and seeks to develop ties with it shows clearly the provenance of their support. In the Republic of Niger, co-juntas in Burkina Faso and Mali, basking on Russia's support, were eager to fight ECOWAS on head if the institution's sabre-rattling was acted upon.

The revoking of military agreements and dismantling of French and American military bases in the Sahel are marked signs of external power play that are displacing the interests of the western powers, and the ascendency of Russia as the gadfly of anti-west forces that are fighting to curtail the hegemony of the west. Niger has issued an eviction notice to the United States and is willing to replace it with another power seeking to "have to a place under the sun."

Conclusion

Supranational institutions strive to influence global politics through the articulating the wishes and aspirations of its members, and work to secure and protect their interests as well. As regional and sub-regional institutions, they are dependable platforms to traverse through the complex maze of interstate politics, and can solve intractable problems if allowed to function without being arm-twisted by external forces.
Supranational institution doesn't possess equal power and influence and their operational capabilities are situated on the diplomatic capitals or the region or sub-region in which they exist. In fact, they depend on the collective powers of their member states to assert their influence. In Africa, for instance, a lot of supranational institutions exist that are handicapped by the feeble and insubstantial power ratings of their members.

For West African sub-region, the coup in Republic of Niger exposes some fundamental weaknesses that formed the thrust of this study. Why did ECOWAS jettison its age-long practice of mediation in place of threat and the use of force when it was yet to engage the

junta in Niger? The decision to deploy the stick first before attempting to reveal the carrot shows that ECOWAS was mere playing a written script, which would have set off an unimaginable conflagration had local and international pressure not forced it to discard its sabre-rattling. By resorting to dialogue and mediation when sabre-rattling failed, ECOWAS has proven it is dependent on external powers, and would not hesitate to throw the sub-region into crisis if it receives green light to do so by powers that are insistent on control African resources and its politics.

Recommendations

1. Real attempts should be made to ensure that supranational institutions in Africa achieve effective diplomatic capitals to counteract the deleterious effects of global power-play
2. Governments must understand that interests, not emotion, faith, morality is the tenet of global politics, and act accordingly.
3. Governments at all level must prioritise the improvement of the people's welfare as the core mandate of governance

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LEVERAGING ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16 (PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS) TO CURB ORGANISED CRIME AND TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study addresses the pervasive issues of organised crime and terrorism in Nigeria, focusing on extremist groups like Boko Haram, Fulani Herdsmen, Unknown Gunmen and seperatist group like IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra). These groups have severely undermined peace, stability and development in the country leading to high mortality rate, disrupted education and economic stagnation. The research highlights the socio-economic impacts of violence which include strained healthcare systems, reduced foreign investment and increased poverty. Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) which emphasises peace, justice and strong institutions is identified as a crucial framework for tackling these challenges. Methodologically, the study employs an embedded mixed-method research design collecting both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. Quantitative data was gathered through structured questionnaire distributed to respondents across selected states representing Nigeria's geopolitical zones. The study explores how leveraging SDG 16 can help curb organized crime and terrorism by promoting inclusive and accountable governance. It examines the interconnections between SDG 16 and other goals like poverty eradication, zero hunger and good health and well-being, arguing that peace and strong institutions are foundational for achieving broader developmental objectives. Through a detailed analysis and impacts of various extremist groups, the research provides insights into the complex dynamics of Nigeria's security issues. Furthermore, the study offers strategic recommendations for enhancing Nigeria's security architecture. It underscores the importance of initiatives that foster transparency, accountability and inclusiveness. By investing in these areas, Nigeria can improve its security and lay the groundwork for sustainable development and long-term prosperity. The research contributes valuable knowledge for policymakers, law enforcement agencies and stakeholders aiming to build a peaceful, prosperous and developed Nigeria.

Keywords: Organized Crime. Sustainability. Extremist Groups. Justice. Strong Institutions

Introduction

Nigeria, like many other nations, continually struggles with the twin challenges of organised crime and terrorism, which pose significant threats to its peace, stability and development. In recent years, the country has faced challenges with extremist groups, ethnic and religious fundamentalists like Boko Haram in the North-East, separatist groups such as the IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) in the South-East, clashes between Fulani herdsmen and locals, as well as attacks by 'unknown gunmen'. These groups have threatened security and stability in the country, leaving terror in their wake and hindering peace-building efforts (John, 2022). Additionally, violence and terrorism in the country have led to increased mortality rates and impeded the goal of peaceful and inclusive learning (John, 2022). These instances of violence have reduced Nigeria to a country on a constant warfare against terrorism and organised crime, thereby affecting the sustenance of peace and nationwide development.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provide a framework for addressing these challenges, particularly SDG 16, which focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Leveraging SDG 16 to curb organised crime and terrorism in Nigeria is crucial for achieving sustainable development and ensuring peace and stability in the country. Several studies have highlighted the interconnectedness of SDG 16 with other goals such as poverty eradication, zero hunger, good health and well-being, emphasising the importance of addressing peace, justice and strong institutions to achieve overall development (Nnaji, Ma, Ratna & Renwick, 2022; Chepkuruin, Amponsah-Dacosta, Haddison & Kagina, 2021; Sebire, 2020).

Similarly, previous researches has revealed that achieving SDG 16 is essential for addressing issues like illicit financial flows, which can impact revenue generation and hinder sustainable development efforts (Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2020). More so, the socio-economic repercussions of terrorism and organised crime in Nigeria cannot be overstated. Beyond the loss of lives and the immediate security concerns, these challenges undermine the country's economic growth, deter foreign investment and perpetuate poverty.

Thus, the paper seeks to address the complex issues of terrorism and organised crime in Nigeria by leveraging Sustainable Development Goal 16 as a guiding framework. The paper further seeks to offer a comprehensive strategy to tackle the root causes of these challenges by promoting peace, justice and strong institutions. In the same vein, the paper aims to improve by investing in initiatives that foster inclusive, transparency and

accountability, Nigeria can not only enhance its security forte but also pave the way for sustainable development and long- term prosperity.

Conceptual framework

Understanding Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16)

Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) is a crucial component of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to address global challenges and enhance the well-being of individuals worldwide. SDG 16 specifically focuses on promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions (Redclift, 2005). This goal is essential as it buttresses the foundation for achieving other sustainable development objectives, such as ending poverty and protecting the planet (Anouti et al., 2022).

The conceptual history of 'sustainable development' can be traced back to the Brundtland Commission's definition in 1987, which laid the groundwork for the development of SDGs and the emphasis on sustainability in global agendas (Redclift, 2005). The adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015 marked a significant milestone, with the establishment of 17 interconnected Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 16, which underscored the importance of peace, justice, and effective governance in achieving sustainable development (Fasoulis, 2021).

Organized Crime

Organized crime refers to structured, continuous criminal enterprises that engage in illicit activities, often involving violence or coercion, with the aim of financial gain or power (Jorge and Ramesh, 2011). These organizations typically operate with hierarchical structures and maintain secrecy to evade legal detection. In Nigeria, organized crime manifests in various forms, including drug trafficking, human smuggling and cybercrime, contributing to instability and eroding societal trust (Etannibi, 2013). This criminality not only undermines the rule of law but also exacerbates corruption and hinders socioeconomic development, which aligns with SDG 16’s objectives to promote peace and strong institutions to counter these destabilizing forces (United Nations, 2022).

Extremist Group

Extremist groups are radicalized organizations or individuals that promote the use of violence to pursue ideological, religious, or political goals, frequently directing their actions against government institutions, civilians, or symbols of authority. In Nigeria, extremism is largely represented by groups like Boko Haram and the Islamic State West

Africa Province (ISWAP). Extremism exists at the periphery of societies and seeks to conquer its center by creating fear of enemies within and outside society. Extremist ..... engage in aggressive militancy, including criminal acts and mass violence in their fanatical will for gaining and holding political power (UNDP, 2023) The disruptive tactics of these groups necessitate robust strategies to align with SDG 16's focus on peace and justice, highlighting the importance of strong institutions to curb terrorism effectively (OECD, 2023).

Justice

The term justice, just like other concepts in sociological, philosophical and political studies, is as old as humanity and a necessary catalyst of social order in the society (Christopher & Ekanem, 2014). It has also been seen as a derivative of the laws of nature. As nature is synonymous with order and equilibrium, so is justice. According to Hornby, justice is "the fair treatment of people and the quality of being fair and reasonable" (Hornby 2000, p. 648, cited in Christopher & Ekanem, 2014). Justice within the framework of SDG 16 encompasses equitable law enforcement, access to fair legal processes and accountability for human rights violations (UNDP, 2023). For Nigeria, justice implies not only the establishment of fair judicial systems but also tackling corruption, impunity and inefficiencies that undermine the rule of law

Strong Institutions

Strong institutions are essential governance structures that operate transparently, uphold accountability, and maintain the rule of law (Transparency International, 2022). Institutions like the judiciary, law enforcement and anti-corruption agencies play pivotal roles in curbing organized crime and extremism by enforcing legal frameworks and protecting citizens' rights. Nigeria's pursuit of strong institutions, particularly within the criminal justice system and law enforcement, is crucial for stability, as envisioned in SDG 16 (UNODC, 2023). Effective institutions can significantly deter crime, counter violent extremism and foster societal resilience against corruption and violence.

An Overview of Organised Crime and Terrorism in Nigeria

Organised crime and terrorism in Nigeria are significant challenges that have had far-reaching implications for the country's security, stability and development. The ties between organised crime and terrorism have been a subject of scholarly inquiry, particularly, in the context of Nigeria's experience with terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and other criminal syndicates (Okoli & Nwangwu, 2022). The impact of terrorism on Nigeria has been substantial, with a high number of terrorist incidents and fatalities recorded in recent years (Okafor & Chikalipah, 2021). These incidents have

taken various forms, including killing, destruction of infrastructure, assault and kidnapping (Okafor & Chikalipah, 2021). Similarly, the upsurge in organised crime has contributed to Nigeria's reputation as one of the most dangerous and corrupt countries in the world (Samuel, 2019).

Going further to examine the separatist group. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is another group that embodies the divisive and factitious spirit of Nigeria. The agitation by the aforementioned group has had significant negative effects on the country. The group, seeking independence for the Igbo ethnic group, has led to socio-economic implications, regional crises and security threats. IPOB's sit-at-home orders have resulted in adverse socio-economic effects, including unemployment and reduced quality of working life in the Southeast (Ekechukwu et al., 2022; Adisa & Gbadamosi, 2019). Additionally, the resurgence of the Biafran agitation has led to violent and well-armed movements, contributing to regional security threats (Sule et al., 2022). Furthermore, the agitation has created governance challenges and a resurgence of Igbo nationalism, impacting Nigeria's unity and national integration (Onu, 2022).

Also, the activities of the Fulani herdsmen have also been linked to terrorism and have been argued to cause considerable damage to the agricultural sector in Nigeria (Okafor & Chikalipah, 2021). The conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and sedentary farming communities have been attributed to the poor response of the Federal and State Governments to the crisis, leading to persistent and escalated violent conflicts (Andzenge & Iorbo, 2023). Also, the inability of the Fulani herdsmen to have unhindered access to land for grazing has been identified as a significant cause of conflict and violence with host communities and farmers in Nigeria (Udosen, 2021).

The causes of terrorism in Nigeria are many-sided, encompassing factors such as elite corruption, poor healthcare, environmental degradation, underdeveloped infrastructure and political instability (Afangideh et al., 2018). Moreso, the presence of ungoverned spaces in Northern Nigeria, for instance, has been identified as a factor that emboldens the recruitment of criminal and terrorist groups in the country (Ojo, 2020). The failure of the Nigerian state to deliver good governance has been identified as a latent function of contemporary terrorism, leading various terrorist groups to unleash havoc on the populace (Aderonke, 2015). Thus, the implications of terrorism for Nigeria's democracy and national security have been a subject of concern, posing serious challenges to the country's stability and development (Ajodo- Adebanjoko et al., 2019).

Efforts to Address Organised Crime and Terrorism in Nigeria

Strategies to combat organised crime and terrorism in Nigeria have been the subject of extensive research and analysis. The collaboration between different agencies,

the empowerment of the national legal regime and the promotion of humanitarian values and human rights have been proposed as essential elements in the efforts to counter terrorism in Nigeria (Akram, 2021). Additionally, the need to enhance partnerships between law enforcement, the academic community and the private sector to understand and reduce terrorism financing has been emphasised (Suchi & Wika, 2021). Similarly, concerning combating money laundering and terrorist financing, there has been a clamor and emphasis on enhancing the legal framework and implementing recommendations to curb such activities has been underscored (Chitimira & Animashaun, 2023).

Furthermore, Lamidi et al. (2022) stress the necessity for peacebuilding in Nigeria's ethnic space, particularly in conflict-prone areas such as Kaduna communities, where ongoing war disorders continue to jeopardize development efforts. The study anticipates that learning from the people about the role played by Federal and State Governments in preventing, minimizing or controlling conflicts in rural communities is crucial for effective peacebuilding (Muhammed, 2023). In the same vein, Nwobueze and Inokoba (2017) argue for the need to address the root causes of conflicts through peace-building strategies, rather than merely focusing on addressing the symptoms.

Linkages Between SDG 16 and Combating Organised Crime and Terrorism

SDG 16 plays a significant role in various aspects of society and governance. It is interconnected with other SDGs, influencing and being influenced by them. Research has shown that understanding the interactions between different SDGs is vital for policymakers, academics and researchers to effectively work towards achieving sustainable development goals by 2030 (Pakkan et al., 2022). SDG 16 is particularly linked to quality education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), reduced inequalities (SDG 10) and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) (Kertyzia & Standish, 2019). More so, the goal of SDG 16, which focuses on promoting peace, justice and strong institutions, is particularly relevant in the context of Nigeria's studies against terrorist groups like Boko Haram and other insurgent movements (Oghuvbu, 2021).

The rise of insurgency, particularly, the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has been a major security concern, leading to widespread violence, displacement and instability in the region (Weeraratne, 2015). SDG 16's emphasis on promoting peace is crucial in addressing the root causes of terrorism and insurgency by fostering stability and security within the country. Oghuvbu (2021) remarks that by strengthening institutions and governance frameworks, Nigeria can enhance its capacity to prevent and respond to security threats effectively (Oghuvbu, 2021).

Finally, the linkages between Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) and combating organised crime and terrorism in Nigeria are crucial for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2020). SDG 16 aims to significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flow, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets, combat all forms of organised crime, reduce bribery and corruption, prevent violence and combat terrorism and insurgency. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasises the need to significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flow, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crime by 2030 (Combes et al., 2021). Additionally, it aims to strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation for building capacity at all levels, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria to prevent violence and combat terrorism and insurgency.

Theoretical Frameworks Conflict Transformation Theory

This paper adopts two theories that it is considered to be relevant, they are as follows: Conflict transformation theory is a crucial framework for addressing conflicts as argued by various theorists (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001). The theory emphasises the emotional aspect of conflict, highlighting the importance of emotional activation in conflict formation and the utilization of Galtung's triadic theory of conflict transformation. In the same vein,(Bodtker & Jameson, 2001). both discuss the application of conflict transformation theory in resolving conflicts, emphasising the need to transform the causes of conflict for effective resolution.

In light of these challenges of terrorism and insurgency which besiege Nigeria as a nation, conflict transformation theory can offer valuable insights into addressing these problems. By understanding the underlying causes and dynamics of the conflict, it becomes possible to transform the systems, structures and relationships that perpetuate violence and injustice in society (Atieno, 2023). Moreover, a critical assessment of the government's response to insurgency is crucial in formulating effective strategies for conflict transformation and resolution (Agara et al., 2022).

Deterrence Justice Theory

Deterrence Justice Theory, a constituent of Criminal Justice, posits that the threat of punishment serves as a deterrent to criminal behaviour (Nagin, 2013). It operates on the principle that individuals weigh the potential costs and benefits of their actions before engaging in criminal acts. This theory suggests that the severity, certainty and swiftness of punishment influence the decision-making process, discouraging individuals from committing crimes. One of the key proponents of deterrence theory is Cesare Beccaria

whose work *On Crimes and Punishments* laid the foundation for modern deterrence theory. Beccaria argued that punishments should be proportional to the offence committed and that certainty and swiftness of punishment are more effective deterrents than severity alone (Becaria, 1764).

Contemporary research on deterrence theory has explored its applicability across various domains, including crime prevention, drug policy and white-collar crime. Studies have found mixed evidence regarding the effectiveness of deterrence in reducing crime with some suggesting that deterrence-based interventions can lead to decreased criminal behaviour, while others highlight the limitations and unintended consequences of deterrence strategies (Nagin, 2013; Pratt & Cullen, 2005).

In the context of terrorism and organised crime in Nigeria, deterrence strategies aim to dissuade perpetrators from committing such acts through the fear of severe consequences.

For instance, Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts, such as enhanced security measures and law enforcement operations, seek to deter potential terrorists by demonstrating swift and harsh punishment for their actions (Onuoha, 2017). Similarly, in combating organised crime, Nigerian authorities employ deterrence tactics, such as strict enforcement of anti-money laundering laws and prosecution of criminal networks, to deter individuals from participating in illicit activities (Nwanguma, 2019). However, the effectiveness of deterrence in these contexts is influenced by socioeconomic conditions, political stability and the capabilities of law enforcement agencies (Ali, 2020), most of which have been revealed to be in a downward spiral and poor condition, thereby compromising the government's ability to combat terrorism and organised crime effectively.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study align with existing literature on the challenges and strategies related to addressing organised crime and terrorism, specifically in the context of Nigeria, the Boko Haram crisis, Fulani Herdsmen Killing and Unknown Gunmen activities. This discussion integrate additional scholarly references to further support and validate the study's findings. In addition to the study's finding, the majority of respondents perceived the government's strategies as ineffective was echoed in broader literature. Scholars such as Onuoha (2012) and Aghedo & Osumah (2015) have critiqued the Nigerian government's counter-terrorism strategies for their reactive nature, lack of coordination, and insufficient focus on underlying socio-economic issues. These critiques suggest that without addressing root causes such as poverty, unemployment and marginalization, government strategies are likely to remain

ineffective.

Also, the mixed perceptions of international support, as found in the study, are also well-documented in existing research. Donor coordination and the effectiveness of international aid in conflict zones often face challenges related to accountability and local integration (Acharya, de Lima, & Moore, 2004). In the context of Nigeria, Campbell (2014) notes that while international aid is crucial, its impact is often diminished by poor coordination and local resistance. Effective mechanisms for better integration and transparency can enhance the positive impact of international support. Furthermore, the study's emphasis on community solidarity and the role of religious leaders in peacebuilding is supported by empirical research. For instance, Adesoji (2010) discusses the significant role that local communities and religious figures play in countering Boko Haram's influence and promoting social cohesion. This highlights the potential of grassroots initiatives and the importance of leveraging community structures to combat terrorism. More so, the study's finding on the underrepresentation of women in peace and justice initiatives is consistent with broader gender studies literature. Researchers such as Olonisakin, Barnes, and Ikpe (2011) argue that the active involvement of women in peacebuilding processes leads to more sustainable peace outcomes. Programmes that empower women and other marginalized groups can thus play a pivotal role in fostering community resilience and stability.

In conclusion, the study's findings are well-supported by existing literature, which emphasises the need for comprehensive, transparent and inclusive approaches to address the Boko Haram crisis and broader issues of organised crime and terrorism in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study concludes that organised crime and terrorism are significant impediments to Nigeria's peace, stability and development. These issues manifest through various extremist groups, notably Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen and 'unknown gunmen,' each contributing to a cycle of violence and insecurity. The immediate physical harm caused by their attacks includes high mortality rates and widespread injuries, which result in a heavy human toll. Psychological impacts are equally severe, as fear and trauma permeate affected communities, undermining the social fabric and cohesion necessary for a thriving society.

The long-lasting impacts of organised crime and terrorism extend beyond the immediate physical and psychological harm to individuals. The socio-economic progress of Nigeria is severely hindered by these persistent threats. Educational institutions suffer frequent disruptions, resulting in lower enrolment rates and a decline in educational

standards in some part of the country. Economic activities are stifled due to the instability, which deters both local and foreign investment, leads to business closures and causes widespread unemployment and poverty. The research underscores that leveraging Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) offers a viable pathway to address these complex challenges. SDG 16's emphasis on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, ensuring access to justice for all and building effective, accountable institutions provides a comprehensive framework for combating organised crime and terrorism. By focusing on these core principles, Nigeria can create an environment conducive to peace and stability.

Finally, the study highlights the necessity of a holistic approach that integrates security measures with socio-economic development initiatives. This approach should involve multiple stakeholders, including government bodies, local communities, civil society organisations and international partners. By strengthening collaboration and adopting a dynamic strategy, Nigeria can address the root causes of organised crime and terrorism, reduce their prevalence and promote long-term peace and prosperity.

Recommendations

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

1. **Strengthening Institutional Frameworks:** To effectively combat organised crime and terrorism, it is crucial to enhance the capacity of institutions responsible for security and justice.
2. **Promoting Inclusive Policies:** Inclusive policies that address socio-economic inequalities are vital in mitigating the conditions that often fuel extremism and organised crime. Education, for one must be prioritized. Investing in the education sector, particularly in regions affected by terrorism and organised crime can help to break the cycle of poverty and radicalisation.
3. **Community Engagement:** Engaging local communities in peace building efforts is essential for fostering trust and social cohesion. Community-based programs can play a significant role in promoting dialogue, reconciliation and cooperation.
4. **International Cooperation:** Nigeria should strengthen its collaboration with international partners to combat transnational organised crime and terrorism. This involves establishing robust mechanisms for intelligence sharing with international agencies can improve the ability to track and intercept criminal networks that operate across borders.
5. **Implementing SDG 16:** Integrating the principles of SDG 16 into national development plans and security strategies provides a comprehensive approach to

addressing the root causes of organised crime and terrorism.

6. **The Inclusion of Women in Peacebuilding and Combating Insecurity**: Women play a crucial role in peacebuilding and combating insecurity. Their inclusion in these processes can bring unique perspectives and solutions to the forefront. Policies and programs should promote gender equality and empower women to participate in peacebuilding and security efforts.
7. **Combating Corruption in the Fight Against Insecurity:** Corruption undermines efforts to combat organised crime and terrorism by weakening institutions and eroding public trust. To tackle this issue, it is paramount to implement robust anti-corruption measures within security and justice institutions.

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FIGURES OF ENDLESS CONTROVERSIES: EXPERIENCES, THOUGHTS AND FORETHOUGHTS ON NATIONAL POPULATION CENSUSES IN NIGERIA, 1962- 2006.

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Abstract

The importance of a credible population census figures as a driver for sustainable socio- economic and political development in any polity cannot be over emphasized. A historical overview of Nigerian political experience from pre-independence period to contemporary time shows clearly that, among the thorny issues that have created great anxiety and brought the country to the recipe has been the attempt at obtaining an accurate count of the country's population. The potency of the issue as a source of confusion and a national discord is underscored by the fact that, several attempts by successive governments in the country to organize population census exercises since 1962 were greeted with the same degree of cynicism, suspicion and endless controversies. Rather than the controversies surrounding population census in Nigeria to abate, it has become complicated. This paper examines critically, the controversies surrounding population census in Nigeria from 1962 to 2023. It interrogates issues that often trigger controversies and invalidate census results in Nigeria during the period under survey. It noted that, rather than being a genuine head count census in Nigeria has always been a political issue. It concludes that in order to march in tandem with the rest of the developed world, Nigeria must adopt modern scientific model of census enumeration in line with international best practices, to engender credibility, accountability and sustainable development in the polity.

Keywords: Population Census, Socio-economic development, Polity

Introduction

Census connotes the total process of collecting, compiling, analyzing, evaluating publishing and disseminating statistical data regarding the population, housing and their geographical location pertaining to a specific time or times to all persons in a country or de-limited territory. Mimiko (2006) defined census as the actual process of knowing the members of the society in terms of age, sex, education, occupation and economic activities.

Census can also be described as the official counting of a regions or nation's people and compilation of economic, social and other data, to assist the process of planning and development of a given polity. It is a truism that one of the most strategic resources for any country is her population. This submission is borne-out of the fact that population is essential to socio-economic, political, security and sustainable development. No meaningful planning and development can be made and successfully implemented without knowing who and how many to plan for, what to plan for, and at what time (Madugba, 1987).

All efforts at conducting population census have met with serious problems. Consequently, planning for sustainable socio-economic development of the nation has been adversely affected by the inadequacy, obsolete and unreliability of available demographic data. Past national development plans failed mostly because of lack of credible demographic data for planning. Demographic data derived from creditable population census are of immense benefits to every government for planning and development. This informed the need for an accurate, reliable and acceptable population census for the country. This concern has become of even greater significance in the face of dynamism of modern-day socio-economic planning both at the macro and micro levels. In view of the importance of population census to national development, the challenge confronting the country is how to conduct a successful census that will generate acceptable demographic data for planning to ensure even development of every sector of the country (Ogieva, 2026).

For a country whose population data remained largely inaccurate, with estimated figures being bandied as the actual population of the country, there is, indeed, the need for a free and fair census that will not only put to rest the controversies regarding the country's population but also to avail different government agencies the much-needed development data for planning. This is the whole essence of census, according to the United Nations Populations Funds (UNFP), as it is critical for development. According to the United Nations Population Fund, the information generated by a population census; number of people, their distribution, their living conditions and other key data is critical to development. Without accurate data, policy makers would not know where to invest in schools, hospitals and roads as those most in need remain invisible.

It is often said that Nigeria is the most populous black country in the world. That one in every four black African is a Nigerian. The reality is that though Nigeria is a big country with huge population. The truth remains that there's no empirical evidence on ground to support this notion. With no credible and scientifically verified population census figure, one cannot say with scientific exactitude that Nigeria is the most populous black country in the world.

In his personal assessment of all the past censuses in the country, a onetime Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the National Population Commission (NPC) Chief Festus Odimegwu, once posited that no census exercise in Nigeria has been credible since 1963. He noted, that even the one conducted in 2006 was not credible. Odimegwu alleged that, he had the records and evidence produced by scholars and professors of repute, to buttress his position. He argued that if existing laws governing the conduct of census in Nigeria were not amended, census in Nigeria will never see the light of day, and will continue to suffer credibility deficit (Ogienagbon, 2008). Though that position appeared to have led to his removal as the head of the National Population Commission (NPC) in 2013, keen watchers of events in the Nigerian polity have maintained that his view reflects that of the majority, and that the self- same questions on when the country will get things right with census must begin to agitate the minds of well-meaning Nigerians. The failure of most of the well thought out development plan in Nigeria after independence are attributable to poor demographic data from discredited censuses in the country.

It is against this background of estimated census figures, lack of credible demographic data for planning purposes, political manipulation of census figures, falsification of figures and facts, that this research work becomes necessary. This research seeks to appraise successive censuses in the country since independence in 1960, the controversies and challenges militating against a smooth conduct of population census in Nigeria. The work will interrogate issues at stake and offer recommendations to remedy the situation. The main problem of the study is to ascertain why successive government in Nigeria since attainment of political independence from Great Britain in 1960 have not been able to conduct a credible and nationally acceptable population census in Nigeria. Moreso, why estimated population figures are not suitable for national planning purposes in the 21st century.

It is an established fact that without a credible demographic data, there can be no national plan and without a national plan, no country can develop in the true sense of the word. These explains the roots of the perennial state of underdevelopment in Nigeria since attainment of independence in 1960.

History of Census Enumerations in Nigeria

The history of census enumeration in Nigeria dates back to the colonial era when the then British colonial administration made several efforts to ascertain the population of her Empire. The primary aim was to pave way for taxation. With the Census Ordinance of 1863, the British colonial authorities organized the first census in the Lagos area in 1866. Other censuses of the Lagos colony and its surrounding areas followed in 1881, 1891, and 1901(Mimiko, 2009.). It should be noted that the early censuses were

restricted to the Lagos and its environs. With the merger of the Colony of Lagos with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1906, the census of 1911was progressively extended to cover the whole of Southern Nigeria. The conduct of the early censuses were marred in crisis due to uncooperative attitude of most Nigerians, who viewed the censuses as attempts by the British colonial authorities to know the actual headcount in order to impose taxes (Lawal, A .2010).

With the amalgamation by the British colonial authorities of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria into one single political entity called Nigeria on the first of January 1914, attempts were made by the British colonial administration to organize national head counts to ascertain the population of the territory. In furtherance of this objective, the colonial administration of Lord Lugard enacted the Census Ordinance of 1917. This brought remarkable changes to the conduct of population census in Nigeria as it paved the way for the conduct of the first nationwide population census in 1921, during the administration of Sir Hugh Clifford as the Governor-General of Nigeria. As noted by Ogieva (2008) the enumeration was an improvement from previous censuses conducted during the era. The census was divided into two parts; The township and provincial census. The township census was conducted within one day to count residents of towns and cities. On the other hand, the provincial census lasted for more than two months and covered the whole country. The exercise was based primarily on tax records of the residents.

In 1921, the British colonial administration conducted the first census for the amalgamated Nigerian territory. The post amalgamation census took place in 1921 at both the Southern and Northern Nigeria. The result of the 1921 census put the population figures of Northern Nigeria at 10.26 million while that of Southern Nigeria stood at 8.37 million. P.A Talbot the colonial official who conducted the census exercise in Southern Nigeria claimed that the result was inaccurate, due largely to logistical problems and uncooperative attitude of the natives. In the same vein, Mr. Meek who conducted the census exercise in Northern Nigeria equally submitted that the head counts in the North was inaccurate. In Meek's submission:

Whilst it is not pretended that the counts made for the natives in the provinces was anything more than approximately accurate, the statistics nevertheless furnish a great amount of valuable information (Everybody's Guide, 1990).

However, in 1931, the British colonial administration of Sir. Donald Cameroon organized another head counts for the Nigerian territory. Unlike the 1921 census, the 1931 enumeration exercise was centrally planned with the appointment of S.M. Jacob as the Government statistician and head of the census exercise (Maduagba, 1987). The 1931 census put the population of the Southern region at 8.493 million while that of the

North was 11,435 million. Like previous censuses, the 1931 census was viewed with high level of suspicions, apathy and fear by most people of the eastern provinces of Southern Nigeria. They allegedly feared that the outcome of the census exercise would be used by the colonial administration to impose more taxes on the people. (Aluko, S. 1965). Consequently, most indigenes of eastern provinces refused to cooperate with census officials to effectively discharge their assigned duties. Resultantly, only a few places were actual enumerations conducted. The result of the 1931 census put the population of the Southern region at 8.493 million while that of the North was 11,435 million (Diamond, L. 1960)). However, the outbreak of the second world war (WWII) in 1939 disrupted the conduct of the census in 1941. Attention of the British colonial authorities were focused on the prosecution of the war efforts.

The overriding interest of the British colonial administrators in organizing the census in Nigeria was not obviously for planning and development of the colony through provision and distribution of amenities based on population figures. Rather, it was designed to speedily facilitate intense exploitation of the Nigerian colony for the benefit of metropolitan Britain, through imposition of prohibitive taxes and eventual repatriation of exploited resources to Europe (Rodney, W. 1981). This allowed the British colonial authorities to have a good idea of population figures, projected tax revenues, and development plans.

Census Crises in Nigeria 1962 To 2006

As agitations by the nationalists for independence progressed in the Nigerian colony, the colonial government under the leadership of Sir John MacPherson organized a country wide national census in Nigeria between 1952 to 1953. Widely suspected as a plot to increase the tax burden or to spy on families and their property, the 1952/53 census was avoided by many Nigerians especially Southerners. (Bamgbose, 1988). Results of the 1952/1953 census put the population of the North ahead of Southern Nigeria.

Unlike the previous census enumerations each of in the country, crisis started when the British Colonial administration utilized the 1952/1953 census figures to allocate the number of seats to each of the regions in the House of Representatives, as well as determinant in the distribution of governmental benefits to regions. For instance, due to the numerical strength of the Northern region during the 1952/53 census, the Northern region was allocated 174 seats in the House of Representatives out of 312 representatives. Eastern region had 73, Western Region 62, Lagos 3 (Bamgbose, 1988).

This triggered political controversy in the country with southern politicians alleging that the British administrators had inflated the Northern population figures to ensure that political power in the country remained with the North (Aluko, S.1965).

Nigeria became independent from British colonial rule on October 1st 1960. The post-Independence government of Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa organized a country wide headcount in Nigeria in 1962. The 1962 population census exercise covered the whole country and was undertaken simultaneously in May 1962. Although the exercise was given adequate publicity, the results were not acceptable to the regions on grounds of high politicization. The 1962 census figures were never officially published as a result of alleged rigging of figures but the figures leaked out. The unofficial figures that were published by the newspapers showed a tremendous increase in the population of the Eastern and Western region and a decrease in that of the Northern region. This development triggered the census crisis of 1962. The Minister of Economic Development Alhaji Shehu Shagari dismissed 1962 census figures as inauthentic and castigated leaders of the Eastern region on the floor of the House of Representatives accusing them of intentionally falsifying the figures (Diamond, L. 1960).

The smouldering crisis was doused by the Prime Minister Alhaji Tafawa Balewa who after consultation with the regional premiers on 19 February 1963, agreed that the 1962 census figures he nullified and a fresh one be held in 1963. A new census was conducted in November 1963 and in February 1964, the provisional figure that put the population of Nigeria at 55.7 million were published. A breakdown of the figures showed the population of the respective regions as follows; the North 29.8 million, East 12.4 million, West 10.3 million, Mid-West 2.5 million and Lagos 0.7 million (Ostien, 2012). The Eastern and Mid-Western regional governments rejected the figures but were accepted by the Northern and Western Regional governments. The Eastern regional government approached the Supreme Court seeking for the declaration of the 1963 census figures as null and void. The Supreme Court dismissed the action and ruled in favour of the Federal Government and validated the 1963 census figures. Most critics claimed that the 1963 census figures were arrived at by negotiation rather than enumeration. The supreme court ruled that it lacked jurisdiction over the administrative functions of the Federal Government (Aluko, 1965).

In 1973, the government of General Yakubu Gowon inaugurated the National Census Board under the chairmanship of Justice Adetokunbo Ademola, with the mandate to conduct a Post-Civil War census for Nigeria. The 1973 census took place across the country. Again, the 1973 census was marred in controversy. The controversy was based on the fact that, like the previous censuses before it, there were allegations of organized inflation of figures across the states in the country. Aside from the alleged inflation of the population figures by states, other reasons adduced as being responsible for the problems encountered by the 1973 were ethno-religious dichotomy, inaccurate data and alleged deliberate attempts by the Northern part of the country to dominate the South (Lawal, 2010). The 1973 census conducted between November 25 and 2nd December was not published on the grounds of deliberate falsification of the census figures for

political and ethno-religious considerations.

However, the military government of President Ibrahim Babangida conducted a national census in 1991. The 1991 census exercise was conducted under Decree 23 of 1989 which setup the National Population Commission (NPC) headed by Alhaji Shehu Musa (Smith, A. 2003). It was a nationwide exercise that took place from November 27 to December 2, 1991. Figures of 87.5 million were also disputed by stakeholders across the country and also by the international Community. According to World Bank estimation, the 1991census figure should have exceeded 120 million. Expectedly, reactions among politicians in the country differered depending on Nigeria's known fault lines of ethno-regional and political divides.

In 2006, the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo inaugurated the National Population Commission (NPC), with the mandate to conduct an accurate, reliable and credible census. The commission designed its methodology and incorporated new techniques and technology for the conduct of the census. The NPC organized a nationwide census in March 2006. For the first time since attainment of independence in 1960, Nigeria conducted a population and housing census. Several stages were involved in the project. The National Population Commission enumerators utilized Global Positioning System (GPS) and Satellite Imagery (SI) to carve out Geo Reference Enumerators Areas map (GREA). To further ensure the sanctity of the exercise, machine readable forms (OMR/ICR/OCR) were used to record information from respondents.

Again, like previous census before it, the 2006 census figures were highly disputed. Objection to the officially published figures surfaced. The pan-Igbo sociocultural organization Ohaneze-Ndigbo described the census as "outrageously doctored Figures" that artificially reduced Ndigbo to a minority (Ogienagbon, 2029). The then Lagos state Governor Asiwaju Bola Tinubu called for a recount and said the census figures were falsified just to please some people (Ibrahim, J. 2019). Explaining his objection to the census result, Tinubu Claimed that a parallel census conducted by Lagos in collaboration with the National Population Commission put the state's population at more than 17.5 million, not 9.0 million as the 2006 census suggested.

Impediments to Population Census in Nigeria

A major impediment to the conduct of credible population census in Nigeria since attainment of independence on October 1st 1960 has been the issue of political interference by those in authority. Since the colonial government in Nigeria used the official figures of the 1952/53 census for delineating constituencies, politicians and politically exposed persons across the country have successively manipulated census

figures to give their areas undue political advantage. Population figures are often inflated by politicians working in connivance with corrupt census enumerators. Consequently, the cook-up and inflated figures that emerged from successive census exercises in the country often falls short of reality. Successive census figures in Nigeria beginning from 1962/63 census to the 2006 census failed credibility test due to political manipulation. This accounts largely for endless contestations of census figures.

Another major impediment to census taking in Nigeria has been the poor state of infrastructure in the country. Most areas in the country are not easily accessible, making it difficult for enumerators to discharge their assigned duties. For instance, several years ago, Holly Newby, who was the United States Survey Manager for ORC Macro (Now Macro International) in Nigeria for the 2023 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted a survey where she discovered that rough terrain made her job all the more difficult.

Additionally, some households in Nigeria are not easily accessible by roads, some are located along the Greeks and Riverine areas making it difficult for effective census taking. Most enumerators are often reluctant to go by boat due to their inability to swim, making it difficult to reach households in riverine areas. Poor remunerations for census enumerators also account for the failures of successive census and in the country. During the March 2006 census, thousands of enumerators walked off the job, because they were not been were not paid (Lalasz, 2007). In some instance, money originally budgeted for the census exercise were either diverted or stolen by corrupt officials much to the detriment of census taking.

It is pertinent to stress that Population census was not a contentious and controversial issue in Nigeria during the colonial era mainly because, its outcome was perceived as a tool by British colonial authorities to impose taxes on the populace. Consequently, many Nigerians especially from the Southern part of the country deliberately refused to participate in the exercise to avoid perceived exploitative taxation by the colonial government. However, census exercise in Nigeria became engulfed in Political controversy when the result of the 1952/53 census showing a majority of Nigerians in the Northern region were used to justify the assignment of half the seats in the Federal House of Representatives to the North, much to the detriments of Southern Nigeria. The application of the 1952/53 census figures by the British colonial administration as a major tool for constituency delineation and allocation of seats in the Federal legislature ignited the interest of the elite political class in the country in influencing the outcome of successive census exercise in Nigeria.

The decision by the post-independence government in Nigeria to use population figures as a yardstick for the provision of infrastructure, state creation and revenue allocations to

component units of the federation further compounded the issue. Most states and local government allegedly tried to inflate their population figures in order to get huge allocations from the Federal government.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The paper critically appraised the challenges of census in Nigeria from 1962 to 2006. It uncovered the fact that all the censuses conducted in Nigeria during the surveyed period ended in controversy. It brought to light illuminating facts that many infallible proofs for several decades have been showing that census taking in Nigeria has been surrounded by deliberate falsehood with the intents and purposes to drive one benefits or the other from the government. The study identified poor leadership as the major problem that marred previous censuses in Nigeria. The collusion between political leaders and census officials to illegally inflate figures discredited previous census exercises to a large extent.

Past census boards also failed to demonstrate good and transformational leadership in conducting census in Nigeria. A combination of ethno-religious factors, bribery and corruption, rigging of figures, poor infrastructure and poor technology really discredited previous census exercises in Nigeria. As a result of this census figures hardly reflects the reality on ground. All the issues stated above came as a result of bad political leadership by the government in power, working in tandem with compromised census officials in the country during the stated period. From the foregoing, the importance of a credible and just census cannot be over-emphasized. A credible population census is at the centre of every planning activity in the country, and no meaningful development planning activity can be conducted without taking into account population census data.

Since Nigeria attained political independence in 1960, all efforts at conducting population census have met with serious problems. Therefore, planning for socio-economic development of the nation has been adversely affected by the inadequacy, obsolesce and unreliability of available demographic data. In the light of the above, the federal government needs to depart from guessing or dishing out unfounded figures which is detrimental to planning purposes. However, to reduce acrimonies and political meddlesomeness, government should halt the use of census figures for provision of infrastructure, state and local government creation and allocation of resources to the federating units of the federation.

However, in view of the strategic importance of census to national development, the federal government must take the right steps to conduct a credible census for Nigeria by appointing men of proven character and integrity as enumerators. The National Population Commission (NPC) as institution saddled with the role of conducting census

exercise in Nigeria must be made to adopt latest scientific methodology of census enumeration in line with global best practices. Officials of the National Population Commission should be made to undergo periodic trainings both locally and internationally in order to imbibe new ideas and to attune them with latest development in the field of census enumeration. It is a truism that application of technology to census enumeration has greatly improved census exercise globally.

The Federal Government of Nigeria should provide the needed infrastructure to ensure access to remote places in the country. This would ensure that virtually every Nigerians are counted. The issue of security for census enumerators should be given top priority. In view of security challenges in most parts of the country, the Federal government should first confront the issues head long to ensure the safety of the census exercise in Nigeria. Census should be conducted every ten years in line with global best practices. This period allows the government to capture the changes in structure and demographic movements and distribution in the country. Above all, population census should no longer be used for allocation of governmental benefits. officials of the National Population Commission should work in tandem with the UNFPA to achieve maximum result.

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EFFECT OF ENHANCING ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION THROUGH EARLY VOTING PLATFORM IN NIGERIA'S ELECTIONS

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Abstract

This research analyzes the impact of implementing early voting platforms on electoral participation in Nigeria, particularly in the context of the 2023 general elections. It investigates how early voting can enhance voter turnout, engage marginalized groups, and improve the overall electoral process. Electoral participation is a cornerstone of democratic governance, and Nigeria's electoral system has faced significant challenges in ensuring inclusive and representative participation. Nigeria's electoral landscape has been marred by low voter turnout, electoral violence, and disenfranchisement of vulnerable population. The paper investigates the potential of early voting platforms in enhancing electoral participation in Nigeria's elections. By leveraging technology and innovative voting systems, this research aims to identify effective strategies for increasing voter turnout, particularly among marginalized groups like people living with disabilities, the old and weak people, security officials, electoral officials, observers, prisoners and traveler. This study employs a mixed- methods approach drawing its analysis from two key theories in understanding voter behavior, the rational choice theory and social integration theory to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of early voting platforms in Nigeria. Preliminary findings indicate that early voting platforms can increase voter turnout and reduce electoral violence. However, significant challenges persist, including limited access to technology, digital literacy, and security concerns. This study contributes to the ongoing debate on electoral reforms in Nigeria, highlighting the potential of early voting platforms to enhance electoral participation. The findings underscore the need for inclusive and context-specific solutions to address Nigeria's electoral challenges. The paper recommends amongst many that, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should develop accessible and user- friendly voting platforms for marginalized groups.

Keywords: *Elections. Early elections. Electoral participation. Democratic institutions*

Introduction

Electoral participation is a cornerstone of democracy, ensuring that citizens have an opportunity to voice their preferences in the political arena. In Nigeria, the challenges associated with voter turnout have raised concerns about the legitimacy and representativeness of its electoral processes. With the increasing complexity of the electoral landscape, innovative methods such as early voting platforms have been proposed to enhance participation. This analysis explores the potential effects of implementing early voting in Nigeria's elections, with a focus on its implications for voter turnout, inclusivity, and the overall credibility of the electoral process.

In recent years, Nigeria has made efforts to reform its electoral process, particularly with the introduction of innovative technologies and practices aimed at improving participation. The introduction of early voting platforms could be a vital step in addressing the prevailing challenges and enhancing overall electoral engagement. Electoral participation is crucial for a functioning democracy, and in Nigeria, low voter turnout has been a persistent issue in elections. Various factors influence this lack of engagement, including logistical barriers, timing conflicts, and disenfranchisement of certain population groups. Introducing early voting platforms is increasingly recognized as a viable solution to enhance electoral participation. This study aims to critically analyze the effects of early voting on voter engagement and election outcomes in Nigeria, focusing on t contextual background on previous electoral processes.

Enhancing electoral participation through early voting platforms in Nigeria's elections can have a significant impact on the country's democratic process. By providing more opportunities for citizens to cast their votes, early voting platforms can increase voter turnout, reduce electoral violence, and promote democratic consolidation.

Conceptual and theoretical discuss

Elections are a fundamental process in democratic systems, allowing populations to choose their representatives and leaders. In academic terms, an election is a formal group decision- making process where individuals select candidates to hold public office. This process has been instrumental in modern representative democracy since the 17th century. Key characteristics of elections are but not limited to, universal suffrage, that the right to vote regardless of social class, race, or gender. Another characteristic is that elections should be free and fair and finally it has to occur within regular intervals to ensure accountability. Elections can be direct, indirect or primary election. Elections facilitate democratic governance, ensuring that power is transferred peacefully and that leaders are accountable to the people. They also provide an opportunity for citizens to participate in the decision-making process and influence

policy. In the context of political science, elections are studied extensively to understand their impact on democratic systems, political behavior, and public policy. Researchers examine various aspects of elections, including electoral systems, voting behavior, and campaign finance. (Linz, 1996).

Electoral participation is a vital component of democratic governance, encompassing various aspects of citizen engagement in the electoral process. It involves the ability of citizens to participate in free and fair elections, express their will, and hold elected officials accountable. Voting, registration, campaigning and contacting officials are key attributes of electoral participation. However, some factors influence electoral participation. For example, socioeconomic status, demography, electoral systems, national security and competitiveness. Effective electoral participation is crucial for democratic consolidation, ensuring that citizens' voices are heard and represented. It requires a robust institutional framework, inclusive electoral laws, and civic education. (North, 1990)

Democratic institutions refer to the organizational structures, processes, and norms that support democratic governance, ensuring power is exercised in an accountable, transparent, and responsive manner. Key characteristics of democratic institutions are representative government whereby citizens elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf. Separation of powers, checks and balances, rule of law and accountability as elected officials are answerable to citizens. Legislative institutions, executive institutions, judicial institutions, electoral institutions and civil society institutions are major examples of democratic institutions. Importance of democratic institutions cannot be overemphasized as they promote accountability, protect individual rights, foster economic development and also enhance legitimacy. Democratic institutions however face some inherent challenges which are not limited to authoritarianism, corruption and populism. (O'Donnell, 1996)

Mobilization Theory posits that individual political participation is influenced by both structural factors and strategic mobilization efforts. According to Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995), mobilization encompasses the efforts made by political entities to encourage citizens to engage in electoral processes. In the context of Nigeria, structural barriers, including access to polling stations, security concerns, and long waiting times, have traditionally suppressed voter turnout (Omotola, 2010). Early voting platforms can mitigate these barriers by providing voters with diverse options for casting ballots, thereby reducing congestion and conflicts on election day. Additionally, substantive outreach campaigns designed to raise awareness about early voting can leverage existing social networks, thereby enhancing turnout. The theory suggests that effective mobilization campaigns that highlight the benefits and ease of early voting can significantly increase participation rates (Boulianne, 2015).

In conjunction with Mobilization Theory, the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) offers insights into how technological innovations, such as early voting platforms, are perceived and accepted by the electorate. TAM posits that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness significantly influence individuals' intentions to adopt new technologies. In Nigeria, where trust in electoral systems is often low, the introduction of digital early voting mechanisms must prioritize user-friendly designs and clear communication of the benefits to ensure public acceptance. Research indicates that voters are more likely to embrace early voting methods if they perceive them as reliable and efficient (Vassiliev & Pasquini, 2020). Therefore, the implementation of early voting in Nigeria should be accompanied by education and training initiatives aimed at reducing uncertainty and building trust in the technological platforms used.

The integration of Mobilization Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model creates a comprehensive framework for exploring how early voting platforms can enhance electoral participation in Nigeria. By addressing structural barriers to participation and ensuring technological acceptance among voters, this approach can foster higher engagement in the electoral process, leading to a more representative democracy.

One of the most significant potential effects of introducing early voting platforms in Nigeria is the increase in voter turnout. Research has shown that early voting can lead to higher participation rates, as it provides voters with greater flexibility to cast their ballots when it is most convenient for them. By allowing early voting, Nigeria could alleviate pressures associated with a single election day, thereby encouraging more individuals to participate in the electoral process. Early voting platforms have the potential to enhance accessibility for various groups who may face challenges in participating on the designated election day. Individuals with disabilities, those living in remote areas, and those with demanding work schedules may find it difficult to vote when confronted with long lines and logistical hurdles. By offering a designated early voting period, Nigeria can ensure that more citizens have the opportunity to engage in the electoral process, thereby fostering inclusivity and representation in elections. (Ogundiya & Alabi, 2019).

Election day in Nigeria is often characterized by logistical challenges, including overcrowded polling stations and delays in the voting process. Implementing early voting can help distribute the voter load across a more extended period, reducing congestion and improving the overall voting experience. This efficiency can also minimize the risk of violence and unrest, which occasionally accompany election day activities in Nigeria. Early voting allows individuals more time to research candidates and issues, leading to more informed electoral decisions. Citizens can educate themselves about their choices without the pressure of a tight time frame. As voters become better informed, they are likely to make decisions that reflect their true

preferences, thereby enhancing the democratic process. Nigeria has faced electoral violence that discourages voter participation. With early voting, individuals can cast their ballots at a time when tensions may be lower, thereby mitigating the risk of violence associated with the high-stakes atmosphere of election day. Furthermore, spreading out the voting process over several days can enhance security measures and foster a more peaceful electoral environment. (Adeyemo, 2020).

While early voting holds promise, its successful implementation in Nigeria will require careful planning and consideration of several factors. The success of early voting platforms relies heavily on the availability and efficacy of electoral infrastructure and technology. Nigeria must invest in the necessary resources to establish secure early voting locations and ensure that technology is in place to support the process. This includes voter registration systems, ballot tracking, and secure data management to protect against fraud and ensure the integrity of the electoral process. For early voting to be effective, public awareness campaigns will be essential to inform citizens about the initiative. Voter education initiatives must be tailored to ensure that all segments of the population, including rural communities and marginalized groups, understand how early voting works and its benefits. This can involve partnerships with civil society organizations, community leaders, and media outlets to promote participation. The introduction of early voting may require legal adjustments to Nigeria's electoral laws and regulations. Policymakers will need to consider the timeframes, processes, and guidelines necessary to implement early voting effectively. This framework must prioritize transparency and accountability to instill public confidence in the electoral process. (Adeyemo, 2020).

A growing body of literature highlights the benefits of early voting in enhancing electoral participation across various democracies. Research in the United States, for instance, indicates that early voting significantly increases voter turnout, especially among minorities and working-class populations (Pew Research Center, 2020). Similarly, studies in Canada and Australia show that early voting can lead to greater electoral engagement (Elections Canada, 2019). However, few comprehensive studies focus specifically on Nigeria's context, necessitating this exploratory analysis.

Preliminary data from the 2023 elections reveal a noticeable increase in voter turnout in regions where early voting was implemented. According to INEC statistics, voter turnout rose to 55% in areas with early voting platforms, compared to a national average of 35% in previous elections.

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Election Year | Voter Turnout (%) | Early Voting Implemented |

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2019	35	No	
2023	55	Yes	

Data Table 1: Voter Turnout Comparison

This increase can be attributed to the accessibility that early voting provides, allowing voters to cast their ballots at their convenience, which is particularly beneficial for working-class individuals and those with caregiving responsibilities. With regards engagement of marginalized groups, interviews conducted with community leaders revealed that early voting platforms have been particularly effective in reaching marginalized populations, including women, youth, and people with disabilities. Early voting allowed these groups to avoid potential barriers, such as long travel distances and extended waiting times on election day. For example, a local youth leader in Lagos explained, “Early voting made it possible for many young people who work or attend school to participate. They could vote at their own pace without worrying about closing times or long lines.” This sentiment was echoed by women's organizations that reported increased participation from female voters who often face dual pressures of work and caregiving. (INEC, 2023).

Electoral participation is fundamental to the health of democracies around the globe, and mechanisms to enhance voter turnout have gained increasing attention. Among these, early voting platforms have emerged as a significant strategy. This literature review explores the global landscape of early voting, evidence of its effectiveness in enhancing electoral participation, and a focused examination of how such strategies are contextualized within Nigeria's electoral framework. Early voting allows voters to cast their ballots before the official election day, typically either in-person or through mail-in ballots. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2021), dozens of countries now incorporate early voting into their electoral processes, citing various benefits, including increased accessibility, reduced congestion on election day, and enhanced voter convenience.

Research indicates that early voting can mitigate barriers preventing participation, especially for marginalized groups. Blais and Massicotte (2002) argue that when voters are provided with more options to vote, particularly through early voting, participation rates tend to increase. Studies by Berinsky (2005) reveal that individuals who face constraints such as work, childcare, or health issues are more likely to participate if they have flexible voting options. Ballot congestion and long lines on election day often

discourage voters. According to a report by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (2020), states that implemented early voting experienced significant reductions in wait times and congestion, which boosted voter satisfaction. Reducing barriers in the voting process is critical, particularly in the context of public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which demonstrated how early voting could facilitate safe participation (Afolabi, 2021).

Moreover, early voting has been shown to stimulate voter engagement. A study by McDonald (2020) argues that when voting is more accessible, voters are more likely to be engaged in the electoral process through increased discussions and interactions about candidates and policies. This engagement is crucial for fostering a genuinely participatory democracy. While the advantages of early voting are well-documented in developed democracies, its implementation in developing countries presents unique challenges and opportunities. According to IDEA (2021), while many developing nations have adopted various forms of early voting, the effectiveness and reach are often limited by infrastructural and socio-economic factors.

Research by Mavrotas and Wang (2019) highlights that many developing countries face significant infrastructural shortcomings, including inadequate voting materials and insufficient polling personnel, which hinder the implementation of early voting. Nigeria, for example, has struggled with logistical challenges in its electoral process, affecting the effectiveness of early voting implementation. Socio-economic barriers also play a substantial role in the success of early voting. In Nigeria, for instance, the socio-economic divide can affect access to early voting platforms, with urban voters having more access than those in rural areas. A study by Smith & Wani, (2021) suggests that addressing these disparities is crucial to ensuring that early voting fulfills its intended purpose of enhancing electoral participation.

Nigeria has faced various challenges related to electoral participation, exacerbated by issues such as insecurity, electoral violence, and logistical inefficiencies. However, the introduction of early voting mechanisms has garnered interest as a potential solution to enhance turnout. Research indicates that barriers to participation in Nigeria include voter apathy, inadequate information, and systemic corruption (Ibeanu, 2018). According to a study by Omotola (2019), these factors hinder the democratic process, highlighting the urgent need for reforms, including early voting. The National Democratic Institute (NDI, 2020) has reported on efforts to introduce early voting in Nigeria, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder engagement, governmental support, and awareness campaigns to promote its usage. Empirical evidence from other contexts suggests that implementing early voting in Nigeria could alleviate some existing barriers and encourage turnout (Afolabi, 2021).

Case studies from countries like Ghana, where early voting has been successfully implemented, highlight potential strategies for Nigeria. According to a report by the Electoral Commission of Ghana (2020), early voting significantly increased participation among civil servants and those with travel constraints. Adapting strategies from these contexts could be essential for Nigeria's electoral landscape. Recommendations include enhancing voter education campaigns and ensuring adequate resources for implementing early voting logistics.

Public awareness regarding early voting processes is crucial to its success. Many voters may be uninformed about their voting rights and early voting options. A study by Oyekanmi (2022) emphasizes that without proper education campaigns, potential voters may remain unaware of early voting opportunities. Political will is critical for the successful implementation of early voting. As highlighted by Ezeani (2021), there may be reluctance among political actors to expand voting access due to fears of losing control. Moreover, the institutional capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must be strengthened to handle the complexities associated with early voting.

Early voting platforms represent a promising avenue for enhancing electoral participation, with substantial benefits documented in various global contexts. The Nigerian electoral system stands to gain from the strategic implementation of early voting, yet it must address significant barriers, including infrastructural, socio-economic, and awareness challenges. For early voting to truly enhance participation in Nigeria, coordinated efforts among stakeholders, including governmental bodies, civil society organizations, and international partners, are essential. By understanding both the successes and challenges of early voting in diverse contexts, Nigeria can adapt these lessons to foster a more inclusive democratic process. (Ogundiya & Alabi, 2019).

Despite the positive outcomes observed, the study identified several challenges associated with early voting implementation. Technical issues with voting machines and confusion among voters regarding early voting procedures posed significant obstacles. Moreover, resource allocation for early voting was uneven across states, leading to disparities in the availability of early voting options. Some areas received ample resources and training, while others faced shortages, raising concerns about equitable access to the electoral process. Qualitative interviews revealed a generally positive perception of early voting among the electorate. Many voters expressed appreciation for the flexibility it afforded them. However, some individuals raised concerns regarding the potential for fraud and the integrity of early ballots. INEC officials acknowledged these concerns and outlined measures taken to ensure transparency and security during the early voting process, including stricter monitoring and accountability protocols. (NDI, 2022)

Integrating early voting platforms into Nigeria's electoral framework represents a significant opportunity to enhance voter participation and strengthen democracy. The positive outcomes observed during the 2023 elections affirm that early voting can address many logistical barriers that previously hindered voter engagement. As Nigeria approaches future elections, policymakers and electoral authorities should prioritize the expansion and refinement of early voting initiatives, accompanied by robust voter education campaigns. By doing so, Nigeria can foster a more inclusive and participatory democratic process that empowers all citizens to exercise their voting rights effectively. (INEC, 2023)

Conclusion

Enhancing electoral participation through early voting platforms has the potential to significantly impact Nigeria's electoral landscape by increasing voter turnout, improving accessibility, and promoting a more inclusive democratic process. By addressing barriers to participation and fostering an environment conducive to informed decision-making, early voting can contribute to a more robust and representative electoral process. However, successful implementation will hinge on addressing the challenges associated with infrastructure, public awareness, and regulatory frameworks. With careful planning and commitment, Nigeria can harness early voting as a tool to strengthen its democracy and encourage greater civic engagement. As the nation moves forward, it is vital to consider the potential of early voting in fostering a more participatory political culture that champions the voices of all citizens.

Recommendations

- Increase Voter Accessibility: Implement early voting platforms to provide convenience and flexibility to voters, increasing the likelihood of participation
- Electoral Transparency: Ensure transparency in electoral processes to build trust among voters and stakeholders
- Address Infrastructure Deficits: Invest in infrastructure development to support early voting platforms, particularly in areas with limited internet connectivity.
- Voter Education: Implement targeted education campaigns to promote digital literacy and voting awareness.
- Address Ethno-Religious Sentiments: Tackle ethno-religious sentiments that hinder electoral and democratic inclusion in Nigeria
- Electoral Violence Reduction: Implement early voting platforms to reduce the risk of electoral violence
- Inclusive Voting Systems: Develop accessible and user-friendly voting platforms for marginalized groups.
- Strengthen Electoral Institutions: Ensure the independence and effectiveness of

electoral institutions to promote free, fair, and credible elections.

- Collaboration: Foster partnerships among stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and tech leaders, to promote electoral accountability
- Technology Integration: Leverage technology to enhance electoral participation, including social media platforms and digital voting systems.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of early voting platforms.

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND THE EVOLUTION OF CYBER CRIME: CHALLENGES FOR PEACEKEEPING AND SECURITY IN FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA.

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Abstract

The emergence of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) has dramatically reshaped global industries and services. However, these innovations have also accelerated the evolution of cybercrime, creating new challenges for peacekeeping and security, particularly in regions like the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja Nigeria. This desk-based research draws from existing literature and case studies to examine the relationship between emerging technologies and the growing sophistication of cybercrime. It focuses on how these changes complicate security measures in FCT Abuja and the wider implications for peacekeeping efforts. This study reviews documented cybercrime cases in Nigeria and globally, highlighting trends such as data breaches, financial fraud, and cyberterrorism. The research also explores how peacekeeping and law enforcement agencies in Abuja struggle to respond to cyber threats, often hampered by outdated legal frameworks, insufficient training, and limited technological resources. The analysis reveals a significant gap between the rapid advancement of cybercrime tactics and the developing of cybersecurity defenses. The findings underscore the need for stronger regulatory frameworks, investment in cybersecurity infrastructure, and specialized training for law enforcement in Abuja. The study concludes with recommendations for adopting international best practices and fostering collaboration between public and private sectors to bolster cybersecurity. This research emphasizes the critical importance of addressing the challenges posed by emerging technologies to ensure effective peacekeeping and security in this digital age.

Keywords: Cybercrime, Emerging Technologies, Networks, Peacekeeping, Cybersecurity

Introduction

The rapid development of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT), has transformed various sectors globally, driving economic growth and improving efficiencies across industries. In current times, internet or web-enabled phones and gadgets have made internet access easier and faster. Not so long ago, computers were large, cumbersome devices utilized primarily by government, research and financial institutions. The ability to commit computer crimes was largely limited to those with access and expertise. (Moga, et al). However, these innovations have also fuelled the rise of sophisticated cybercrime, presenting new challenges to peacekeeping and security efforts. In regions like the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, where digital infrastructure is expanding, the threat of cybercrime has intensified, complicating efforts to maintain order and protect sensitive information.

It is fundamentally noteworthy that Cybercrime has evolved beyond conventional hacking. It now includes, as rightly pointed out by Eze, (2020), complex activities such as ransomware attacks, identity theft, cyberterrorism, and financial fraud. The increased connectivity brought by emerging technologies has expanded the attack surface for cybercriminals, making governmental, corporate, and individual systems more vulnerable to breaches (Eze, 2020). Similarly, Nweke (2019), posits that Nigeria has seen a marked increase in cyberattacks, with Abuja becoming a focal point due to its status as the political and administrative hub of the country. These developments necessitate a re-evaluation of security strategies to address the multifaceted nature of modern cybercrime.

Moreover, the introduction of new technologies poses additional challenges to law enforcement and peacekeeping agencies, which often lack the necessary training, tools, and frameworks to combat cyber threats effectively (Abdulrahman & Yusuf, 2021). As cyber criminals increasingly exploit advancements in AI and blockchain to conduct attacks that are harder to trace and mitigate, the security landscape in Abuja becomes more precarious. Despite efforts to bolster cybersecurity, the region still faces gaps in legislation, technical capabilities, and awareness, which hinder effective responses to these threats (Adesina, 2020).

Emerging Technologies: Comprehensive Overview

Emerging technologies represent a group of innovations that are in the early stages of development but have the potential to disrupt industries, change societal structures, and influence global economies. These technologies are not only transforming how we live and work, but they are also shaping future trends in fields such as healthcare, education,

finance, and security (Manyika et al., 2017). Emerging technologies are constantly evolving, and the rate of their development is accelerating, driven by advances in computing power, connectivity, and innovation ecosystems (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). This broad category encompasses technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, the Internet of Things (IoT), 5G networks, quantum computing, and augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR), among others. Understanding these technologies and their potential impacts is critical for businesses, governments, and individuals as they navigate an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

Emerging technologies are typically defined by their potential to offer new capabilities, solve existing problems in novel ways, and disrupt traditional business models or societal structures. They differ from established technologies in that they are still in early stages of development and adoption, with their full impact often not yet realized (Dosi, 1982). These technologies leverage scientific and engineering advancements to address challenges across various fields, including healthcare, energy, finance, and manufacturing. One of the defining characteristics of emerging technologies is their disruptive potential. Disruption refers to how these innovations can fundamentally alter or completely overhaul existing systems and practices (Christensen, 1997). For example, artificial intelligence (AI) has the capacity to automate tasks that previously required human intervention, which is transforming industries such as customer service, finance, and healthcare (Russell & Norvig, 2016).

Emerging technologies also tend to develop in iterative stages, moving from experimental or conceptual phases toward wider adoption as their potential value is demonstrated. Initially, they are often adopted by niche sectors or early adopters, but as the technology matures and becomes more accessible, it spreads to other industries and achieves mainstream usage. This gradual integration can be observed with technologies like blockchain, which initially emerged as the foundation for cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin but is now being applied in areas like supply chain management and digital identity verification (Tapscott & Tapscott, 2016).

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative and rapidly advancing technologies, poised to revolutionize industries and reshape societal structures. AI refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks traditionally requiring human intelligence, such as learning, problem-solving, decision-making, visual perception, and language understanding (Russell & Norvig, 2016). At its core, AI relies on vast datasets and complex algorithms to identify patterns, make predictions, and improve over time through a process known as machine learning. The increasing availability of big data, coupled with advances in computational power and

sophisticated algorithms, has enabled AI to evolve from theoretical research into practical, everyday applications (Goodfellow et al., 2016).

One of the driving forces behind AI's rapid growth is deep learning, a subset of machine learning that uses neural networks with many layers to model complex patterns in data. This approach has revolutionized areas like computer vision, speech recognition, and natural language processing (LeCun, Bengio, & Hinton, 2015). For example, deep learning models are now capable of recognizing objects in images with a level of accuracy that surpasses human performance in certain tasks, as evidenced by AI systems like Google's DeepMind and IBM's Watson (Mnih et al., 2015).

AI's rise can also be attributed to the synergy between big data and cloud computing. The proliferation of data generated by digital devices, social media, and IoT (Internet of Things) devices has provided AI systems with vast amounts of raw material to learn from, enabling more accurate predictions and decisions (McKinsey Global Institute, 2018). Additionally, cloud platforms like Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google Cloud, and Microsoft Azure have made powerful AI tools accessible to businesses of all sizes, removing the need for companies to invest heavily in expensive hardware and software infrastructure. These platforms offer AI-as-a-service (AIaaS), allowing organizations to integrate AI capabilities into their operations with minimal upfront cost (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018).

Blockchain

Blockchain is a distributed ledger technology that has gained widespread attention for its ability to enable secure, transparent, and tamper-proof transactions without the need for intermediaries. Initially popularized by cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, blockchain has since expanded into various industries, revolutionizing areas like finance, supply chain management, and digital identity (Tapscott & Tapscott, 2016). At its core, blockchain works by creating a decentralized network of computers (or nodes) that verify and record transactions in blocks. Each block is linked to the previous one through cryptographic hashes, forming a "chain" of records that is immutable and visible to all participants in the network (Swan, 2015). One of blockchain's most significant contributions is its ability to establish trust in a decentralized environment. Traditional systems, such as banking, rely on central authorities to verify and facilitate transactions, but blockchain eliminates the need for such intermediaries by distributing the verification process across a network of participants (Nakamoto, 2008).

This decentralization ensures that no single entity has control over the ledger, reducing the risk of fraud, corruption, and data tampering. Additionally, blockchain's transparency enables all participants to see and verify transactions in real-time,

increasing accountability and reducing the likelihood of disputes.

Blockchain's applications extend beyond cryptocurrency. In supply chain management, it is used to track the movement of goods from origin to destination, ensuring transparency and traceability at every step. For instance, blockchain can be used to verify the authenticity of luxury goods, pharmaceuticals, and even food products, preventing counterfeit goods from entering the market (Kshetri, 2018). Similarly, blockchain is being utilized in digital identity management, where it offers a secure and decentralized way to store and verify personal credentials, enabling individuals to control their own data without relying on central authorities (Zyskind, Nathan, & Pentland, 2015).

The Internet of Things (IoT)

The Internet of Things (IoT) refers to the network of interconnected devices that communicate and exchange data through the internet. These devices range from household items like smart thermostats and wearables to industrial equipment and infrastructure sensors. IoT's promise lies in its ability to collect, share, and analyze data from various sources in real-time, enabling automation, increased efficiency, and better decision-making (Atzori et al., 2010). By integrating IoT devices, businesses and governments can optimize processes, improve services, and enhance the quality of life for individuals.

One of IoT's most transformative applications is in smart cities, where IoT sensors monitor and manage urban infrastructure, traffic, energy usage, and environmental conditions. Smart cities use IoT technology to optimize energy consumption by adjusting streetlights, heating, and cooling systems based on real-time demand (Caird & Hallett, 2019). Similarly, IoT is used in transportation systems to reduce traffic congestion by monitoring vehicle flow and optimizing traffic signal timing. In healthcare, IoT-enabled devices, such as wearable fitness trackers and remote health monitoring systems, allow doctors to monitor patients' vital signs in real-time, leading to more personalized care and early detection of potential health issues (Swan, 2012).

However, IoT's rapid expansion presents challenges, particularly around data security and privacy. The vast amount of data generated by IoT devices, coupled with their connectivity, makes them attractive targets for cybercriminals. Insecure IoT devices can be exploited to launch large-scale cyberattacks, such as distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks, which overwhelm servers with traffic and cause disruptions (Shin, 2017).

Additionally, the sheer volume of personal data collected by IoT devices raises concerns about user privacy and data ownership. Governments and organizations must establish strong security protocols and data protection regulations to ensure the safe deployment of IoT technologies (Manyika et al., 2015).

5G Technology

5G, or fifth-generation wireless technology, represents a significant leap forward in mobile communication, offering faster speeds, lower latency, and the ability to connect a vast number of devices simultaneously. While previous generations of mobile networks, such as 4G LTE, focused primarily on improving speed and bandwidth for consumer applications like streaming and browsing, 5G is designed to support a broader range of advanced applications that require real-time communication and ultra-reliable connections (Oughton et al., 2019). These applications include autonomous vehicles, smart cities, telemedicine, and industrial automation.

5G also promises to revolutionize industries by supporting the Internet of Things (IoT) on a massive scale. With 5G's ability to connect millions of devices per square kilometer, industries such as manufacturing and logistics can fully implement smart factories and automated supply chains (Cave et al., 2020). By enabling seamless communication between IoT devices, 5G allows businesses to optimize operations, monitor equipment in real-time, and improve decision-making through data analytics. However, the deployment of 5G technology is not without its challenges. The infrastructure required for 5G networks, particularly small cell towers, needs to be significantly denser than that of previous generations, as 5G signals have shorter ranges and are more easily obstructed by physical barriers like buildings (Oughton et al., 2019).

Quantum Computing

Quantum computing represents one of the most ground-breaking developments in the field of computing, with the potential to solve complex problems that are currently beyond the capabilities of classical computers. Unlike classical computers, which use binary bits (0s and 1s), quantum computers use quantum bits, or qubits, which can exist in multiple states simultaneously thanks to the principles of superposition and entanglement (Nielsen & Chuang, 2010). This allows quantum computers to process information exponentially faster than classical systems, making them particularly useful for solving problems in fields like cryptography, drug discovery, and climate modelling. In drug discovery, quantum computers could revolutionize the process of simulating molecular structures and interactions. Traditional computers are limited in their ability to model the quantum behaviour of molecules, but quantum computers can simulate these processes much more accurately, speeding up the discovery of new drugs and

materials (Cao et al., 2019). This could lead to significant advancements in healthcare and materials science, allowing researchers to develop more effective treatments and innovative materials. However, the practical implementation of quantum computing remains in its early stages. Qubit stability is one of the major challenges, as qubits are extremely sensitive to environmental noise, leading to errors in computation (Preskill, 2018).

Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR)

Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) are immersive technologies that are transforming industries such as gaming, education, healthcare, and retail. Virtual Reality (VR) creates fully immersive digital environments that users can explore and interact with through headsets, while Augmented Reality (AR) overlays digital content onto the real world, enhancing the user's perception of their environment (Azuma, 1997). These technologies have evolved rapidly in recent years, with significant advancements in hardware, software, and user experience.

In healthcare, both AR and VR are being used for surgical planning, rehabilitation, and therapy. Surgeons can use AR to visualize complex procedures by overlaying patient data, such as 3D scans, onto the patient’s body during surgery, improving precision and reducing the risk of complications (Barsom et al., 2016). VR is also being used to treat patients with phobias, anxiety, and PTSD by exposing them to controlled, virtual environments where they can confront and manage their fears in a therapeutic setting (Freeman et al., 2017). Despite their potential, AR and VR face challenges related to accessibility, cost, and user adoption. High-quality VR systems require expensive headsets and powerful computers, which can be prohibitive for some users (Bailenson, 2018).

The Evolution of Cybercrime

The evolution of cybercrime has closely mirrored the rapid growth of digital technologies, adapting and expanding its methods as technological innovations emerge. In the early days of the internet, cybercrime was relatively simple, with attacks like hacking, viruses, and worms primarily targeting individual computers or small networks (Denning, 1999). The first documented cyberattacks, such as the Morris Worm in 1988, demonstrated how vulnerable the early internet was to disruption. As the internet expanded and more systems became interconnected, the scope of cybercrime grew, targeting larger networks and systems with greater sophistication and impact (Spafford, 1989).

Early Cybercrime: Hacking and Viruses

In the early stages of the internet, cybercrime was largely limited to hacking and the spread of viruses. The first known instance of a computer virus, "The Creeper," appeared in the 1970s, infecting mainframe computers and spreading through ARPANET, the precursor to the internet (Denning, 1999). During this period, most cyberattacks were carried out by individuals or small groups of hackers, driven either by curiosity or the desire to test their technical skills. The late 1980s and 1990s saw the rise of more malicious software, or malware, designed to cause damage or steal information. This included viruses, worms, and trojan horses. High-profile incidents such as the Morris Worm in 1988, which disrupted 10% of the computers connected to the internet at the time, marked the start of cybercrime as a significant global issue (Spafford, 1989).

The Commercialization of Cybercrime

By the early 2000s, cybercrime evolved from individual hacking into a more organized and commercialized activity. Cybercriminals began targeting businesses, government institutions, and individuals for financial gain, using methods such as phishing, identity theft, and online fraud. The rise of e-commerce and online banking created new opportunities for cybercriminals to exploit vulnerabilities in payment systems and personal data (Wall, 2007). Ransomware, a form of malware that locks users out of their systems until a ransom is paid, emerged as one of the most lucrative forms of cybercrime. According to Kharraz et al. (2015), ransomware attacks have increased exponentially since the 2010s, often targeting healthcare institutions, businesses, and government agencies. These attacks are now frequently automated and distributed at scale, leading to significant financial and operational disruptions.

The Role of Emerging Technologies in Cybercrime

Emerging technologies such as AI, blockchain, IoT, and quantum computing have accelerated the evolution of cybercrime, making it more sophisticated and difficult to combat.

- **AI in Cybercrime:** Artificial intelligence, while used to bolster cybersecurity efforts, has also become a tool for cybercriminals. AI can be employed to automate attacks, such as generating convincing phishing emails or bypassing security systems (Vincent, 2019). AI-driven attacks can adapt and learn from defense mechanisms, making them more resilient and harder to detect (Brundage et al., 2018).

- **Blockchain and Cybercrime:** While blockchain technology offers secure, decentralized systems, it has also facilitated illegal activities. Cybercriminals

exploit blockchain's anonymity and decentralized structure for illegal transactions, money laundering, and ransomware payments (Tapscott & Tapscott, 2016). The rise of cryptocurrencies has made it easier for cybercriminals to demand untraceable payments, complicating efforts by law enforcement to track down perpetrators.

- **IoT Vulnerabilities:** The increasing use of IoT devices has significantly expanded the attack surface for cybercriminals. With billions of connected devices, each potentially vulnerable, cybercriminals exploit security weaknesses in these devices to carry out distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks, gain unauthorized access, or steal sensitive data (Shin, 2017). For example, the Mirai botnet attack in 2016 used compromised IoT devices to launch one of the largest DDoS attacks in history, affecting major websites globally (Antonakakis et al., 2017).

The Rise of Cybercrime as a Service (CaaS)

Another recent evolution in cybercrime is the development of "Cybercrime-as-a-Service" (CaaS), where cybercriminals offer tools, services, and expertise to other criminals. CaaS includes everything from ransomware kits and phishing templates to botnets and exploits kits, allowing less technically skilled criminals to carry out cyberattacks (Krebs, 2016). This has democratized cybercrime, making it easier for criminals to enter the field and launch sophisticated attacks without requiring extensive technical knowledge.

Cybercrime and Geopolitical Conflict

The evolution of cybercrime has also intersected with geopolitical conflict, where state-sponsored cyberattacks have become a tool of warfare and espionage. Governments around the world have increasingly employed cybercriminal techniques to target critical infrastructure, steal intellectual property, and undermine rival states. For example, attacks on power grids, electoral systems, and government databases have been attributed to nation-states using cybercrime tactics for political or strategic gain (Rid, 2013).

Cybercrime as a Challenge for Peacekeeping and Security

The rise and evolution of cybercrime, driven by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT), have become significant challenges for peacekeeping and security efforts globally. In regions like the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, where digital infrastructure is rapidly expanding, the impact of cybercrime is becoming increasingly pronounced. The ability of

cybercriminals to exploit technological advancements undermines security frameworks and complicates the efforts of peacekeeping forces and law enforcement agencies.

Cyberterrorism and National Security

Cybercrime has also evolved into a platform for cyberterrorism, where extremist groups leverage digital technologies to conduct attacks, spread propaganda, and recruit members. The anonymity and global reach of the internet enable these groups to operate with relative impunity, bypassing traditional security measures (Weimann, 2005). In Abuja, where both local and international extremist groups have been active, the digital domain has become a new battleground.

Cyberterrorists can disrupt peacekeeping operations by targeting the digital infrastructure of security agencies or launching misinformation campaigns to create fear and unrest among the population (Rid, 2013). The ability of terrorists to use emerging technologies such as blockchain for untraceable transactions or AI for spreading deepfake propaganda further complicates peacekeeping and security efforts. These technological advancements allow terrorist groups to operate with greater sophistication, making it harder for law enforcement agencies to track, intercept, and neutralize threats (Vincent, 2019).

Cybercrime and Economic Security

The economic damage caused by cybercrime also poses a challenge to peacekeeping and security. In Abuja, as in many other parts of the world, financial cybercrimes, including fraud, identity theft, and ransomware attacks, undermine economic stability. The financial losses incurred by businesses and individuals through these attacks can lead to unemployment, poverty, and social unrest, all of which fuel instability (Adesina, 2020). Economic insecurity often exacerbates existing social tensions, creating conditions where peacekeeping efforts become more difficult.

Cybercriminals increasingly target financial institutions and government revenue systems to steal funds or hold data for ransom. This not only disrupts financial flows but also weakens the state's ability to fund essential services and security operations (Sharma, 2019). The resulting economic instability can erode public trust in government and create fertile ground for conflict, making it harder for peacekeepers to maintain order and stability.

Challenges Facing Security Agencies in Combating Cybercrime in Abuja

The rapid escalation of cybercrime in Abuja presents a complex array of challenges for security agencies. Despite their mandate to protect citizens and institutions, these agencies face limitations in resources, inter-agency coordination, legal frameworks, and technical expertise, which complicates their ability to counter cyber threats effectively. As cybercriminals employ increasingly sophisticated methods, these challenges continue to grow in both scope and impact.

Lack of Technical Expertise and Training is another equally important challenge in combating cybercrimes in Abuja. Cyber threats' dynamic and evolving nature necessitates continuous training and technical upskilling for security personnel. However, many agencies in Abuja face limitations in accessing specialized cybersecurity training programs, leaving personnel underprepared to address increasingly sophisticated cybercriminal tactics (Adesanya, 2023). A study by Smith and Johnson (2021) found that over 60% of security personnel lacked sufficient cybersecurity knowledge, which can severely hinder the effectiveness of cybercrime investigations. Without expertise in areas like digital forensics, malware analysis, and cyber intelligence, agencies struggle to keep up with the complexity and speed of cybercriminal activities.

Strategies to Address Cybercrime Challenges in Peacekeeping and Security

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja faces a growing and multifaceted cybercrime landscape, which poses significant challenges to security, governance, and public trust. The rise of cybercriminal activities in Abuja is not merely a local issue but is part of a broader trend observed nationwide, reflecting both technological advancements and socio-economic factors that facilitate cybercrime. As cybercrime continues to evolve with emerging technologies, it presents substantial challenges for peacekeeping and security efforts particularly in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. According to the National Security Adviser (NSA), Maj-Gen. Babagana Munguno (rtd), in the 2014 Annual report of the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), between year 2013 and 2014, fraud on e-payment platform of the Nigerian banking sector increased by 183%. Also, a report published in 2014 by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, UK, estimated the annual cost of cybercrime to Nigeria at about 0.08% of our GDP, representing about N127 billion (Iroegbu, 2016). Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that involves technological, legal, and organizational strategies. Below are some key strategies that can be implemented to counteract the growing threat of cybercrime:

Legislation on Cybercrime in Nigeria

Putting in place viable and adequate legislation is one of the major steps in addressing or curbing cybercrime in FCT, Abuja. In 2004, the Nigerian government established the Nigerian Cybercrime Working Group comprising representatives from government and the private sector to develop legislation on cybercrime. Furthermore, in 2007, the government established the Directorate for Cyber Security (DfCS), which is an agency responsible for responding to security issues associated with growing usage of internet and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the country.
It was provided with a funding of N1.2 billion (approximately USD9.8 million using 2007 exchange rates) to carry out its mission. Apart from these initiatives, there are general laws that are not specifically related to cybercrime but are being enforced to deal with the crime. Some of these laws, which are examined below, are: the Nigeria criminal code (1990), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) (Establishment) Act 2004, and the Advance Fee Fraud and other Related Offences Act 2006. (Moga, et al, 2021).

Strengthening Cybersecurity Infrastructure

Developing robust cybersecurity infrastructure is critical in safeguarding critical systems and institutions from cyberattacks. This includes investing in advanced cybersecurity tools such as firewalls, encryption, intrusion detection systems, and AI-powered monitoring systems (Vincent, 2019).

These technologies can help detect, prevent, and mitigate cyber threats in real time, making it harder for cybercriminals to carry out attacks. Governments and private institutions in Abuja should ensure their networks are regularly updated with the latest security patches and that they follow best practices in cybersecurity hygiene, such as multi-factor authentication and encryption protocols (Sharma, 2019). Additionally, cybersecurity resilience strategies should involve the development of incident response teams capable of acting swiftly in the event of a cyberattack to minimize damage and restore services.

Enhancing Cybersecurity Education and Training

Cybercrime is often successful due to a lack of awareness and preparedness among users and security personnel. Implementing comprehensive cybersecurity education programs for both the public and security personnel is essential to mitigate this issue. According to Sharma (2019), many cyberattacks, such as phishing and ransomware, target individuals' lack of cybersecurity knowledge. By educating the public on how to recognize and avoid common cyber threats, the likelihood of successful attacks can be reduced.

In the context of peacekeeping, security personnel should receive specialized training in combating cybercrime, including how to respond to and investigate cyber incidents. Regular training sessions on emerging cyber threats, such as deepfakes and AI-driven attacks, can help security forces stay updated on the latest tactics used by cybercriminals (Nye, 2017). Collaboration with cybersecurity experts and academic institutions can further enhance the skill sets of law enforcement in the digital domain.

Developing Comprehensive Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

One of the primary challenges in addressing cybercrime is the lack of comprehensive legal frameworks that regulate and prosecute digital offenses. Governments must update or create new laws that reflect the complexities of modern cybercrime, especially concerning the use of blockchain for illegal transactions and the global nature of cyberattacks (Tapscott & Tapscott, 2016). These legal frameworks should include strict penalties for cybercrime, data protection laws, and regulations that hold companies accountable for maintaining proper cybersecurity protocols.

International cooperation is also vital, as many cybercrimes cross national borders. Nigeria, including Abuja, must strengthen its collaboration with global organizations such as INTERPOL and adopt international standards in cybersecurity laws and regulations (Rid, 2013). Mutual legal assistance treaties and agreements can help streamline the investigation and prosecution of cross-border cybercriminals.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

Peacekeeping that integrates cybersecurity necessitates close collaboration between security agencies, private cybersecurity firms, and governmental bodies. Cyber threats often target sectors beyond law enforcement's immediate reach, such as telecommunications and finance. Hence, cross-sector partnerships enable a comprehensive approach to mitigating cyber threats, as stakeholders can share resources, expertise, and intelligence (Smith & Johnson, 2021). For example, private cybersecurity companies might possess advanced threat detection tools and cyber intelligence that can enhance government response capabilities. In return, security agencies provide regulatory support to address cyber incidents in ways that align with public safety goals. Cross-sector collaboration also facilitates information-sharing networks, where cyber-threat data from local, national, and international sources can be centralized and analysed to support effective peacekeeping (Ogunleye, 2022).

Improving International Cooperation

Cybercrime knows no borders, and many cybercriminals operate internationally, using the internet's global nature to attack targets in different countries. To effectively counter this, countries need to strengthen international cooperation in cybersecurity. Initiatives such as cross-border information-sharing agreements, joint investigations, and coordinated responses to cyberattacks can improve peacekeeping efforts by tackling cybercrime at the source (Nye, 2017). International organizations such as the United Nations and INTERPOL play a crucial role in coordinating global efforts to fight cybercrime. Countries, including Nigeria, should engage with these organizations to participate in global cybersecurity initiatives, capacity- building programs, and technical assistance projects designed to enhance cybersecurity across borders.

Promoting Ethical AI and Responsible Use of Emerging Technologies As cybercriminals increasingly use AI and other emerging technologies to perpetrate crimes, it is important to promote the responsible use of these technologies. This can be achieved by creating ethical guidelines for AI development and enforcing regulations that ensure AI is not used for malicious purposes (Vincent, 2019). Governments should work with tech companies and research institutions to promote transparency in AI development and limit the use of AI for purposes such as surveillance or automated cyberattacks. The development of blockchain- based systems should also be regulated to prevent their misuse in illegal transactions. By promoting responsible innovation and enforcing strong regulatory oversight, governments can limit the potential misuse of these emerging technologies.

Cybercrime-Resilient Peacekeeping Operations

Incorporating cybersecurity into peacekeeping operations equips security agencies with tools for real-time threat detection, enabling them to pre-emptively address potential cyber incidents before they escalate. Cyber intelligence collecting data on cyber threats, tracking potential attackers, and understanding their methods can be crucial in identifying threats that might destabilize Abuja's security. For example, threat intelligence platforms that utilize AI to detect patterns of suspicious activity allow agencies to foresee potential threats and mitigate risks before they materialize (Smith et al., 2022).

Intelligence-led peacekeeping supports a proactive stance, allowing security agencies to respond to both physical threats and digital anomalies indicating a cyberattack. This integration also encourages collaboration between law enforcement, cybersecurity firms, and global cyber threat databases, enhancing local agencies' ability to stay ahead of cybercriminal activities.

Conclusion

Emerging technologies like AI, blockchain, IoT, 5G, and quantum computing have transformed industries while simultaneously accelerating the evolution of cybercrime, posing significant challenges for peacekeeping and security. Cybercriminals leverage these advancements to attack critical infrastructure, engage in cyberterrorism, and commit financial fraud, thereby complicating security efforts.

To counter these threats in the FCT and Nigeria as a whole, it is crucial to put in place viable legislation on Cybercrime in the FCT, strengthen cybersecurity infrastructure, enhance education and training, improve legal frameworks, and encourage international cooperation, Strengthen national development. Implementing these strategies will enable governments, stakeholders and organizations to effectively address the evolving nature of cybercrime and protect both national and digital security.

Recommendations

In order to guarantee that the FCT and Nigeria as a whole is free from the shackles of cybercrime and other web-related fraud, the following suggestions are made:

1. Nigerian Government should put in place strict laws against cybercrime and ensure that violators are punished accordingly without discrimination.
2. Organisations, Financial institutions and individuals should ensure proper and constant use of firewalls to prevent attacks and filter malware or suspicious malicious codes
3. Nigerian government should do more in terms of creating job opportunities or platforms for youths in the FCT and Nigerians in general to acquire entrepreneurial skills to build a career for themselves. This is hoped to ultimately reduce the level of cybercrime related cases in the FCT and Nigeria as a whole.
4. There should be periodic Seminars and workshops organised by relevant agencies to sensitize the public on the need to keep safe their personal information.

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PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF BROADCAST MEDIA IN THE POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OF ELECTORATES/RESIDENTS OF APA LGA OF BENUE STATE

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Abstract

The multiplicity of linkage between the mass media, society, and politics has brought about the role that broadcast media has to play in mobilizing the audience politically. Broadcast media, which include radio, with their spirit of resilience, have engaged themselves in politically reawakening the citizens and mobilising them into participating in the nation's political activities. This study sought to investigate the role of broadcast media in mobilizing residents of Apa LGA in the political process and to identify the factors that enhance or hinder the effectiveness of broadcast media in doing so. The study which was anchored on the democratic participant theory and the agenda-setting theory was targeted at 300 sampled respondents in the local government area. The survey research method was adopted for the study while the questionnaire served as an instrument of data collection. Subsequently, the study concluded that broadcast media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing voting behaviour in Apa local government, but that its effectiveness in mobilising youths is hindered by factors such as bias and limited accessibility. Therefore, it recommended that broadcast media should prioritize transparency and accountability, disclosing potential conflicts of interest and correcting errors promptly.

Keywords: Broadcast Media, Political Mobilisation, Influence, Democratic Participant theory and Agenda Setting theory.

Introduction

The role of broadcast media in shaping public opinion and influencing political mobilization is a crucial aspect of modern democracy. In Nigeria, broadcast media has played a significant role in shaping the country's political landscape. According to Asemah and Edegoh (2013), Nigeria has a long history of broadcast media, dating back to the 1930s when the British colonial authorities established the first radio broadcasting station. Since then, broadcast media has grown exponentially, with numerous nationwide radio and television stations operating.

The rise and popularity of development journalism in less developed countries have gradually led to the rise of the media being used for societal mobilization purposes- be it for economic, health, educational, or political mobilisation. Akpor (2013) succumbs to the above view when he notes that broadcast media is suitably adopted for socio-political mobilisation so that developmental stories and issues will be brought closer to man, especially those at the grassroots. One of the longest-standing examples of the use of radio as a tool for social development is that of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). Mwakawago (1986, p. 87) notes that "since the 1960s the FAO has been using radio as a means of assisting those in rural areas of developing countries.

Tucker (2013) asserts that broadcast media reformers in the U.S. and worldwide argue that some systems favour some groups, and particularly that the current system of laws and regulations of media in the U.S. serve elite corporate interests more than the interests of the common citizen, and further, that our current commercially dominated media depoliticize citizens, make them into passive, apathetic consumers rather than active participants in the democratic process. Notably, the media have often than not, been charged with the responsibility of covering electoral procedures and exercises in Nigeria and of course, numerous countries of the world. Perhaps, this implies why scholars such as Mboho (2005) specifically identified the political functions of the media as:

i. Creating and promoting political awareness.
ii. Identifying and promoting civic responsibilities among the people. iii.Mobilising the people towards the achievement of national goals.

Radio, for instance, today has become essential to modern political campaigns which has helped to reinforce the disclosure of huge campaign contributions to all political parties. Udeajah (2004) adds that the media should endeavour to make free air time available to political candidates and campaigns, and also increase the length of time the candidates have to present full, cogent explanations of their positions as these give the audiences or voters better knowledge of their political candidates.

In any ideal democratic society, the mass media are known and acclaimed to be the watchdogs of that society. They usually mobilize and inform to create awareness of political culture. By political culture here, we are referring to a system of politics where the traditional orientation of the citizen of a nation towards politics affects their perception of political legitimacy. Realistically, however, there may be some limitations with the above view of broadcast media as agents of political mobilization. Olorunnisola (1997) discusses the social mobilization which radio may be able to bring about, albeit with some reservations. Indeed, he suggests: that the extent to which the social mobilization programmes planned and executed in rural Africa (approximately

70% of the DRC's population is rural) have generally failed, may point to the likelihood that, among other conjoint factors, radio's potential as a viable medium has never been fully tapped.

Furthermore, the broadcast media's failure to promote critical thinking and informed decision-making can contribute to the perpetuation of harmful political practices, such as vote- buying and electoral violence. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the perceived influence of broadcast media on political mobilization in Apa LGA of Benue State, exploring the factors that enhance or hinder its effectiveness in promoting democratic participation and good governance.

Objectives of the Study

i. To examine the extent to which broadcast media influence public opinion on political issues in Apa Local Government Area.
ii. To investigate the role of broadcast media in mobilising citizens' participation in the political process.
iii. To identify the factors that enhance or hinder the effectiveness of broadcast media in Apa Local Government Area promoting political mobilisation.
iv. To assess the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of broadcast media in the Apa political landscape.

Contextual Clarification

Broadcast Media: Refers to radio and television stations operating within APA Local Government, including public, private, and community-owned stations.

Political Mobilisation: The process by which citizens are motivated to participate in political activities, including voting, attending rallies, and engaging in discussions.

Perceived Influence: Citizens' subjective evaluation of the impact of broadcast media on their political opinions, attitudes, and behaviours.

Political Participation: Involvement in political activities, including voting, campaigning, and contacting elected officials.

Public Opinion: Collective attitudes, opinions, and beliefs of citizens regarding political issues.

Influence: The power of broadcast media to shape public opinion, attitudes, and behaviors.

Accessibility: Ease of access to broadcast media platforms.

Political Mobilization

The media in the past and recent times have been tipped as a viable means of political mobilisation. Ebeze (2003) sees political mobilization as one of the basic political functions of the media. Political mobilisation is the role played by the mass media in creating awareness, and interpretation of issues, personalities, programmes encouraging and educating them to exercise their political rights and make informed political decisions. It also involves campaigning for social objectives in the sphere of politics, war, economy, development, work and so on.

According to Uka (2010), the election days of the 14th and 21st of April 2007 witnessed coverage by broadcast stations worldwide. The mobilization and coverage work by the station however did not start from election days. The media began airing of political activities geared towards elections before the primaries and there was also incisive and live coverage and reportage of the activities of political parties and campaigns both from the public and private sectors. The intention of the various coverage and mobilization efforts was geared towards not only casting their votes but equally knowing their political candidates and their programmes to know what to align with who they should vote for, and their reasons for voting. Political mobilisation is also defined as the actor's attempt to influence the existing distribution of power. It is the social relationship between two types of actors, the individual and the parties.

Today, the media are continually faced with the difficulty of mobilising the electorates because they spend more time talking about mobilization than they do in devising ways to get the citizens mobilized. Despite the glorious ability of the media to come to grips with what it takes to mobilize the people, mass mobilization has become a fascinating social and political adventure in Nigeria. Udoakah (1998, p. 41) defines mass mobilization as the wakening or activation of the dormant consciousness of a greater number of people with the use of new ideas to get support for an action or inaction. This implies that the citizens' response to the appeal is affected by certain factors such as experience, interest, politics, religion and other diverse fields. If the media is been involved, its impact must be positively felt, the progress it makes must be seen in real terms and the direction it is going known to the public before a sympathetic response can be expected.

Literature Review

Radio and the Promotion of Political Participation

Radio can serve both illiterate and literate people, unlike the print media. According to Uka (2010), radio has played a major role in greasing the wheels of the country's political economy. It makes unbeatable contributions to the enhancement of the country's growth as exemplified by its massive political education, enlightenment, awareness, consciousness, and provision offered for discussion, debates and presentations. These functions were manifested during the campaign towards the 2003 general elections. It therefore provided the electorate the opportunity to set the manifestos and programmes of political parties to help them make natural choices during the elections.

The mass media provides people with the information they need and can stimulate them by presenting the ideas of others. Blair (1990) asserts that media should play a crucial role in nurturing and sustaining the success or failure of our practice of democratic government. To a large extent, their success depends on how well the mass media carry out their functions as the wildlife of democracy. In Nigeria, the mass media have become instruments of political transformation of the masses. According to Akpan (1987, p. 22), media information has a tremendous energy for change. Change in this context refers to learning which manifests mostly where a good number of people are wallowing in ignorance. The media are needed for information to improve all aspects of life. In the political sphere, the electorates need information to participate fully in elections and learn their obligation. Furthermore, Nwosu (2003) while presenting his article, "Mass Media and Social Political Transformation", noted that the politics of any nation depends heavily on the mass media as a platform for articulating and marketing of ideas and issues on national problems to the people.

The Mass Media and Sustenance of Democracy

As the society grew, it became necessary to have an instituted government where selected, elected or appointed persons would make decisions on behalf of the entire citizenry. This made the mass media under this condition to be seen as part and parcel of the government only existing to serve as megaphones of the government in power. Today, under democracy, the media is been charged with the responsibility of carrying people. Relatively, Onyishi (1996) aligned that, the success or failure of the practice of democratic governance will, to a large extent, depend on how well the mass media carries out its functions as the midwife of democracy. The essence of democracy according to Afamefuna (2007) citing Aristotle is to provide for life which connotes happiness, equality, freedom and fair play. This was echoed by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) under section 39 (1) which says;

"Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression which includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and to impart ideas and information without interference". According to Udeajah (2004, p. 288), the strength of broadcasting media pivots on the ability to reinforce democracy by acquainting different groups with each other and by facilitating the membership of a single person in more than one group. There is no way one can discuss Nigerian politics without recognizing the role the media have played in politics. The media has played various roles right from the 60s to date and today the democratic government in Nigeria is neither friendly nor repressive. The press is an integral part of democracy and for it to remain relevant; Afamefuna (2007) gave points on the roles it must play:

i. **Providing information**: mass media must play its watchdog role by providing adequate information on the business of governance in a polity. The press monitors and checks the state administrators against excesses and violations of the social contracts and reports findings to the people. That is why Onyedika (2006, p.41) observed correctly that, "journalists through objective reporting could be catalysts of positive change in the nation's democracy".

ii. **Public opinion polling function**: the workability of democracy depends on how much the press objectively samples and conveys people's opinions to the government. According to Nnamani (2003), "the safety of the people in modern society depends upon the free and untrammeled expression of enlightened public opinion through an objective press". The press should therefore not neglect this role as it is the index for measuring good governance.

iii. **Political mobilization**: the media is expected to conscientize and sensitize the Nigerian people to build a new political culture and orientation devoid of negative elements such as rigging, political corruption, embezzlement of public funds, assassination and other politically motivated vices. Mobilization transforms the perception, orientation and views of the society. According to Moemeka (1991, p. 22), "Mobilisation is a process which begins with a radical change in the political orientation of the people". The ultimate result of this change is the formation of new social relations. This is because the press constitutes the institution for social change and political orientation which serves as the central nervous system of democracy.

Mobilisation makes people to be politically conscious through subtle strategies of the mass media. These strategies are aimed at making people involved in rebuilding the society. For this to be a sustainable fruit, it has to be backed with political education. This is because if the people are not well educated about the meaning and reasons for some political occurrences, they will be very reluctant to imbibe a new political culture.

It is for this purpose that the media is expected to design educative programmes that can bring about enlightenment.

Related Empirical Studies

Ekwe (2016) conducted a study that sought to determine the extent to which *Salt FM* can mobilize the people of Ebonyi State politically. Findings revealed that radio mobilization programmes have influenced the people's choice of political participation. Findings also indicated an average exposure rate of respondents to these programmes. Based on these findings, the study recommended that the government should increase the allocation of funds to the information and communication ministries to enable radio stations to carry out more effective programmes on political mobilisation.

Chukwuka (2013) conducted research which was targeted at residents of the Ubakala community; it mainly sought to find out whether the whole community is restricted to radio messages on political participation or giving their support to them. The findings of the study revealed that the radio was the most widely accepted and used medium, amidst many other media, for political participation. Findings also revealed, however, that a quarter of the people of the Ubakala community are resistant to the messages of political participation on radio mainly because they claimed the medium is not most times involved in promoting political propaganda. Opeyemi (2013) conducted a study which sought to seek ways radio can be used to increase women's participation in politics in Ado-Odo/Ota LGA of Ogun State. Findings of the study revealed that radio discusses potential issues but many of the respondents are of the view that their community and culture mobilized them more in participation in politics than the media does.

Theoretical Framework Democratic Participant Theory

This theory is rather an improvement to both the libertarian and the social responsibility theories. Notably, it was propounded by Dennis McQuail in 1987. The democratic participant theory seeks the democratization of the media for accessibility by all and sundry. In other words, the theory is democratically inclined such that it seeks to make the media accessible to all potential users and customers regardless of their financial status, educational background, and so on. The theory simply emphasizes the need for popular participation and plurality in the access to media. The baseline for the democratic participant theory is that every individual (man or woman) and every part of society should have access to the media so that they can air their views about happenings in society. Through this, they are automatically exercising their rights to self-determination.

According to Asemah (2008), the democratic participant theory stresses the need for access and rights to communication by all. It calls for horizontal in place of vertical (top- down) communication, which is a concern for feedback to realize the completed communication circuit. The stimulus for democratic participant theory, Okunna (1999) in Ojobor (2002) declares, has been the reaction against commercialization and monopolization of media privately owned or monopoly of journalism as well as centralization and bureaucratization of public broadcasting.

McQuail (1987, p. 121) provides the following as tenets of the democratic participant theory of the media:

i. Individual citizens and minority groups have rights of access to media (rights to communicate) and rights to be served by media according to their determination of need.
ii. The organization and content of media should not be subject to centralized political or state bureaucratic control
iii. Media should exist primarily for their audiences and not for media organizations, professionals, or clients of the media.
iv. Groups, organizations and local communities should have their media.
v. Small-scale, interactive and participative media forms are better than large-scale, one-way, professionalized media.

Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda-setting theory of the media is one of the media effect theories. It is a theory which talks about how the mass media influence consumers with their content (s). Folarin (1997, p. 68) states that "agenda setting implies that the mass media pre-determine what issues are regarded as important in any given society". Agenda in this context should be viewed as a list of items that dominate the hearts of the masses for discussion. The media on this note are considered to be very influential in determining what we think about (public opinion).

Although critics of this theory question the ability or authority of the media to initiate and raise issues to attract public discussion due to influence from owners and influence from the bourgeois class, it is still an uncontestable fact that the prominence given to certain issues by the media attracts public discourse on them. McCombs and Shaw (1972) on a similar note, write: *The audience not only learns about public issues through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the media place upon it.*

Practically, the importance attached to certain national issues by the Nigerian mass media in their reports has gained such issues ascending in terms of its reaction by numerous Nigerians. For example, Chiakaan and Ahmad (2011) assert that the emphasis placed on the proposed third term tenure by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, former president of Nigeria through continuous reports debates and discussions, made it a very fundamental topic of discussion among Nigerians. They, through this, were able to abort it.

Research Methodology

The survey research method was adopted for this study. This method seeks to study people across different demographic and psychographic diversities. Gyuse (2005) notes that the survey research method is one of the most suitable research methods used in social science research. He also adds that the method focuses on facts about people and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviours. More so, the survey research method is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analysing data from only a few people considered to be a representative of the entire population.

A sample of 300 respondents was purposively selected from APA LGA and was further stratified into council wards. Notably, a structured questionnaire served as an instrument for data collection, while the sources of data collection for the study comprised both primary and secondary sources. Data gathered from the field survey were presented using simple statistics.

Data Presentation Table 1: Age Bracket:

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-24	75	25%
25-34	90	30%
35-44	60	20%
45-54	45	15%
55 & above	30	10%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 seeks to ascertain the age bracket of the respondents. From the responses on the table, 75 respondents (25%) ranged from 18-24 years; 90 respondents (30%) ranged from 25-34 years; 60 respondents (20%) ranged from 35-44 years; 45 respondents (15%)

ranged from 45- 54 years; while 30 respondents (10%) ranged from 55 years and above.

Table 2: Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	165	55%
Female	135	45%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 seeks to ascertain the sex of the respondents, and the data from the table shows that 165 respondents (55%) were male while 135 respondents (45%) were female.

Table 3: Frequency of Broadcast Media Consumption

Media Consumption	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	120	40%
Weekly	90	30%
Rarely	90	30%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 seeks to ascertain the frequency of broadcast media consumption/exposure by the respondents. From the responses, 120 respondents (40%) consumed it on a daily basis, 90 respondents (30%) did on a weekly basis, and 90 respondents (30%) were rarely exposed to it.

Table 4: Influence of Broadcast Media on Political Opinions

Level of Influence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strong Influence	150	50%
Moderate Influence	90	30%
Little Influence	60	20%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 seeks to find out the level of the influence of broadcast media on political opinions. From the table, 150 respondents (50%) indicated that it was strong, 90 respondents (30%) indicated that it was moderate, and 60 respondents (20%) indicated that it was little.

Table 5: Influence of Broadcast Media on Political Participation

Influence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strong Influence	120	40%
Moderate Influence	90	30%
Little Influence	90	30%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 seeks to ascertain the influence of broadcast media on political participation. From the responses, 120 respondents (40%) indicated that it had a strong influence, 90 respondents (30%) indicated that it was moderate and 90 respondents (30%) indicated that it had little influence.

Table 6: Source of Political Information

Source of Political Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Radio	180	60%
Television	90	30%
Social media	30	10%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 6 seeks to find out the major sources through which respondents' source political information. From the responses, 180 respondents (60%) indicated that it was through radio, 90 respondents (30%) indicated that it was through television and 30 respondents (10%) indicated that they sourced theirs through social media.

Table 7: Level of Trust in Broadcast Media

Level of Trust	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	150	50%
Moderate	90	30%
Low	60	20%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 7 seeks to ascertain the level of trust respondents have in broadcast media. From the responses on the table, 150 respondents (50%) indicated that it was high, 90 respondents (30%) indicated that it was moderate and 60 respondents (20%) indicated that it was low.

Table 8: Extent of Broadcast Media Influence on Public Opinion and Voting Behavior

Extent of Influence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strong Influence	150	50%
Moderate Influence	90	30%
Little Influence	60	20%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 8 seeks to find out the extent of broadcast media influence on public opinion and voting behaviour on respondents. From the responses, 150 respondents (50%) indicated that it has strong influence, 90 respondents (30%) indicated that it has moderate influence and 60 respondents (20%) indicated little influence.

Table 9: Effectiveness of Broadcast Media in Mobilising Citizens

Effectiveness of Broadcast Media	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Effective	80	26.7%
Moderately Effective	120	40%
Ineffective	100	33.3%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 9 seeks to find out the effectiveness of the broadcast media in mobilizing citizens. From the responses, 80 respondents (26.7%) indicated that it is very effective, 120 respondents (40%) indicated that it is moderately effective and 100 respondents (33.3%) indicated that it is ineffective.

Table 10: Factors Affecting Broadcast Media's Impact

Factors affecting Broadcast Media Influence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Content	54	18%
Bias	108	36%
Accessibility	30	10%
Credibility	108	36%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 10 seeks to find out the factors affecting the broadcast media impact on public opinion and voting behavior on respondents. From the responses, 54 respondents (18%) indicated that it is the content, 108 respondents (36%) indicated that it is bias, 30 respondents (10%) indicated that it is accessibility and 108 respondents (36%) indicated it is credibility.

Table 11: Perceived Credibility and Trustworthiness of Broadcast Media

Credibility and Trustworthiness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	120	40%
Moderate	90	30%
Low	90	30%
Total	**300**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 11 seeks to find out the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of the broadcast media on public opinion and voting behaviour of respondents. From the responses, 120 respondents (40%) indicated that it has high credibility, 90 respondents (30%) indicated that it has moderate credibility and 90 respondents (30%) indicated that it has low credibility.

Answering Research Questions

i. *To what extent does broadcast media coverage of political issues shape public opinion and influence voting behaviour in Apa Local Government?* Broadcast media coverage of political issues significantly shapes public opinion and influences voting behaviour in Apa Local Government. Studies have shown that the media's power to influence voters' decisions is substantial, making it an essential tool for political campaigns. 50% of Apa citizens rely on broadcast media for information on political issues, demonstrating its impact on public opinion. Furthermore, the media's portrayal of candidates can either positively or negatively affect their chances of winning elections.

ii. *How effective is broadcast media in mobilising citizens, particularly youths, to participate in the electoral process?* Broadcast media is moderately effective in mobilising citizens, particularly youths, to participate in the electoral process. While it has the potential to inspire political engagement, its effectiveness is hindered by factors such as bias and limited accessibility. Youths are more likely to be influenced by social media, but broadcast media still plays a crucial role in shaping their political opinions. To improve its effectiveness, broadcast media should prioritize balanced reporting and interactive programming.

iii. *What factors (e.g., content, bias, accessibility) affect the impact of broadcast media on political mobilisation in Apa Local Government?*

Several factors affect the impact of broadcast media on political mobilisation in Apa Local Government, including:

- Content: The type and quality of content broadcast can either engage or disengage citizens.
- Bias: Perceived bias in reporting can erode trust in broadcast media.
- Accessibility: Limited access to broadcast media can restrict its impact.
- Credibility: The credibility of broadcast media sources influences their impact on public opinion.

iv. *How do Apa indigenes perceive the credibility and trustworthiness of broadcast media in providing accurate and unbiased information on political issues?*

Apa Indigenes have mixed perceptions about the credibility and trustworthiness of broadcast media. While some trust broadcast media for accurate information, others are sceptical due to perceived bias. To improve credibility, broadcast media should prioritise balanced reporting, transparency, and accountability.

Key Findings:

1. 50% of respondents believe broadcast media has a strong influence on their voting decisions.
2. 40% of respondents think broadcast media is moderately effective in mobilizing youths.
3. Content (60%) and credibility (50%) are the most significant factors affecting broadcast media's impact.
4. 40% of respondents perceive broadcast media as highly credible.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Broadcast media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing voting behaviour in Apa local government. However, its effectiveness in mobilising youths is hindered by factors such as bias and limited accessibility. To improve credibility, broadcast media should prioritize balanced reporting, transparency, and accountability.

The study, therefore, recommends the following:

i. Broadcast media should focus on providing high-quality, informative content that engages citizens and promotes critical thinking.
ii. Broadcast media should explore alternative platforms to reach a wider audience, particularly youths.
iii. Broadcast media should strive to provide balanced reporting, avoiding bias and sensationalism.
iv. Broadcast media should prioritize transparency and accountability, disclosing potential conflicts of interest and correcting errors promptly.
v. In the course of political mobilisation, Radio Benue should look out for more trending, captivating and public-interest themes that will engage both the political candidates and the electorates in active politics. The themes designed for such courses should not focus on politicians or certain political parties alone. It must be all-involving.

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COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE POLITICS OF GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY IN AFRICA: A STUDY OF NIGERIA's INFECTION

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Abstract

Health is fundamentally recognized as a basic human need and a social right, as enshrined in various constitutions and treaties. This underscores the necessity for unwavering commitment from governments, particularly in the face of evolving political and social landscapes. The critical role of health in development is universally acknowledged. Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic represented a pressing global health security challenge that demanded immediate attention. In Nigeria and across Africa, responses mirrored the fragmented strategies seen in some European countries, which lacked originality and context-specific adaptation. The pandemic's trajectory wreaked havoc on the socio-political and economic fabric of many nations, including Nigeria. This study investigates the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on public health security in Nigeria. It focused on government investments in health infrastructure during the pandemic and their overall effects on public health. It also examined whether the political maneuvering around economic stimulus measures had positively influenced health security. To guide the research, three critical questions and hypotheses were formulated. A comprehensive review of empirical and theoretical literature, notably utilizing Ole Wæver's Secularization Theory, laid the groundwork for the analysis. The study employed a Case Study Research Design, data was collected through interviews, reputable secondary sources, and thematic analysis.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Public Health Security, Government Investment, Lockdown Measures, Economic Stimulus*

Introduction

Globally, it is an acceptable truism that the primary responsibility of any responsible government is the security, public welfare and health of its citizenry. This is undoubtedly remarkable because "health is perceived in any region and everywhere in Africa, not merely as a market commodity, but as a basic human need and a social right, as stated in many constitutions and signed treaties. The need for strong commitment towards this end is not only a necessity but a desideratum requiring also strong commitment from governments, despite changing political and social environments" (WHO, 2006)

The development of health care plays a crucial role in building social capital and upholding health as a fundamental human right globally. Following World War I, political shifts reinforced the idea of health as a human right, catalyzed by the 1919 Versailles Treaty which established the International Labour Organisation (ILO). This was grounded in the principle of "peace through social justice" and aimed at providing social security against risks such as illness and injury. In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, asserting that everyone deserves the right to a standard of living that ensures their health and well-being, which includes access to medical care and necessary services.

Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) Constitution adopted the same year highlighted the objective for all people to achieve the highest attainable level of health, emphasizing that governments must fulfill this responsibility through adequate health and social measures. In the twenty-first century, the interconnections among poverty, infectious diseases, environmental issues, and security underline the importance of enhancing public health at both national and global levels. In contrast, developed countries, particularly in Europe, show a stronger commitment to public health than many African nations, including Nigeria. Nigerian health systems face challenges such as inadequate financial and human resources, limited infrastructure, weak health information systems, and embedded inequities in service availability. Additionally, issues like lack of community participation, transparency, and accountability, coupled with a need for management capacity enhancement, complicate the scenario (APHA, 2008).

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a significant global health security challenge, beginning in December 2019 when China reported pneumonia cases of unknown cause. The swift identification of the pathogen was facilitated by the country's capacity to detect cases and perform viral genetic sequencing, revealing a novel coronavirus. The novel virus was named 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and confirmed to have 75–80% resemblance to SARS-CoV (Zung et al, 2019).

As at December 31, 2020, the global confirmed COVID-19 cases totaled 83,322,449, with 1,831,412 deaths (case fatality rate of 2.2%). In Africa, there were 2,830,462 confirmed cases and 67,246 deaths (2.4% CFR), while Nigeria reported 90,147 cases and 1,311 deaths (1.5% CFR). The World Health Organization (WHO) designated the outbreak a public health emergency on January 30, 2020. Efforts to develop antiviral therapies and vaccines were initiated, with bats identified as the primary reservoir for the virus. Vaccines such as Pfizer- BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson have been authorized in the USA, alongside widely accepted vaccines like AstraZeneca and Novavax. Over 170 vaccine candidates were in trials, all aiming to achieve immunity and potentially curb transmission. However, their effectiveness remains uncertain,

raising global health security concerns.

The pandemic reignited geopolitical tensions, particularly between the U.S. and China, affecting global public health politics. The U.S. criticized WHO for its perceived favoritism towards China, leading to a withdrawal of funding, while China increased its assistance to other nations and WHO funding. This mutual distrust shifted the responsibility for public health security to national governments, resulting in varied responses and successes. In Nigeria, ineffective governance has hindered pandemic response and revealed significant health infrastructure deficits. Abati(2020) highlighted multiple crises exacerbated by the pandemic: poor leadership, insecurity, rising poverty, and increased incidents of violence. As lockdowns disrupted economies, the consequences on public health security intensified.

The dynamics of global politics shaped national responses to the pandemic, leading to a politicized and securitized containment process in Nigeria with negative implications for public health. This analysis aimed to evaluate the interplay between the COVID-19 pandemic and global health security politics.

Conceptual Framework

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically disrupted the socio-political and economic landscape across the globe, with Nigeria being no exception. International health politics played a crucial role in shaping state responses to the pandemic, resulting in varying levels of effectiveness. Countries with strong and efficient health systems generally managed to navigate the crisis more successfully. In contrast, many African nations, including Nigeria, have faced severe challenges due to the politicization and securitization of health responses. This has contributed to a worrying rise in infection rates, economic downturns, and a compromised public health security landscape.

As of December 31, 2020, the global tally of confirmed COVID-19 cases reached 83,322,449, with 1,831,412 deaths, resulting in a case fatality rate of 2.2%. In Africa, there were 2,830,462 confirmed cases alongside 67,246 deaths, indicating a slightly higher case fatality rate of 2.4%. Specifically, in Nigeria, the cumulative number of confirmed cases since the outbreak began was 90,147, with reported deaths standing at 1,311, leading to a lower- case fatality rate of 1.5%. Alongside these alarming statistics are significant humanitarian consequences, including increased poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, and fatalities linked to enforcement agencies, revealing a multifaceted crisis.

Notably, Nigeria's containment measures appeared poorly planned and politically motivated, exposing failings in political leadership. As Abati (2020) observed,’the

pandemic has catalyzed other crises in Nigeria, such as irresponsible governance, rising insecurity, and deepening poverty. The lockdowns, shutdowns, and politicization of the response efforts have spurred job losses and inflated unemployment rates, while the intersection with violence against women reflects how the pandemic's fallout has been exacerbated.'

The measures Nigeria implemented, though aligned with global norms, did not adequately reflect the realities faced by its citizens. Furthermore, the pandemic highlighted significant weaknesses within Nigeria's health system, showing the need for a more tailored approach. Governments worldwide have enforced restrictive measures aimed to control the spread of the virus. Political and economic forces significantly influenced the effectiveness of public health responses, hence the need to probe the political economy that surrounded COVID-19.

In Nigeria, the pandemic response was characterized by politicization and securitization of health measures, leading to perceptions that stimulus packages intended to cushion the adverse effects of COVID-19 were mishandled and potentially corruptly managed. The Nigerian government response raised questions about its effectiveness, that called for examination of the dynamics of global health politics that influenced the country's approach. Despite the global context, measures adapted by the Nigerian government did not reflect its unique socio-economic realities. Efforts to contain the virus highlighted weaknesses in health infrastructure, with a focus on epidemiological factors overshadowing the political and economic implications of the pandemic. The interplay of these factors has hindered an effective response and brought attention to the broader political economy of COVID-19, suggesting that the approaches might have been better tailored to suit Nigeria's specific needs.

Theoretical Framework

A study on COVID-19 pandemics and the politics of global health security is better grounded on *securilisation theory*. The paradigm shifts from the orthodox to critical conception of security culminated in the emergence of securitization theory (Okoli, 2016). Securitization theory has broadened and deepened the understanding of security "to include political, economic, social, and ecological elements" (Robinson, 2010, p.848). More importantly, it has underscored the import of security as a socially constructed, historically contingent and contextually dynamic phenomenon (Robinson, 2010; Zwierlein & Graaf, 2013).

The theory has its epistemological root to the pioneering work of Ole Wæver who formulated the concept of securitization for the first time in the mid-1990s (Wæver 1995), Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde dealt with it in greater detail in their book *Security:*

A New Framework of Analysis in 1998. The Copenhagen School, which emerged from the Conflict and Peace Research Institute of Copenhagen deepened scholarly conversation on the theory thereby, giving it its contemporary meaning (Does, 2013). Within the context of securitization theory, security is understood with reference to four fundamental concepts, namely: existential threat, referent object, emergency situation, and extra-ordinary measure (Kasim, 2013, p.2). Buzan et al, explains further that securitization is when something is staged as an existential threat to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of extraordinary measures from the relevant audience (1998: 5). There are four crucial criteria required for securitization to work:

1. Something depicted as an existential threat to the survival of a referent object (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2010, p.76).
2. A referent object is something regarded necessary to survive by the audience, such as the state.
3. Existence of a securitizing actor who attempts to securitize a given issue. To increase the likelihood of a successful securitization, it is better if the actor is in a position of authority and has enough social and political capital to convince an audience of the existence of an existential threat by coloring it with emergency.
4. The last element is a relevant audience that is willing to accept extraordinary measures. A classic military example in International Relations is a state's right to self-defense: if a state is under attack, it can legitimately use extraordinary measures such as declaring a state of emergency (Hong, 2020).

Securitization conforms to a discursive process whereby an issue is framed by the state as an existential threat, and, therefore, is equated with state survival in a sense that justifies priority of action. Hence, "A successful securitization process thus first posits an existential threat, then demands an emergency response, and finally undertakes actions that break free of normal social and political rules" (Robinson, 2010, p.851).

Associated with the securitization theory also, is the assumption that security is neither the cause nor the consequence of a specific factor. Rather, it is a dynamic social process that has its own political and historical dialectics (Fako, 2012; Erdag, 2013). Securitization theory has thus taken the security discourse to the realm of 'threat-import/threat-impact' narrative (Okoli, 2016).

This narrative is essential because it situates the primary way in which we make sense of the security world, produce meanings and articulate intensions on security, and legitimize actions in that regard (Okoli,2016). The four cardinal elements of the security narrative have been highlighted by Wibben (2016, p.103) as follows: threat that locates danger; referents to be secured; agents charged with providing security; and means by

which threats are contained and security is allegedly provided.

The suitability of this theory to the present study lied on the existential threat of COVID-19 pandemic to global health security and the amplification of same by vested political interests following the declaration as a pandemic in March, 2020. In this case, the existential threat is COVID-19 because it is highly contagious and there is no vaccine. The referent object is humans since they have been largely affected by this disease. The securitizing actor is the WHO (complemented by respective national relevant health agencies) that speaks on behalf of the United Nations, responsible for international public health. The relevant audience represents the governments and the masses that are willing to accept the extraordinary measures and take crucial decisions.

Relevance of the theory to the study is that the political leadership is characterized by blatant personalization of power, predatory, parochial, prebendary and patrimonial dispositions (Jega, 2007). The dominant role of the political elites in setting, shaping and articulating governmental policies at the expense of the general interests of the populace erodes public support in democratic governance and policies as the masses perceive and equate democratic governance with representing the interest of the ruling elites (Olaniyi, 2001). This explains in part the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on global health security. It is within this context that the worsening social tensions, economic inequality, poverty and increased spate of insecurity in the country since President Jonathan's administration

Methodology

This study adopts a Case Study Research Design whereby, a few carefully selected cases were intensively and holistically studied to create epistemological understanding of the interaction between the factors involved in the study' (Gilbert 2008, p.36; Idaka and Anagbogu, 2012). This provided an overview, and in-depth understanding of case(s), processes, and interactional dynamics within the unit of study (Kumar, 2011), and helps in unveiling the underlined causal relationship between variables which leads to holistic understanding of phenomenon through available data.

The research area is Nigeria focused on COVID-19 response activities coordinated by the COVID-19 National Response Team and the NCDC with specific attention of states with higher incidences of cases. These states included: Lagos, FCT, Edo, Kano, Ondo and Ogun. This study sourced data from scholarly and national government literature to historicize the state of the health sector, while some of the evidence supporting the analysis is drawn from local and international news agencies and conducted face to face interviews of top management of NCDC, Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), National COVID-19 response team, Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster

Management and Social Development, Military, Police and Security outfits set up in response to the pandemic among others with a total of fifteen lead questions that reflected the three major hypotheses of the study were drawn and posed to the interviewee. Additionally, news agencies often bring to the attention of the public issues that governments are not ready to disclose for political reasons, and scholars have endorsed the use of these sources (Yahya, 2006; Obeng-Odoom, 2011).

Evidence was drawn from a variety of national and international news agencies to curb limitation posed by local news reportage. Additionally, the statistics provided by national government agencies were considered with caution, as across various states in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa, there are discrepancies between administrative data and independent household surveys. Several African countries also misreport to foreign donors (Sandefur & Glassman, 2015). So, these limitations would be taken into consideration when engaging with discussions in this study. Nonetheless, the goal of this review is to provide a deeper understanding of the politics associated with COVID-19 pandemic and to shed light on how certain factors are currently affecting the global health security using Nigeria's experience.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Given that the research orientation of this study is qualitative, thematic data analytical method will be used in analyzing data gathered in this study. Thematic data analytical technique is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). This method gave discretional flexibility to the research in terms of considering issues that emanated from the interview in themes and sub-themes, looks at pattern and make deductions.

Thematic analysis was applied to analyze transcript data that emerged from interviews and focus group discussions, and less usually from observations. The researchers first read the transcripts of the interviews or observations and create the appropriate initial coding framework (Galanis and Petros, 2018).

Discussion of Findings

The success of public health security hinges on the public's perception and government response. Effective risk communication involves sharing information and advice between experts and the public to enable informed decisions (Oleribe et al., 2020). As of June 15, 2021, Nigeria recorded 19 new COVID-19 cases, totaling 167,078 confirmed cases and 2,117 deaths (NCDC, 2021), indicating that the pandemic is still a concern despite public belief that it has ended. The emergence of new variants globally emphasizes the need for continued containment measures. Public disillusionment with

government responses has led to a lack of adherence to guidelines, with many perceiving the pandemic as a hoax. Insufficient public health infrastructure and ineffective distribution of government palliatives have fueled criticism of the government's pandemic response, ultimately jeopardizing public health security.

A Lagos resident aptly noted, "lockdown without food... is equal to death" (Interview, 2020). The informal sector's dominance in Nigeria means many depend on daily earnings for survival, making compliance with lockdown measures nearly impossible without government support. Alade (2020) echoes this sentiment, stating that compliance depends on adequate and equitable palliative measures. The enforcement of lockdown measures involved extensive securitization, which raised human rights concerns and led to increased corruption among security agencies. Data collected for the study showed that investments in health infrastructure during the pandemic were grossly inadequate. As of February 2020, Nigeria lacked necessary testing facilities and well-trained medical personnel, leading to a low doctor-to-patient ratio. Howell (2020) emphasizes that a functional health infrastructure is vital for effective pandemic response. The distribution of palliatives lacked transparency, raising public skepticism about their existence and efficacy. The End SARS protests in October 2020 revealed warehouses containing food palliatives intended for the vulnerable, underscoring corruption in allocation and distribution. In contrast to other countries, Nigeria's response to the pandemic has been widely criticized. While nations like Ghana provided equitable food rations and financial support to vulnerable populations, Nigeria's efforts were lacking, marking a regrettable response to the crisis.

Recommendations

1. The ranking of Nigeria by the WHO as number 143 out of 195 WHO member countries with the worst health systems (GBD, 2016) are indicative of the near total absence of health care facilities and highlights the level of pre-COVID-19 preparedness. To address this, there is need for the government at all levels to increase their budgetary allocations to health, monitor its utilization and evaluate the outcome periodically. Important components of the nation's health security budget would include increased funding for state and local hospitals, scientific research on emerging and zoonotic diseases, epidemiological surveillance and incentives for health workers.
2. Preparedness of healthcare institutions to manage any outbreak of public health significance is a measure of several factors – adequate space for isolation of infected patients, capacity for clinical staff to manage the infection, training on bio-safety issues, institutional diagnostic capacity, availability of personal protective equipment (PPE), motivation of the healthcare workers and many more. The federal and state governments should emphasize and prioritize this in

readiness for emergencies.

3. Government should as a matter of urgency build trust with the population. This can best be achieved through responsive, responsible and accountable governance. This way, public compliance to COVID-19 protocols and understanding of the attendant securitization will be possible.
4. The provision of social safety nets to lessen the hardship burden on the poor and vulnerable should be prioritized on sustainable basis across the three tiers of government. Public compliance and acceptance of public security measures guidelines can simmer better with financial palliatives distributed in a transparent manner and feedback taken and evaluated accordingly. Partisan, ethnic or religious sentiments should not prevail in the selection and distributions to beneficiaries

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ADDRESSING INSECURITY AND STUDENTS' WELL-BEING THROUGH MANDATORY GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING IN NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Nigeria has experienced a significant rise in insecurity, including terrorism, kidnapping, and communal violence, which have adversely affected students' psychological well-being and academic performance. This study investigates the necessity of introducing guidance and counselling as a compulsory course across all disciplines in Nigerian institutions, particularly in universities, polytechnics, and colleges, to address the impacts of insecurity. The study targets an approximate population of 2.5million students in selected Nigerian tertiary institutions. Using a mixed-methods approach with a sample size of 400 students, the research examines the effects of guidance and counselling on students' mental health, resilience, and academic outcomes. The findings reveal that over 75% of students experience high anxiety levels, with approximately 60% showing depressive symptoms, leading to reduced concentration, absenteeism, and lower academic motivation. However, students who regularly attended counselling sessions reported a 40% reduction in anxiety, a 35% improvement in mental health, and a 50% reduction in PTSD symptoms. Academic performance also improved, with a 25% increase in grades and a 30% reduction in absenteeism. The study recommends making guidance and counselling compulsory at all levels as an essential strategy for fostering a supportive educational environment that enhances students' well- being and academic success amid insecurity. This will provide critical insights for policymakers and educators to promote resilience, stability, and academic excellence in Nigerian institutions.

Keywords: Insecurity, Guidance and Counselling, Mental Health, Academic Performance, Student Well-being.

Introduction

Nigeria, a Nation endowed with vast resources and a diverse population, faces series of challenges that threatens its social and economic stability. Insecurity in Nigeria negatively impacts school administration, leading to loss of manpower, poor quality of education, and reduced private investment in education. Jacob, O., Ndubuisi, A., & Constance, O. (2021). Insecurity negatively impacts Nigerians' right to health, and only in an atmosphere of peace and security can this right be fully realized. Egbue, N., & Nwankwo, I. (2014). These challenges, indeed has emerged as a critical issue, affecting every facet of our country Nigeria, from education and healthcare to an unstable economy. The surge in criminal activities, including terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence, has left an ugly mark on the collective psyche of Nigerians, leading to a terrible atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. In such situation, the role of educational institutions as agents of social change and stability becomes very important. Education in Nigeria has overtime rooted its focus on academic excellence and the development of professional skills, often neglecting the emotional and psychological well- being of students. However, in a country where insecurity looms large, there is need to change this approach. The ability to cope with stress, make ethical decisions, and build strong interpersonal relationships is as crucial as academic achievement, as Vestad, L., & Tharaldsen, K. (2021), in a study on Building Social and Emotional Competencies for Coping with Academic Stress among Students in Lower Secondary School states "Mindfulness, problem- solving, and growth mindset are supportive in coping with academic stress, while emotional regulation and relationship skills are considered more challenging". Therefore, the integration of Guidance and Counselling as a compulsory course across all disciplines in Nigerian educational institutions is not just a progressive educational reform; it is a strategic imperative. Professional guidance and counselling services are crucial for open and distance learning students in Nigeria, promoting good behaviour, improved academic performance, and creating a safe school, workplace, and family environment. Ahimie, B., Ikuburuju-Orola, A., & Oizimende, P. (2020). Guidance and counselling programs was established to support students in their personal, social, and academic development, equip individuals with the skills necessary to navigate life's challenges, and make necessary decisions.

Guidance and counselling in schools helps students develop their personalities, abilities, and values, leading to independent living and fulfilling developmental tasks. Dianovi, A., Siregar, D., Mawaddah, I., & Suryaningsih, S. (2022). In the context of rising insecurity, these programs is bound to make a greater significance. By fostering emotional resilience, ethical reasoning, and a sense of community, guidance and counselling can help mitigate the effects of insecurity and contribute to the overall stability of the nation.

The introducing guidance and counselling as a compulsory course at all levels, across all disciplines is very important in Nigeria today. Quite a percentage of the youths, in Nigeria, are seriously affected by insecurity and they are the most critical, to the country's future. Therefore, as students progress through their educational journey, with the pressures and challenges, they tend to have some level of strain, and that impacts negatively on their mental health and well-being. Without adequate and proper support systems in place, these pressures can lead to serious outcomes, including academic underperformance, mental health issues, and even result in criminal activities.

Integrating guidance and counselling into school curricula directly addresses the psychological impacts of rising national insecurity, such as terrorism, communal violence, and kidnapping. Students in regions affected by insecurity often experience elevated levels of anxiety, fear, and trauma, which can severely hinder their ability to focus on their studies and engage in school activities. By providing access to trained counsellors, schools can offer a safe space where students process these traumatic experiences, receive coping strategies, and develop emotional resilience. This support mitigates mental health issues that would otherwise impair academic performance, reduce social engagement, and weaken the school community's overall morale.

Nigeria is currently struggling with a significant rise in insecurity, such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence. This escalating insecurity has disrupted educational processes, increased among the students, psychological stress, and instilled a deep sense of fear and instability within communities. The need for emotional resilience, ethical decision-making, and community cohesion, has been ignored as the current educational curriculum in Nigeria remains primarily focused on academic and professional skills, thereby neglecting the all -inclusive development of students.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to address this gap by introducing guidance and counselling as a compulsory course in every discipline within Nigerian educational institutions. This integration is very essential not only for enhancing the emotional and psychological well-being of students but also for ensuring the ethical and social competencies necessary to contribute positively to a more secure and cohesive society. The introduction of guidance and counselling as a necessary part of the curriculum remains a strategic opportunity to reduce the effects of rising insecurity and to support the holistic development of Nigeria's future leaders.

This study will identify the existing gaps in the Nigerian educational system, particularly concerning the lack of prominence on students' psychological and emotional well- being, and how these gaps make worse the effects of insecurity on students and society. This study will develop an outline for the effective integration of guidance and counselling into the curricula of all disciplines, ensuring that these programs are

programmed to meet the specific needs of students across diverse fields of study. It will also look at the potential benefits attached to it such as improved mental health, better academic performance, reduced vulnerability to insecurity, and the development of a more cohesive and ethically grounded society.

Literature Review

Dianovi, A., Siregar, D., Mawaddah, I., & Suryaningsih, S. (2022) highlighted in a study on Guidance and Counselling in Education, that Guidance and Counselling in education helps students develop physically and spiritually, enabling them to live independently and fulfill their developmental tasks. The Guidance and Counselling in schools is a structured agenda designed to support the development of students. This agenda focuses on helping students navigate academic, personal, social, and career challenges by providing tailored interventions that promote their overall well-being. Its primary components include Preventive, (which are proactive interventions aimed at addressing potential issues before they escalate. These services include programs that educate students about coping strategies education, stress management education, conflict resolution, and ethical decision-making), developmental, (which are services that focuses on the continuous growth and development of students throughout their educational journey, and designed to assist students in achieving their full potential by supporting their academic, personal, social, and career development), and responsive **services**, (that is services address immediate and urgent student needs, particularly those that arise from unexpected or challenging situations. For example, crisis-oriented and direct intervention to aid students cope with day-to-day issues that may impact their academic performance or personal well-being).

Dianovi, Siregar, Mawaddah & Suryaningsih (2022), in their study on Guidance and Counselling in Education, stated that Guidance and counselling in schools contribute to the development of students' personalities and abilities, enhancing their ability to live independently and fulfill developmental tasks as individuals and social, moral, religious, and cultural beings. Sitinjak, C., & Canu, Z. (2023) on the importance of guidance and counselling in effective school learning. *Jurnal ilmiah global education*, submitted that Guidance and counselling are essential for a child's future success in school, building their confidence and assisting them in learning both inside and outside of school.

Sinal, (2023). In an investigation on How Students of Educational Counselling Perceive the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Enhancing their Motivation and Engagement at school?, concluded that Guidance and counselling programs in schools play a significant role in boosting students' motivation and engagement, promoting future success.

Suleiman, Olanrewaju, & Suleiman (2019), in their study on how to Improve Guidance and Counselling Services for Effective Service Delivery in Nigerian Secondary Schools, emphasised on the importance of Guidance services in Nigerian schools being integrated into the primary school curriculum and taught as a class subject, with administration providing critical leadership and a conducive work environment. Raji (2019), while investigating Issues around vocational and career counselling in Nigeria mentioned that the undergraduate syllabuses in career counselling at the University of Ibadan are somewhat inadequate, affecting the practice of career counselling in secondary schools.

As students study through their university years, they encounter a variety of experiences that can influence their personal and academic lives. The shift from secondary school to university can be particularly intimidating, with increased independence, academic pressures, and social dynamics. By strengthening guidance and counselling education throughout their academic journey, institutions can provide students with the necessary tools and support they need to navigate these challenges successfully.

In recent years, Nigeria has faced numerous security challenges, including insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence. These crises not only threaten the safety of citizens but also significantly impact the mental well-being and academic pursuits of university students. It is on this note, the integration of guidance and counselling as a yearly study course in universities emerges as a vital tool to empower students to navigate the difficulties and complications of this challenging domain. The level of Insecurity in the country today has created an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear, especially among young people. University students, who are in a critical phase of their personal and intellectual development, often find themselves struggling with anxiety, severe depression, and stress as a result of the prevailing insecurity. This situation not only affects their academic performance but also their social interactions and overall mental health.

Guidance and counselling program, when properly structured, provides a platform for students to express their fears and concerns. Regular sessions can help students develop coping strategies and emotional regulation, to deal with anxiety and stress, fostering resilience in the face of adversity. Guidance and counselling in the school curriculum will equip students with conflict resolution and negotiation skills. Vested with the knowledge of handling disputes amicably, students can contribute to peacebuilding efforts within their communities, promoting a culture of dialogue and understanding.

Insecurity, marked by threats such as terrorism, armed robbery, kidnapping, and communal violence, has become a serious issue in Nigeria today. This atmosphere of fear and uncertainty significantly impacts students at various levels of education,

influencing their psychological well-being, academic performance, and overall development. Insecurity in Nigeria negatively impacts school administration, leading to loss of manpower, poor quality of education, and reduced private investment in education. Jacob, O., Ahaotu, G., & Obi- Ezenekwe, U. (2021). Students experience or suspect constant threats often experience heightened levels of anxiety and fear. This often leads to chronic stress, sleep disturbances, and a general sense of helplessness, all of which negatively affect their mental health.

Insecurity in Nigeria has negatively impacted the future of education, with the vulnerability of schools and students being a soft target for attacks. Okwelum, C. (2022). A study by Miya, Y., Sarkingobir, Y., Hiliya, A., Sidi, A., & Bello, Z. (2023), on Absenteeism of Some Students in Secondary School in Sokoto East, Nigeria, confirmed that Insecurity (17.7%) is a reason behind students absenteeism in Sokoto East, Nigeria, leading to poor education and academic performance. The stress and anxiety resulting from insecurity can impair students' ability to concentrate on their studies and could lead to increased absenteeism, as students may skip school to avoid potential dangers. This absenteeism can result in gaps in learning, lowering overall academic achievement of this students. Moreso, schools may be closed temporarily or permanently, for insecurity reasons, disrupting the academic calendar and affecting students' ability to complete their education on the stipulated time.

A study by Ojukwu, M. (2017) on Effect of Insecurity of School Environment on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Imo State revealed that Insecurity of school environment significantly affects the academic performance of secondary school students, leading to gangsterism, smoking, and other violent activities. Therefore, exposure to violence and insecurity can lead to an increase in aggressive behaviours among students, as they may mimic the violence they observe or experience. Other peers may withdraw socially due to fear or trauma, leading to isolation and low participation in school activities. And a situation where students may be recruited into violent groups or engage in criminal activities as a means of coping or survival must also be mention in this study.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding the interconnections between mental health, resilience, and academic performance requires exploring various psychological and educational theories. These theories provide a framework for comprehending how mental health influences students' ability to cope with challenges (resilience) and how both factors contribute to their academic success.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a model where basic needs like physiological requirements and safety must be satisfied before higher-level needs like self- fulfillment are pursued. Carducci, B. (2020). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (By Abraham Maslow 1943) is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs. The tiers are often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self- actualization.

This theory can be implemented as a solution to overcome academic procrastination behaviour among students by fulfilling physiological, security, feelings of love, respect, and self-actualization. Muhibbin, M., & Marfuatun, M. (2020). Moreso, Freitas, F., & Leonard, L. (2011), in a study on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and student academic success, submitted that Students identified "physiological" and "psychosocial" needs as important factors contributing to their academic success in Nigeria. Therefore, students who achieve higher levels of the hierarchy, particularly esteem and self-actualization, are more likely to perform excellently well academically and that success, is often a reflection of a student reaching the self-actualization stage, where they are motivated to reach their full potential.

Methodology

The Research Design utilized a mixed-methods research design that combined both quantitative and qualitative approach. This provided a comprehensive understanding of the current needs, perceptions, and potential impact of introducing guidance and counselling as a compulsory course. A stratified random sampling method to select participants from various levels and disciplines across different Nigerian institutions (universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education) was applied. Out of a total of 400 questionnaire distributed across selected Nigerian Universities, only 480 were retrieved. Students, faculty members, institutional administrators, educational policymakers, counsellors, and security personnel were included to ensure broad representation. Data Collection had designed structured questionnaires targeting students, faculty, and administrators to collect quantitative data on their perceptions, attitudes, and potential benefits of introducing a compulsory course in guidance and counselling with an in-depth, semi- structured interviews with key stakeholders, such as education ministry officials, school counsellors, security experts, and educational leaders, to gather qualitative data on feasibility, challenges, and strategic approaches for implementation. Organization of focus groups discussion with students and faculty that discussed the perceived impact of such a course on reducing insecurity and promoting student well-being. Relevant documents, policies, and existing curricula from Nigerian institutions to understand current practices and identify gaps in guidance and counselling services were reviewed.

SSPS statistical software was used to analyze survey and questionnaire data. Perform descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode) and inferential statistics (t-tests, chi-square tests) to identify patterns, trends, and correlations. Thematic analysis was employed to code and categorize data from interviews and focus group discussions. Identify key themes, recurring issues, and stakeholder perspectives on the introduction of a compulsory guidance and counselling course. Pilot Study was conducted in selected institutions to test the feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of the proposed compulsory course. Feedback to refine the course content, teaching methods, and implementation strategies.

An implementation framework was developed based on research findings, outlining the steps, resources, and timelines required to introduce the guidance and counselling course across all levels and disciplines. Policy recommendations, proposed for institutional adoption, including training requirements for faculty, integration strategies into existing curricula, and continuous assessment and feedback mechanisms.

Results

The results section provides a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies. The findings are presented in three key areas: psychological impact of insecurity on students, effectiveness of guidance and counselling programs, and the relationship between these programs and academic performance.

Table 1: Psychological Effects of Insecurity on Students

Psychological Effects	Percentage of Students Affected (%)
High Levels of Anxiety	75%
Depression (Mild to Moderate)	60%
Severe Depression	20%
PTSD Symptoms	30%

Source: Fieldwork, 2024.

The table above shows the respondents responses on the effects of insecurity on students. 75% of students reported experiencing high levels of anxiety due to insecurity. 60% of students exhibited symptoms of mild to moderate depression, and 20% showed severe depression. 30% of students displayed symptoms of PTSD, especially in regions with recent violent incidents.

Table 2: Impact of Guidance and Counselling Programs on Mental Health

Measure	Before Counselling (Mean Score)	After Counselling (Mean Score)	Percentage Change (%)
Anxiety Levels (Scale: 1-10)	8.5	5.1	-40%
Depression Levels (Scale: 1-10)	7.2	4.7	-35%
PTSD Symptom Severity(Scale:1-10)	6.8	3.4	-50%

Source: Fieldwork, 2024.

The table above shows the respondents responses on the Impact of Guidance and Counselling Programs on Mental Health. Counselling led to a 40% reduction in anxiety levels among students. There was a 35% improvement in depression levels, with students reporting fewer depressive symptoms. PTSD symptoms showed a 50% reduction, demonstrating the effectiveness of trauma-focused counselling interventions.

Table 3: Academic Performance and Attendance Before and After Counselling

Indicator	Before Counselling	After Counselling	Percentage Improvement (%)
Average Academic Performance (GPA)	2.5	3.1	+25%
Absenteeism Rate (% of Total Days)	20%	14%	-30%
Academic Motivation Score (Scale: 1-10)	5.5	7.1	+29%

Source: Fieldwork, 2024.

According to the table above, the average academic performance improved by 25% following the introduction of guidance and counselling. The absenteeism rate dropped by 30%, indicating that students felt safer and more supported in attending school regularly. Academic motivation scores increased by 29%, reflecting enhanced interest and engagement in school activities.

Table 4: Summary of Qualitative Themes from Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Theme	Frequency of Mention (%)	Representative Quotes
Emotional Support and Coping Strategies	85%	"Counseling sessions help me talk about my fears and feel less anxious."
Improved Resilience and Optimism	70%	"I feel more confident facing challenges after attending counseling."
Reduction in Trauma and PTSD Symptoms	60%	"Counseling helped me confront my past trauma, and now I sleep better."
Academic Focus and Motivation	75%	"With counseling, I learned to set goals and manage my time better."

Source: Fieldwork, 2024.

Based on the table above, emotional support and coping strategies were the most frequently mentioned benefits of counselling, with 85% of participants highlighting its importance. 70% of participants noted improved resilience and optimism as a result of counseling. Reductions in trauma and PTSD symptoms were significant, with 60% of participants mentioning these benefits. 75% of participants indicated enhanced academic focus and motivation due to the counselling sessions.

Conclusion

Integrating guidance and counselling as a compulsory course in all educational disciplines proves to be an effective strategy for enhancing students' psychological well-being, resilience, and academic success in the face of insecurity. These findings provide strong evidence for educational policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders to implement comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in Nigerian schools to support students in overcoming the challenges of their environment.

Recommendation

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

i. The findings highlight significant improvements in mental health and academic performance among students who participated in counseling programs. Therefore, educational institutions should introduce guidance and counseling as a compulsory course in all academic programs to ensure students receive consistent support throughout their studies.
ii. To achieve emotional resilience and mental health support among students, institutions should invest in specialized training for counselors, particularly in trauma- related counseling, to address the psychological effects of insecurity such as PTSD, anxiety, and depression.
iii. Alongside regular counseling sessions, institutions should embed mental health awareness, coping strategies, and resilience-building modules into the general curriculum. This will help students develop critical skills to manage stress, navigate interpersonal challenges, and thrive in academic settings.
iv. Educational institutions should ensure that counseling services are accessible to all students, regardless of their location or mode of study (e.g., open and distance learning). Virtual counseling services can be expanded to reach students who may not have regular physical access to campus facilities.
v. To ensure continuous improvement, institutions should implement mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the impact of guidance and counseling programs. Regular feedback from students and staff, combined with data on academic performance, absenteeism, and mental health, can be used to refine and enhance the services provided.

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DEMOCRACY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A NEW STRATEGIC APPROACH

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Abstract

The paper examines the relationship between democracy and rural development in Nigeria. It is an attempt to see how far the civilian democratic government since 1999 when the Fourth Republic came into being has taken due cognizance of the plight of the majority of citizens who resides in the rural areas by way of provision of good things of life such as potable water supply, good roads, good schools, regular electricity, and efficient health care delivery system, among others. The provision of these social amenities will go a long way in enhancing the living standard of rural dwellers. It is the position of the paper that democracy as a form government, derives its power and authority from the people, and should put in place appropriate policies and programmes in the interest of the people, especially the rural inhabitants. It is the expectation of the rural inhabitants that the civilian democratic governance will address the inadequacies of the past military administrations in Nigeria and pay particular attention to the development of the rural sector where majority are engaged in subsistence farming. The paper relied heavily on secondary data and review of relevant literature to obtain information on the topical issues therein. The findings revealed that, so far, not much has been achieved in terms of provision of social amenities which has continued to elude the rural dwellers. In addition, it is revealed that most of the previous rural development efforts failed because of the elitist top-down policy and planning approach adopted. In order to correct this anomaly, it is recommended that the civilian democratic government should adopt a new strategic approach in the design and implementation of rural development programmes in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

Keywords: Democracy, Good Governance, Rural Development, Integrated Rural Development, Top- down and Bottom-up Approaches.

Introduction

The study seeks to examine the nexus between democracy and rural development with particular emphasis on Nigeria and from the perspective of a new strategic thinking. It is acknowledged world- wide that democracy is a form of government that every state within the international system is clamouring to install or to enjoy because of the obvious advantages accruing from adhering to its avowed tenets or principles. This is more so in Nigeria which experienced almost three decades of military rule during which democracy was kept at bay and the people were denied the dividends of democracy. On the other hand, the concept of rural development has continued to receive the attention of scholars, political leaders, international organizations, and other stakeholders. This is attributed to several factors especially in Nigeria where majority of the people live in rural areas, and derive their daily livelihood as rural dwellers, among others. It is therefore natural that what goes on in the rural areas should be of interest to both the government and all the relevant stakeholders especially in a democratic civilian dispensation.

Nigerians see democracy as the beacon of hope especially after experiencing long period of military interregnum. It was a big sigh of relief when, in 1999, the Fourth Republic under a democratically elected civilian administration was ushered in. It was indeed a moment of hope, hope that the new form of government would in all ramifications take care of their interests. In particular, for those who are concerned more with the plight of the rural dwellers, it was a moment of joy that the civilian administration would now pay the needed attention to the transformation of rural communities with a view to raising their living standard.

The rural inhabitants were confident that the civilian democratic government would be committed to fulfil its electioneering campaign promises about providing social amenities if elected into the various elective offices as contained in their respective party manifestoes. And as noted during the 2024 Nigeria's celebration of Democracy Day, rather than celebrating democracy, the country should be celebrating 25 years of civil rule, because there is a world of difference between the two. As observed by Bolaji Akinyemi (2024), democratic governance should be more concerned with the provision of social infrastructure and/or welfare of the people to enhance their living standard. Akinyemi argued that this goal is yet to be achieved leaving many Nigerians increasingly getting disenchanted with the whole idea about democracy and democratic governance.

Nigeria returned to the civilian democratic governance in May 1999 after almost three decades of military rule. The first military coup occurred on the 15th January, 1966, which brought to an end the First Republic that lasted only for six years. As earlier

noted, military rule is an aberration because it truncated democracy which was a manifestation of abuse of peoples' right to freely elect a government of their choice, a government that the people can hold accountable. In this case, the people are yearning for a government that guarantees inclusivity and effective participation in governmental activities which will allow them to be part of the decision-making process. And as asserted by Habib (2018:209), "the period of over thirty years of military rule was observed to be a period of sheer political misfit, bad leadership, bad governance and aberration to good governance".

Some Conceptual Considerations and Literature Review Democracy

Chakravarty (1950:147) contends that democracy is a form of government in which the people exercise an indirect control over the government through their representatives. Chakravarty cited Abraham Lincoln who defines democracy "as a government of the people, for the people and by the people" and noted that in a democratic state, the ultimate power lies with the people who have the right to participate in the governance process. Chakravarty went further to assert that in democracy, those entrusted with the affairs of the state must develop a sense of responsibility and exercise power and authority in the interest of those who elect them.

Appadorai also see democracy as the system of government that gives premium to the supremacy of the popular will regarding policies and programmes of government as well as upholding the right of citizens in the state to freely and actively participate in decision-making process especially on matters that affects them. Appadorai went further to underscore the importance of "proper organization and leadership" as essential indices to the success of democracy which he sees as a form of government that recognizes its duties and responsibilities to the people and at the same time appreciates the rights of the people. The Nigerian rural dwellers therefore have every reason to expect positive changes from the civilian government as a matter of right, changes that will spur them to higher living standard. Among other things, this will lead to the attainment of good governance as observed by Oransaye (2018:249) and uphold the much-cherished fundamental values or indices such as accountability, participation, rule of law, responsibility, justice equity, and fairness. And as asserted by Elaigwu (2011:175), the concern of good governance should be how the state use the instrumentality of power at its disposal to, among other things, provide welfare for the citizens.

Rural Development

Scholars have never been in doubt as to the multidimensional and multi-sectoral nature of rural development which explains why there is no single universally accepted definition

of the concept (Raheem and Bako; 2014:579). One of the reasons is that there are differences in the levels of development between nations and even between societies and/or regions within the same nation thus prompting different scholars to use different parameters, approaches and perspectives to define rural development. This notwithstanding, the paper will examine some definitions of rural development in order to drive home the nexus between it and democracy and good governance.

Hunter (1964:82), sees rural development as a starting point of development characterized by subsistence living. Ogeidefa (2010) looked at rural development from the perspective of creating and widening of opportunities for rural individuals to realize their full potential through education and share in decision action which affects their lives. On the other hand, Idachaba citing Ndangara (2005) asserted that rural development efforts must be derived from the "needs and aspirations of the rural people---". Idachaba further asserted that rural development entails programme of actions targeted at increasing the efficiency of the rural population with steady power supply for enhanced standard of living and productivity, education and environmental sanitation. On its part, the World Bank (1975) sees rural development "as a strategy to improve the economic and social life of specific group of people – the rural poor."

In addition, Reddy and Devi underscore the comprehensive nature of rural development planning and implementation as it defined their common needs and mobilize local resources to meet those needs. Rural development should therefore be seen as "a unified problem-solving approach" aimed at changing the socio-economic status of the rural people. There is also a sense in which rural development is equated with community development which underlines its multi- dimensional nature as it involves areas such as agriculture, health, education, provision of rural infrastructures, enhancement of social and political processes including the integration of the rural economy with the national economy (Egbe, 2014:20). This is important because of the obvious fact the rural economy is the pivot upon which a sound and virile national economy is built. The import of Egbe's view lie in the fact that, world- wide, there is a paradigm shift from just focusing on rural development to integrated rural development which involves a comprehensive and holistic approach to rural transformation. This view was corroborated by Egbe (2014) who cited Aziz (1999) who observed that rural development should now be seen as a holistic concept because its variables are inter-related and inter-connected. And that the variables jointly and severally influence the quality of lives of the rural inhabitants.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the theory of humane governance as developed by Richard Falk in 2008. Globally, there is a paradigm shift to humane governance aimed at promoting

human development against the backdrop of democratic governance which enhances the development of the democratic process within the political system (Swani, 2019:108). This democratic process encourages participation of all the people who have a say or voice in governance. It is a governance system that is not concerned only about economic growth and efficiency but focuses on the overall development of the people based on the principles of equity and social justice. According to this theory, the definition of the concept of democracy will only have meaning if governance in all its ramifications is people-oriented with a focus on human rights and human security. It is about governance that will swiftly take steps to address the challenges facing the people especially in the areas of welfare services and the provision of their basic needs. The theoretical underpinning of humane governance took its roots from the philosophical teachings of the moral ideals of Confucian that "to govern is to correct (Zheng Zhe, Zheng ye) which literally means "if you set an example of being correct, who would dare to remain incorrect".

By way of elucidating, it means that governance should aim at correcting whatever it is that is not done properly in the conduct of state affairs which enables leaders to make better decisions or policies in the interest of the generality of the people. Humane governance abhors injustice and corruption which breeds social disorder and underscores the need for "worthy and wise leadership because such leaders are able to uphold the basic principles of democracy such as, integrity, transparency, responsibility, accountability, observance of rule of law, conduct of free, fair and credible periodic elections, inclusive participation, among others. In many ways, the theory is similar to the concepts of "democratic governance" and "good governance" anchored on peoples' participation and allowing the people "a real political voice".

According to Ahn *(2015),* humane governance is based on the principles of "inclusiveness and subsidiarity" and that the people who are directly or indirectly affected by public policies and decisions should be part of the decision-making process. Ahn contends that this can be achieved through the peoples elected representatives. Ahn also cited Held (2010) who contends that the people should participate in the decision-making process since they are affected by such decisions and policies as beneficiaries. This view further supports the ideas of Habermas (2000) on "ethics and deliberative democracy". Ahn noted that humane democracy enhances higher human ideals and values and brings out the potentials of individuals who make up the polity, and observed that there is similarity between humane democracy and good governance. This perspective is in tandem with Amartyn Sen's (2009) discourse on justice for all citizens and what they referred to as "threshold level of capabilities" to all citizens. These capabilities include but not limited to issues concerning the good things of life like health, education, and shelter, etc.

The application of the theory of humane governance has its root from the basic principles which emphasize democracy as one of the best forms of government. It is a form of government which is largely people-oriented, a government that is supposedly expected to uphold the virtues of good governance in terms of transparency, accountability, observance of rule of law, and inclusive participation. In addition, the people should only be part of the decision-making process but also be part and parcel of the implementation process in line with the bottom-up approach. This represents a new paradigm shift which is in contrast with the traditional top-down approach of government policies and programmes that has, over the years, proved unworkable and not in the best interest of the rural inhabitants.

New Strategic Approach to Rural Development-A Paradigm Shift

The analysis so far indicates that there is a close link between rural development and Nigeria's socio-economic political goals. The foundation for building a strong, peaceful, united and prosperous country in line with the provisions of Chapter 2, Articles 14(1) and (2) of the Nigerian Constitution of 1999 as amended must be anchored on the framework of the development of the rural sector. The position of this paper is that Nigeria, as developing nation, is facing the challenges of development in the 21st Century. One of these challenges is how to transform the rural environment and ensure the integration of the rural economy with that of the larger national economy.

These strategies and programmes have been put in place to transform the rural sector of the nation's economy and to raise the standard of living of the rural majority. From available records, the various rural development projects had gulped huge chunk of the nation's financial resources but with little or no result to justify the amount expended. It is unfortunate that most of these rural development projects were short-lived, with varying degrees of successes; while most of them could not be sustained due to lack of political will and lack of involvement of the targeted population. It is on record that most of these programmes further worsened the living conditions of many Nigerians especially the rural majority. A few examples of these rural development programmes include the Structural Adjustment Programme (1986), Agricultural Development Programme (1975), The Green Revolution (1979), Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP,2001), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS,2004), 7-Point Agenda (2011), and Local Government Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (2005), and Comprehensive Local Agric Plan (C-LAP,2017.), among many others.

It is, therefore, pertinent to advocate for a re-visit to the policy of integrated rural development as a new strategic approach that will address all identified gaps in the attempt to transform the rural sector of the nation's economy. As earlier mentioned, the

new integrated approach should emphasize a system of rural transformation as recommended by the United Nations (1976&1998). This will require a holistic and comprehensive strategic planning of all areas that touches on the lives of the rural populace including agriculture, education, health, housing and entrepreneurship and/ or acquisition of skills training.

The new integrated rural development approach is strategic in conception and implementation as it will promote rural productivity and comprehensively transform the rural communities. The new strategic approach should be designed to improve the social and economic lives of the people in the rural areas. The programme should focus on the livelihood of the rural people made up of subsistence and small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless. In addition, the new strategic approach should focus on poverty reduction which is critical to rural development programme to enhance income earning capacity of rural dwellers. This will eventually lead to the modernization and monetization of the rural society and/or economy which will ultimately lead to transition from traditional isolation to integration with the national economy (World Bank, 1975).

It is important to reiterate the need for inclusive participation of the rural people in decision-making process and effective coordination of individual and group efforts geared towards full utilization of local talents and resources. The new strategic approach is what Chambers (1983:2014) referred to as the "bottom-up approach" to rural development which entails decentralization of power to local communities and all members of the rural dwellers, male and female, young and old. This is a major paradigm shift in rural development approach which focuses on improving the quality of life of the rural people, eradication of rural poverty and provision of basic services. The bottom-up approach is different from the usual top- down approach of government policies and programmes which have so far failed to transform the rural communities.

The theoretical link between Democracy and Rural Development

There is a positive and, indeed a strong relationship between democracy and rural development because one reinforces the other. The widening of the democratic space and the deepening of the democratic culture is largely based on the level of acceptability and adherence to the basic tenets of democracy including mass participation in the democratic process. And this in turn is enhanced by the way and manner policies and programmes of government impact on the people. As rightly observed by Hayatu et al (2019), there is a strong relationship between basic infrastructure and improved living condition of the rural inhabitants just as lack of them impact negatively on their lives which leads to increase poverty and declining income and poverty. The ultimate consequence of all these is that people especially, the rural inhabitants develop political

apathy leading to low participation in the political process which may impact negatively on the sustainability of democracy.

It should therefore be noted that good governance facilitates policies and programmes that will lead to the attainment of rural development goals thus establishing the strong nexus between the two variables. In the same vein, bad governance leads to underdevelopment and poverty, hunger and disease. As asserted by Tuya (2013), poverty is a threat to democracy because it deprives the people from effectively exercising their political rights. In addition, poverty serves as a barrier to holding the government accountable and responsive, and more importantly, erodes public trust in the democratic institutions. It is thus established that rural development cannot be separated from good governance which is sine qua non to the sustenance of democracy and this underscores the need to approach rural development and/or rural transformation in a holistic and integrated manner.

Conclusion

In view of the strategic importance of rural sector to the Nigerian economy, the development of the rural environment should be accorded special priority which underlines the need for a new strategic approach to rural development. The new integrated rural development strategy should be based on the theory of "mass participation. Rural Development has been subsumed either in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture or State Ministries of Agriculture where ironically emphasis is more on issues relating to agricultural development. Sufficient attention is, therefore, not paid to issues concerning rural development and/or rural transformation. On their part, local government councils should re-vitalize the Community Development Departments to make them more effective as a tool to facilitate the execution of peoples' self- help projects to complement government efforts.

Recommendations

1. In order to strengthen Nigeria's democracy and democratic governance, the government should, as a matter of priority, design policies and programmes aimed at transforming the rural communities to enhance the living standard of the people
2. Government should adopt a new approach of integrated rural development strategy to comprehensively address the challenges of transforming the nation's rural environment with a view to effectively integrating the rural economy to the national economy to achieve sustainable development

3. All tiers of government in Nigeria should adopt a bottom-up approach as against the top-down approach as a strategy to transform the rural environment; this new approach should emphasize on rural peoples' participation in decision-making and implementation on matters that affect their lives
4. As part of the new paradigm shift in rural development planning strategy, government should, as a matter of deliberate policy, shift emphasis by allocating more resources to the development of the rural sector of the national economy as against the present arrangement which accords priority to urban centres leading to urban bias in project citing and implementation
5. The National Assembly and State Assemblies should, as a matter of urgency and national importance, enact a legislation making it mandatory for the establishment of a functional and fully funded Federal and State Ministries of Rural and Community Development with the sole goal of transforming the nation's rural communities.

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MANAGEMENT OF INTERGROUP CONFLICT IN IGBOLAND: A STUDY OF AGULERI AND UMULERI DISPUTE ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines the place of decolonization of peace education and management of intergroup conflict in Igboland with focus on the Aguleri and Umuleri dispute. Both communities were engulfed in intractable conflicts over the ownership of Otuocha land and in the reconstruction of their history with each claiming to be the direct descendant of Eri. The paper basically draws from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are derived from oral interviews, while the secondary sources are mainly obtained from books and journal articles. The study finds that the dispute led to the loss of lives and property, destruction of the economic base of the belligerent communities. Though the dispute may seem to have ceased, the issues at stake remain unresolved. The paper concludes that African value systems and institutions of conflict resolution remain relevant and important towards promoting peace and harmony on the continent. This paper recommends an adoption of methods outside the criminal justice system, such as Oath taking, use of respectable Elders (Umunna), Age grades, Youth organizations, influential community leaders, Women groups (Umuada), as an essential conflict resolution model (between Aguleri and Umueri) can help in resolving difficult conflicts.

Keywords*:* Peace Education, Management of Intergroup Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Aguleri and Umuleri Communities**.**

Introduction

Africa is home to over a thousand ethnic groups, speaking over one-thousand (1,000) languages. Yet, Africa seems to always be depicted as a single culture; meaning there is this common misconception about Africans sharing the same culture. Looking at this from a realist's viewpoint, over 1,000 different ethnic groups cannot possible be united under a single culture. However, the beauty of Africa is such that, there is a kind of common frame of culture which most groups share. This commonality can be found in our concepts of kingship (where kings oversee societies/towns); our mode of farming; our family structure; our use of rhythm in music; functions of dancing and mask wearing; our adherence to values (social, moral, religious, etc.) and norms, etc are the some of the common grounds most African cultures share.

The process was, however, more than drawing borderlines. It was carried out in such a way that guaranteed identification of the limits of each political unit. Thus, any group of communities or people who proved disloyal or opposed to the boundary adjustment, were dealt with and traditional rulers such as the *Olugbo* of Ugbo, *Nana* of Itsekiri and *Jaja* of Opobo, who failed to recognise the artificial boundary created by the colonial government, were summarily dismissed (Mustapha, 1998). At independence, Nigeria inherited series of ethnic conflicts. As a result of the multi-ethnic nature of the country, ethnic cleavages remain a critical problem and they alarmingly erupt. Within the past four decades, Nigeria had experienced dangerous scares of incessant dysfunctional conflicts, which occurred between communities, ethnic groups and religious groups. It is noteworthy that these conflicts were not confined to any specific geo-political region of the country. The situation had become extremely worrisome even before the beginning of the new democratic dispensation (that is, Nigeria's Fourth Republic inaugurated on May 29, 1999).

In fact, Nigeria has witnessed the outbreak of several violent communal or ethnic conflicts both in the past and even in the present. Some have been resolved, while some old ones have gained additional potency (Albert, 2001). Human societies at various stages of their development have been characterized by diverse forms of conflicts. Conflicts in its many forms are therefore an omnipresent fact of human existence. As Hill rightly states, 'like the poor, conflict is something we will always have with us'. Conflict is also interactional. According to Ukpabi (2019).

It would appear that as soon as various groups settled in a given area, competitions might arise between them over land, water resources, trade and the possession of strategic locations. In the ensuing struggle, armed conflict could not be excluded (Ukpabi, 2019).

Traditional and contemporary societies of South-Eastern Nigeria have been characterized by conflicts of diverse forms. These conflicts occasionally take the form of wars especially inter-communal wars. Since conflict often includes dysfunctional and destructive components, men have explored numerous methods for its management. Consequently, the people of South-Eastern Nigeria have developed traditional methods of conflict management which date back to pre-colonial times. However, with colonialism, modern methods and institutions for conflict management such as the court, police, etc were introduced. Despite the popularity of these modem institutions and methods of conflict management, there are instances when parties to a conflict have withdrawn.

Land being a major factor of production has been at the centre of most conflicts in Nigeria. Aguleri and Umueri are two-sister communities co-habiting within themselves, in the eastern bank of the Omambala River, in Anambra East Local Government Area of Anambra State, without a clear delineation of boundary; fighting over rightful ownership of Otuocha land. Although it appears that both communities share the same descent, but the indigene- settler' syndrome tend to distort the fraternal relationship. This led to the distortion in the reconstruction of their history, as Umuleri community changed their name to Umueri, to substantiate their claim of being the direct descent of Eri, their acclaimed progenitor.

Aguleri and Umueri communities have been engulfed in conflicts which took the form of legal tussles, and physical conflicts over Otuocha land since 1933. Even though the conflict of 1933, and other succeeding conflicts, witnessed the use of crude weapons like sticks, cutlasses, and cudgels, with minimal casualty, it contributed in widening the gap between these sister communities. Pockets of conflicts were intermittently recorded until 1999, when the situation degenerated into a full-blown war. Sophisticated weapons were arbitrarily used in these wars, which led to the death of many people, as well as the destruction of property worth hundreds of millions of naira. From the above mentioned discuss, there therefore, the need to continuously interrogate the conflict with a view to understand it's dynamics and proffer better way of managing the homogeneous conflict for peaceful coexistence.

Geography of the Aguleri and Umueri

Aguleri is a community in Anambra-East Local Government Area of Anambra State. It is located on both sides of the Anambra (Omambala) River. On the East, Aguleri is bounded by Umueje, Ifite-Ogwari, Igbakwu and Anaku all in Ayamelum Local Government Area of Anambra State, by Nando in Anambra-East Local Government Area and Nteje in Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra State. On the West, it is bounded by the Ezichi River (also known as Oda River)which separates Aguleri from

Anam settlement. On the North, Aguleri is bounded by Ogurugu and Igga respectively in Enugu State. On the North-West, it is bounded by Echonwa and Obalein Kogi State. On the South, it is bounded by Umueri in Anambra – East Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Umueri is located at the bank of Anambra (Omambala) River. It is bounded on the East by Nteje in Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra State. On the West, Umueri is bounded by the Anambra (Omambala) River. It is bounded by Aguleri on the North and Nsugbe on the South. Depending on where the visitor is coming from, Aguleri and Umueri are fairly easy to locate. A visitor coming from western part of the country will stop at Upper Iweka, Onitsha and pick a bike from there to the Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity, Onitsha. Buses going to Otuocha are stationed in front of the Basilica and it is a thirty minutes' drive from there to Otuocha. Although both communities occupy Otuocha, you will get to Umueri and Aguleri before Otuocha. A visitor from Awka or Enugu, on the other hand, will stop at Awkuzu Junction and board a bus from that Junction to Otuocha. It is about twenty minutes' drive from there to Otuocha.

Historical Background

Otuocha is a town and Headquarters of Anambra East Local Government Area of Anambra State. It was previously a divisional headquarters of Anambra Divisional Council during the 1st Republic and also the old Local Government Headquarters of Old Anambra Local Government Area that was broken to create the following four prevalent local governments: Anambra East, Anambra West, Oyi and Ayamelum LGAs. It has a large population as many people from different ethnic groups in Nigeria dwell in the land. These people include not only the original Igbo natives of Aguleri and Umueri but others from other parts of Igbo land including the Igala, Hausa, Ijaw, Yoruba, and others.

Aguleri-Umueri communal conflicts are one of the numerous cases of conflicts which have spread across the millenia. The conflicts lend credence to Igwe's analysis of conflict as a universal and permanent attribute of nature, life and society. In Aguleri and Umueri, the drums of war have beaten across generations even more so than those of peace initiatives and peace building. At the heart of Aguleri-Umueri conflicts is Otuocha land. *Otu* means *beach or waterside* in the dialect of the riverine communities in the Anambra River basin. When Aguleri community leased a portion of land on the beach of Anambra (Omambala) River to Royal Niger Company Chartered and Limited in 1891, they called that land, *Otu ndi Ocha* meaning *beach occupied by the White Men*. Given their penchant for shortening names, *Otu ndi Ocha* soon became Otuocha. In 1898, Umueri sold the first portion of Otuocha land to the Royal Niger Company, Chartered and Limited. However, it must be mentioned that both the lease of land by

Aguleri and the sale of land by the Umueri to the Royal Niger Company was a typical colonial government affair. They saw a land perfect for the location of their company, made inquiries about the owners and got it on their own terms.

The Major people living in the town of Otuocha are the Aguleri and Umueri people. Whereas, the Aguleri dwell mostly in the northern part of the town, Umueri are found mostly in the southern part of the town, along the tarred road leading from Oye-Agu Abagana to Otuocha market. Another groups found in the town are the Umuoba Anam who co-habits the central part of the town along with the two hosts. There are other groups from other part of Igboland living as tenants and residents in the town and these include the Hausa, Ijaw, Igala and Yoruba communities.

The Nature and Sources of Conflict in Aguleri and Umueri Communities

The crux of problems that militate the growth of this town lies in the age-long land disputes over Otuocha land which has led to lots of violence and animosities between the two hosts, Aguleri and Umueri communities. The question is which of the two communities first settled at the land and which of them has superior claim over the territory now called Otuocha? The case was first heard in 1933 when Umueri leaders sued Aguleri over the land but lost because they had earlier sold the land to Royal Niger Company Limited and therefore had been divested of the rights or title to the land according to the judgement then. The court held that Umueri has nothing left to justify the Court giving them declaration of title. Aguleri sensing the loss of case sued Umueri in 1935 but lost too on the ground that they too could not establish exclusive ownership of the land.

In 1964, an attempt by Anambra County Council to alter the name of Otuocha headquarters to "Otuocha Aguleri" led to another suit by Umueri Community and this was major reasons for the crisis of 1964 in which some people were killed and properties destroyed. The Nigeria Civil War interrupted the legal battles between the two sides as the case was suspended. After the war, the East Central State Government restored the name to Otuocha. In 1975, Aguleri again sued Umueri claiming exclusive ownership of Otuocha. They lost on the same ground as before. They appealed to the Court of Appeal who reversed the decision of the High Court. The Umueri Community appealed to Supreme Court which decided that neither community could claim exclusive ownership of Otuocha but the lead Judge Obaseki was unanimous on his judgment that "Otuocha was a vacant piece of land but it was the people of Umueri who first came into the land and have lived there for at least 100 years before the people of Aguleri infiltrated", Though he does not believe that it is the people of Umueri that allowed the Aguleri into the land.

Umuoba Anam, another major community in the town and who also was involved in the crisis of 1999, claimed to have migrated into the land in early years of last century precisely in 1900. According to one of the principal witnesses during the Supreme Court's case of 1984, he stated that on entering the land, they were received by the people of Umueri who collected some money, cows and many other items as an agreement to sell portions of Otuocha land to them. He went further to state that in 1910, the people of Aguleri invaded their land and attacked them but they engaged in peace settlement with Aguleri by purchasing the land too from Aguleri thereby paying the same price which they had earlier paid to the people of Umueri.

After 1984 Supreme Court of Nigeria judgment, there was a relative peace existing between the communities until in September 1995 when Aguleri community invaded the Umueri, killing, maiming and destroying properties belonging to the people of Umueri. From the reports of World Organisation Against Torture & Center for Law Enforcement Education, the crisis emanated in 1994 when Aguleri decided to establish a Motor Park/Market at a location on contested Agu Akor land and destroyed the Blessed Virgin Mary statue mounted on Our Lady of Victory Cathedral Otuocha belonging to the Umueri. They destroyed all the signposts bearing Umueri and left the ones bearing Aguleri. It was credibly rumoured that Aguleri had been planning to attack Umueri with the supports of the then local Government Chairman who was from Aguleri. Umueri petitioned and the then State Government who drafted Mobile policemen into Otuocha between December 1994 and April 1995. This action buried the plots and avoided the violence that would have ensued. Following the re- deployment of the anti-riot policemen out of Otuocha, members of Aguleri community attacked Umueri on 30 September – 3 October 1995, unleashing massive destruction of human lives and property.

In 1995, a Judiciary Panel of Inquiry was set up by the then Military Government of Anambra State to investigate the crisis and recommend solutions to avoid future occurrence. The report of the Judiciary Panel of Inquiry amongst many other things indicted the then Chairman of the Local Government (an Aguleri native) and the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) for involvement of taking sides in the conflict. It also recommended that State government rebuild many of the destroyed Public Buildings which including Umueri Technical College, Girls High School, Otuocha Postal Office, General Hospital Umueri, etc. The Government then declined to implement or accept the recommendations. In apparent retaliation for yet to be redressed violence of 1995, it was said that the Umueri youths launched attacked on Aguleri in April 1999. The reprisal attacks were said to be carried out because of rumour making round that Aguleri people who at then was engaging in funeral ceremonies of the indicted chairman (who died immediately at the end of 1995 crisis) "wanted seven human heads" to give the former local Government chairman a befitting burial. Another factor was Government

disinterestedness in the recommendations of the Panel, amongst many others.

Involvement of Umuoba Anam in 1999 Crisis

Umuoba Anam is third of the three Major communities that make up Otuocha. According to a book entitled "Anambra Day break " written By Idediora Nwabunwanne, they bought their settlement from Umueri in 1900 whereas report from World Organization Against Torture and Center for law Enforcement Education, the settlement was bought in 1898 from the Umueri Community but following incessant harassment from Aguleri, in 1910 they entered into another purchase agreement with Aguleri for the same settlement. The Umuoba Anam has always provided a safer zone between the Aguleris and Umueris in the spasmodic crisis between the two Communities. Umuoba Anam also sheltered the displaced people who fled to them for refuge during the attacks of 1995. The cause of their involvement in 1999 is not yet clear. It is alleged that they (Umuoba Anam) joined forces with Aguleri to attack Umueri. According to the Umueri source, Aguleri and Umuoba Anam, reached a pact that if Umuoba Anam joined them to chase Umueri out of the area, the Aguleri community would give Umuoba Anam more land to expand their settlement.

Infrastructure and Government/public Buildings

The basic infrastructure of the city was built at a time when the town was the headquarters of Anambra County Council and Old Anambra Local Government. Due to crisis and perceived Government Neglects, there is no much improvement in basic infrastructure. The followings are public infrastructures in Otuocha: The Local Government Secretariat, Divisional Police Head Office along the Otuocha-Oyeagu Road, the Aguleri Post office, Nipost Umueri, etc. There are many Schools in Otuocha which Includes: St. Joseph's Primary School, Ovuakwu Primary School, Ochei Primary School, amongst many others. There were also banks which includes First Bank of Nigeria PlC, Aguleri Community Bank, Umuoba Anam Community Bank and Umueri Community Bank.

Religion and places of worships

Though Otuocha just like any other town in Anambra enclave worships traditional African gods but with advent of Europeans and Christianity, a lot of churches have sprung up in the town amongst the following: St Joseph's Pro-Cathedral, Aguleri; Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church Otuocha; St Augustine's Catholic Church, Umuoba Anam; St Gabriel's Anglican Church Udeabor Umueri and many other denominational churches.

Market and shopping facilities

Otuocha has a viable Market call "Eke" Market. It is located within the heart of Otuocha at the bank of the Great Omambala River. Though market activities go along daily in the market, "Eke" Market day is a special market day as traders and buyers from all walks of life comes for business. The market is also a major yam transit point in East of the Niger.

Forms of Settlement

Conflict resolution in traditional Africa is geared towards reconciliation, maintenance and improvement of social relationships. The significance and efficacy of the processes lie in the fact that they strive to restore a balance, to settle conflict and eliminate disputes. Trivial issues are handled at the family level; other major issues could end up being settled at the spiritual level, at the behest of ancestors and/or the gods. Indigenous, traditional or local knowledge refers to the knowledge and proficiency unique to a given society or culture, which encompasses 'the cultural traditions, values, beliefs, and worldviews of local people', including specific beliefs, rules and taboos that are part of the customary law of a specific group.

In community administration of Igbo society, conflict resolution is undertaken by such bodies as the age grades (where the offender has deliberately neglected performing an expected civic responsibility). Council of elders settles marriage disputes, conflict arising out of inheritance rights, and breach of rites of passage (Nwanunobi, 2012) and so on. The village assembly exists to resolve seniority rights of component lineages in a town or land disputes (Udechukwu, 2003). The chief priest handles conflicts associated with violations of rules sustaining caste system, calendar and critical ceremonies. Rituals, like breaking of cola nut (*cola acuminata*), pouring of libations, invocation of the ancestors, smearing of the white chalk (*nzu)* usually by titled elderly men, show how the living commune with the dead. This creates the environment for deliberation and conflict resolution. It is a method that encourages parties to a dispute to share meaning on existing methods of conflict resolution (Imobighe, 2003). It is also a method of socialisation.

This development has led to a situation where many members of voluntary associations are not at home with the content of the laws governing how their associations are run. Adegbulu captures the situation as follows:

A critical examination of the legal procedures involved in the creation of the autonomous communities and their traditional rulers in Igboland reveals the artificiality of these Ezes. For instance, a 'Traditional ruler' must be able to prove 'popular support'

by being formally presented to the governor. Besides, an 'autonomous community' has to provide a written constitution and a code of conduct for the traditional ruler. However, the law makes little provision to define how in detail, these documents emerge, and who writes them-except by rather vague reference to 'customary law'. The question then can be asked: Can the legal instrument which coerces communities to put into a fixed, written form what they regard as their tradition, pass for the people's tradition? (Adegbulu, 2011:13).

Udechukwu (2003) is correct in saying that, in Igbo society of old; leadership as championed by titled men was aimed at ensuring that decisions reached must protect collective values. The leaders understood well that their spiritual world influenced their secular equivalent and any observed miscarriage of justice can lead to unpleasant outcome or regrets. This is captured by the concept of *ofo* and *ogu* in Igbo cosmology. While the *ofo* symbolises rituals and political power, *ogu* symbolises the moral authority associated with leadership positions held (Udechukwu, 2003).

Traditional conflict resolution processes are part of a well-structured, time-proven social system geared towards reconciliation, maintenance and improvement of social relationships (Osei-Hwedie and Rankopo, 2012). The methods, processes and regulations are deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of Africans. The importance and efficacy of the processes lie in the fact that they strive to restore a balance, to settle conflict and eliminate disputes (Ademowo 2015; Osei-Hwedie and Ronkopo, 2012:1). The traditional processes are relatively informal and thus, less standardized – those who use them are more comfortable in familiar territory/environment. Peacebuilding is the main concern of traditional African societies. Atogo (in Asilia, 2013), writes that peacebuilding is an organic process, which is initiated from the grassroots level. He posited that only when members of community take ownership of peace processes that peace can be sustainable.

Basically, proverbs are used resourcefully in a typical traditional African society. To Mbiti (1995), proverbs have rich vocabulary of words, phrases, combination of words, symbols, pictures, allusions and comparisons hence if culture were an important tool of cohesion and development; if language were a carrier of culture and if the relationship between language and culture were like the two-edged sword, then the role of proverbs as a metaphorical coding of language could not be glossed over (Adesina 2015). In conflict management or conflict resolution, proverbs are used to a high degree. Proverbs are used during settlement of disputes, before a dispute sets in, and even after dispute has been settled. Indeed, dexterity in the use of proverbs is an essential condition for dispute settlers.

Peace scholars however, look beyond the traditional perception of conflict, as it lends itself to negativism hence, conflict can also be viewed as not necessarily destructive, rather as something productive depending on how we perceive and handle it. Viewed as such, conflict could be an opportunity for change – pointing to problems, increasing self-awareness, improving solutions, fostering change (Ademowo, 2016). Conflict Management is used both in specific term to resolve, prevent or limit conflict, especially violent ones, while building up the capacities of all parties involved embarking on peace building. To Bercovitch (2005), the "purpose of conflict management, whether undertaken by the parties in conflict or whether involving the intervention of an outside party, is to affect the entire structure of a conflict situation so as to contain the destructive components in the conflict process (e.g. hostility, use of violence) and help the parties possessing incompatible goals to find some solution to their conflict."

Conclusion

The essence of decolonization of peace education and management of intergroup conflict in Igboland is to showcase how relevant and important the use of African methods in resolving conflicts are which includes; to remove the root-causes of the conflict; reconcile the conflicting parties genuinely; to preserve and ensure harmony, and make everybody involved in the resolved conflict happy and be at peace with each other again, and this required getting at truth; to set the right milieu for societal production and development; to promote good governance, law and order; to provide security of lives and property and to achieve collective well-being and happiness. Therefore, the rejection or outright adulteration of those traditional methods of conflict resolution has led to violence, instability and retardation of development in African communities.

The abandonment of utility laden traditional methods of bargaining and conflict resolution for foreign models is largely responsible for the multiplicity of avoidable conflict all over the continent of Africa. African methods of conflict resolution are more effective and efficient than the imported methods. This is justified by the fact that most of Africans still prefer, and in fact, resort to the traditional methods of conflict resolution because modern methods have become faulty and inadequate in many conflicts in Africa. The wholesale adoption of Western methods of conflict resolution which do not reflect the cultural realities of the societies of Africa was discovered as one of the major problems promoting the escalation of conflicts in Africa. Africa has been adopting those aspects of Western culture which are not productive or developmental and are seldom relevant for conflict resolution.

The analyses of the conflict situations in Africa should be deepened and expanded to reflect the objectives peculiarities of the conflict configuration of the communities of

Africa. As revealed in the study, the application of theories and methodologies of peace research and conflict resolution in Africa has largely neglected the simple fact that Africa had well developed and tested indigenous approaches and methods of conflict management, resolution, pacific settlement of disputes and peace buildings. It becomes necessary therefore, to peep into the cultural resources of Africa's rich past to discover the strategies that minimised conflicts and promoted peaceful co-existence among Africans.

The study therefore highlights the need for decolonization of peace education and management of intergroup conflict in Igboland with focus on Aguleri and Umueri dispute and showcases how African value systems and institutions of conflict resolution remain relevant and important towards promoting peace and harmony on the continent. It is hoped that the lessons to be drawn here will inform academic, policy makers, national and global discussions on the role of traditional institutions in dealing with conflict, justice, development, governance and peace. Certainly, traditional institutions will continue to shape the African landscape of conflict resolution

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COPING MECHANISMS AND ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES AMONG BORDER COMMUNITIES FACING INSURGENCY IN YOBE STATE

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Abstract

The Boko Haram insurgency has inflicted devastating consequences on northeastern Nigeria, particularly in the state of Yobe, which has been one of the most adversely impacted areas. This study aims to examine the various coping mechanisms and adaptive strategies employed by people living in border settlements in Yobe State to cope with the challenges posed by the Boko haram conflict, focusing on the methods and systems utilised by those living in the border areas. The study employs a desk research method, using quantitative data on the prevalence and effectiveness of various coping strategies and adaptive measures. Findings indicated that the border communities of Yobo State have employed various adaptive strategies to enhance their security and resilience. The establishment of community-based social support networks has been a significant coping technique employed by the border villages of the state. These social coping mechanisms have been crucial in assisting the state's border towns in surmounting the challenges created by the posing threat to the country's stability and development, fostering a sense of community, and providing a vital source of support and resilience in the face of violent conflict.

Keywords: Coping mechanisms, Adaptive strategies, Border communities and Insurgency

Introduction

The northeastern region of Nigeria has been deeply affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, which has been ongoing since 2009. This insurgency, characterized by violence, abductions, and terror campaigns, has inflicted massive destruction on states like Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa. Boko Haram, originally formed with the intent of establishing an Islamic state, has since morphed into a highly destructive militant group, and its impact has been particularly severe on Nigeria's border communities. Among these states, Yobe, located at Nigeria's northeastern border with Niger, faces unique challenges due to its geographical position. The border areas of Yobe have become particularly vulnerable to attacks and destabilization, as they are near Boko Haram's strongholds and are located along a porous border that has allowed insurgents and illicit arms to move freely across the region (Idowu & Arua, 2023).

Boko Haram's insurgency can be traced back to 2009 when the group, led by Mohammed Yusuf, launched violent campaigns against the Nigerian government, security forces, and civilians. While Borno State, particularly the capital Maiduguri, served as the epicentre of the insurgency, the violence quickly spread to neighbouring states, including Yobe. Yobe's location, sharing a border with Niger, made it especially vulnerable to early attacks. Boko Haram exploited the remoteness and porousness of the border, facilitating cross- border attacks, arms smuggling, and the recruitment of fighters from both Nigeria and Niger. These factors, along with the relatively sparse presence of security forces in border communities, created a breeding ground for Boko Haram's expansion into Yobe (Okunade & Ogunjobi, 2020).

Yobe's border communities—Geidam, Yunusari, and Machina, among others—became frequent targets of Boko Haram's violent campaigns, which included bombings, raids, abductions, and destruction of property. These communities, many of which relied heavily on farming and cross-border trade, were particularly vulnerable due to their proximity to Boko Haram's operations in southern Niger and their dependence on trade routes that Boko Haram frequently disrupted. Over time, the persistent attacks disrupted the socio-economic fabric of these border areas, leading to displacement, the loss of livelihoods, and the weakening of local governance structures.

The impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on Yobe's border communities has been multifaceted, touching nearly every aspect of life. The most visible and immediate effect has been widespread displacement. As of 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that over 3.2 million people have been displaced across northeastern Nigeria due to Boko Haram activities, with Yobe State accounting for a significant share of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) (UNHCR, 2023). Many border communities in Yobe, such as Geidam and Yunusari, have seen

large portions of their populations displaced to neighbouring towns and IDP camps both within Nigeria and across the border in Niger.

Beyond displacement, the insurgency has severely affected the livelihoods of border communities. Agriculture, which is the primary source of income for most residents of Yobe's border areas, has been particularly impacted. Frequent raids by Boko Haram have made it unsafe for farmers to tend to their fields, while attacks on rural infrastructure have destroyed irrigation systems, grain storage facilities, and roads that are essential for transporting goods to markets. The destruction of farmlands and the disruption of trade routes have led to widespread food insecurity, with many households unable to produce or purchase sufficient food to meet their needs (Idowu & Arua, 2023).

In addition to the socio-economic disruptions caused by Boko Haram's insurgency, the group's activities have also had profound impacts on the socio-political and security dynamics of Yobe's border communities. One of the most significant effects has been the breakdown of traditional governance structures. In many border communities, traditional rulers and local leaders have historically played central roles in maintaining order, mediating disputes, and ensuring the security of their communities. However, the insurgency has undermined these traditional governance structures, as Boko Haram has specifically targeted traditional leaders who refuse to cooperate with the group or who are seen as too closely aligned with the Nigerian government (Agbiboa, 2021).

The killing or displacement of traditional leaders has weakened local governance, leaving a vacuum in many communities that has been filled by informal or extra-legal actors. In some cases, local vigilante groups, known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), have stepped in to provide security and protect communities from Boko Haram attacks. While these vigilante groups have been successful in some cases, they have also contributed to increased tensions between different ethnic and religious groups within the community and have sometimes clashed with government security forces (Okunade & Ogunjobi, 2020). The absence of effective state security and the reliance on informal security actors have, in many cases, exacerbated the insecurity and instability in Yobe's border areas.

Furthermore, the insurgency has led to the militarization of the border region to the point where even the country's capital, Abuja is also impacted due to internal displacements (Fatele, Iroye & Ibebunjo, (2022). The Nigerian government, in collaboration with international partners such as the African Union and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), has deployed significant military resources to combat Boko Haram. While these efforts have succeeded in recapturing some territories previously controlled by Boko Haram, they have also contributed to the further

displacement of civilians and the destruction of infrastructure. In some cases, military operations have been criticized for their heavy-handed tactics, including indiscriminate bombing and mass arrests, which have alienated local populations and further weakened trust between communities and the state (Idowu & Arua, 2023).

The border communities of Yobe State have been severely impacted by the Boko Haram conflict. The extremist organisation has obliterated essential infrastructure, disrupted commerce, and instilled terror in the local populace. The destruction of transport infrastructure and roads has severely hindered residents' access to essential services, economic activities, and communication with other regions. Travel has become perilous due to the insurgency's orchestrated instability, which intensifies the communities' existing social and economic challenges.

Given that these border towns have traditionally relied on the unrestricted movement of goods and individuals across the Nigeria-Cameroon border for their livelihoods, the disruption of cross-border trade and mobility has been particularly detrimental (Imasuen, 2015; Adegoke, 2020). Numerous residents have been forced to limit their movement due to assaults on transit routes and the apprehension of abduction or violence, resulting in diminished economic activity and heightened poverty and food insecurity.

In addition to its economic repercussions, the Boko Haram insurgency has inflicted significant psychological and social harm on the border communities. The border communities of Yobe State have endured significant and enduring repercussions due to the Boko Haram insurgency. The deterioration of social and economic conditions in the region has been ascribed to the destruction of infrastructure, disruption of trade, and engendering of fear.

Methodology

This study employs a desk research approach with quantitative methods to gather and analyse data. The methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how border communities in Yobe State adapt to insurgency conditions, focusing on their resilience and coping strategies.

The study utilises a **descriptive research design**, which seeks to quantify coping mechanisms and adaptive strategies employed by border communities in response to insurgency. By applying quantitative analysis to secondary data, relying on existing literature, government reports, non-governmental organization (NGO) publications, and academic studies on insurgency, coping mechanisms, and resilience in border regions.

Discussion of Findings

The border communities of Yobe State have developed various coping strategies and adaptive methods to ensure their existence amid these formidable challenges. Residents employ income diversification as a strategy to reduce reliance on traditional economic activities adversely affected by the insurgency. (Erıng et al., 2014) To augment their income and maintain a level of economic resilience, certain community members have engaged in small-scale trading, artisanal activities, or service provision (Adebayo, 2014).

The establishment of community-based social support networks has been a significant coping technique employed by the border villages of Yobe State. To avert the loneliness and despair stemming from prolonged conflict, the community has come together to provide emotional support, share resources, and offer mutual assistance. The robust social cohesion within these communities has significantly enhanced their ability to organise and confront the challenges posed by the Boko Haram insurgency (Rampengan et al., 2014).

The border communities of Yobe State have employed several adaptive strategies to enhance their security and resilience. This involves the establishment of early warning systems, the formation of community-based security patrols, and the development of detours for cars to circumvent areas deemed hazardous. Due to these precautions, residents can do their daily activities with a degree of normalcy while manoeuvring through the hazardous security environment. The border villages in Yobe State have demonstrated notable psychological resilience, beside possessing effective coping techniques. The local population's optimism and sense of community have been significantly bolstered by their resilience in adversity and a profound sense of camaraderie (Isah, 2022).

Yobe State's border towns have demonstrated remarkable adaptability and resilience in response to the ongoing insurgency, with the formation of civilian defence groups. Adegoke, 2020 The disruption of economic activity, including foreign trade and agricultural output, has forced the local population to explore alternative ways of sustenance, such as diversifying income sources and enhancing survival skills. To supplement their income and address the financial challenges posed by the insurgency, several residents have turned to small-scale entrepreneurship, including petty commerce and artisanal ventures. Others have altered their agricultural practices, exploring novel crops and methodologies to ensure food security amid the disruptions caused by the fighting.

The resolve of these communities to maintain social cohesion and support networks under the devastation and displacement caused by the insurgency exemplifies their resilience. Community-based organisations and mutual assistance societies have been vital for individuals affected by violence, providing a sense of community and access to needed services. The border settlements in Yobe State have employed coping strategies and adaptive techniques that reflect the resourcefulness and resilience of the local population in managing the challenging and complex conditions created by the Boko Haram conflict.

Civilian Defence Groups and State-Community Relations

The establishment of civilian defence formations, like as the Civilian Joint Task Force, is a significant adaptive technique employed by border communities in Yobe State (Agbiboa, 2020). These associations have expanded to augment the efforts of Nigeria's security agencies by providing a degree of protection and security to the local population. The establishment of civilian defence formations underscores the precariousness of security in the region, as the state has had challenges in effectively combating the Boko Haram insurgency and ensuring the populace's safety (Agbiboa, 2020).

The relationship between these non-governmental defence organisations and the government has been complex and at times unstable. The presence of the groups has elicited apprehensions regarding potential power abuse and the risk that they may "turn bad," thereby jeopardising the communities they were meant to safeguard, despite their critical role in assisting the military in locating and apprehending Boko Haram insurgents (Agbiboa, 2018; Agbiboa, 2020). A primary coping mechanism employed by border communities confronting the Boko Haram insurgency in Yobe State is the establishment of civilian defence units, such as the Civilian Joint Task Force. By providing a degree of security and protection for the local population, these groups have been instrumental in enhancing the efforts of the Nigerian security forces. The proliferation of civilian defence formations in Yobe State underscores the essential function of civil-military collaboration in effective counterinsurgency operations (Agbiboa, 2020). To avert the exploitation of these entities, the state must implement robust systems of oversight and accountability, as evidenced by the precarious nature of this arrangement.

Economic Coping Strategies

In response to the challenges posed by the Boko Haram insurgency, the border villages of Yobe State have implemented several economic coping strategies. Due to the insurgency's disruption of commercial and economic activities, residents have been

compelled to diversify their income sources and seek alternative livelihood options (Agbiboa, 2017). The growing dependence on informal economic activities and cross-border trade has been one such strategy. Certain residents have continued cross-border business despite the risks and challenges posed by the insurgency, leveraging their knowledge of the region and connections to adjacent settlements on either side of the border.

The border villages in Yobe State have sought to expand their economic opportunities through subsistence farming, small-scale enterprises, and various informal economic activities, alongside cross-border trading. These strategies have enabled residents to increase their income and mitigate the economic impact of the insurgency; yet, numerous challenges persist due to ongoing turmoil and insecurity.

Social Coping Mechanisms

The border towns in Yobe State have established social coping strategies to address the problems presented by the Boko Haram conflict. One strategy has been the enhancement of community-based support networks and social safety nets. Confronted with the interruption of formal social services and institutions, citizens have sought assistance and mutual support from their families, neighbours, and local community organisations.

These community-based support structures have been essential in providing residents with access to needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare, while also assisting them in managing the trauma and uncertainty of the insurgency through emotional and psychological support. Moreover, despite the ongoing conflict, the border settlements of Yobe State have endeavoured to maintain social cohesion and a sense of normalcy. Residents have demonstrated collective resilience and solidarity, arranged community events, upheld cultural and religious traditions, and maintained resilience despite disruptions to their daily lives. These social coping mechanisms have been crucial in assisting Yobe State's border towns in surmounting the challenges posed by the Boko Haram insurgency, fostering a sense of community, and providing a vital source of support and resilience.

Community Resilience and Social Cohesion

Apart from the diverse coping methods and adaptive tactics utilised by Yobe State's border villages, there have also been noteworthy community initiatives that seek to tackle the obstacles presented by the Boko Haram insurgency. To facilitate communication, resolve disputes, and advance reconciliation, certain communities, for example, have formed local peace committees that include a variety of stakeholders,

such as traditional authorities, religious leaders, and civil society organisations. A sense of community cohesion and group resilience in the face of persistent security threats has been greatly aided by these initiatives.

In sum, Yobe State's border towns have shown incredible tenacity and resourcefulness in the face of the Boko Haram onslaught. These communities have managed to negotiate the complicated and unstable environment by diversifying their sources of income, building social support networks within their communities, and putting adaptive security measures in place. In addition, the border communities have come together to help and aid the most defenceless individuals within their communities, including those who have been internally displaced and those who have lost their means of subsistence because of the insurgency. These neighbourhood-based programs have been crucial in helping to lessen the conflict's social and economic effects and in giving the locals a feeling of optimism and autonomy (Chinwokwu & Michael, 2019), (2020, Agbiboa), (Nwokolo, 2020).

Adaptation through Livelihoods and Social Capital

The border villages of Yobe State have enhanced their social capital and diversified their revenue sources to more effectively endure the obstacles posed by the Boko Haram conflict.

Individuals have sought alternative means to sustain their families due to the disruption of traditional economic activities such as agriculture and cross-border trade.

Some individuals have turned to small-scale enterprises such as petty trading and necessary service supply, while others have grown reliant on remittances from family who have been displaced or have sought refuge in other areas of the country. An additional significant coping technique has been the enhancement of social capital via the expansion of familial and communal networks. For the displaced and vulnerable, these networks have functioned as a crucial safety net, offering sustenance, accommodation, and financial assistance.

The border towns of Yobe State have successfully navigated the challenges posed by the Boko Haram insurgency primarily due to the diversification of their income sources and the enhancement of their social capital. Notwithstanding the protracted battle, the populace has managed to maintain a degree of resilience and autonomy due to these flexible strategies. Nonetheless, the insurgency's ongoing nature and the limitations imposed on social and economic activities in the border areas have diminished the effectiveness of these coping strategies.

Government and International Assistance

In addition to their incredible fortitude and inventiveness in the face of the Boko Haram insurgency, Yobe State's border settlements have profited from a variety of national and international aid programs. The Nigerian government has sent military personnel into the area and put counterinsurgency plans into action to increase security there. In addition, Yobe State's border towns have proven to be remarkably adaptive as they have worked to make their way through the perilous security environment and discover new sources of income. To avoid the disturbances brought on by the insurgency, some locals have, for example, investigated alternate transit routes or participated in informal cross-border trade. In addition to their incredible fortitude and inventiveness in the face of the Boko Haram insurgency, Yobe State's border settlements have profited from a variety of national and international aid programs. The Nigerian government has sent military personnel into the area and put counterinsurgency plans into action to increase security there.

Some communities have also established informal security networks, relying on local vigilante groups and self-defence mechanisms to protect themselves from Boko Haram attacks (Iweze, 2020) Furthermore, the border communities have demonstrated a remarkable resilience in maintaining social cohesion and supporting one another during these trying times, with residents pooling resources and providing mutual aid to the most vulnerable members of their communities (Iweze, 2020). The border communities have also engaged in cross-border cooperation and collaboration with their counterparts in neighbouring countries, such as Cameroon, to facilitate the movement of goods and people and to share information and resources in the face of the shared security threats posed by Boko Haram.

However, the ability of the border communities to fully recover and thrive in the aftermath of the Boko Haram insurgency will ultimately depend on the sustained and coordinated efforts of the Nigerian government, the international community, and the communities themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the adaptive strategies employed by Yobe State's border communities underscore both their resilience and vulnerability. While these communities have demonstrated remarkable capacity to cope with the insurgency, sustainable peace and development will ultimately depend on the restoration of security, the strengthening of state institutions, and long-term investment in local infrastructure and livelihoods. Without these, the coping strategies that have kept these communities afloat may not be enough to ensure their survival in the future.

Recommendation

Considering the research findings, the subsequent recommendations are put forth:

1. Enhance cross-border collaboration and information exchange: The Nigerian government should collaborate extensively with neighbouring countries, such as Cameroon, to improve cross-border security cooperation and the dissemination of intelligence and best practices in addressing the Boko Haram insurgency.
2. Augment investment in community-oriented security initiatives: The Nigerian government and international development partners ought to furnish financial and technical assistance to community-oriented security initiatives, including the formation of local peace committees and the training of community security personnel.
3. Emphasise livelihood diversification and economic advancement: Policymakers ought to allocate resources to initiatives that facilitate the diversification of livelihood activities and the establishment of sustainable economic prospects in border communities.
4. The Nigerian government should prioritise the enhancement of basic social services, including education, healthcare, and water and sanitation, alongside the development of essential infrastructure, such as roads and communication networks, in border communities.
5. Encourage community-driven peacebuilding initiatives: The Nigerian government and international development partners should endorse community-driven initiatives designed to enhance social cohesion, resolve underlying conflicts, and facilitate peaceful coexistence among the diverse populations in border communities.

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FARMER-HERDER CONFLICT: AN IMPLICATION ON PEASANT FARMING IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The farmer-herder conflict has severely affected livelihoods in Taraba State, leading to the destruction of agriculture, reduced productivity, and lower incomes. This has worsened poverty, increased unemployment, and heightened food insecurity with many people have been displaced, facing immense hardship. The conflict has also spread fear and insecurity, leading to anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and social breakdown. Communities have suffered from deaths, kidnappings, sexual violence, and the erosion of trust and cohesion. Additionally, ethnic and religious tensions have intensified, governance has been undermined, and efforts to resolve the conflict have largely been ineffective, resulting in further human rights abuses. This paper explores the economic, social, political, environmental, and humanitarian impacts of the conflict, alongside key concepts such as conflict, peasant farming, and the farmer-herder conflict. The paper used eco-violence theory to examine the root causes, of the conflict and used content analysis method draws from a range of literature, including newspapers, journals, and government reports, to assess the conflict's implications. The paper concludes that the conflict has had devastating effects, including loss of life, destruction of property, and the displacement of peasant farmers, leaving them unable to sustain their families. It recommends that the government, in partnership with national emergency agencies, provide relief, increase security in farmlands, rehabilitate those affected, and promote alternative approaches to conflict resolution.

Keywords: Farmer-Herder Conflict, Peasant Farming, Taraba State, Livelihood Impact

Introduction

The farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria is a significant challenge that continues to threaten the livelihoods of peasant farmers. Thus, Nwankwo (2024), posit that peasant farming is a type of agriculture typically practised by small-scale farmers who either own the land they cultivate or work on land owned by others that is characterised by small plots often managed by individual families or small groups, with the primary focus on growing crops for personal consumption, while any surplus is sold or traded in local markets. To him, this form of farming relies on traditional agricultural methods, involving manual labour and minimal use of modern machinery or inputs and it is often deeply rooted in local communities, were social relationships and cultural practices shape farming techniques and crop choices. Okonkwo, Chris, & Udegbunam (2023) narrated that overtime the farmers-herders conflict on peasant farming have witness attacks by herders which led to destruction of crops, killing of farmers, raping, maiming, and kidnapping.

Unfortunately, Obikaeze, Oduntan, Fajobi, Kayode, and Eteng (2023) argued that the impact of the farmers-herders conflict has not only caused increased food shortages and higher prices but has also resulted in the loss of over 1,500 lives in 2022 and 2023 alone and has taken a heavy humanitarian toll on communities, with many displaced individuals seeking refuge in impoverished rural areas or overcrowded Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. Consequently, these individuals often endure psychological trauma, and the situation has exacerbated criminal activities, such as banditry and kidnapping, thereby undermining national security, socio-economic stability, and the farming activities of peasant farmers in the country (Egbuta, 2018). Similarly, Udosen (2021) highlighted that, between 2015 and 2019, at least 189,862 people were displaced across Adamawa, Kaduna, Benue, Borno, Taraba, and Plateau states and between 2017 and 2020, suspected herders were reported to have carried out 654 attacks, leading to the deaths of 2,539 Nigerians. More recently, on 25 January 2024, the Punch newspaper reported that at least 30 people were killed in renewed violence linked to the ongoing farmer-herder conflicts in Plateau State.

The devastating impact of the recurring conflict continues to claim lives and destroy properties worth billions of naira, rendering people homeless, making children orphans, and turning wives into widows as well as disrupts social cohesion and erodes trust between farmers and herders, which further fuels ethnic, religious, and political tensions that has led to incidents such as the burning of places of worship, the killing of Christian farmers, and the killing of herders and their cattle, who are predominantly Muslim (Udosen, 2021). Considering these impacts, Tari and Jonah (2022) identified several contributing factors to the farmer-herder conflict, including climate change leading to drought and desertification, soil degradation, a growing population of both humans and

cattle, global terrorism, rural banditry, the proliferation of light weapons, and the ECOWAS migration law, among others.

Unfortunately, Obikaeze, Oduntan, Fajobi, Kayode, and Eteng (2023) argued that the impact of farmers-herders conflict has not only led to increased food shortages and higher prices, but has resulted in the loss of over 1,500 lives in 2022 and 2023 alone as well as taken a heavy humanitarian toll on communities, with many displaced individuals seeking shelter in other impoverished rural areas or overcrowded Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. As a result, these individuals often face psychological trauma, and the situation has worsened issues led to criminality, banditry, and kidnapping, thereby undermining both the national security socio economic as well as farming activities of peasant farmers in the country (Egbuta, 2018). Similarly, Udosen (2021), pointed out that from 2015 to 2019, at least 189,862 people were displaced across Adamawa, Kaduna, Benue, Borno, Taraba, and Plateau states and between 2017 and 2020, suspected herders were reported to have carried out 654 attacks, resulting in the deaths of 2,539 Nigerians. More recently, on 25 January 2024, Al Jazeera reported that at least 30 people were killed in renewed violence linked to the ongoing farmer-herder conflicts in Plateau State.

Given these factors, Salihu & Enwere (2023) added that the increase in farmer-herder conflicts is due to the expansion of agricultural populations and cultivated land at the expense of pasturelands, deteriorating environmental conditions, a breakdown in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and rural crime such as banditry, Boko Haram insurgency, kidnaping for ransom among others are contributing factors. As a result, these factors have led to insecurity and violence, prompting many populations to form self-defense forces and ethnic and tribal militias with increasing ease of access to weapons as well as religious polarisation between Christians and Muslims has further exacerbated the conflict, particularly between Muslim Fulani herdsmen and Christian farming communities with a high level of mutual distrust, mistrust, and suspicion, which often takes the form of North verses South, Muslims verses Christians, majority verses minority, and We verses Them, among other fault lines confronting the cooperative existence of Nigeria as a corporate entity. Additionally Yamtal, Ajik & Yamtal (2023) argue that among factors contributing to the conflict between farmers and herders was as a result of rearing of cattle at night, handing large flogs of cattle to young person that are professional in controlling cattle's drugs abuse as well as historical grievances. In this context, regarding the impact of the farmers-herders conflict, Katibi, Mohad, Ramli, & Sulaiman (2024), along with Modu (2023), have studied the effects of this conflict on food security, and their findings reveal that the devastating consequences of the conflict have led to food insecurity, leaving many people unable to afford food. Is on this backdrop the study objective is to further examine the impact of the farmers-herders conflict on peasant farming from the standpoint of economic,

social, environmental, political, and humanitarian perspectives, as well as to consider its long-term consequences in Taraba State as well as discourse the concepts of conflict, peasant farming, and the farmers-herders conflict.

Theoretical Framework

Eco-violence theory, first propounded by Homer-Dixon and Blitt in 1998, posits that human existence hinges on resource availability, and the scarcity of resources can lead to conflicts. The underlying assumption of eco-violence theory elucidates that when resources like land, water, and mineral resources become scarce, as seen in the herder-farmer conflict linked to land scarcity and other environmental factors, multiple competing interests and social groups can fuel conflict. Conversely, increasing demand or unequal resource distribution due to environmental hazards can result in deprivation and violence within affected populations. Resource scarcity can be exacerbated by factors such as climate change, population growth, and other environmental challenges. This situation mirrors recent events in Taraba State, and other parts of the country, as well as in many African countries was as a result of the shrinking of Benue, Donga, and Ibi river, desertification, and drought have forced nomads to move with their cattle in search of greener pastures, encroaching on farmlands. Simultaneously, farmers seek fertile land along cattle routes, intensifying the conflict.In a broader perspective, the eco- violence theory views society as comprising individuals in competition for limited resources, with this competition forming the core of all social relationships. Unlike consensus, competition characterises human interactions. Broader social structures and organisations reflect this competition for resources and the associated inequality, where some individuals and organisations possess more resources, like power and influence, using them to maintain their societal positions (Dixon and Blitt, 1998).

Methodology

This study employs content analysis to examine and interpret the characteristics of various forms of communication, including text, images, and audio. The approach involves systematically analysing materials, identifying patterns, themes, and other relevant features to draw insights on the implications of the farmers-herders conflict on peasant farming across four local government areas (LGAs) in Taraba State. These selected LGAs are Wukari, Gassol, Gashaka, and Bali were chosen due to the recurring nature of such conflicts within these areas. Wukari LGA, located in the North-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria, serves as the agricultural hub of Taraba State, producing crops like yams and rice. It also has a thriving trade sector, highlighted by the renowned Wukari yam market. This LGA borders Nasarawa State, with Wukari town as its headquarters.

In Gassol LGA, the Benue River forms the northern boundary, while the Taraba River flows northward, converging with the Benue River, supporting rich soil and resources for farming. Bali LGA, with a tropical savannah climate, covers 9,146 square kilometres, providing favourable conditions for agriculture. Gashaka LGA, with its headquarters in the town of Serti, experiences an average humidity of 16% and a temperature of 33°C, adding to its unique farming potential. Taraba State, situated in northeastern Nigeria and known as "Nature's Gift to the Nation," is characterised by diverse geographical features and rich natural resources. Created from the former Gongola State on 27 August 1991, the state shares borders with Nasarawa and Benue states to the west, Plateau to the northwest, Bauchi and Gombe to the north, Adamawa to the northeast, and the Cameroon Northwest Region to the south. With a projected population of 3,609,800 (NPC, 2023). Taraba continues to be a vital agricultural region, heavily impacted by the farmers-herders conflict, particularly in the selected LGAs for this study.

Conceptual Clarifications Conflict

Conflict is a term often associated with words such as disagreement, crisis, war, violence, opposition, and revolt (Gwade & Inuwa, 2022). While these terms are closely related, each possesses distinct epistemological features and evokes different consequences, setting them apart. In light of this, Lang and Yao (2023) describe conflict as the result of opposing interests, typically involving competition for scarce resources, diverging goals, and frustration. Similarly, Ide, Johnson, Barnett, Krampe, Billon,Maertens, & Vélez-Torres (2023), define conflict as a situation where two or more parties strive to obtain the same scarce resources simultaneously. Building on this, Rahim (2023) contends that conflict arises when two individuals or groups seek to perform actions that are mutually incompatible. Whether it involves individuals, groups, or even states, these parties may either aim to achieve the same goal or pursue different objectives that are incompatible with one another.

From a behavioural perspective, Snow, Junaidi, and Goso (2023) view conflict as a negation rooted in behavioural norms that manifest as negative reactions to situations, ideas, principles, or other behaviours. They argue that once interaction occurs between groups, conflict becomes inevitable, suggesting that it is a natural phenomenon intrinsic to human relations. Hence, peace must be allowed to take precedence over conflict. In a similar vein, Ansems, Riesthuis & Tinnevelt (2023), assert that conflict is a clash between individuals, resulting from differences in thought processes, attitudes, understanding, interests, needs, and sometimes even perceptions. Egbuta (2018) further defines conflict as the interaction of independent individuals or groups who perceive their goals to be incompatible and believe they are being hindered by others in achieving these goals.

Moreover, Modu (2023) highlights that conflict and consensus are the two main patterns of social interaction. This view is supported by Udosen (2021), who observes that all conflicts share certain common characteristics: first, there is some form of contact between the involved parties; second, the parties perceive conflicting views; and finally, one of the parties seeks to resolve the existing contradictions.

Peasant Farming

Scholars have noted that there is no universally accepted definition of the term peasant farmers.As such, it is necessary to highlight various interpretations by different scholars. For instance, Lenin (2023) defines peasant farmers as individuals who cultivate small plots of land, primarily relying on family labour. Thus, Harrison (2023) argues that a peasant farmer is someone who employs traditional farming methods to produce mainly for household consumption and local markets. Given to this definition, Vizuete, Oteros-Rozas, and García- Llorente (2024) suggest that peasant farmers typically engage in mixed crop and livestock production, focusing on sustainability and self-sufficiency with minimal use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, relying instead on organic matter such as compost, green manure, and crop rotation to maintain soil fertility and manage pests.

The term "peasant farming" is sometimes used to describe subsistence agriculture, but it can also apply to market-oriented farms where individuals make a living solely from agriculture that often rely on draft animals and hand tools, with minimal use of capital investments or external inputs (Brass, 2024). Additionally, Kurakin and Niederle (2024) emphasise that peasant farming is characterised by labour-intensive cultivation of local crops, which are mostly planted and managed manually with animal dung is used as manure to improve soil fertility while also providing an additional source of income. In essence, peasant farmers represent a class of individuals who till the soil, either as small landowners or as agricultural labourers.

Farmers-Herders Conflict

The definition of the farmers-herders conflict has been widely debated among scholars due to its profound impact on lives and property and many scholars describe it as complex and multifaceted. In this section, we will consider several definitions proposed by different scholars, while not limiting ourselves to these perspectives alone. According to Lamidi, Juta, and Taleat (2024), the farmers-herders conflict involves incidents arising from the movement of herdsmen, which often leads to clashes with farmers and host communities. To them. these clashes typically result in the destruction of farmland and property, as well as loss of lives, including both farmers and cattle, primarily due to competition for scarce resources, particularly grazing land and fresh

water. Similarly, Asanebi (2024) describes the farmers- herders conflict as an umbrella term for various clashes, often characterised by resource competition between pastoralist herders and sedentary farmers. In support of this view, Lamidi et al. (2024) explain that the farmers-herders conflict (HFC) is a complex and multifaceted dispute between pastoralist herders and agricultural farmers over resources, space, and livelihoods that result to competition for land, water, and grazing resources is often exacerbated by cultural, ethnic, and religious differences.

Building on this definition, Babalola, Alabi, Isaac, &Asuquo (2024) argue that the farmers-herders conflict can be seen as intentional grazing on, or damage to, crops by cattle, which often escalates into violent confrontations that result in the destruction of lives and property and also erode social cohesion and foster mistrust, leading to ethnic and religious tensions. Thus, Mumuni & Abdulyakeen (2024), in their perspective, attribute the conflict was as to the neglect of grazing reserves and insufficient support for the agricultural sector by successive administrations as result to this neglect has led herdsmen to revert to their traditional and seasonal grazing routes, which have been interrupted by industrialisation, urbanisation, demographic shifts, and other natural factors, ultimately resulting in clashes with farmers. Furthermore, the farmers-herders conflict is often a consequence of two groups using the same environmental resources, affected by factors such as climate change, environmental degradation, diminishing arable land for farming and grazing, and a lack of political will to address these challenges led to the destruction of lives and property (Duke & Agbaji, 2020). Musa and Muhammad (2024) argue that this conflict, which occurs between herdsmen and farmers within communities, has become a recurrent issue with far-reaching consequences, including the destruction of crops, loss of lives and property, widowing of women, orphaning of children, and exacerbation of poverty and unemployment. Musa and Muhammad (2024) further point out that the conflict often involves unprovoked attacks, killings, and displacement, as well as incidents of rape, torture, and kidnapping, affecting both farming and non-farming communities. It also includes the destruction of farmland by herdsmen, which fuels hostility between farmers and herders.

Some Implications of Farmers- Herders Conflict on Peasant Farming

According to Yamtal, Ajik, and Yamtal (2023), the ongoing farmers-herders conflict has wide ranging implications for peasant farming, affecting the economy, society, environment, political, and the humanitarian These implications are explained in detail below;

i. **Economic Implications:** the conflict has resulted in a significant loss of livelihoods, destruction of agricultural activities, and reduced productivity that

has led to decreased income, exacerbated poverty, increased unemployment, and heightened food insecurity as well as many have been displaced from their homes, causing untold hardship.

ii. **Social Implications:** the conflict has created widespread insecurity, instilling fear, anxiety, depression, and frustration also contributed to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), deaths, kidnappings, sexual violence, and maiming, eroded social cohesion and trust within communities.

iii. **Environmental Implications:** The land degradation and soil erosion caused by the conflict have led to water scarcity and the loss of biodiversity and further worsened the impacts of climate change.

iv. **Political Implications:** The conflict has fuelled ethnic and religious tensions, contributing to governance instability has hindered the implementation of policies aimed at fostering peace and sustainability, making conflict resolution ineffective as well as led to human rights violations.

v. **Humanitarian Implications:** The displacement of people due to the conflict has forced many to seek refuge in nearby villages, urban areas, and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps which has worsened the humanitarian crisis, leading to inadequate healthcare, poor sanitation, and malnutrition and the disruption of education has increased the number of out of school children.

Given these implications of the farmers-herders conflict on peasant farming, Mbah, Jiriko, & Ameh (2020) further highlight that the conflict has led to a breakdown of law and order in communities, outbreaks of hunger and disease, migration to urban areas, and an unsafe environment for peasant farming, proliferation of small arms as well as rising number of orphans and widows, and widespread malnutrition among peasant farming households have also been significant consequences. Thus, Obasanmi and Enoma (2021) argue, the long-term consequences of the conflict, as previously mentioned, include heightened food insecurity, economic stagnation, the erosion of social cohesion, increased poverty, and a growing threat to national security.

Conclusion

The farmer-herder conflict has had devastating effects on peasant farming in Taraba State, Nigeria. It has led to the destruction of crops, loss of lives, and the destruction of property worth millions of naira. This has resulted in severe hardship, increased poverty, and unemployment, leaving many people destitute and unable to provide for their families. The conflict has disrupted the economic activities of farming communities, as farmers are now too afraid to tend to their land, which has worsened food insecurity and slowed economic growth, ultimately affecting government revenue. Additionally, the conflict has led to a rise in criminal activities, such as kidnapping, banditry, and cattle rustling, turning many communities into safe havens for criminal

groups and encouraging the spread of illegal weapons as well as caused humanitarian crisis has forced people to flee to urban areas and neighbouring villages, overcrowding internally displaced persons camps, which has led to poor sanitation, malnutrition, and outbreaks of disease.

As a result, it has also contributed to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), death, kidnappings, sexual violence, and maiming, while eroding social cohesion and trust. Furthermore, the conflict has fuelled ethnic and religious tensions, leading to instability in governance and hindering the implementation of policies aimed at promoting peace and sustainability. Efforts at resolving the conflict have been largely ineffective, and there have been significant human rights violations. The conflict has also caused environmental damage, including land degradation, soil erosion, water scarcity, and loss of biodiversity, which have worsened the effects of climate change. These implications urgently require intervention.

Recommendation

Given the devastating impacts of the farmer-herder conflict on the economy, society, environment, politics, and humanitarian conditions, it is essential for stakeholders, including government institutions, politicians, and non-governmental organisations, to identify the root causes of the conflict in order to bring lasting peace between the two groups. The following recommendations are suggested:

i. The government, in partnership with national emergency agencies to provide relief, increase security in farmlands, rehabilitate those affected, and promote alternative approaches to conflict resolution.
ii. The state government, Ministry of Agriculture should collaborate with the Ministry of Education to educate both farmers and herders on how to use environmental resources, such as water and land, responsibly and without encroaching on each other's territories.
iii. State authorities should prioritise non-violent approaches to resolving the farmer-herder conflict, especially by adopting alternative dispute resolution methods such as mediation, negotiation, and dialogue and provide security for peasant farmers to access their farmland and go back to farming.
iv. The state government should educate farmers and herders on the benefits of establishing cattle ranches, rather than solely relying on legislative measures.

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AN EXAMINATION OF SAMUEL HUNTINGTON'S 'CLASH OF CIVILIZATION' THESIS AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

Internal conflicts continue to grow in Nigeria, despite scholarly studies that prescribe empirical solutions to their abatement. This study therefore examined conflict from the theoretical paradigm of Samuel Huntington's thesis with the aim of determining its applicability with identity-based conflicts in Nigeria. To achieve this, the researcher identified the tenets of Huntington's 'Clash of Civilization' thesis, identified the dynamics of the major types of conflicts in Nigeria as well as perceptions of identity and heterogeneity, assessed the relevance of Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' thesis to contemporary identity conflicts in Nigeria and finally, examined how Huntington's thesis can be adequately used to mitigate contemporary identity conflicts in the study area. The study is primarily a desk review which also employed descriptive research design. The research found that, in spite of the fact that civilisation is a cultural entity, the fundamental avenue through which conflicts are and will be expressed in this new world and in Nigeria is not primarily ideological or mainly economic, but cultural, with the conflicts being both inter- and intra-civilisation. Also, some scholars pointed out that identity-based conflicts in Africa and Nigeria predated the two world wars and the Cold War. The findings suggest that identity is, to a Nigerian, a strong psycho-social garment by which he defines himself or herself. Furthermore, inadequate social structures, resources, corruption, and politics are the most important root causes of conflicts. These root causes often use identity-based conflicts fought along the lines of

religion, ethnicity, culture, etc. as means of expression. Conclusively, albeit Huntington's thesis may have been an academic extrapolation rather than an empirically researched theory, identity however, plays an important role in relationships, conflicts, interactions, and transactions in Nigeria, and thus, Huntington's thesis applies to Nigeria, albeit in a restricted sense.

Keywords: Civilization, Clash, Conflict, Identity, Samuel Huntington

Introduction

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order is an expansion of the 1993 Foreign Affairs article written by Samuel Huntington that hypothesized a new post-Cold War world order. Prior to the end of the Cold War, societies were divided by ideological differences, such as the struggle between democracy and communism. Huntington's main thesis argues, the most important distinctions among peoples are [no longer] ideological, political, or economic, they are cultural. New patterns of conflict will occur along the boundaries of different cultures and patterns of cohesion will be found within the cultural boundaries (Hendrikson, 2020). This thesis, expounded by Huntington, has been the topic of many academic and sociological debates. Our key concern in this work is on the extent to which it applies to the Nigerian context. To aid our discussion, there are certain points we must note. First, standing on more than 216 million persons (World Population Review, 2022) Nigeria remains the 6th most populous nation. High population density surely has its benefits, but the odds are stacked differently for a heterogeneous nation such as Nigeria accommodating more than 500 languages and 250 ethnic groups.

Second, Nigeria's major religions and tribes have distinct expressions. The distinct expressions almost always create a sense of 'difference' or distinction among the people (Ibe, Iroye & Ibebunjo, 2024). The Hausa-Fulani inherited a loyalty-based system propagated by both Islam and the conquering Arabians. The centralized hierarchical structure which culminates in the office (throne) of the Emir at the regional level, or on the Sultan at the national level, makes for ease of loyalty and unity, but also bigotry and fundamentalism. The post-independence Yoruba nation embraced formal education much earlier than the two other major tribes, thanks to the policies of the first Premier of the Western Region – Obafemi Awolowo. With education came sophistication, and with sophistication, so came unpredictability. Unpredictability was often [mis]interpreted as "untrustworthiness" by the other major tribes.

As a result of the above, collapse, secession, civil unrest, civil war, minority anxiety, and violent clashes, all of which would be considered exceptional in normal states, are common forces or actual events in divided states (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:4). Nigeria

is ranked as one of the most unstable countries in Africa due to a complex network of politically quiet identities, as well as a history of protracted and seemingly persistent warfare and instability. Nigeria has been tossed around by periodic crises of regional or state illegitimacy since independence, thwarting efforts at democratization, stability, economic change, and national cohesion. The crisis appears to have reached a pinnacle during the 1960s civil war, which began immediately after independence (Okpanachi 2010).

Another severe and 'pandemic' (Dike 2005) problem in Nigeria is high levels of corruption and looting of state resources, which exacerbates all types of conflict and turmoil. Although the country is "richly endowed with natural resources and high-quality human capital" (Ogbeidi 2012:1), corruption is one of the major factors limiting the country's progress. Poverty and bitter wrath are unavoidable parts of daily socio-economic and political life due to the capture of state resources by particular hands. Despite the fact that corruption is not unique to Nigeria, several sources refer to it as the 'bane of the country' (Dike 2005; Ogbeidi 2012:21). The key questions within the purview of this article are: to what extent are the conflicts in Nigeria driven or motivated by ethnic proclivities? How linked are the conflicts in Nigeria to Samuel Huntington's theories? If the theories apply to Nigeria's context, what then are the predictors with regards to future conflicts? With the use of the secondary data, this work attempts to provide answers to these questions.

Conceptual Analysis Civilization

A civilization is generally defined as an advanced state of human society containing highly developed forms of government, culture, industry, and common social norms. Of course, not all scholars agree with this definition. In fact, there is much debate over what constitutes a civilization and what does not. Furthermore, who determines what is 'advanced' and what is not? (Sullivan, 2001).

There seems to be a bit of subjectivity involved. So yes, on the one hand, this is a bit of a tricky issue. On the other, the general consensus defines civilization in much the same way as I just described. The definition I provided is typically along the lines of what you would see in a dictionary or textbook. So, even if it is an oversimplification, it is the commonly understood definition, and for our purposes, we'll just go with it (Sullivan, 2021). The word itself comes from the Latin root civilis, meaning civil. The word 'civilization' first began appearing during the Enlightenment. If you're familiar with the Enlightenment, this is not surprising. The Enlightenment was all about civilizing humankind, using reason, education, and science to bring people up to a high state of human functioning (Sullivan, 2021).

Ethnicity

Brumfiel (2001) explains that ethnicity is an identity based upon a presumption of shared history and common cultural inheritance. Ethnic identity is shaped by both ethnic affiliation and ethnic attribution. Ethnic affiliation refers to individuals' own sense of group membership and the characteristics of the group as defined by its members. Ethnic attribution concerns the characteristics of the group as defined by outsiders.

Identity

In defining Identity, Haldin and Opeyemi (2016) explain that, "from a socio-political perspective, 'identity' bears a personal and a social meaning. Processes related to identity are 'located at the core of the individual and yet in the core of his community culture' (Erikson 1968:57; Okpanachi 2010). Thus, identity can be said to be an individual's 'sense of belonging to a group if (it) influences his political behavior' (Erikson 1968:57; Mary Anderson 2010; Okpanachi 2010). Identity is built into an individual's physiological 'givens' and in social roles (Erikson 1968:57; Okpanachi 2010). Identity is characterised by features such as an 'emotive tie to a group', 'love and belief for a group', 'pledge to a cause', and 'commitments and duties to a group' with which a person identifies (Smyth and Robinson 2001:7-11; Okpanachi 2010)."

General studies in identity underscore the fact that identity implies similarity and contrast at the same time (Jenkins 2004; Okpanachi 2010). 'For an individual, or for a group, there may be a plurality of identities. Yet, such a plurality is a source of stress and contradiction in both self-representation and social action. This is because identity must be distinguished from role-sets' (Okpanachi 2010). theoretical framework: the origins and evolution of the 'clash of civilizations'

a) The Clash of Civilizations

Quite obviously, this work builds its basic schematics on Samuel Huntington's thesis on the Clash of Civilization. In the simplest terms, it establishes that many conflicts in Nigeria are ramified by identity and ethnicity rather than ideology. This work will straddle the aforementioned framework. In a speech at Johns Hopkins University in 1957, British orientalist Bernard Lewis (1990) was the first to claim that there was a "clash of civilizations." According to Lewis, Islam and the West have opposing principles that can only be addressed via confrontation. Lewis' argument, on the other hand, did not cause much of a stir at first. Given that the principal foreign policy challenge faced the West in the late 1950s was dealing with what was popularly viewed as an expansionist Soviet Union, this was hardly surprising. Lewis's clash of civilizations had become a battle of civilizations four decades later.

This was the thesis of Samuel Huntington, who claimed that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, a collision between the West and the 'Muslim world' would be the primary foreign policy issue for the US (and the West in general). Huntington, like Lewis 40 years before, argued that one of the two 'sides' was ideationally destined to triumph over the other. They would not be able to work together to solve humanity's many issues due to their differing values (such as climate change, poverty, and gender inequality).

The relationship between a scientific argument relating to, and popular understanding of, a phenomenon is not always evident. If things had gone differently, Huntington's ideas on the 'clash of civilizations' would have sparked only a few academic debates, with little impact on policymakers or popular understanding of how the world works. However, the events of 9/11 elevated Huntington's views to the foreground. Others had preceded the 9/11 attacks, which may be considered as early indicators of a 'civilizational conflict' between the West and the Muslim world in retrospect. In 1993, a terrorist attack on the Twin Towers was followed by attacks on two US embassies in Africa in 1998. Some saw the 1993 and 1998 attacks, as well as 9/11, as obvious evidence that Islamist radicals were eager to push the "clash of civilizations" to the point of open conflict with the United States.

The "new world" that Huntington was referring to in the above quotation was the brief but eventful period following the Cold War when the Soviet Union fell apart and the West—led by the US government—sought to export its understanding of democracy and human rights to much of the rest of the world more quickly. 3 This attempt to establish a "new world order" was misguided, not least because it featured Western, primarily American, efforts to disseminate American/Western principles such as democracy, individualistic human rights, and the rule of law; in other words, Western-style modernisation.

b) Constructivism

The Constructivist theory was first introduced to international relations through Nicholas G. Onuf's 1989 book 'World of Our Making'. Onuf and other early scholars who built the theoretical foundations of constructivism in international relations first established that norms matter in this context. Shared ideas form the bedrock of motivations, not raw nature, or the arbitrary state. Social interactions lead to structures. States pretend that society is anarchic, and so respond or behave anarchically. What makes the United States the United States, or what makes Nigeria Nigeria? Structures, systems? No. It is shared identity, values, norms and beliefs. This theory will be the main theory upon which our work will be based since it is relationally most linked to Huntington's thesis on the basis for conflict which are

identity-based. Even if the state dies, the identity remains. The USSR failed, not because it was disbanded, but because people stopped believing in it. Fragmented beliefs and identity systems in the USSR ultimately broke it, not anarchy. Reality reflects our beliefs and vice versa. Through this, Realism and Liberalism are rejected. If the US and Russia (USSR0 decided they were no longer enemies, then they cease to be enemies. In Nigeria for instance, we conglomerate around a common value: sports, many other factors divide us.

Constructivists argue that states can have multiple identities that are socially constructed through interaction with other actors. Identities are representations of an actor's understanding of who they are, which in turn signals their interests. They are important to constructivists as they argue that identities constitute interests and actions. For example, the identity of a small state implies a set of interests that are different from those implied by the identity of a large state. The small state is arguably more focused on its survival, whereas the large state is concerned with dominating global political, economic and military affairs.

It should be noted, though, that the actions of a state should be aligned with its identity. A state can thus not act contrary to its identity because this will call into question the validity of the identity, including its preferences. This issue might explain why Germany, despite being a great power with a leading global economy, did not become a military power in the second half of the twentieth century. Following the atrocities of Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime during the Second World War, German political identity shifted from one of militarism to pacifism due to unique historical circumstances.

The Theory of Clash of Civilizations

Over the last two decades, many thinkers have pondered on how the end of the Cold War has altered world politics. Many people have wondered what new systems are being developed. There is a lot of debate over how to explain how the world works in terms of global politics at its most fundamental level. Many academics are challenging the importance and influence of nation states. Samuel Huntington began looking for new approaches to understand the causes of conflict in the late 1980s and early 1990s. His concept was dubbed "the collision of civilizations." The fundamental source of conflict under the new world order, according to Huntington, would neither be ideological or economic. Huntington, on the other hand, proposes that the dominant source of conflict will be cultural.

He admits that nation states will continue to be the most powerful actors in international affairs, but that global political problems will be mostly caused by civilizational differences. Huntington hypothesized that nation-states were losing their clout, claiming

that they were no longer representative of actual borders. "Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and probably Africa," Huntington classifies the world into eight civilizational groups. (Huntington, 1993, The Clash of Civilizations) Huntington includes Africa because, despite a lack of cohesion among African countries, they share cultural linkages. There is no central state to guide and link the potential African civilisation together, and the culture foundation is more heterogeneous.

These civilizations may appear to be just another sociological way of classifying people, but according to Huntington, "Civilizations are nonetheless meaningful things, and while the borders between them are rarely crisp, they are genuine." (p. 24 in Huntington, 1993). Multiple nation-state entities have fought in the previous several centuries, which Huntington aims to explain with civilizations. Civilizational commonality is a technique of categorizing nations that have similar cultural identities, such as ethnicity, religion, history, and values, as well as economics. Huntington claims that people are bound together by their core cultural roots in ways that no nation-state can hope to attain.

Within their culture, people naturally think similarly and have a lot more in common than they would with people from different civilizations. People that have a common cultural heritage, way of thinking, and worldview are more likely to be loyal to one another than those who are simply brought together in a nation-state by boundaries drawn on a map. "These distinctions are the result of centuries of evolution. They aren't going anywhere anytime soon." (Huntington, 1993, p. 25).

‘Clash Of Civilizations’ and the Conflicts in Nigeria: Application of Samuel Huntington’s Conflict Theory

In addition to the definition of Identity provided above, the researcher also needs to explain the reality of identity with an analogy. When, as a Yoruba, you travel to China, you are likelier to build a relationship with any black-skinned person encountered; when you come down to the Johannesburg, any West African is a brother or sister. When you come down to Accra, any Nigerian is kin; if the journey takes you to however to Kano State, any Yoruba man is a brother, but in Kwara State, mostly those from your home town are kin. The theory therefore is, the farther from home one goes, the wider the sphere of affiliation. This sphere of affiliation often exacerbates conflict through its lens on identity, thus, lending some credence to Samuel Huntington’s theory.

In Nigeria, no discussion of the country would be complete without mentioning religion. This is due to the fact that the Nigerian state is made up of a complicated network of ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. Its more than 216 million people are

split between a Christian-dominated south and a Muslim-dominated north by a geographical and religious fault line. However, religion in Nigeria is mainly mentioned in negative terms at various levels, or rather, historical events related to religion tend to favor its negative rather than good contributions to the Nigerian state.

The Jihad, civil war propaganda, Shari'ah law debate, tensions sparked by Nigeria's accession to the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), and the continual religious conflicts that have consumed the Northern region of the country, primarily, all point to religion's negative impact in Nigeria. Indeed, religious violence has long been associated with Islam in Nigeria and elsewhere. "In general, Islam in Northern Nigeria has experienced moments of radicalization or violent outburst".

The rapid growth of radical religious fundamentalist groups in Nigeria, which "are unified in the ultimate goal of establishing Nigeria as an Islamic state", is particularly concerning. The Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), led by Sheik Ibrahim El-Zakzakky;

Boko Haram, led by the late Mohammed Yusuf; Kala-Kato, led by Mallam Badamasi; Darul- Islam, led by Aminu Bashir Abdullahi; Ahmadiya Movement, led by Al Gulam; Khadiriyyha, led by Nasir Kabara; Salafiya (or Izala), led by Late Ab Some of these cults' actions are now threatening the Nigerian state's legitimacy, as well as the safety of its inhabitants' lives and property.

Boko Haram, with its severe extremism, is the sect with which Nigeria's security system has been battling. Boko Haram's ideological goal is to topple the Nigerian state and its Western values, then establish strict Islamic Shariah law over the country. This is a violent retaliation against Nigeria's mostly westernized state. There is a clear collision of civilizations going on. In fact, the West's efforts to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values, to retain its military superiority, and to further its economic interests have prompted counter-reactions. As a result, the advent of Boko Haram, with its violent anti-Western beliefs, is a counter-response to Western civilisation, which is rapidly overwhelming other civilizations, such as Islamic civilization.

For the researcher, there is an overwhelming connection between Huntington’s thesis on the Clash of Civilisations and the extent to which it applies to Nigeria. Despite the debate sparked by Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations" thesis on global politics and cultural conflict dynamics, its relevance in diverse contexts like Nigeria remained underexplored. Nigeria's socio-cultural heterogeneity is evident in identity-based conflicts, such as the conflicts between Tiv-Jukun conflict, Ife-Modakeke conflict, Jos North-Jos South conflict, Umueri-Aguleri conflict and even the Biafra secessionist

movement and ongoing regional and religious clashes in places like Southern Kaduna, illustrating struggles for resource control and identity among various groups. This research clearly demonstrates that most conflicts in Nigeria are fought along ethno-religious lines. The root causes of the conflicts however, may not be always pinned to the socio-cultural divides, but to other factors such as resource control, political, socio-cultural, economic, etc. The ethno-religious conflicts are merely modes of expression.

Huntington's theory posits that future global conflicts will be cultural rather than ideological or economic, centered on civilizational fault lines. Scholars have debated its applicability, particularly regarding Islam and the West. In Nigeria however, we have seen in this research that though civilizational clashes are replete, they have little to do with the post-cold war sequence of Samuel Huntington.

Conclusion

Huntington's reasoning is compelling but insufficient to explain conflicts in the new world order, according to this study. "Culture and cultural identities, which are civilizational identities at their broadest level," he claims, "are creating patterns of cohesion, dissolution, and conflict in the post-Cold War era" (Huntington 1996, 20). He did not, however, provide a quantitative study of the argument. He solely gave case studies and provided qualitative analysis as a back-up. Many studies, including this one, have been carried out in response to his clash of civilizations concept, with post-Cold War hostilities being quantitatively evaluated. None of these researches has discovered evidence to back up Huntington's claims. This study's findings show that a difference in civilization isn't enough to comprehend what causes conflicts nowadays, nor does it have a good impact on military conflicts.

In Africa and Nigeria particularly, identity-based conflicts as propounded by Huntington accounts for the cause of more than 85% of conflicts, the researcher nonetheless, agrees with Suberu (2005) who argues that the absence of vehicles of social control that were characteristic of traditional African societies, such as kinship, religious and political systems concerned with the well-being of the community, has led to the escalation of ethno-religious conflicts. The failure of these institutions is partly to blame for the ethnic and communal conflicts witnessed in Nigeria today. Broken families and the inability to make ends meet in many homes have led to an increase in the level of immorality while at the same time providing a reservoir of youths who readily take up arms to execute ethno-religious conflicts at a fee.

Recommendations

i. Federal and State Governments to Incorporate Cultural Awareness Programs: Given the strong consensus on the importance of cultural distinctions, it is recommended that cultural awareness programs be integrated into conflict resolution strategies. These programs should focus on promoting mutual respect and understanding of different cultural entities within Nigeria.

ii. Education and Engagement Initiatives: With a significant portion of the population being young and educated, educational initiatives that emphasize the historical and cultural contexts of various groups should be implemented. Engagement through dialogues and educational forums can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of diversity.

iii. Strengthening of Marital and Community Ties: Considering the high percentage of married respondents, leveraging marital and community structures to promote peace and conflict resolution can be effective. Community leaders and marital counselors can play pivotal roles in mediating and resolving conflicts at the grassroots level.

iv. Utilization of Huntington's Framework in Policy Formulation: Policymakers should consider incorporating the principles of Huntington's thesis into national and regional policies. This includes recognizing the inevitability of cultural clashes and proactively addressing potential conflict triggers through inclusive and representative governance.

v. Promotion of Interfaith and Interethnic Dialogues: To address the religious and ethnic dimensions of conflicts, organized interfaith and interethnic dialogues should be promoted. These dialogues can help bridge gaps, reduce misunderstandings, and build trust among different groups.

vi. Implementation of Comprehensive Conflict Resolution Training: Training programs based on Huntington's framework should be developed for conflict resolution practitioners. These programs should equip practitioners with the skills to identify and address the underlying cultural factors contributing to conflicts.

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AFRICA DEMOCRATIZATION: TRENDS AND IMPACTS ON THE POLITICAL INSTITUTION OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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Abstract

The collapse of authoritarian and monarchical leadership in most Sub-Saharan African countries gave rise to democracy. Many African countries look up to Nigeria, the giant of Africa, to exhibit laudable political values, but the reverse is the case, and it is faced with many challenges. The paper will examine the strength of democracy, the factors that have impeded the democratic process, and why democracy is less responsive to its citizens in some Sub-Saharan Africa. The paper adopted secondary data from reviewing several components of literature from journals, working papers, and other published work to analyse the impacts of the third wave of democracy on Sub-Saharan Africa. Aftermath-appropriate social science theory gave a philosophical interpretation of democracy in contemporary societies. This paper seeks to answer questions such as: What are the nature and characteristics of Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa? How has democracy impacted Sub-Saharan Africa? What factors threaten the achievements of the Democracy of Sub-Saharan Africa? Furthermore, what measures can be adopted to ensure Liberal Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa? Conclusively, democracy provides voice and openness in selecting leadership and fosters development in these regions. The paper also proffers measures such as strengthening democratic institutions, enhancing judiciary independence, and recognizing the consciousness of the political will of office-bearers and electorates, which can be adopted to curb the challenge of 'fallen democracy' in the Pan-African political sphere.

Keywords: Democracy, Development, Electorates, Election

Introduction

Democracy is defined by the Greek word "Demos," meaning people, and "Kratos," meaning rule. It was correlating the Greek words that gave birth to "democracy," a form of government/leadership of the people and by the people. This form of government accommodates people in African leadership's political decisions that involve the ruler and his subjects. Arguably, the only disparity between the two leadership models is structural differentiation. The institutional arrangement in the democratic systems of government entails the representation of citizens in decision-making because institutions are more responsive and transparent in addressing the plights of their citizens or subjects. It is generic that every leadership takes just a few leaders, and the majority are ruled.

Notably, the central premise of Western democracy is "winner takes all, and it also can be described as "a game of numbers." The results of an election can be challenged by an opposition leader or political party in cases where there is rigging, electoral malpractice, and manipulated elections. The African societies based the leadership selection on commensalism; the consensual choices were made to represent a sizeable societal order in the context referred to as Cultural Democracy. The African Cultural Democracy has found that people's openness and participation in decision-making entails decentralizing the traditional hierarchy/leadership to several sub-structures representing the people. Cultural Democracy means fairness because there is non-monetization of political positions. High moral standards characterized the leadership ideology because oat was taken in or before a deity to ensure responsive and transparent leadership to promote societal development. The distortion of the cultural democracy gave birth to Western-style Democracy in Africa.

Nature of Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa

After 1960, most African countries gained independence. Still, from 1980 to date, African countries faced changes in political culture due to strict orders, hijacking of power, political anarchy, ethnic/political differences, militarism, and coups. "Democracy" was an option espoused to ensure leverage to the fundamental human rights of citizens in the affected societies. The leadership is more authoritarian, and the government endorses policies that implicitly or explicitly affect the development of the African states irrespective of the minds of the masses (Bates & Hoefler, 2012). The pitfalls of this leadership style have caused unrest and an uprising in Sub-Saharan Africa.

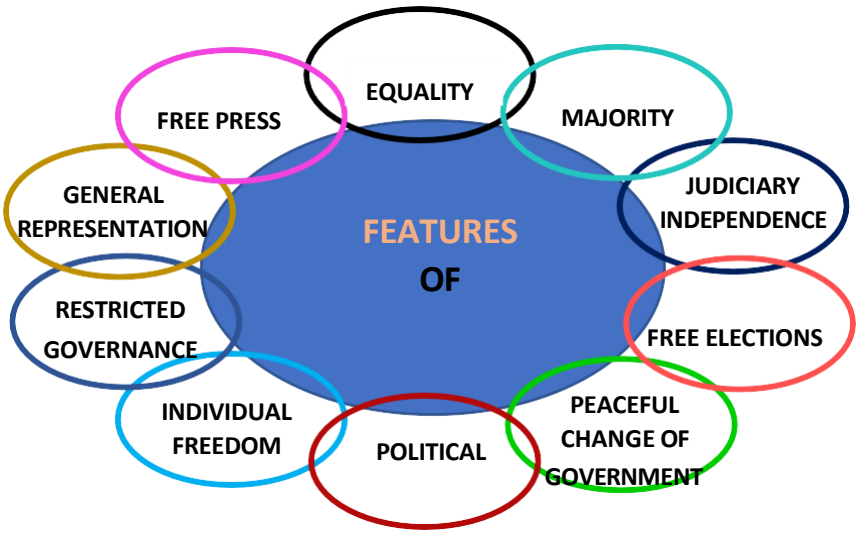


Figure 1: Features of Democracy

The principle of government of the people by the people and for the people articulated by Abraham Lincon is globally recognized in Africa's democratic success. Democracy may take any form, including Direct, Representative, Constitutional, Parliamentary, or Monitory. In the history of African politics, Botswana and Mauritius are the first democracies on the African continent and still maintain a high regard for political rights regarding economic policies. Direct democracy could be referred to as Athenian Democracy; it was first invented by Cleisthenes in 507 B.C. and adopted in Athens (Ancient Rome) to elect leaders with universal suffrage given to only male citizens. This form of democracy allows the electorate to decide on policy initiatives without elected representatives. The Greek system of direct democracy gave the way for representative democracy across the globe. Representative democracy implies electing credible leaders to represent citizens' interests, ideas, and voices via voting. It is an indirect democracy where the people's representatives hold sovereignty. Countries like the U.S.A, Germany, and Mexico practice represented democracy.

Consequently, Britain is the birthplace of Parliamentary Democracy, commonly characterized by freedom of speech and the rule of law. Parliamentary democracy is practiced in countries like Hungary, Pakistan, and Singapore, to mention a few. Constitutional Democracy has almost the same tenets as the represented democracy. The authority of the majority is limited by legal and institutional resources, and the fundamental rights of individuals and minorities are respected. Countries like Australia, South Korea, Malaysia, Germany, Israel, Japan, the United States, and many others

practice this form of democracy. Then, the Monitory democracy is characterized by election monitoring, workplace codetermination, and participatory budgeting to ensure credibility. The monitory mechanism shows that everything is wrong with the political structure (Keane, 2018).

The United States and European Union democracies deeply regard human rights and promote the rule of law (Dahl, 2006). The success of democracy in Western countries prompted most African countries to democratize. Several scholars have investigated a similar matter and argued in diverse ways. Jane (2000) argued that democracy in most African countries is still in its infancy phase, struggling to consolidate its democracies. Mushi and Osman (2008) asserted that liberal democracy failed in many parts of Africa mainly because the Western political parties aggregated primarily with class interest. In the Scholars' view, some of the premises of democracy, such as the multi-party systems, could not be appropriate for contesting leadership positions due to African society's diverse indigenous cultural values. The numerous ethnic groups, religions, and tribes make the electoral process cumbersome, and the outcomes degenerate into ethnic or communal conflicts and clashes.

In a nutshell, Sub-Saharan society's complexity poses many challenges to democracy. The monetization of political positions in Sub-Saharan Africa has also impeded individual interest during selection. Monetizing leadership positions has violated the main characteristics of modern democracy, which support the active participation of citizens in the selection of leaders via free and fair elections.

The Character of Democracy in Pan-African States

Democracy overrides the authoritarian rule central to African polities during Cold War II. The end of colonial rule in the late 1950s ushered in a new leadership system for independent African states with a modern framework. Sub-Saharan Africa comprises forty-six (46) countries, including Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Ethiopia, Senegal, and many others. Countries like Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, Ghana, and Tanzania, to mention a few, can also be referred to as Pan-African States because they actively support the political independence of African states, and freedom against colonial rule has played fundamental roles in Africa's democratization and commonality. Africa's most accessible attempt to adopt a democratic government after the 1960s failed due to the anti-democratic alliance between Africa and the ruling government. Rivals were slanted by other forms of rulership like militarism, coup d'état, authoritarianism, and a party system.

After the Berlin War, political evolution propelled the World Bank to recommend good governance to the African nations. The third global democracy wave that cut across

Africa in the early 1990s provided opportunities for African continents to explore democracy and its impact on the socio-economic development of Africa. Democracy in African countries such as Nigeria differs from Western democracy because unfair elections and results, tyranny, and dictatorship commonly characterize it (Oluwale, 2005). It is deeply rooted in corruption, poor governance, and service delivery. Since 1990, the need for liberal democracy has been suggested to provide a laudable form of leadership to promote good governance.

Since the early 19th century, Western Countries have promoted democracy as a human form of government or leadership that will encourage swift development, maintain a stable political structure, and promote equality and the right to participate in political decisions. The multi-party elections in African societies like Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, and others have given people from several ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds the right to participate in the selection process. The main idea was to enhance the structure and substructures of African politics, but the reverse was the case. The resultant impact has been intimidation, impeding citizen's fundamental human rights (the rule of law), and the masses' impoverishment in the selection process. The character of democracy is a foreign/modern way of rulership that has displaced African cultural leaders, referred to as traditional or monarchial forms of leadership, and military regimes have interfered intermittently on many occasions.

Kenya was under British rule during the colonial epoch, adopted a multiparty election system in 1991, and had its first election in 1992. Still, the elections were marred by electoral irregularities, political violence caused by ethnic tension, and accusations of rigging by the then-ruling government, Kenya African National Union (KANU). Since then, it has had one election after another, and new leaders emerged. Historically, Kenya's democratic experience is marked by periods of authoritarianism, ethnic tension, and electoral violence. Nevertheless, it has also made a giant strike by transiting from a one-party system to a multi-party democracy, constitutional reforms, and transitional of power. Regardless, most of the elections were characterized by a marred electoral process.

Also, Senegal's democratic process has attested to a long-standing trait. In the colonial era, it was under a French colony but gained independence from France in 1960. Senegal adopted a semi-presidential system of government with a multi-party system in its early years of independence. Afterward, there was a peaceful transition of power, and adopting democratic principles showed commitment. Henceforth, Senegal's elections have been characterized by fraud and post-election violence/unrest. Aside from some of these ill outcomes, Senegal has experienced a peaceful transfer of powers countless times, which is rare in most African countries. Notably, Senegal's arms of government, which include the judiciary and elected members, have demonstrated resilience and

independence, unlike other African countries where these political institutions are compromised. These have contributed to a smooth transition of power and its democratic stability.

Ghana, then known as the 'Gold Coast' under the British colony, also struggled for independence. It became the first African nation in the South of the Sahara to gain independence from colonial rule. It was a watershed for Ghana, and its initial democratic structure was a one-party state that transitioned to multi-party elections. Ghana's democratic rules were marked by authoritarian rule from several successive governments**.** Consequently, since the fourth republic in 1992, Ghana has experienced various peaceful power handovers, supported by the appropriate political institutions demonstrating independence in conducting these elections to ensure free and fair elections, thereby maintaining the rule of law (Ayee, 2011). On the contrary, Ghana's democratization is marred by several challenges, such as corruption and political unrest due to disputes over results.

Effects of Democracy

The impacts of democracy encompass the negative and positive impulses released by its outcome in society. The SWOT analysis below holistically represents the achievements, challenges, prospects, and menace of democracy in African communities.



Figure 2: Positivity and Tests of Democracy

Table 1.1: SWOT Analysis Showing the Impact of Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa

Strength	**Weakness**
• Transition of one government administration to another via voting. • Willingness to support. the system of governance • Credible elected representatives. • De-monopolization of power. • Respect for human rights. • Conflict resolution. • It is a constitutional base idea.	• Voting the wrong people into office • Lack of Political Will • Lack of equitable distribution of wealth • It is a fragile political system • The governed are marginalized and side-lined. • Manipulation by political actors • Disenfranchising of credible electorates
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Good governance • Socio-economic development • Freedom of speech • The rule of law • Equity • Check and balances in the system • Free and fair election	• Illiteracy • Religious fanatism • Lack of trait inclusiveness • Restiveness and war • Lack of unity • Corruption • Violation of the fundamental human rights of the electorates

Source: From Review of Strands of Literature (Oguine & Loko, 2022)

Several countries have adopted the democratic form of government, and as such, the tenets of democracy are similar. The SWOT analysis showed that development and growth are essential to democratic societies. Still, achievements could differ due to disparities in cultural and socio- economic backgrounds, political structure, and the Political Will of the elected. It is imperative to examine the impact of the new form of government on the citizens and the developmental process of the countries. In as much power is invested in the people elected to occupy certain leadership positions in a country, there must be indices to show the performance of these elected persons and how the decisions affect the people's lives. There are generic features that could represent the benefits of democracy in most countries: freedom of speech, human rights laws, Rule of Law, and equality, to mention a few. The similarity of the tenets of democracy has helped to harness the ideology through a consensus-building process.

"Every coin has a flip side," therefore adjudicating from the other side of the coin the lack of equitable distribution of wealth in society is a discernment of the premise of

democracy. The disparity between the haves and the have-nots, the leaders, and the citizens undermines the democratic process. Consequently, strata polarization explains the gap between the poor and the rich. Due to political inequality, the subjects (masses) occupy most of the country's population. The rich are very few, mainly those in leadership, who participate in the decision-making. The citizens are subjugated to unfair rules and policies without due consultation.

Challenges in Democracy in Sub-Sahara Africa

Despite its uniqueness, political development evolution has propelled challenges in democracy in Sub-Sahara Africa. In a democratic leadership system, the practice supports and accommodates the elected to remain in office for four years with a maximum of two tenures. Consequently, several strands of literature show that several factors, including corruption, intimidation, and ethno-religious sentiments, have threatened African democracy. Still, the malfunction of democracy in Africa also boils down to the monetization of leadership positions in Sub-Saharan Africa; this has deprived minorities of a fair chance to participate, especially in terms of vying for a political post.

Furthermore, discrimination against women and gender insensitivity are factors that have threatened democracy in Sub-Saharan States. Arguably, the return of the Athenian leadership style seems to affect women's participation in politics universally. In the 21st century, the contentious issue of gender inclusiveness is no longer discrimination against the female electorate but female contestants. Despite all of these challenges, citizens expect good governance. These factors, as mentioned earlier, have violated the characteristics of modern democracy.

Theoretical Framework

In analysing democracy in Africa, the Elite theory best explains the process. The elite approach of the state seeks to describe and explain power relationships in contemporary society. The theory postulates that the minorities, which consist of members of the economic elite and the policy-planning systems, hold the most power and argues that this power is independent of democratic elections. (Gilens & Page, 2014). It is a standard view of Marxist-inspired elite theorists, who argue that democracy is either a utopian folly that typically describes an imaginary community or society that possesses highly desirable or nearly perfect qualities for its members (Giroux, 2003). It is traditionally viewed in the traditional Italian tradition that democracy is not realizable within capitalism in its idealized form.

The essential features of this theory are that power is concentrated, the elites are unified, and the non-elites are diverse and powerless. The elites' interests are unified due to common backgrounds and positions, and the defining characteristic of power is institutional position (Deric, 2011). The theory posited that societies are ruled by small, powerful elites who hold disproportionate influence over political and economic decisions. The elites employ their wealth, resources, and power to marginalize the electorates and the opposition party and pervert justice to suit their curiosity. This perspective emphasizes the concentration of power in the hands of a few; it then argues that democratic processes may be a façade for elite control. This has sabotaged the central tenets of democracy, and it is one of the main reasons for conflicts and all manner of coups in Africa.

Inference

In many Sub-Saharan African countries, democracy has made notable progress, particularly since the 1990s, when the wave of democratization spread across the region. Countries like Ghana, Senegal, and Ethiopia stand out in terms of relative democratic stability and consolidation. These nations have had regular free and fair elections, are known for peaceful transitions of power, and established functioning institutions, such as an independent electoral commission, judiciary system, and people. Consequently, another big question is whether these political institutions and people are independent. In the African context, democracy has continued to lose its tenets and values due to primordial sentiments, cultural/political alienation, ill attitudes, and the mindset of the candidates vying for political office and the electorates. The primordial ideas surrounding religion, ethnicity, and gender have influenced voting in favour of an inept government.

These gaps have thrown most African countries into economic regression that could take decades to correct. Ghana's democratic experience is Africa's most successful in terms of peaceful shift of power to another person. However, political unrest remains because of a lack of transparency regarding the election results. In a democratic nation, votes command power, and powers are derived from the consent of the governed. This determines who occupies certain positions in government to bring or support positive change in society. In the 18th century, the core of Thomas Jefferson's political thought argued that the government of his choice would respect the authority of individual states, operate with a small bureaucracy, and cut its debt. Amidst the shortcomings of the form of government, he opined that the word democracy feels uncomfortable in the mouth and tastes like ashes as if the beautiful dream it once contained has been burnt out by political reaction and cynicism because it promotes something closer to its opposite (Riley, 2007).

Until now, countries like Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Uganda are engrossed with weak institutions, electoral fraud, corruption, authoritarian tendencies, and thwarting and monetizing political posts and votes, resulting in electoral manipulations and the entrenchment of long-term leaders. In African democratic political structures, these gaps have weakened democratic norms and stifled political pluralism. From the electorate's viewpoint, the votes count, but this seems to make electorate votes meaningless and invalid, thereby violating the principle of democracy. Democracy has expanded and deepened in many countries, regions, and continents. As mentioned earlier, using the SWOTH Analysis, every country's democracy has strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In all ramifications, democracy is better than monarchy, autocracy, totalitarianism, or dictatorship.

Way forward

In democracies, the democratic decline is caused by the state-led weakening of political institutions that sustain the democratic system. Every epoch has challenges that demand a specific response and approach. Democracy is a form of government introduced to the African continent to give people the right to participate in politics and decision-making. The wave of democratic revolution surge in the early 1990s was compelled to adopt the multi-system to give citizens the right to select a leader via voting (universal suffrage). Since the early 1990s, African countries have adopted democratic leadership and many reforms to provide fairness and development, but the impact has not been felt in most African countries like Nigeria.

Hypothetically, there is no perfect system of government, including democracy. Citizens would prefer democracy because it entails serving the people and implementing the Constitution instead of being ruled over. Most sub-African states have made giant strides towards multiparty democracy, constitutional reform, and peaceful transition of power. The path to democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa requires a complex approach that strengthens institutions, promotes participation, ensures transparency, and addresses multiparty discrepancies. African democracy will continue evolving and progressing by firming up democratic institutions to create reforms supporting free, fair, and transparent elections. Also, judiciary independence should be encouraged to uphold the rule of law and protect the rights of the citizens. Judicial appointments and activities should be free from political interference to ensure free and fair judgments on issues relating to election irregularities.

Democracy is meant for “man.” Supporting and defending its value will entail maintaining objective standards and values such as liberty, religious tolerance, rationalism, trait inclusiveness, fraternity, constitutional governance, and secularism, regardless of anti- democracy groups in disguise. The "Constitution" is supreme in true

democracy; all individual rights are equally protected under the law. It should be implemented in all decision-making to avoid trampling on the rights of individuals in the lower strata. Furthermore, the tenet consciousness of politicians and the electorates is crucial to achieving these goals and securing a brighter democratic future for countries in the Sub-Sahara region.

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THE PULPIT AND THE PEACE: A STUDY OF CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ABUJA IN PEACEBUILDING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

It is inconceivable to engage in peacebuilding discussions without crediting religious institutions' efforts due to their considerable influence. This is particularly true in Abuja where the changing cultural, economic, political, and social realities have complexified the Catholic approach to building peace and community development. The paper examined the impact of the initiatives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja in peacebuilding and community development with special reference to education, healthcare, and environmental protection. The paper employed a qualitative research design. The study's sample comprised 48 interviewees and discussants purposively selected from the diverse cohort of Abuja residents using the snowball technique. Primary data were collected using participant observation and interviews conducted with the clergy, laity, and community members. The paper also relied on relevant publications as secondary sources of data. The data were subjected to context analysis. It was found that certain characteristics of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja make it possible for it to build peace and develop communities. These characteristics include a wide network of population of Church members, access to different levels of authority, policymakers, and powerbrokers. The archdiocesan peacebuilding and community development initiatives have helped to mitigate tension and prevent violence in Abuja. The paper therefore recommends a scaling up of the climate change programmes, a downward review of the costs of its education and health services, and the establishment of vocational training institutions in collaboration with other organisations.

Keywords: Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja, Community Development, Peacebuilding

Introduction

Nigeria is experiencing an increased perpetration of violence through acts of conflict, terrorism, and ethno-religious crisis in many places. These deeds have defiled the peace of the nation and brought suffering to residents. This is evident in Nigeria's capital where banditry, armed robbery, bombing, kidnapping, 'one chance', human trafficking, insecurity, terrorism, and other social vices have become prevalent. In the plethora of these acts of violence, peace is an essential commodity sought after. Peace and development are like Siamese twins. Sustainable development and self-reliance cannot be attained in a violent atmosphere. Without peace, all other goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be impossible to achieve. Adams and Nwosu (2024) allude to the nexus between peace and development and assert that imbibing a culture of peace is the root of peaceful coexistence and development. The duo further posits that peace is cardinal and germane to the issue of development of any society and sustainable development programmes and projects can only be implemented in an atmosphere of peace.

Faith practice has long been influential and fundamental to most people's lives in the pluralistic Nigerian capital. It is very much part of the culture, life, and tradition; and it is conspicuous in the nation's capital as "Houses of God" and other structures created for worship adorn the streets. Many residents believe that faith practice gives meaning, purpose, and direction to their existence. Religious letters, posters, signs, symbols, and stickers are often displayed in private and public places. Vehicles are frequently adorned with religious inscriptions such as *Abasi do, Alhamdulilahi, Chinememma, Oghenerukevwe, Oluwaseun,* etc. Popular Psalms on display include Psalm 21, Psalm 35, and Psalm 91.

The Catholic Church is a leading peacebuilding and development-oriented religious institution. It is the global institution at the forefront of the struggle to promote peace and justice based on the dignity of the human person. The Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja is part of the worldwide Catholic Church, under the spiritual leadership of the Pope, the Curia in Rome, and the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). It was erected in 1981 and elevated to Archdiocese in 1994 (CBCN, 2019). The archdiocese is led by an Archbishop and operates eight apostolic deaneries - Bwari, Gwagwalada, Garki, Karimo, Karu, Kubwa, Lugbe, and Wuse for administrative convenience.

The estimated Catholic population of Abuja is 550,115 (Kaigama, 2020). The archdiocese is blessed with an amazing array of institutional assets. Evidence of the archdiocesan peacebuilding institutions is broad, diverse, and eclectic. It comprises the clerics (Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, Archbishop of Abuja, Archbishop

emeritus, and auxiliary bishop). Furthermore, the social institutions also encompass development organisations (CAFOD, Caritas, and JDPC); and service organisations (Catholic Television, Radio Maria, and The Good Shepherd Newspapers). Others include specialised institutions (Lux Terra Leadership Foundation, Psycho-Spiritual Institute, Gaudium et Specs Institute), and lay apostolate Catholic organisations like the Catholic Men Organisation, Catholic Women Organisation, Catholic Youth Organisation, *Zumuntan Mata Katolica*, (indigenous Arewa Catholic Women's Group), as well as other base communities and solidarity groups. Each of these social institutions plays specific roles in the archdiocesan peacebuilding and community development continuum. These broad social institutions allow for seamless connections through official and unofficial structures, drawing upon diverse and pluralistic resources.

Conceptual Discourse and Theoretical Framework Community Development

Community development as a practice and academic discipline "to promote participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, equality, economic opportunity and social justice, through the organization, education and empowerment of people within communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in an urban and rural setting" (Jarikre, 2020). Community development is all about people with a sense of connection working towards a positive change. The change is about the empowerment of the community to improve the socioeconomic and environmental sustainability of the community. Equitable community development results in fewer crimes, less inequality among the populace, better jobs, a more skilled labour force, and fewer problems that affect inhabitants as a whole. Buye (2021) posits that community development is a positive change and value-based process that aims to address imbalances in welfare and power based on inclusion, human rights, social justice, equity, and equality. Through community development initiatives, community members can become more enlightened and empowered in diverse fields.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is not a novel phenomenon; it is as old as humankind. Since its inclusion in the United Nations Agenda for Peace peacebuilding has been gaining prominence and attention by scholars and policymakers (Moses, 2023). Long before it was widely accepted in the field of policymaking, the idea of peacebuilding was first presented in scholarly discourse by the Norwegian Professor Johan Galtung. Galtung is credited as the originator of the concept in his paper entitled, "Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding" (Galtung, 1976). While peacekeeping involves sending UN soldiers (peacekeepers) to the ground to calm unstable areas and guarantee that the peace process is completed, peacemaking involves stopping an

ongoing conflict to accomplish full reconciliation among rivals and new mutual understanding among parties and stakeholders through reconciliation, mediation, negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, regional agencies or arrangements, sanctions, blockading, and violent intervention. Galtung's third method for achieving peace is peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is a structural mechanism that addresses the immediate effects and underlying causes of violent conflict before, during, and after it occurs. It involves a wide range of initiatives by varied players in government and civil society at the local, national, and international levels (Galtung, 1976).

Schirch (2005) conceived peacebuilding as comprising activities seeking to foster relationships and prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to unrest. In a related discourse, Jarikre (2021) teased out that the increased frequency and enthusiasm in peacebuilding as reflected in the contemporary period gained impetus from the persistent search for strategic measures in the form of programmes, policies, and practices to wean fragmented elements and resolve the spectra of conflicts in various regions of the world as well as forestall the renewal of hostilities. Other coherent discussions by peacebuilding practitioners (Iroye and Ibebunjo) have highlighted the need to explore non-political avenues such as religion to promote and maintain peace among societies. Moreover, peace scholars like Orebiyi, (2016) and Nwosu and Orji (2023) argue that religious organisations can play a crucial role in pre-empting, preventing, or resolving violence by building lasting structures for peace.

Theoretical Framework

The paper is anchored on structural functionalism theory propounded by Emile Durkheim and Talcot Parson. The theory sees society as "a complex system" whose components work together to promote solidarity and stability. Durkheim wanted to understand what exactly keeps the society together and functional. At the core of structural functionalism is the very simple idea that all the parts of society work together to create a stable whole. Structural functionalism theory explains what keeps society stable. Violent conflicts and disasters happen in society, yet the society remains intact because the pieces of our society are interactive interdependent, and interconnected which creates stability. In essence, the proper functioning of each part of the society will ensure the well-being and survival of the whole society (Bothamley, 2004).

The Abuja archdiocese has adherents who are part of the social system and operate according to the beliefs and practices of the Church. The Archdiocese also participates in the operation of other social institutions like families, hospitals, schools, and

financial services, among others. This makes the Church a functional structure crucial to the smooth functioning of Abuja. Structural functionalism therefore offers adequate explanations for the existence and sustenance of the church and its impact on the development of environmental, educational, and health institutions in Abuja.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design using a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. The study's sample comprised 48 interviewees and discussants purposively selected from the diverse cohort of Abuja residents. A review of selected relevant literature was also adopted for this paper. Discussion of some literature was done and, in the process focusing on initiatives used in building structures for peace and community development. The paper used both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was obtained from participant observation and the conduct of semi-structured interviews and discussions with the clergy, laity, and community members in the six area councils of Abuja. The secondary data was from church bulletins, journals, diocesan reports, newsletters, and government sources. The paper used the snowball and purposive random sampling techniques to select interviewees.

Discussion

The Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja has gained prominence in the discourse and practice of peacebuilding and community development over many decades. The paper interrogates their activities in three core thematic areas: peacebuilding and community development through the provision of educational services; peacebuilding and community development through healthcare apostolate services; and peacebuilding and community development through tree planting.

1. Peacebuilding and Community Development through Educational Services Approach

Education is a fundamental human right and a catalytic investment for the equitable development of any nation. The core purpose of education is the acquisition of skills and competencies needed by humankind to effectively exploit and explore its environment (Clara, 2020). It is therefore not surprising that first-world nations allocate a large percentage of their national budget to education because of the link between education and development. Education is a smart power of the Catholic Church which she uses as a strategy of furthering the evangelizing mission and charity globally. The Universal Church is the largest non- governmental provider and maintenance of educational institutions in the world. Catholic educational institutions are a major contributor to the realisation of the fourth SDG which is strongly rooted in the provision

of access to quality education and ensuring that nobody is left behind. According to the Global Catholic Education Report (2023), the Catholic Church estimates that 34.6 million children were enrolled in Catholic primary schools in 2020, with 19.3 million children enrolled in Catholic secondary schools and 7.5 million children enrolled at the preschool level (Wodon, 2022).

Amidst societal upheaval and instability in Nigeria, schools have emerged as beacons of stability and resilience. The church recognises the value of investing in education to build a safer, more prosperous future for all, especially children at risk of being left behind. By establishing schools, people would be trained to have a broader worldview; and by so doing, sustainable peace will be propagated. Education, as earlier affirmed, has to do with "the development of the whole man; soul, body, intellect, will, emotion and physical wellbeing" (Arinze, 1965). Thus, the education initiatives of the Mother Church are identified as the greatest contribution of the Church to community and national development (Ohazurike, 2023). Catholic schools are the most crucial places for observing, guiding, advancing, inspiring, and motivating young people to become informed and active citizens. They provide important avenues for eradicating illiteracy and promoting peace messages and moral education to a large population of youths. The rules of the church govern the schools. The Abuja Archdiocese has oversight functions on all schools irrespective of whether the archdiocese owns them, set up by parishes, or congregations (Mbonu, 2020).

Nevertheless, from the perspective of an interviewee in Gwagwalada, there is a need for the church to establish technical and vocational centres as a way of increasing skills development and substantially reducing the proportion of youth not in employment, "We thank the church for building schools but our children have no work after schooling. The church should help us by building technical and vocational skills acquisition centres for employment and entrepreneurship."

2. Peacebuilding and Community Development through Healthcare Apostolate Services

Health and peace are interrelated. In the words of the Director-General of WHO, "There cannot be health without peace, and there cannot be steady peace without health." (Tedros, 2019). The United Nations established a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals to assist governments, businesses, and corporations build a more equitable and sustainable world (UN, 2015). These Global Goals provide an ambitious, comprehensive plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity and for ending the injustices that underpin poor health and development outcomes. Since the creation of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 there have been historic achievements in reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and tackling malaria, lasa fever,

and other debilitating diseases. Goal 3 is on Good Health and Wellbeing for all, including a bold commitment to end many diseases by 2030. It also aims to achieve universal health coverage and provide access to safe and effective medicines and vaccines for all (UN, 2015).

The health sector in Nigeria continues to face difficulties due to inadequate funding and a lack of adequately trained staff, especially in rural health centres. The archdiocese also offers free medical services to residents across the six area councils without discrimination against people from other faith communities (Afeni, 2021). Notwithstanding the efforts of the government to provide quality healthcare to people in Abuja, many poor individuals and communities are still left without access to basic healthcare services. Low per capita income raises the chances of violence (Collier, 2007). However, as Ogwuche (2024) asserted, being poor is not the problem, but rather the lack of access to realistic national opportunities as a result of exclusion that prevents discriminated groups from escaping poverty thereby breeding social discontent.

In recognition of the underinvestment and the attendant gap in healthcare services and furtherance of its mission in health apostolate, the archdiocese established many hospitals like St. Peters Catholic Hospital – Abaji; Saint Mary's Catholic Hospital, Gwagwalada; and Christ the King Church Clinic in Kubwa to bridge the deficiencies. There are 22 Catholic hospitals, and three other clinics operated by the archdiocese which have boosted medical services in their respective communities. For instance, St Mary's Catholic Hospital, Gwagwalada has rare and state-of-the-art equipment, where intractable medical cases are referred to from across the FCT and beyond (Nwekeaku and Christopher, 2021).

To promote health and wellness which are key indices of human development in society, Caritas Nigeria carries out routine medical outreach for people in the archdiocese. For instance, in September 2022 at St Gabriel's Catholic Chaplaincy, under Garki Deanery, over 350 children were attended to, and over 150 were given anti-malaria drugs, mosquito nets, worm expellers, blood tonics, and supplements for malnourished children (Andeh, 2021). Furthermore, the JDPC collaborated with the Health Commission through the Association of Catholic Medical Practitioners to conduct a medical outreach to the indigent communities of Mpape and Gishiri in July 2023. During these outreaches, a variety of medical tests such as blood tests and eye tests while community members received free medical counselling from professionals (JDPC, 2023a). The principles and approaches of ‘health for peace’ have been applied in interventions in several communities like Giri, Sheda, Kutunku Soho, as well as in IDP camps. Indeed, it will be a laborious task to discount the distinctive contributions of the Abuja Archdiocese in the provision of healthcare services to communities in the FCT.

Peacebuilding and Community Development through Tree Planting/Environmental Protection

Pope Francis's environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home) is undoubtedly one of the most important interventions in twenty-first-century campaigns for environmental peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is seen as any action meant for seeking peace but also geared towards building structures that promote peace. Tree planting is an investment in peace and development. Environmental protection is not the sole responsibility of the government. The government, organisations, and individuals have the joint responsibility of ensuring optimal care of the environment. God's people have the divine obligation to protect the environment. Genesis 2:15 says "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." Conflicts can arise when there is divergent use, access, and management of natural resources.

It could be recalled that in July 2023, the ninth Secretary-General of the UN, Antonio Guterres launched the New Agenda for Peace which outlines an ambitious and extensive set of recommendations that recognises the inter-linked nature of the plethora of challenges and what needs to be done to prevent violence and mitigate the risks (Gowan, 2023). The policy brief outlines that climate change is also generating social dynamics that will increase social tensions with a greater risk of insecurity if not well managed. The New Agenda for Peace places more emphasis on preventative peacebuilding and increased cooperation. Environmental protection and development can immeasurably assist in addressing the root causes of conflict.

Green Revolution Campaign

To mitigate climate change and environmental degradation and accelerate the green transition, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria proposed to plant 5.5 million trees to mitigate the effects of climate change in the country. There is a targeted engagement of stakeholders to build their confidence and capacity to use the tree-planting exercise as a confidence-building mechanism. Consequently, the Conference launched a tree-planting campaign tagged: the "Green Revolution Campaign". CBCN President, Rev. Lucius Ugorji said, "Over 50 dioceses of the church have been directed to plant 20,000 trees respectively stressing that this would ensure that at least 1.1 million trees are planted every year." The President explained that the project is geared towards saving the environment from imminent destruction due to the menace of climate change which manifests in the form of excessive rainfall, rising sea levels, floods, severe droughts, desert encroachment, loss of biodiversity, and conflicts due to scramble for shrinking agricultural and grazing lands.

The understanding of the impact of climate change in North Central Nigeria and its intersection with conflict has been highlighted by previous researchers (International Alert 2024; Takwa, 2020). In a significant step toward combating deforestation and fostering environmental renewal and as part of Justice Development and Peace Caritas Initiative's effort to end deforestation and promote environmental regeneration by eco-friendly briquette charcoal, the Archbishop of Abuja Archdiocese, commissioned a landmark project - Laudato Si' Briquette Charcoal Factory at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Sheda Kwali Area Council.

The nexus between climate change and conflict is apparent says JDPC's Chairman, Sir Josephat Abaagu, KSM, who emphasized that Tree Planting and other environmental protection and renewal campaigns align with the principles of Laudato Si'. Sir Abaagu outlined the broader impact of these initiatives: "Our tree planting campaign contributes to carbon sequestration, prevents soil erosion, and promotes a healthier ecosystem. Concurrently, the briquette factory and safe energy cooking stoves address the urgent need for sustainable energy solutions, helping alleviate poverty and promote environmental justice." Statistics show that about 90 per cent of trees being destroyed in Africa are used for wood fuel or charcoal production, but their use for cooking comes with deadly consequences (Chimtom, 2024).

Conclusion

The Catholic Church is called to promote the integral development of the human person in the light of faith. This is achieved by attending to the inestimable goods of justice, peace, and the care of all creation. The peacebuilding and community development strategy of the Abuja archdiocese is internally driven and centred on the concept of the local turn – meeting the underlying needs of the local population and involving the locals in the design and implementation of community-based projects and programmes. The archdiocese aims to strengthen local community-based peace structures and address issues of violent conflict and social injustice by building a strong network of community peacebuilders who will promote ethical standards, and efficient governance and encourage intercultural/interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Peacebuilding is inevitable in any society marred by violence.

Previous studies reveal that within the UN, there is a growing focus on social institutions (architecture) for peace because of the critical interconnections of the UN's peacebuilding institutions and the needed coherence necessary for effective response (Hearn, Bujones, and Kugel, 2014; UN, 2020). Flowing in the same line of thought, the former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (UN, 2010) affirmed this position by positing that "building genuine peace is about much more than ending war. It is about putting in place the institutions and trust that will carry people forward into a

peaceful future." As such, this research found that the archdiocesan peacebuilding institutions combine different peacebuilding and community development activities to address as many different types of conflict drivers and underlying causes as possible. Moreover, Galtung in conceptualising peacebuilding called for the establishment of permanent institutions that would create sustainable peace (UN, 2000).

The Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja projects and programmes have impacted the lives of a very significant proportion of Abuja's population and therefore are crucial to peace, community development, and human security in Abuja. From the discussions above, the appreciation of this contribution is underscored by the special recognition and attention accorded to the educational and health institutions of the archdiocese by state and non-state actors. As Jarikre (2021) elucidated, peace cannot only be kept or made; but can also be built by developing an architecture, that integrates development to reduce violent conflict and its debilitating impact. When properly carried out, peacebuilding and community development are a win-win for society. The archdiocese has been in the vanguard in fighting for peace, tackling development issues, and moving peacebuilding from paper to practice.

Recommendations

1. The Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja should work in close collaboration with other faiths to jointly establish vocational skills training facilities on information and communications technology, engineering, and agricultural programmes. This will create avenues for training and mutual interaction among people of different backgrounds.
2. The archdiocese should scale up awareness-raising and institutional capacity on climate change, mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning.
3. The archdiocese should construct more educational and health facilities that are affordable, child, disability, and gender sensitive.

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PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF THE OCHI'DOMA PARAMOUNT CHIEFTAINCY STOOL WITHIN THE MIDDLE BELT TRADITIONAL PARTRIACHAL STRUCTURE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

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Abstract

This paper assessed the Och'Idoma Paramount Chieftaincy stool, a first-class traditional institution which covers the Idoma ethnic group in the present-day Benue State, part of the larger Middle Belt Region in Nigeria. It investigated the integration of the traditional system of governance and its impact on the local government administration in the patriarchal historical structure prevalent as a carry-over from the ancient Kwararafa Kingdom from which the Middle Belt emanated. The methodology was a desk review substantiated by field work (quantitative). The findings showed that traditional authority carried more weight among the citizens than that of elected local government officials. In conclusion, the paper stated that the observed arbitrariness in traditional authority would be substantially curtailed if constitutional provisions are made. The paper recommended that traditional institutions should be further integrated into Nigeria's political system as their moral authority would be required to further strengthen political authority.

Keywords: Traditional Authority, Local Government, Patriarchal

Introduction

For centuries before the advent of British rule, governance in different parts of present-day Nigeria was synonymous with traditional institutions and their rulers. Local administration generally centered on the traditional ruler who was considered the

repository of religious, legislative, executive and judicial functions, with a few exceptions (e.g.: in the south-east amongst Ibo communities) (Afigbo 1972). In effect, the traditional ruler formed the nucleus of governance. One striking fact is that the geographical spheres of authority of these traditional rulers were essentially localised and no traditional ruler ever had jurisdiction over the entire geographical area of modern Nigeria. Partly on account of this historical background, the tendency has been to view and analyse the developments taking place in traditional institutions in the country more in relation to local government as opposed to the country's governmental system at large.

A number of studies have affirmed the resiliency, legitimacy and relevance of African traditional institutions in the socio-cultural, economic and political lives of Africans, particularly in the areas of local government administration. Juxtaposed with this is the sometimes parallel "modern State", vested with enormous authority in rule making, application, adjudication and enforcement (Ezea, 2011). As Africa seeks to build and strengthen capable States, there is the need to recognize and address this "duality" fully. This is principally borne out by a growing recognition that capable democratic States must be grounded on indigenous social values and contexts, while adapting to changing realities. This will require among other actions, aligning and harmonizing traditional governance institutions with the modern State.

The roles that traditional authorities can play in the local government administration can broadly be separated into three categories: first, their advisory role to government, as well as their participatory role in the administration of regions and districts; second, their developmental role, complementing government's efforts in mobilizing the population for the implementation of development projects, sensitizing them on health issues such as HIV/AIDS, promoting education, encouraging economic enterprises, inspiring respect for the law and urging participation in the electoral process; and third, their role in conflict resolution, an area where traditional leaders across Africa have already demonstrated success (Abubakar, 2016). The Idoma are people that primarily inhabit the lower western areas of Benue State, Nigeria, and kindred groups can be found in Cross Rivers State, Enugu State and Nasarawa State in Nigeria. According to Onoja (2007) the Idoma language is classified in the Akweya subgroup of the Idomoid languages of the Volta–Niger family, which include Alago, Agatu, Etulo and Yala languages of Benue, Nasarawa and Northern Cross river states. The Akweya subgroup is closely related to the Yatye-Akpa sub-group. The bulk of the territory is inland, south of river Benue, some seventy-two kilometers east of its confluence with river Niger. The population of the Idoma is estimated to be about 4 million. The Idoma people have a traditional ruler called the Och'Idoma who is the head of the Idoma Area Traditional Council while each community has its own traditional chief such as the Ad'Ogbadibo of Orokam, Chief D.E Enenche. The Palace of the overall Och'Idoma is

located at Otukpo, Benue State. The present Och'Idoma, HRM John Obagaji was installed into office in 2021 and the position is for life until death. The history of the Idoma people precedes the history of Benue State (created 1976) and the history of the Republic of Nigeria (created 1960), and that cannot be completed that the part Och'Idoma I and other subsequent Och'Idomas played in local government administration (Onoja, 2007, Emordi. &. Osiki, 2010).

The role of traditional rulers in local government administration has been changing over the years. From a position where they were chief executives of their localities, they now serve as advisers in the contemporary local government system. This has created a problem in the relationship between traditional rulers and elected local government actors. Such a structure, by obvious implication, is charged with the responsibility of ensuring development in the local communities that make up the state or country. To be meaningful and relevant, any development programme must ensure the increased material well-being of the citizensthrough the provision of such basic needs as water, shelter, food, education sanitation, health- care, as well as gainful employment and equal income distribution. In addition, social security and human development must form part of the development process and programme (Little, 2015).

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, human beings would be in a better position to advance to a higher level of development once their basic needs are satisfied (Maslow, 2014). The satisfaction of the basic human and material needs of citizens at the grassroots is, thus, one of the reasons for the establishment of the local government system. Since traditional rulers constitute a significant factor in the political environment of the local government because of their closeness to citizens at the grassroots level, and because of the significant followership some of them command in the local communities, incorporating them in local government administration is absolutely imperative (Onah, 1998). That explains why all governments in Nigeria have often made provisions for them in the political system.

The focus of this paper is to examine the problem of integrating traditional rulers (like the Och'Idoma) into the contemporary local government system in Nigeria and discern a pathway to resolving the challenge.

Brief Historical Background of the Och'Idoma Stool

Och'Idoma, the leader of Idoma people is the Och'Idoma and he is resident in the Och'Idoma Palace in Otukpo. The current traditional ruler is HRH, Elias Ikoyi Obekpa, Och'Idoma IV. Past Och'Idomas are HRH, Agabaidu Edwin Ogbu – Och' Idoma III, HRH, Agabaidu Ajene Okpabi – Och' Idoma II, & HRH Agabaidu Ogiri Oko – Och' Idoma I.The Idoma are people that primarily inhabit the lower western areas of Benue

State, Nigeria, and kindred groups can be found in Cross Rivers State, Enugu State and Nasarawa State in Nigeria (Onoja, 2007). The Idoma language is classified in the Akweya subgroup of the Idomoid languages of the Volta–Niger family, which include Alago, Agatu, Etulo and Yala languages of Benue, Nasarawa and Northern Cross river states. The Akweya subgroup is closely related to the Yatye-Akpa sub-group. The bulk of the territory is inland, south of river Benue, some seventy- two kilometers east of its confluence with river Niger. The Idomas are known to be 'warriors' and 'hunters' of class, but hospitable and peace-loving. The greater part of Idoma land remained largely unknown to the West until the 1920s, leaving much of the colorful traditional culture of the Idoma intact. The population of the Idoma is estimated to be about 4 million. The Idoma people have a traditional ruler called the Och'Idoma who is the head of the Idoma Area Traditional Council while each community has its own traditional chief such as the Ad'Ogbadibo of Orokam, Chief D.E Enenche. The Palace of the overall Och'Idoma is located at Otukpo, Benue State. The present Och'Idoma, Elias Ikoyi Obekpa was installed into office in 1997 and the position is for life (Ezea, 2011).

With the full establishment of the colonial administration in Idomaland, which formed part of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, the colonial government realised that it was necessary to work with the Traditional Chiefs as regards British policy of administration in Idomaland. This collaborative effort made the Traditional Chiefs subservient to British authority, to command total obedience from the Chiefs. For their economic purpose and others, the Idoma Council of Chiefs was created in 1927 and named the *Ojila* of the *Oche*. This body was to serve as a 'Court of appeal' and to advice, the administration on matters referred to it. Also, the District was grouped into four administrative areas. The leadership of the *Ojila - Och'Ogbole* of the *Oche* was usually given to an elderly and respected Chief from any of the Intermediate Areas, who assumed the authority of leading such gathering. Some of the *Och'Ogbole* included the following Chief Elaigwu k'Awa, the *Alegwu* of Ojope from Ochekwu, Chief Enyi Ukpo – the *Och'Apa* of Igumale, Okenyi Aba Etema the *Idoga* of Orokam and Chief Ujo Aka *Obande* of Ugboju as the last who held such post. This system continued until 1947. Thus, from the *Ojila* of the *Oche* the Colonial authority began to make enquiries to find a suitable candidate for the office of a Chief who would permanently preside over them (Ode, 1966).

It should be noted that, various reasons culminated in the creation of the office of *Och'Idoma*. To start with, before 1947, the Idoma elites largely made up of demobilised soldiers, colonial government workers, educated elites and miners were under the auspices of the Idoma Hope Rising Union (I.H.R.U.). This elitist group championed the agitations for the creation of the office of *Och'Idoma* for various reasons. First, the soldiers who fought in the First World War before their departure saw how some of the Traditional Rulers most especially the Emirs came to bless and bid farewell to their

soldiers. Thus they, felt what the Idoma people were missing.

Conceptual Clarifications

Traditional System of Authority in Nigeria

It is difficult to provide a universally accepted definition of a traditional system of authority in Nigeria because of the diversity in the political and administrative components of traditional systems in different parts of the country. This difficulty notwithstanding, traditional systems of authority may be defined as the indigenous polity which existed before the advent of the colonialists (Adewumi & Egwurube 2015). Traditional rulers can be described as individuals or groups of individuals who occupy communal political leadership positions by immorality and are through the consent of community members granted authority and legitimacy to direct the affairs of particular ethno-cultural or linguistic groups in an ordered manner (Egwurube,1988). Dasuki Committee report (1988) regards a traditional ruler as “the person who by virtue of his ancestry, occupies the throne or stool of an area and who has been appointed to it in accordance with the customs and tradition of the area”. Thus, a traditional ruler is a person who by tradition occupied the highest social and political positions in their respective societies over a given politically recognised area.

The responsibility for giving appropriate definition as to who is a traditional ruler is primarily that of the State Governments. There are no fundamental variations in the definitions contained in the Traditional Rulers and Chiefs Law of the various State Governments (Onoja 2007; Emordi & Ofoeze, 2011). Based on the review of various of State laws, Ola and Tonwe (2009) argue that a 'traditional ruler' may be defined as ‘the traditional head of an ethnic group or clan who is the holder of the highest primary executive authority in an indigenous polity, or who has been appointed to the positioning accordance with the customs and tradition of the area concerned by instrument or order of the state government, and whose title is recognised as a traditional ruler title by the Government of the State’.

Patriarchy

Sylvia Walby (2024) defines patriarchy as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women". This essentially was the political structure inherent in the old Kwararafa Kingdom which spilled over into the modern state system encapsulating the Middle Belt in modern Nigeria. Consequently, the Och’Idoma stool is strongly patriarchal.

Local Government

Some form of local government exists in every country of the world. Although there may be differences in the essential features of local government: constitutional status, historical structure, level of autonomy, et cetera, local government is generally seen as veritable agent of development and grassroot participation in a democratic process. According to Amadi (2017) in a broader definition, sees local government as a system of local administration under local communities that are organized to maintain law and order, provide some limited range of social services and encourage cooperation and participation of the inhabitants towards the improvement of their conditions of living. It provides the community with formal organizational framework which enables them to conduct their affairs effectively for the general good. Also, Ekong (2015) is of the opinion that if local government is to be effective provider of services, it must be more than efficient, and it runs a risk if it neglects the involvement of the public in a meaningful way, reason being that the local government will still be judged by that justice, fairness, equality and openness by which democratic society as a whole is judged.

From our discussion so far, it is obvious that in Nigeria, the local government system has undergone changes right from the inception of British colonial rule. Also evident is the fact that there was no uniform approach to local government administration in the country until 1976. Prior to that date, each region and later, state, in Nigeria was at liberty to fashion out its own system of local government administration. But the 1976 reform altered all that and introduced a uniform system for the whole country. That is why it has been observed that: The 1976 reforms represented a fundamental change in the development of local government in Nigeria. For the first time, the country was given a common, single-tier structure of local government in place of the different structures of various regions or states (Ezea, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

Democratic-Participatory School of Thought

The democratic-participatory school of thought is of the view that the existence of local governments is basically for the purpose of promoting democracy and participation at the grassroots level, thereby bringing government nearer to the people. This position is premised on the attempts to justify the existence or need for local government on the basis of its being essential to a democratic principle or for practical administrative purposes like responsiveness, accountability and control (Gboyega, 1987). Local government is perceived as a free institution that provides political education for those who participate in the act of decision-making. However, whether or not local government will promote

sectional interest, political education as well as accountability will depend largely on the nature of the political arrangement within the political system.

Research Design Area of the Study

The Idoma people are the second largest ethnic group in Benue State and occupy 7 local government areas in Benue State. These are: i. Ado local government area; ii. Agatu local government area; iii. Apa local government area; iv. Ohimini local government area; v. Ogbadibo local government area; vi. Okpokwu local government area, and vii. Otukpo local government area.

There are however are other Idoma groups in parts of Nassarawa and Cross Rivers States. The majority of the people of Idoma Land speak Idoma language with different dialects. These dialects are: (1) Western Idoma (Okpokwu and Ogbadibo) (2) Central Idoma(Otukpo and Ohimini) (3) Southern Idoma (Ado) (4) Northern Idoma (Agatu and Apa) (5) Akweya (Akpa in Otukpo) and (6) Ufia (Utonkon in Ado).

Predominantly Idoma people are farmers who grow crops like yam, cassava, corn, rice, soya beans and palm fruits. Och'Idoma is the leader of the Idoma people in Benue State, his resident is the Och'Idoma Palace in Otukpo. Och'Idoma, the leader of Idoma people is the Och'Idoma and he is resident in the Och'Idoma Palace in Otukpo. The current traditional ruler is HRH, Elias Ikoyi Obekpa, Och'Idoma IV. Past Och'Idomas are HRH, Agabaidu Edwin Ogbu – Och' Idoma III, HRH, Agabaidu Ajene Okpabi – Och' Idoma II, & HRH Agabaidu Ogiri Oko – Och' Idoma 1(Adejo, 2004).

Presentation of Data and Analysis Sample size and Sampling Techniques

The areas covered by the Idoma Traditional Authority called the Idoma Traditional Area (ITA) are presented in the tabular form below:

Table 1: Idoma Traditional Area

S/N	State	Number of Offices	Number of Staff
1	Ado	1	600
2	Agatu	1	600
3	Apa	1	500
4	Ohimini	1	500
5	Ogbadibo	1	600

6	Okpokwu	1	600
7	Otukpo	1	600
	TOTAL	7	4000

Source: Field Survey (2024).

Table 2: Do you understand the Role of the Och'Idoma in local government Administration?

The role of traditional leaders/ Och'Idoma in local government administration?	**YES**	**NO**	**Total**
	(F) (%)	**(F) (%)**	**(F) (%)**
Formulation of general proposals by way of advice to the Local Government or to all local governments in the area.	243(84.9%)	43 (5.1%)	286 (100)
Harmonisation and co-ordination of development plans of such local governments by joint discussions and advice	269(94%)	17 (6%)	286 (100)
To assist in the maintenance of law and order	265(92.6%)	21 (6.4%)	286 (100)
Nomination of candidates for elective and appointive positions in governments	255(89.1%)	26 (10.9%)	286 (100)
They serve to aggregate local interests and communicate same to the government and also transmit to the local people government's programmes	230 (80.4%)	56 (17.9%)	286 (100)
They assist the local governments to mobilise the local resources for efficient delivery of social and economic services to the people at the grassroots	265(92.6%)	21 (6.4%)	286 100)

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 3: Whether unelected authorities like the Och'Idoma still have a role to play in the modern political system?

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
YES	277	97
NO	9	3
Total	286	100

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 4: Level of the relationship between traditional leaders/Och'Idoma and the local government chairmen in the Idoma Traditional Area?

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Very cordial	117	40
Cordial	70	24
Very hostile	13	5
Hostile	20	7
Can't say	66	23
Total	286	100

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 5: whether the traditional rulers/Och'Idoma should be allowed to actively participate in the local governance?

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Agree	87	30
Strongly agree	70	24
Disagree	66	23
Strongly disagree	50	17
Can't say	13	5
Total	286	100

Source: Field Survey (2024).

Table 6: Has the Och'Idoma contributed significantly in local government administration in Idoma land?

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Agree	100	35
Strongly agree	115	40
Disagree	31	11
Strongly disagree	20	7
Can't say	20	7
Total	286	100

Table 7: Challenges facing traditional rulers/Och'Idoma in local government administration

How the role of traditional leaders/ Och'Idoma can be strengthened for better local government administration?	**YES (F) (%)**	**NO (F) (%)**	**Total (F) (%)**
Constitutional reforms for traditional authorities to play a significant and active role in the governance and development of local government	273(96.6%)	7 (2.5%)	286 (100)
Making and enforcement of orders relating to public health and sanitation within their domains.	269(96.1%)	11 (3.9%)	286 (100)
They should be granted statutory functions, such as the levying and collection of annual direct taxes on communities in the area	260(92.9%)	81 (28.9%)	286 (100)
Government should allow the traditional authorities to participate in economic planning and the development of their localities for the common interests of the communities	270(96.5%)	23 (8.2%)	286 (100)
There should be security allocation for the traditional institution which will enable the institution to mobilize the people for the maintenance of security	230(82.1%)	50 (17.9%)	286 (100)
The traditional rulers should be allowed and encouraged to establish security council or committee in their domain with the collaboration with security agencies.	265(94.6%)	15 (5.4%)	286 (100)

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 8: Ways the role of traditional leaders/Och'Idoma can be strengthened for better local government administration?

SN		**YES**	**(%)**	**NO**	**(%)**
1	How to reduce crime and criminality	260	(86.7%)	40	(13.3%)
2	How to improve economic activities	278	(92.7%)	22	(7.3%)
3	Peace in the local communities	287	(95.7%)	13	(4.3%)
4	Youth empowerment.	227	(75.7%)	73	(24.3%)

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 9: Opportunities facing traditional rulers/Och'Idoma in local government administration?

Opportunities facing traditional rulers/Och'Idoma in local government administration?	YES (F) (%)	NO (F) (%)	Total (F) (%)
Encourage democracy, transparency and good governance in the local governments	266 (88.7%)	20 (11.3%)	286 (100)
They can also be given the opportunity to nominate quality candidates for elections and other political appointments.	269(96.1%)	11 (3.9%)	286 (100)
They can discourage the spate of violence (including kidnappings and killings) by teaching traditional virtues to the people	260 (92.9%)	81 (28.9%)	286 (100)
Maintainance of peace in the local communities	255(91.7%)	25 (8.9%)	286 (100)

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Findings

In line with the findings obtained from the questionnaires distributed and given in tables higher than shows that the role of traditional leaders/Och'Idoma in local government administration include assisting in formulation of general proposals by way of advice to the Local Government or to all local governments in the area, harmonisation and co-ordination of development plans of such local governments by joint discussions and advice, maintenance of law and order, involvement in nomination of candidates for elective and appointive positions in governments and to aggregate local interests and communicate same to the government and also transmit to the local people government's programmes. Furthermore, it was revealed that the level of the relationship between traditional leaders/Och'Idoma and the local government chairmen.

While on the challenges facing traditional rulers/Och'Idoma in local government administration majority of the respondents were of the view that the challenges facing traditional rulers/Och'Idoma in local government administration was how to reduce in crime and criminality. It was also believed by the respondents that it was how to improve local economic activities. While others agreed that it was how to bring about peace in the local communities and to empower the youth. On the opportunities facing traditional rulers/Och'Idoma in local government administration the response above shows that, out of the 286 respondents surveyed, most respondents agreed that the

opportunities facing traditional rulers/Och'Idoma in local government administration is to encourage democracy, transparency and good governance in the local governments, opportunity to nominate quality candidates for elections and other political appointments.

Conclusion

It has been pointed out that the traditional rulers have a role to play in the in local government administration. This is due to the fact that the government cannot do it alone. Also, the fact remains that the traditional rulers are grassroot leaders who live among the people. They are highly respected and revered as the custodian of the people's culture, tradition and wisdom. As grass root leaders, they have a grip of the security of the area and the people can confide in them on security matters. They are therefore in a better position to play a role in the maintenance of security in the local government administration.

The role of traditional institutions in local government administration is highly disputed in the post-colonial literature. This study does not subscribe to the school of thought that hold, the view that the traditional system is anachronistic, undemocratic, divisive and costly; and as such a hindrance to the development and transformation of the continent. It is sad that, while some scholars are quick to comment that traditional rulers were adaptive enough to be used by both the colonial and post-colonial State, these scholars are unreceptive to the fact that traditional rulers can be adaptive in providing their services to a democratic State as catalysts for development.

In Nigeria, traditional rulers still record a high degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the people. There remains the need integrate the institution into the country's contemporary local government system. Political and economic development would be more successful when rooted in widely shared institutions and cultural values which traditional authorities represent. Traditional institutions constitute crucial resources that have the potential to promote grassroots governance and to facilitate access of rural communities to public services. The goal of modernisation is to generate a rapid increase in social wealth and its driving force is economic development. Traditional rulers in Nigeria are in a privileged position to contribute to this goal, and as such should not be jettisoned.

Recommendations

They should be security allocation for the traditional institution which will enable the institution to mobilize the people for the maintenance of security. The government should give the traditional institution constitutional recognition and backing for their actions.

This will enable the decisions reached in arbitrations by traditional rulers implemented by parties in conflicts. In a restructure Nigeria, the traditional rulers should be partnered by the government and security agencies to obtain information on security matters in an area. Such information should be treated with up uttermost secrecy and with dispatch. The traditional rulers should be allowed and encouraged to establish security council or committee in their domain with the collaboration with security agencies. Their area of focus can be set out by the government. When this is done, security will be better handled both by the government and the traditional rulers who are at the grassroots as the government cannot handle security alone as events of the recent time have shown.

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LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

It is widely acknowledged that effective leadership and governance are essential to achieving the political, economic, and social goals of any given political community. Since effective leadership establishes the norm and tone of governance, it is evident how important leadership is to governance. This essay explores the relationship between leadership and governance conceptually and examines the phenomena of this relationship in Nigeria with a strong emphasis on secondary evidence. The results show that Nigeria's history is replete with examples of visionless leadership and governance, primarily mired in political squabbling and corruption that crowned poor governance and mishandled public resources, resulting in instability, economic downturn, and extreme poverty. If effective governance and leadership are to be achieved in Nigeria, there must be a thriving civil society dedicated to ensuring free and fair elections that result in the installation of political leaders based on unique sound value systems and with an investigation for probity and accountability.

Keywords: Leadership, Political Leadership, Governance, Development, National Development

Introduction

It goes without saying that a nation's degree of political stability and advancement is closely correlated with the caliber of its leadership and general government. Underdevelopment and political instability are the only outcomes of inadequate leadership and bad governance. The assertion that a system's sustainability depends on its leadership is based on the understanding of the necessity of governance and leadership for a nation. Everything depends on leadership because, through the use of sound governance, effective leadership can take a country or any organization to new heights of development and productivity. Nigeria has struggled with weak leadership and governance since gaining independence, which has contributed to the nation's political instability and low level of growth. Given Nigeria's abundant mineral and people resources, it is not unreasonable to anticipate that the country will rise to prominence and compete with the world's largest economies. Ironically, Nigeria—also known as the "giant of Africa"—wallows in political, social, and infrastructure decay in

every nook and cranny of the continent.

Therefore, it begs the question of whether Nigeria will ever be able to escape its destitute and decadent status if the people who should be leading the country's emancipation don't have the morals or sanity to do so. In light of this, this essay considers the subject of leadership and governance in Nigeria. There are seven sections in all. The conceptual examination of governance and leadership is covered in part two, whereas this section serves as an introduction. Section five focuses on the elements of governance and leadership failure in Nigeria, whereas Section Four critically analyzes governance and leadership within the framework of the Nigerian state. While section seven provides conclusions and recommendations for good governance and effective leadership in the Nigerian democratic state, section six focuses on the effects of poor governance and leadership in the nation. Different academics have expressed differing opinions regarding the topic of governance. The process of making choices and policies, as well as the method by which they are carried out or not, is known as governance. Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2006) possibly provide a thorough explanation of governance. They define governance as the customs and structures that exercise power over a nation. These include the methods used to choose, oversee, and remove governments; the ability of governments to create and carry out sensible policies; and the state's and the people's respect for the institutions that control their social and economic interactions. The six indicators of governance include rule of law, accountability, political efficacy of public service delivery, bureaucratic quality, and the soundness or quality of policies implemented by the government. The sixth indicator is corruption control. In a different reality Rotberg (2009) contends that political goods like as participation, economic opportunity, rule of law, national security, and human development affect how well a government performs. He contends that the degree of governance increases with the caliber of the distribution of these political commodities to the populace (Adeosun, 2012).

It has been believed that leadership is crucial to government (Lord, Atkinson, and Mitchell, 2009). As pointed out by Ihonubere, (2014), Leadership is the act of using one's authority; governance is the customs and structures that allow people to exert that authority within a nation. Othman and Rahman (2014) believe that governance is about leadership because of the relationship between good governance and leadership. They contend that accountability, transparency, efficiency, probity, and responsibility are the ways in which leadership and governance are related. Likewise, asserts that effective leadership establishes the norm and voice of government. argues in favor of the relationship between good governance and leadership, saying that the two are so intertwined that they define each other Uzodike & Whetho, (2011).

Conceptual Clarification

The Concept to be clarified are; Leadership, Political Leadership, Governance, Development, National Development

i. **Leadership** as a method whereby one person routinely has a greater influence than others on the type and course of group activities. However, the ability to effectively lead a group of people, an organization, a nation, etc. is the definition of leadership in its most basic form. Leadership is the process through which one person consistently exerts more influence than others in the pursuit of group behavior. It also involves the ability of the one or few at the top to make others do a number of things (positively or negatively) that they would not have done or might not have done otherwise (Nnablife, 2010).

ii. **Political Leadership** Political leadership is defined as the organizing and guidance of other members of a society through the use of primarily non-coercive tactics, so as to bring about (or avoid) changes in the official distribution of values within that community. Osaghae (2010) determined that compassion, patriotism, moral uprightness, a sense of historical mission, an understanding of developmental obstacles and how to overcome them, courage, boldness, and determination are among the qualities and expectations of successful leadership (Nnablife, 2010).

iii. **Governance:** It has been determined that effective governance is essential to a nation's social transformation, economic expansion, and human development. Numerous academics have shown that leadership and governance are essential to the emergence and maintenance of democracy. As observes by Huntington (1991), democracy will expand throughout the world to the extent that those in positions of power do so globally and inside particular nations (Julius, 2011).

iv. **Development:** Development is essentially a positive-connotation economic concept that entails applying certain economic and technological strategies to utilize resources in order to stimulate economic growth and raise people's standard of living. Development was primarily referred to as "economic growth" in the 1950s and 60s, which denoted a quantitative rather than qualitative shift in economic performance. Development theories, therefore, were created to jump-start and quicken economic growth and steer emerging countries toward the industrialized West's path of shifting from a predominantly agrarian economy to one centered around industrial production and commerce (Magu, (2012).

v. **National Development:** Aiming to continuously improve the well-being of the entire population and each individual based on their active, voluntary, and meaningful participation in development and the equitable distribution of the benefits that flow from it, development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural, and political process. Development, in its broadest definition, is the process of enhancing the most impoverished people's quality of life through the productive resources of society. Essentially, national development entails improving each person's whole situation in a variety of areas, including social, psychological, political, economic, and cultural interactions. Therefore, a sustainable improvement in the standard of living for the people who live in a particular social space—typically a nation state—is the ultimate goal of development (Ajaebili, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

While there are a number of theories that are suitable for a discussion of this kind, the political economy approach and the structure-agency theory provide us with a useful heuristic for analyzing the main questions of this research. Karl Marx's theory of social production serves as the foundation for the political economy method. Essentially, the political economy method examines society as a whole through the relationships that already exist within it, particularly within the context of social production. Production becomes crucial to understanding how society develops as well as to analyzing the dynamics that exist within it. Our main interest in this case is how man's behavior and the character of his society are shaped by the mode of production.

Leadership and Good Governance in Nigeria

It has been stated that poor leadership and governance are the main causes of Nigeria's problems, as they are in many other African nations. If this turns out to be a disaster, it highlights the flawed foundations that led to the emergence of Nigeria's leadership, which was inherited from the colonial masters. These foundations are self-centered and self- aggrandizing, as opposed to nationalistic and focused on the interests of the governed as a whole. The political, economic, and social preconditioning and orientation passed down from Nigeria's British colonialists, who only sought, pursued, and harnessed self-interest while sacrificing the betterment and good of the colonized, is to blame for the country's governance and leadership failures as well as the ensuing deterioration of its national infrastructure. In the expressions of Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012), "Political dominance is colonialism's primary goal. Its secondary goal is to enable the colonial nation to be exploited.

Even after fifty-four years of independence, the political system remains completely disorganized. Between the change from civilian to military rule and the current democracy she lives in, it is reasonable to assume that lessons have been learned and transformative leaders have emerged. However, this is not the case because the current democracy, which began in 1999, is tainted, lacking in democratic citizen participation, arbitrary power use, and subordination of the rule of law. "The generation of leaders who have held positions of power since independence has, in one way or another, lacked vision; the majority of them have become mired in political squabbling and corruption, which has led to the enthronement of bad governance and resource mismanagement, and as a result, economic disaster and extreme poverty as national legacy" (Lawal and Owolabi, 2012).

Literature Review

Mechanism for Bad Leadership and Governance Failure in Nigeria

Corruption: Although corruption is not unique to Nigeria, it has consumed the country's fabric to such an extent that pockets of corrupt behavior have seeped into and diluted even the tiniest of structures at the local level. Corruption has spread throughout the nation and become corrosive, defying all known or attempted measures to eradicate it. For a variety of historical, political, economic, and social factors, corruption in Africa was exacerbated by colonialism and dictatorship and reached deadly proportions (Mangu, 2012). The Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (EFCC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) now only engage in charades and retaliation against the administration's opponents. Nigeria is still corrupt as ever as a result of the numerous reforms, the authorities' lack of creativity, and their lack of honesty (Lawal and Owolabi, 2012).

Lack of Foresight: The Nigerian leadership is incapable of foreseeing problems or results. As a result, they become reactionary leaders who only act when an issue emerges rather than anticipating it and averting it. Therefore, they don't find a solution until a calamity strikes or the already failing infrastructure totally collapses. Walter Carrington, the former US ambassador to Nigeria, blamed corruption, poor leadership, and a lack of vision for the majority of the nation's economic issues during his speech at the University of Ilorin's 29th convocation address. He observed that the country's growth was hindered by ongoing poverty and held the leaders of the succeeding governments accountable for their lack of vision and corruption, which led to the decline and growth of the African behemoth. (Mokuolu and Abubakre, 2013).

False Hopes: Nigerian local leaders take advantage of the ignorance and disability of their people, brainwashing them with lies and convincing them that their religious and

ethnic interests come first, when in fact, they are the genuine enemies of their own people. Promises that are not followed through on have become commonplace in governance. Therefore, as election seasons approach and year after year pass, people who profess to understand the concerns of the people but seldom intend to meet them make empty promises. Ene, Abam, Williams, and Dunnamah (2013) also noted this, characterizing Africa's and Nigeria's political status as retrograde due to unmet expectations, greed, and similar factors (Adeosun, 2012).

Lack of ideas, creativity and innovation: The leaders of Nigeria exude these qualities in their demeanor and charm. The authorities of Nigeria are unable to provide guidance in the face of the country's increasing insecurity and in making the most use of its natural, financial, and human resources. This was documented by Nnonyelu (2013) which was repeated as a "failed, insensitive or clueless political leadership which is fighting hard to appease their constituents with crumbs from the national cake while stealing large chunks for self- preservation and perpetuation" and who characterized the situation as "the predilection of the Nigerian elite in the face of poverty of ideas." (Imhionopi and Ugochukwu, 2013).

Poorly Baked Policies, Poor planning and continuity: The claim that the Nigerian government lacks the necessary skills to create exceptional policies that would be carried out to completion and goal achievement is supported by the administration's frequent policy reversals. What makes one ask who makes up the country's ruling body is the regular churning out of policies cloaked in inconsistency, flawed in their inception, and 'directionless' in their context. "The ability to create and carry out wise policies, as well as public and citizen respect for the institutions that oversee social and economic relations, are all components of good governance." (Arowolo and Aluko, 2012); However, Nigeria's history is such that policies that go against perceived interests are not allowed to succeed, and those that are allowed to fail due to a lack of direction eventually crumble (Nnablife, (2013).

Irresponsibility: Nigerian governance is egregiously reckless; it is not accountable to the electorate or the general public. "What then is the government's responsibility to the people?" is an issue raised by the government's drive toward privatization, which has resulted in the privatization of practically every significant industry and service provider. Since the government has the financial authority to manage these organizations, costs would undoubtedly increase and quality would decline if all government agencies that provide basic amenities were placed under private management. Laws and regulations pertaining to the procedure, as well as supervisory obligations, have been broken without consequence.

Lack of rule of law: The supremacy of the law is lacking something. This is supported by the fact that political actors have complete control over the judiciary, which is an arm that protects the rule of law. Nwekeaku (2014) claimed that because Nigeria's constitution guarantees citizens' fundamental rights and the functions of all governmental levels, the country's problems do not stem from a lack of strong laws, but rather from poor governance that tries to bend the law to suit its own needs. To emphasize this even more, Lawal and Owolabi (2012) stated that the judiciary's lack of independence in Nigeria is a threat to the rule of law. This is demonstrated by the direct control Nigeria's political elites have over the court system, including through appointments, promotions, gifts, and threats, as well as by their choices and the court's inability to effectively execute the law and court rulings (Julius, 2011).

Oppression, Suppression and Intimidation: It has been shown that military regimes employ intimidation and repression as a means of obtaining compliance and collaboration from individuals, governmental entities, and organizations operating at all tiers. Therefore, using the same media for governance by a highly desired civilian/democratic government is abnormal. As cliques seize state power and utilize it to settle personal grudges, threaten the opposition, and embezzle public funds, party discipline disintegrates. They employ these as instruments to impose their wills and whims on rivals and the general public. Unfortunately, because they have grown more dictatorial and disorderly, law enforcement organizations and units of control including as the Police, EFCC, ICPC, SSS, INEC, and hired goons are utilized to carry out these heinous activities. Due to them, there has been an increase in violations of human rights at all scales, including those committed by "wielding the powers of life and death" and the general public (Idada and Uhunmwuangh, 2012).

The use of Political Offices as 'Objects for Settlement': The nation's productivity has been severely impacted by clientelism and "settlement" attitudes toward public and political office, whereby these prestigious positions—which demand technocrats and professionals— are used to repay favors. This was exemplified in the 1999 Obasanjo-led administration, when "leadership was devalued; people of questionable character and preference were selected to governance." Through ruthless tactics including intimidation, thuggery, and election manipulation, they were elevated and imposed onto the populace.

Lack of Accountability, Transparency and Due Process: Corrupt practices are directly related to this. Local, state, and federal governance are not transparent or accountable, and due process is disregarded. The budget allocates large sums of money to the public sectors, but the various sectors are mired in poverty and shoddy structures. This is a byproduct of the powerful people's opaque rule (Julius, 2011).

Lack of Patriotism and Nationalistic Consciousness: Here, individualism opposes nationalism and self-interest triumphs over national interest. The government's goal is to accumulate as many assets and properties as it can while making empty promises of progressing the country. According to Ugochukwu (2013), these politicians "accumulate wealth at the expense of national development without deference to the basic needs of the masses," which is a short way to put this perspective. Idada and Uhunmwuangh (2012), who characterized Nigerian governance as "politics of personality," further support this claim (Julius, 2011)

Effects of Governance and Leadership Failure in Nigeria

The consequences of poor leadership and governance are evident in every aspect of Nigeria, including the country's vast and dilapidated infrastructure (Ene et al., 2013), its troubled healthcare system with a high death rate, its urban degradation, the rise in slums and substandard living conditions, its high cost of living, the widening gap between the rich and the poor in social strata, the high rate of unemployment and the growing restlessness of the youth, the breakdown of law and order, lawlessness and ineptitude, assassinations, the man- know-man syndrome, which undermines meritocracy and encourages mediocrity in public life and administration, and the crisis in poverty reduction; pockets of corruption across society; wastage of labor, capital, and mineral resources; erosion of faith and confidence in the government; disinterest in politics; and economic instability brought on by recurrent strikes that halt business operations (Arowolo and Aluko, 2012).

These challenges of bad governance are described as appearing in the following areas: low industrialization, low industrialization, nepotism, ethnic distrust, religious violence, poverty, unemployment, insecurity, lack of water, inadequate housing, crime, corruption, rural underdevelopment, deteriorating infrastructure, illiteracy, low worker pay, lack of social security, unreliable power supply, poor public transportation system, malnutrition, high rates of maternal and child mortality, inadequate health services, political instability, and rascality (Abati 2007 in Idada and Uhunmwuangh, 2012; Julius-Adeoye, 2011).

Political cabals that have acted as roadblocks to Nigeria's advancement, from the lowest to the highest positions of authority, have limited the country's ability to grow. Nigeria's leadership and governing style has always been the result of cabals driven by avarice, self-interest, and archaic instincts to amass money. They have rendered absurd what could have been Nigeria's potential for greatness (Arowolo and Aluko, 2012). According to Agbor (2011) as cited by (Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, 2013), "The outcome of bad leadership in Nigeria is represented by bad governance, which is expressed in ongoing political crises and instability, extreme poverty among the

populace, a crippling corruption culture, and rising jobless rates". Ebegbulem (2009) in Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, (2013) believes "The country's affairs and resources have been criminally managed by the leadership since 1960, pushing the people over the edge into absolute poverty, illiteracy, hunger, rising unemployment, preventable health crises, and insecurity." In August 2012, US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton visited Nigeria and highlighted her dissatisfaction with the country's government, stating that "a failure of governance at the federal, state and local levels is the most immediate source of the disconnect between Nigeria's wealth and its poverty."

Clarifying the field of education According to Madukovich (2014), the industry is currently experiencing its greatest drop to date. The UNESCO minimum budget of 26% is not met by either the federal or state governments for education, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria. The nation's university system has just recently reopened following another protracted strike; in the meantime, state institutions, such as those in Lagos, have persisted in their demands for better lecturer welfare and lower student costs. Primary schools in some states, like Benue, have been closed for months, and polytechnics and colleges of education have been closed for almost a year. The government has not listened to their demands (Omoyibo, 2013).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The socio-political virus that has deeply ingrained itself into Nigeria's national fabric, causing a stagnant economy, severe infrastructure damage, and deterioration in nearly every area, is, in fact, a result of poor governance and leadership. To restore Nigeria's dignity, leaders and aspiring leaders must rekindle their sense of national pride, clean up and rid the government of corrupt individuals and policies, and mobilize the majority of eligible voters to support deserving candidates for public office and reject unsatisfactory leaders.

i. Future generations must be instilled with a sense of national consciousness and a nationalistic lifestyle. In this sense, candidates with a stronger purchasing power of the electorate's conscience need to lose out to reputable, astute individuals with a track record of honesty and integrity.
ii. Voters should use their right to vote sensibly and responsibly, and they shouldn't sell themselves short. If excellent governance and leadership are to be achieved, the election or selection of leaders should be based on distinct, sound value systems and should involve an investigation into accountability and probity.
iii. In Nigeria, effective leadership and sound administration are contingent upon the supremacy of the constitution, the independence of the judiciary, and the rule of law. Therefore, because of their standing in society, people found guilty of committing acts of corruption should not be freed. Corrupt officers ought to face

the appropriate sanctions.

iv. Last but not least, if the ongoing fight against corruption is to be perceived as a perpetuation of the hyperbole and sloganeering of the past, then all claims of corrupt activities from the past should be thoroughly investigated and the implicated public officials should be held accountable.

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MARITAL CONFLICTS AND VIOLENCE IN LAGOS METROPOLIS AMONG SOUTH-WEST MARRIED WOMEN; CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract

The study examines the causes, responses and consequences of marital conflict and violence as perceived by women in these relationships. It analyses the narratives of 28 Yoruba women selected through snowball sampling in Lagos, Nigeria. The women's narratives were obtained through in-depth interview to understand issues associated with marital conflict and violence from their perspective. The study confirms the ubiquity of conflict in marital relationships as well as diversity in the nature and extent of violence which often results from it. Consequent upon conflicts, partners shun inter-personal relations such as verbal communication, family meals and sex. The study is hinged on the social structural model which offers explanation for power relations among the Yoruba where the husband wields control and authority. The study reveals the relevance of extended families in the mediation process despite couples' neolocal residence. It found that traditional values still influence women's understanding and attitude to conflict and violence in their families in spite of their educational and economic status. Dominant reasons for remaining in violent marriages include the desire to protect children and the belief that a good woman must persevere. The study recommends strengthening the extended family and equipping key players in faith-based organizations for more effective intervention.

Keywords: Marital, Conflict, Violence, Yoruba, Women

Introduction

Marital conflicts are ubiquitous and inevitable, cutting across socio-economic strata and without prejudice to the age, religion and occupation of marital partners. Conflicts vary in intensity ranging from minor issues that can be unraveled to major issues, the causes of which are not understood by both partners and therefore cannot be solved by them. The latter could lead to violence and may be destructive to the relationship. Gottman and Driver (2005:65-66) examined Wile (1993)'s submission "that marital conflicts could either manifest in a cooperative manner in which partners admit their mistakes and support each other to move forward or an antagonistic style in which they become defensive and blame their partners, or an avoiding style in which they withdraw to avoid conflict through stonewalling".

There exist robust literatures that focused primarily on the causes, pattern, intensity and management of marital conflicts. The authors often drew their empirical analyses and conclusions from various cultural climes globally. For instance, a study conducted in Pakistan revealed that husbands and wives usually have high and unmet expectations and at the same time, experience deviations from perceived norms as main causes of marital conflicts. In a similar study carried out by Robila & Krishnakumar (2005), the authors interrogated major variables that cause marital conflict in Romania; and was discovered that economic pressure and financial stress account for most of the marital discords being witnessed in the country.

The authors specifically sampled the perception of educated elites on factors that created marital stability in Ilorin metropolis in Kwara State. In her own work titled 'Causes of Marital Conflict among Couples in Nigeria: Implications for Counseling Psychologists' Tolorunleke (2014) investigated the causes of marital conflicts in Ijumu land focusing on the level of education and length of marriage and established no significant relationships between the variables investigated. Ikorodu Local Government of Lagos State is one of the areas that have shown the tendency for high marital conflicts as observed by the authors of this article, which previous researches have not covered. It is on that basis that this paper investigated the causes, consequences and solutions among married women in Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

In spite of being considered empowered Yoruba women rarely disclose their experience of marital conflict or violence until the situation can no longer be contained (Omoyibo, Egharevba & Iyanda 2010; Makinde 2004). The Yoruba worldview of marriage as 'an institution of learning' for the 'woman' expects women to learn virtues such as endurance and forbearance. This restraints women from disclosing episodes of conflict or violence in their relationships. Researchers studying marital conflict attempt to study

couples from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds without due cognizance for peculiar normative gender relations within specific cultural contexts (Tolorunleke 2014; Amadi & Amadi, 2014; Omoniyi- Oyafunke, Falola & Salau, 2014).

Clarification of Key Terms

***Marital Conflict*:** Marital conflict has wide areas of definition and coverage in terms of actors, frequency, intensity and consequences for the immediate family and the society at large. It also has different dimensions with respect to how married partners react and respond to conflict events in their relationships. Marital conflict is described in the context of this study as couple's disagreements on home-finance, child's care, handling issues relating to in-laws, sexual differences, extra-marital affairs among others. In extreme cases, when such situations experience delayed intervention or not handled constructively, it could lead to domestic violence and outright separation or divorce of the couples.

Violence: These are problems has confronted human endeavors at various levels. This is an aggressive or violent by one partner over another that includes physical confrontations, verbal, sexual, social, religious and economic. Intimate relationship like that of marriage. Usually, this will have occurred by desire to demonstrate authority, power and control in a marriage. A devastating patterns of abusive behaviors targeted to harm the other party. This could cause live lost, psychological trauma, stress and mental disorder for people in marriage characterized by violence**.**

South-West women: The Yoruba worldview of marriage as 'an institution of learning' for the 'woman' expects women to learn virtues such as endurance and forbearance. This restraints women from disclosing episodes of conflict or violence in their relationships. Researchers studying marital conflict attempt to study couples from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds without due cognizance for peculiar normative gender relations within specific cultural contexts (Tolorunleke 2014; Amadi & Amadi, 2014; Omoniyi-Oyafunke, Falola & Salau, 2014), which may influence the subjects' responses.

Consequences of violent marriage relationship: ironically, when two people agreed to get married, usually, its supposed to be for good intension. It is believed that both love each other before final decision to get married had happened. As they progress in the marriage, trust, understanding and feel safe with each other, but unfortunately, in most cases, this does not come as expected due to marital issues. Sadly, no matter who is the victim and culprit, the effects of marital conflict could result to beating, bruising and emotional problem.

Depression, Physical injuries, mental and health problems and emotional disorderliness are other dangerous circumstances around married couples with violent habits that often stems from a sense that lead to someone losing control of their lives. They are often feel moment of hopelessness and helplessness for a total downward depression.

Literature Review Marital Conflict

According to Graff, Birmingham, Wadsworth & Hung (2024). marital conflict is a state of tension, struggle, clash, strife, disagreement or quarrel primarily between a husband and a wife, and sometimes with other members of the household, over opposing needs, ideas, belief, values or goals. Cummings (as cited in Olugbenga, 2018). Usually, marital conflict comes in different ways including spouse battering, spousal abuse, sexual abuse, marital irresponsibility, incest, rape, subtle struggle for control between the couples and other abusive behaviors. Marital conflict, which is a variant of family conflict, is recognized worldwide as the most vital forms of conflict that affects every clime, culture, nation and the global community. Hence, existing literature shows that most researchers and authors that have previously carried out studies on the subject were drawn from various disciplines, background or fields of study including law, sociology, psychology, peace studies, gender studies and development studies. This is a demonstration of the multi-disciplinary nature and richness of analyses that are currently ongoing on the subject. Most of the analyses focus mainly on the causative factors, pattern, consequences and responses to marital conflicts. According to Tiruwork (2015), and Meaza and Wobedel (2014) several major sources of marital conflict include childlessness, forced marriage, incompatibility, communication gap, interference by in-laws, finance, infidelity, sex of child and ingratitude among others.
In Nigeria, marital conflict is discussed in the literature in the context of domestic violence with evidence of its multiple causes varying across Nigeria's multi-cultural setting as well as its pervasiveness (Omorogbe *et al.*, 2010; Aderinto 2004; Aina 2004; Alumanah 2004; Idialu 2003). Whereas most studies on marital conflicts have examined couples or relational partners (Aderinto 2004; Aina 2004; Alumanah 2004; Idialu 2003), this study is different because it examines the views of only the women in marriage in Ikorodu local government Area of Lagos state, South-West.

Causes of Marital Conflict Among South-West Women

Some the causes of marital conflict in Christian marriages are:

Sex denial: Odeleye (2019) lamented sex starvation was discovered to be one of the reasons why divorce has increased amongst couples. Some women are very spiritual and claim to be praying and fasting every day. This makes the man uncomfortable and he calls for a divorce. Some of the women also usually claim to be going to church for a

night vigil, simply to deny their husband's sex. The man endures but gets to a point where he feels that he needs to get another wife and divorce his current wife. In a marriage, a man denying sex to his wife and vice versa could amount to cruelty and may be grounds for divorce.

***Falsehood*:** A false statement is one that refers to an untrue statement or the absence of truth or accuracy Merriam-Webster (2022). They are false beliefs Baima (2017). Divorced couples reported lies by one of the partners as a supporting reason for their divorce. A partner who is impotent will not tell the wife, or he will tell lies about having a job with a company when he does not. The lady, on the other hand, may have removed her womb without telling the husband, or one of the partners may have hidden their health status, such as being HIV positive, from their partner. Mrs Tolu (2022: oral interview) mentioned that she knows someone who divorced her husband, having discovered he was impotent without his telling her. Alieke (2022:1) reveals, 'When the marriage was contracted under falsehood, half-truth or undeclared facts can as well be a ground for seeking a divorce'. Also, one of the couples may have made empty promises to each other, and when they are not fulfilled, divorce takes its course (Vanguard 2022).

a. ***Wrong Marriage Partner:*** Since it has become easy for young men to marry, many of them just choose their marriage partners without proper examination. It is however amazing that their refusal to consult neither church leaders nor traditional elders has paved way for continuous conflict in the family. Ademiluka. (2024).

b. ***Technological Transition:*** No one can deny the immense good of modern technology. At the same time, the evil it has brought into the family life cannot be over looked especially on television and internet which have greatly invaded on our Christian homes and the society as a whole. Appathurai (2012), asserted that, the twentieth century initiated the disintegration of the extended family. The faster modes of transportation and better tools of communication have made the world-smaller and smaller but the distance between the members of family grows wider and wider since communication can be done in any part of the world through telephones and laptops.

c. ***Falsehood*:** A false statement is one that refers to an untrue statement or the absence of truth or accuracy (Merriam-Webster 2022). They are false beliefs (Baima 2017). Divorced couples reported lies by one of the partners as a supporting reason for their divorce. A partner who is impotent will not tell the wife, or he will tell lies about having a job with a company when he does not. The lady, on the other hand, may have removed her womb without telling the husband, or one of the partners may have hidden their health status, such as

being HIV positive, from their partner. Mrs Tolu (2022: oral interview) mentioned that she knows someone who divorced her husband, having discovered he was impotent without his telling her. Alieke (2022:1) reveals, '[*w*]hen the marriage was contracted under falsehood, half-truth or undeclared facts can as well be a ground for seeking a divorce'. Also, one of the couples may have made empty promises to each other, and when they are not fulfilled, divorce takes its course (Vanguard 2022).

d. **Financial constrain**— In spite of the amount of money a couple has, it is frequently the basis of marital strife. Most of the time, there are disagreements on how money brought into the household should be used. It is critical for spouses to communicate their financial beliefs and sentiments so that each partner may seek understanding for the other.

Budgeting and financial planning typically needs compromise and negotiation. That is because they are essential priorities that assist couples to plan ahead and set future goals, including child rearing, the kind of schools their children must attend, constructing a house, purchasing a car, donating to the less fortunate or children's homes, spending the money as it arrives or spending a little, as well as getting a substantial reserve for the next day.

A disagreement may emerge as a result of not understanding each other's wages or financial condition. Conflicts may also arise when a partner wants to control the expenditure of the other partner, (Akinade, (1997) and Niolon, (2003).

Communication is a crucial strategy in resolving the aforementioned home financing issues. If couples could discuss about the income that comes into the home from both partners and how such money should be expended, finance-related marital problems could be well managed if not fully eradicated (Akinade, 1997 and Niolon, 2003). In-law Problems with in- laws occur within the initial years of a marriage and when not well managed, can cause strife within the family. Spouses can cope with in-law issues by addressing their feelings and the type of relationship they desire with their in-laws. Having negative feelings such as misconceptions, insecurities, and biases towards in-laws typically can cause problems in marriage.

Theoretical Framework

Several explanations, three of which we consider here have been offered for marital conflicts. One set of explanation focuses on gender differences in behaviour. Caughlin and Vangelisti (2006) identified two types of gender differences: differences in the extent to which men and women enact particular behaviours and differences in the

association between conflict and other constructs (Caughlin & Vangelisti 2006:11). They observed that women in heterosexual unions tend to display more of negative behaviour than their partners including being more critical (Kelley, Cunningham, Grisham, Lefebvre, Sink, & Yablon, 1978), more demanding (Mikolic, Parker & Pruitt 1997), displaying more overt hostility (Zuroff & Duncan 1999) and distributive tactics (Messman & Mikesell 2000). Some explanations have also linked conflict behaviour with other constructs showing variations by sex. For example, women who have had negative experiences in their family of origin (e.g., parental divorce) may respond more negatively in conflict situation than men with such experience (Sanders, Halford & Behrens 1999). There is however the possibility of gender differences in conflict being exaggerated with researchers propagating gender stereotypes and ignoring conflict behaviours that run counter to stereotypes (Caughlin & Vangelisti 2006). Also of relevance is the cultural explanation theory which offers a set of explanation by underscoring the use of tradition and norms within culture to explain marital violence (George 2011).

The marriage relationship among the Yoruba is not a relationship of violence which forces, bends, breaks, destroys all possibilities and minimizes resistance (Foucalt 1982) but "a power relationship which is articulated on the basis that 'the other' (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results and possible interventions may open up" (Foucault 1982:14). These responses, reactions and possible interventions to marital conflict among the Yoruba are what this study explored.

Methodology

The study relies on primary data collected through in-depth interview with selected women in Lagos, Nigeria. The women were selected through snowball sampling in Ogba and Yaba areas of Lagos State on the condition that they satisfy the criteria for inclusion in the study. These are that they are Yoruba women, married for at least five years, were having or must have had marital conflict and were willing to share their story by giving their informed consent. Although 42 women were contacted through the snowball technique, only 28 women completed their interview and gave their consent.

Study Area: Ikorodu is one of the largest local government area in Lagos state, located to the North-East of the state, along the Lagos lagoon and shares boundary with Ogun state, with a population of 536,619 according to 2006 population census and with major language to be Yoruba.

Instrument

An in-depth interview guide was the study instrument. Caughlin and Vangelisti (2006:1) observed that questions about conflict can reflect various timeframes. Following their submission, we asked the interviewees to recall episodes of conflicts in their relationships. The interview guide ensured that the retrospective reports focused on what the women thought they did to cause the conflict, the responses of their spouses, consequences of the conflict and prefer solutions to the problems. The study used the technique of 'her story' to unravel women's perception of conflict situations of which they are a part by undertaking thematic analyses of the narratives of the 50 married women. The analysis followed the themes central to the objectives including causes, responses, consequences and solutions of marital conflict as well the sociological explanation of the conflict situation.

Results

Characteristics of participants

The participating women were between 25 and 65 years of age and had stayed not less than 5 years in marriage, with the majority being in their 50s. All but two of them had children ranging from one to six with the majority having between one and three children. They all had spouses who were older than they were with the age difference varying from one to 18 years. Most of the women were educated to the secondary and tertiary levels except one without formal education, two with primary education and two with postgraduate education. They were all engaged in economic activities outside the home. In presenting the women's narratives on the major causes of marital conflicts in their homes.

Causes of marital conflict

During the course of the interview, the women where allow to allow to give detailed of what has been perceived as the major causes of marital conflicts in their homes. The women complained of lack money being giving to them by their husbands to prepare food for the family, infidelity from their husband, lack of trust, household responsibilities and no communication once the man leaves for work**.**

Mrs. Iya, a 43 years old woman had stated that as my husband does not give you enough money to cook food for the family, You dear not make any mistake to give food that has no taste. He wants to Make sure everything is complete in the soup, whether you go do ashawo work or not. Once that not done, it is going to be trouble all through that night**.**

Mrs. Gold, a 52 years married woman stated that. The only way my husband will want to talk you if once he leaves for office or he is outside the house is only when he wants sex from you that night. He will call me like hundred times before he gets home, once you satisfy his sexual taste that night, without minding whether you the wife is satisfy also, the next day, once he goes out, he will not bother to call again. In fact, men are special human being.

Mrs. Oredo as been coded share her views as that My husband problem na anything on skirt o. he can sleep with even a death woman inside coffin, as long as there is a hole in between her two legs. Even though you catch him, he will still be claiming right. Woo, me I don tied for the marriage, I don't allow him to touch me again because of diseases in town. Na my children I dey marry now. I don tired for the marriage.

Responses on the consequences from the women

The responses from the women indicates that depression, mental disorder, health challenges like high blood pressure are unusually, the greatest problem with marital conflict among Ikorodu married women. Women are major affected because when the man want to start his problem He already has his girl friends outside that he is ready to bring into the house Immediately there is separation or park his things to go and stay outside with such strange women. Most times, these women can secretly commit suicide because of marriage frustrations, leaving the children to suffer in the hands of outsider.

Discussion of findings

A number of issues are raised by these women. It is observed that **e**ducational attainment and economic participation are expected to empower women so they can protect themselves against physical and other forms of abuse. The study however shows that women may be subjected to abuse in spite of being educated and economically independent. These two variables also did not affect the causes of conflict which seem to be similar for all participants. This is in consonance with the finding that education and length of marriage did not influence causes of conflicts among couples in Ijumu, Nigeria (Tolorunleke 2014). Participants who had both indices of empowerment still experienced abuse especially when their partners think they are usurping their role or appropriating the honour due to them.

A 43-year old trader and a mother whose husband was uncomfortable with being beaten up at the slightest provocation between she and the husband due to her in ability to support the family financially and not able to meet up with shared house responsibilities. Quarrel will always start with like these issues, he could stay in the

house without talking to me and the children for some time refused to eat and avoid sexual relations with her "as long as the quarrel lasts in the house.

The only participant without formal education who worked as a house security woman said she has suffered physical and emotional abuse on suspicion of extramarital affairs. In part, she says:

I never hid anything from him but he never trusted me. He didn't want me to work outside the home. He was always beating me, throwing my things out….my people came to plead on my behalf. I used to go to the village to deliver my children but I did not go for the last child as his mother was also annoyed because I used to help her on the farm…. My bad eyesight is as a result of his beating and torturing me.

Women with lower educational attainment seem to be worse off as they experience more aggression and maltreatment relative to their more educated counterparts. A primary school leaver and a school certificate holder who both said they could not take any decision without their husbands, experienced physical violence for challenging their husbands' extramarital affairs. The former said: "I did not agree with him when he brought a woman into the house. He beat me mercilessly; I lost a front tooth in the process". To the latter, being beaten since he found out about his affair with a girl in the same compound was "a normal thing".

Effective communication is key in resolving marital conflict. Oftentimes, this may sound like a common language, but a very few individuals put them in practice. This may involve active listening, paying attentions to details, making eye contact and giving your couple best of attention as they speak. Communication is the bed rock for every marriage relationship. keep open –mind during as this could help in conflict resolution. keeping an open minded will assist to find a peaceful resolution, hence it's easy to be caught unaware on the side of argument and lies. But the moment you are able to show ability to be flexible and show of understanding towards your partners concerns as it affects.

Conclusions

Findings from the discussions revealed that women are more likely to suffer more from marital conflict in their marriage relationship, where some of the issues that range from infidelity, financial challenges, lack of support for home from responsibilities and lack of trust would have been handle if there was proper communication in place. Furthermore, children are most likely to share from the pains of marital conflicts, if eventually lead to device. Women because children are always willing to pass through these pains because of their children and not just because the marriage is a do or die

affair.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are being suggested to help couples maintain a healthy marriage relationship in conflict resolution practices in the study area:

1) Couples must always be willing and ready to practice active listening, each time their partners take to explain the frustrations and pains being faced in the marriage,
2) The issues of finance and management available resources in the house should always discuss by both couples to give assurance of spending in handling family responsibilities
3) Couples should be willing and ready to ask open-minded questions to help uncover underlying issues and root causes of the problems, that can help improve dialogue, peaceful resolutions and solutions.
4) Couples facet with marital conflicts must be ready and willing to timeout during confrontation, argument and quarrel, especially as the emotions runs high. This would give room to calm the situation down, as one person can step away for period, to avoid escalation.
5) Women should speak out when confronted with such life challenges and life threating situations in their marriage. Also, seek external support from experts on marital conflict and therapist

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CONFLICT ESCALATION AND COMMUNAL CONFLICT IN NIGERIA: JOS CRISIS OF 2001

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Abstract

Plateau State faces multiplicity of communal struggles due to indigene/settlers struggle between farmers and herders. This issue lingered on for years until in 2001, when violent protest leading to crisis was experienced in Jos, the capital of Plateau State. This conflict culminated into series of clashes, showing escalatory trends in the conflict situation, with attendant dramatic loss of lives and properties. Therefore, this study analysed conflict escalation and communal conflicts in Nigeria, focusing on the Jos Crisis of 2001. The study made use of the qualitative research design, drawing data from secondary sources. The study found that there was excessive rivalry between clans in the Jos Local Government area as they struggled for their political positions. There was insensitivity to this struggle by the government who triggered communal grievances based on the appointment of a non-indigene of Jos North Local Government Area (LGA), as coordinator and chairman of a Jos North Monitoring Committee. This occurred despite existence of rival claims to land ownership and Indigene-settler conflicts between the Hausa-Fulani settlers, and this served as dynamics to the escalation of the conflict. The study recommends that government of Plateau State should ensure that they are proactive in addressing disputes whenever it arises in communities in the State. Also, the Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups should design measures that will enable them to co-exist in peace in available lands in plateau State,

Keywords: Diplomacy, International Politic, Global Integration and Peace

Introduction

According to Onwe (2006), communal conflict is prevalent around the world because, it is part of human effort to secure group interests of communal or village identity. Communal conflict will always be in existence as human race survives by interdependence. Eze et al. (2023) states that in Nigeria, communal conflicts have taken many forms and patterns, while majority of them are mainly in form of ethno-religious conflicts and herder–farmer land conflicts. But Okoli and Uhembe |(2014) notes that some of the communal conflicts in Nigeria, were not ignited by religious identities, but hugely masterminded by egoistic conflict profiteers, who capitalize on existing religious differences to achieve their partisan or self- centered interests. Also, Agheyisi (2019) contends that the struggle for land based-resources and ancestral attachment to land, are part of the major causes of communal conflict in Nigeria. Hence, Brosch′e (2023) postulate that communal conflict is a monstrous social problem which threatens the survival of the human race, causes thousands of deaths and severe livelihood disruptions, with pandemic-stricken communities.

In 2001, communal violence erupted in Jos, Plateau State. The crisis emanated from an appointment of a Muslim politician, Alhaji Muktar Mohammed, as local coordinator of a federal poverty alleviation program in the State (Minchakpu, 2001). The violence led to the destruction of lives and properties in large scale, and the military was also deployed and stopped the violence (Human Rights Watch, 2001). In July 2023, inter-communal violence erupted again in Jos, Plateau State, which resulted in the displacement of more than 80,000 people and a reported death toll of around 300. The conflict primarily involved clashes between Muslim nomadic herders and Christian farming communities, posing significant security challenges for Plateau State. In response, the Nigerian military took measures to strengthen security and address the violence with the aim of restoring stability in the affected areas.

The incessant eruption of communal conflict in Plateau State, coupled with its attendant dramatic loss of lives and properties, apparently necessitates the need for concrete analysis of community peace-building strategies in Nigeria, specifically evaluating conflict management strategies applied by peace-building stakeholders in the Jos crisis. Although systematic comparative research on communal conflict resolution is scarce, numerous case studies such as Cox (2016) have attempted to explain and discuss the causes of communal conflicts, but their findings do not present clear understanding of the local factors that contributes to the escalation of communal conflicts in Africa. Based on the foregoing, this study aims to analyze the factors that contributes to the escalation of communal conflicts Africa, using Jos, Plateau State as the study focus.

For further insights into the study, the study is organized into 6 sections; Section 2 contains conceptual review of the study, section 3 contains the methodology of the study, section 4 presents the theoretical framework of the study, section 5 contains empirical review of related literatures from other works, while section 6 presents the findings and conclusion.

Conceptual Review

Conflict

According to Best (2006), conflict is described as the pursuit of incompatible goals and desires, which bring about various ranges of discord. Faleti (2006) sees conflicts as a manifestation of the inherent flaws in human nature due to the fact the human nature is selfish, individualistic and obviously conflictive. Conflict exists everywhere and an ordinary part of social living, which may be minute or gigantic, apparent or hidden, and quick or lengthy lasting. Conflict occurs in all human relationships and social settings. Because of the extensive variety of ability variations amongst humans, the absence of war typically alerts the absence of significant interaction. Conflict through itself is neither accurate nor bad. However, the way wherein war is dealt with determines whether or not it's miles optimistic or destructive (Deutsch and Coleman, 2000). Although conflicts are inevitable in social relations, humans can embark on conflict constructively in addition to destructively. When approached constructively and cooperatively, conflicts can expose vital issues and project injustice. Conflicts do now no longer continually result in violence, and while cooperative techniques fail, humans can nevertheless voice their issues in collective opposition, protest, and non- violent cooperation.

Communal Conflict

Most scholars use the term ‘communal conflict’ without any explicit conceptualization. This has tended to suggest that there is a common understanding of the term. A conceptualization of the concept of communal conflict is therefore important as conflicts passes through stages before it becomes communal. Communal conflicts are violent conflicts that occurs based on communal identification and demarcation according to boundaries. This demarcation often causes conflicts among the inhabitants who see themselves as the legal owners of resources which cannot be shared within their sphere of control (Fearon & Laitin, 2011). Communal conflicts have the capacity of killing thousands of people in within a few days or weeks. These conflicts are often marked by atrocities and ethnic cleansing. Even if the killing subsides after only a few days, they tend to leave behind serious legacies of trauma, displacement, loss of market structures and income, and weakened social trust (Krause, 2020).

Community conflict follows a widely recognized concept of armed conflict, and this involves State sponsored groups or non-State sponsored groups, who have no formal military organization but can still demonstrate a high degree of coordination (Tilly, 2003). Communal conflict arises when ethnic identities are politicized, ethnic interests challenged, identities threatened and communication insufficient that differences cannot be effectively addressed. When a group perceive that they are being excluded from access to what they consider to be their right: It may be in the area of political, economic, administrative, commercial, religious or linguistic right (Imobighe, 2003).

Conflict Escalation

Zartman and Faure (2005) noted that the word escalation is not an object of explications as it has its origins in the Latin noun Scalae, which means "steps," "stairs," or "scaling," metaphorically suggesting a process of becoming greater or higher. Even more notable, however, and analogous to the linguistic roots of conflict, there is also an explicit transitive and intransitive meaning of the verbs that have been deduced from the Latin origin (e.g., to scale, to escalate). In this context, escalation signifies both an action strategy and an abstract description of a state of affairs in a dynamic social relationship (Zartman & Faure, 2005). Both meanings have played a decisive role in major scientific debates about concepts of conflict escalation.

Conflict escalation is seen as an intensification of a conflict with regard to the observed extent and the means used (Mitchell, 2014). Conflict escalation is characterized by a processes of circular interaction that lead to the growth and restructuring of the parties, generating new reasons and pretexts for applying additional means, thus leading to an expansion and protraction of the content of a conflict (Eckert & Willems, 2003). Given its dynamics and, to a certain degree, its autonomous nature, an escalating conflict represents both an evolving process and a self-stabilizing structure, or, in other words, a social system in its own right. Most conflicts manifest themselves as cursory bagatelles, but a few end up in situations of organized, collective violence (Pruitt, Kim, & Rubin, 2003). It is thus crucial to understand how trivial contradictions can become meaningful conflicts in a broader societal context. Hence, conflict escalation indeed represents a broad topic that covers agendas in different research strands, from psychological studies on interpersonal behavior, to sociological accounts on conflicts between social groups (Byrne & Senehi, 2009).

Theoretical Framework Human Needs Theory

This study is anchored on the Human Needs Theory. Abraham Maslow founded the Human Needs in 1943 (Wills & McEwen, 2014). The theory stipulates that humans survive on planet earth based on some universal needs, which are hierarchical in order.

Although, critics of the Human need theory has contended that in the early presentation of the theory, Maslow did not refer to a pyramid in describing the human needs. It is only in recent expressions by various scholars, the theory is shown as a pyramid mainly for in illustration purposes.

More importantly, the hierarchy of needs helps to show how humans intrinsically partake in behavioral motivation. Maslow used the terms "physiological", "safety", "belonging and love", "social needs" or "esteem", "self-actualization" and "transcendence" to describe the pattern through which human needs and motivations generally move. According to McLeod (2021), the hierarchy has been used to explain how effort and motivation are correlated in the context of human behavior. Each of these individual levels contains a certain amount of internal sensation that must be met in order for an individual to move to the next stage of the needs.

The human needs theory is applied in this study because, it helps to for explicit understanding of the motivational factors that drives communal conflict. Community inhabitants places more attachment and emphasis on ownership of resources. Ownership of these resources is seen as part of the fulfillment of collective needs of the community. Members are ready to do anything including engagement in conflict situations in order to reach the next level associated with the human needs.

Empirical Review

The Jos Conflict of 2001: Origin

According to Higazi (2011), conflict erupted in Jos in 2001 over grievances on the appointment of Alhaji Muhammed Mukta-Usman, a non-indigene of Jos North Local Government Area (LGA), as coordinator and chairman of the Jos North Monitoring Committee of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). Eventually, on September 7, 2001, the conflict was escalated into a crisis when a Christian woman, Rhoda Nyam, on was restricted from passing through a road barricaded by Muslim congregation in preparation for their Friday Juma'at Prayer at the Congo-Russia area. Higazi, 2011) further emphasized that the crisis lasted a week and Jos, and that the capital of Plateau State became the scene of mass killing and destruction for the first time in its recent history. Hundreds of people were killed and tens of thousands displaced in less than one week. The violence suddenly erupted between Christians and Muslims in a city where diverse communities had coexisted peacefully for years and which had prided itself on avoiding the inter-communal violence that had plagued neighboring States.

According to the Human Rights Watch {HRW} (2001), opinions about who was primarily to blame for the outbreak of violence varied and were sometimes highly polarized. However, all those interviewed by Human Rights Watch agreed on one conclusion: that the violence could have been foreseen but that government authorities failed to take action to prevent it. The state government adopted a passive attitude and appeared not to take seriously the numerous, explicit threats issued by both "indigenous" and "non-indigenous" groups in Jos in the weeks leading up to the crisis. All those interviewed also deplored the lack of police presence and intervention during the crisis and the failure of the police to ensure protection and security for the population. Eventually-but only after many lives had been lost-it was the military, not the police, who intervened to restore law and order (HRW, 2001).

Madueke (2017) noted in his work that, although the pursuit of power played out in the Jos crisis of 2001 at different levels, everyday members of the conflicting groups found fighting against perceived enemies apt in one setting, in particular: the neighbourhood. The outburst that overwhelmed the city manifested in a series of attacks and counterattacks by residents whose goal was exclusive dominance in their neighbourhoods or, in some cases, to extend dominance to new frontiers. However, many riot participants admitted their actions were only defensive. Some residents of Tina Junction, for example, insisted they only went out to defend their neighbourhood from incursion (Madueke, 2017).

Escalation of the 2001 Jos Conflict

There is the existence of bulk of research on what caused the escalation of the 2001 Jos conflict, and most of the works such as Ostien (2009), tends towards explaining identities and groups in terms of constructs created and recreated as a means to achieve political-cum- economic ends. Several analysts such as Osaghae and Suberu (2005) states that strife in the once peaceful city of Jos and elsewhere in Nigeria led to series of struggles between individuals and groups over economic advantage.

According to Izugbara et al., (2003) in the reliance on indigenous knowledge to resolve communal conflict, there are a number of critical issues for both the theory and the practice of communal conflict resolution. The issues which cause a communal conflict are usually in place long before the outbreak of violence, and it is their escalation that often turns a situation of peaceful competition into a destructive, deadly confrontation. Every communal conflict situation will always have warning signs, early indicators which could be effectively addressed. Izugbara et al., (2003) also noted that perceived incompatibility of interests, infringement upon the environmental rights of a group, refusal to respect well-established cultural boundaries, and lack of respect for a group's cultural and economic entitlements often serve to mobilize or rally a group around its

grievances. It is often the absence of a third party to help local communities reinvent and reroutes these grievances into less violent outbursts that precedes an escalation. Instead of waiting until these incompatibilities burst into destructive violence, trouble spots and vulnerable areas could be identified and the time bomb of communal violence detonated before it explodes. In Nigeria, as in many other countries of the world, there are local government authorities. The identification of potential local conflict spots, the honest assessment of their causes, the mediation of such conflicts in a transparent manner and their de-escalation in time is a statutory duty that local government authorities need to be taken seriously (Izugbara, 2003).

The report of International Crisis Group (2012) states that in 2001, violence erupted in Jos city, capital of Plateau state, in Nigeria's Middle Belt region. The ostensible dispute was over the "rights" of the indigene Berom/Anaguta/Afizere (BAA) group and the rival claims of the Hausa-Fulani settlers to land, power and resources. Indigene-settler conflicts are not new to Nigeria, but the country is currently experiencing widespread inter-communal strife, which particularly affects the Middle Belt. The Jos crisis is the result of failure to amend the constitution to privilege broad-based citizenship over exclusive indigene status and ensure that residency rather than indigene determines citizens' rights. Constitutional change is an important step to defuse indigene-settler rivalries that continue to undermine security. It must be accompanied by immediate steps to identify and prosecute perpetrators of violence, in Jos and other parts of the country. Elites at local, state and federal level must also consistently implement policies aimed at reducing the dangerous link between ethnic belonging and access to resources, power and security if inter-communal violence is to end (International Crisis Group, 2012).

Krause (2011) researched on the deadly cycle of communal conflict in Jos and finds that the historical, regional, and religious dimensions of the Jos crisis are crucial to understanding the protracted nature of the conflict situation. Geographically, Jos lies in the centre of Nigeria, between the predominantly Muslim north and the mostly Christian south. The city of Jos was established around tin mining activities during colonial times. It attracted migrants from all parts of Nigeria to work in the mines and with the colonial administration. The colonial legacy of indirect rule initially relied on northern emirate structures.

Later, political power was transferred to the 'native' tribes of the Plateau. The study also found that the Berom were one of the largest tribes and they most vocally defend 'indigene'. But Hausa migrants from the north constituted by far the most numerous groups in early Jos. The ownership of Jos and claims to 'indigene' status are fiercely contested between the native tribes and the Hausa. Indigene certificates ensure access to political representation and positions within the civil service. Only local governments

issue these certificates and therefore decide on indigene status. Krause (2011) noted that this arrangement opened the floodgates for the politics of labelling and the selective reciting of historical accounts that foster group boundaries to secure political control over local government areas.

Methodology

The qualitative research design is adopted for this study. The study data were obtained from secondary sources such as journals, textbooks, online resources, newspapers, among others.

The data generated was analyzed with the use of content analysis. The analysis was done by empirically reviewing other related literatures to the subject matter of the study. Content Validity Index (CVI) was used to measure the proportion of acceptance and rejection of each item in each reviewed literature in the Study.

Findings

Conflict escalates, given its dynamics and, to a certain degree, its autonomous nature, an escalating conflict represents both an evolving process and a social system of its own. The Jos crisis of 2001 is a situation of an escalatory communal conflict. Its immediate trigger of was communal grievances on the appointment of Alhaji Muhammed Mukta-Usman, a non- indigene of Jos North Local Government Area (LGA), as coordinator and chairman of the Jos North Monitoring Committee of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). This was despite existing clan affiliation and politics of exclusiveness.

There was excessive rivalry between clans in the Jos Local Government area as they struggled for their favourite's sons to ascend into government positions for glory, power, resources and belonging. There was also the existence of rival claims to land ownership and Indigene-settler conflicts between the Hausa-Fulani settlers, which served as dynamics to the escalation of the conflict. The Jos conflict of 2001 was earlier perceived in the government security watch, but government authorities failed to take action to prevent it. The State government adopted a passive attitude and appeared not to take seriously the numerous, explicit threats issued by both "indigenous" and "non-indigenous" groups in Jos in the weeks leading up to the 2001 crisis.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Jos Conflict of 2001 was a communal conflict that erupted amidst multiplicity of communal issues that were left unresolved. The immediate cause of violence which is

the appointment of Alhaji Muhammed Mukta-Usman, a non-indigene in the area of appointment, was only trigger and not the root causes. The root causes could be seen in the primordial sentiments and differences between the Hausa-Fulani settlers, who have had conflicts of land ownership over the years prior to the issue of appointment of Alhaji Mukta. The Nigerian government both at the State and national level were not proactive to curtail the grassroots disputes, enabling it to escalate into crisis situation that caused the death of over 1000 people, displacement of people and the destruction of properties in large scale.

Based on the findings made in above, the following recommendations have become valid.

- The government of Nigeria, both at the federal and State levels should device resort to the use of Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR measures that can address conflicts in the grassroots level, so as to prevent them from escalating into full blown crisis,
- The community leaders in conflict affected communities should resort to alternative dispute resolution mechanisms so as to seek ways to resolve age long disputes.
- The government security agencies should prevent the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in communities, so as to prevent large scale destruction of lives and propertied in advent of dispute.
- The government of Plateau State should ensure that they are proactive in addressing disputes whenever it arises in communities in the State.
- The Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups should design measures that will enable them to co- exist in available lands in plateau.
- The Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups should always seek peaceful settlement of disputes through established peaceful means.
- Victims from the Jos crisis should be properly rehabilitated, while properties destroyed should be restored partially all in full, as the case may be.

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CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES IN COMBATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN KOGI STATE, NORTH CENTRAL, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Domestic violence against women remains a pervasive and entrenched issue in Kogi State, Nigeria. Despite government efforts to combat this scourge, implementation of strategies remains hindered by various challenges. Domestic violence does not refer to a single act of violence but rather to a complicated pattern of abuse that may encompass physical, psychological, and sexual assault. This paper examined the challenges affecting the implementation of government strategies in combating domestic violence against women. The survey and exploratory research designs were adopted in the study. One (1) Local Government Area was purposively selected from each of the three (3) senatorial districts. A sample size of 400 was utilised using Taro Yamane formula. Questionnaires, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were the major instruments for data collection. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data obtained. The finding revealed that listening to multiple friends among couples increases cases of domestic violence, delay in passing judgment on the perpetrators of domestic violence encourages others to indulge in the act of domestic violence; equally, negative family members' attitudes toward victims of domestic violence also compounded the incidences of domestic violence. It was recommended that the State Government should, as a matter of policy, establish Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Centres in collaboration with private sectors to assist victims of domestic violence against women in all the political wards in Kogi State.

Key Words*:* Domestic violence; Women; Challenges; Implementation and Combating.

Introduction

Domestic violence against women is a pervasive and entrenched issue in Nigeria, with devastating consequences for victims, families and communities. Kogi State, in particular, has recorded alarming rates of domestic violence, necessitating urgent attention from policymakers and stakeholders. Despite the existence of government strategies and policies aimed at combating domestic violence, the persistence of this scourge suggests that implementation remains a significant challenge.

Domestic violence does not refer to a single act of violence but rather to a complicated pattern of abuse that may encompass physical, psychological, and sexual assault. United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2013) posited that domestic violence is any violence that is aimed at a person based on their biological sex, gender identity, or perceived conformance to socially imposed norms of masculinity and femininity. Despite various mechanisms such as cognitive and behavioural techniques to diminish, decrease, control, or tolerate the demands of a stressful or dangerous situation, the menace is increasing (Muller & Spitz, 2003). Knowing what mediates the relationship between domestic violence and the well-being of survivors is becoming increasingly important (Calvete, Corral, & Estévez, 2008; Milani, 2016; Shannon, Logan, Cole, & Medley, 2006; Wuerch *et al.*, 2019).

According to these studies' findings (Bauman, Haaga, & Dutton, 2008; Brabeck & Guzmán, 2008; Goodman *et al.*, 2005), survivors of domestic abuse use several coping techniques to manage their high levels of stress, flee the violence in their lives, and create safe spaces for themselves. Utilising one's coping mechanisms and seeking support are methods for overcoming the detrimental effects of domestic abuse. There is growing evidence that victims who are subjected to physical or emotional abuse at home during their formative years may suffer unfavourable consequences in terms of growth and mental health (Hill *et al.*, 2016). Also, they may exercise an increase in aggressiveness and anxiety, as well as changes in how such victim interacts socially with peers, family, and professionals. Despite these several ways of managing this menace, lots of obstacles still hinder various government strategies in managing domestic violence against women. It is against this background this study identifies constraints on the effective implementation of government strategies in combating domestic violence against women.

Theoretical Framework

The Power and Control Wheel

This paper is hinged on "The Power and Control Wheel Theory". This theory was created by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Projects (DAIP) in 1984 to help both victims of domestic violence and to educate abusive men. Through focus groups with survivors, they developed a wheel outlining the most common tactics of abusive partners. In contrast with the Cycle of Violence, the Wheel does not imply these experiences happen in a certain order but rather, in combination, denotes a pattern of power and control, the two facets that hold the Wheel together as its centre.

The Power and Control Wheel theory in gender-based violence describes the different tactics an abuser uses to maintain power and control over his partner. In an abusive relationship, the batterer uses the pattern of tactics described in the power and control wheel to reinforce his use of physical violence.

Some of these tactics include:

- Economic abuse, to deny the survivor access to money
- Coercion and threats, like convincing the survivor to do something illegal
- Intimidation, to keep the survivor fearful
- Emotional abuse, such as degrading the survivor,
- Isolation, controlling when the survivor can leave the home
- Minimising, Denying and Blaming, such as gaslighting
- Using the children, including threatening to file for custody if the survivor leaves
- Male privilege, to define men's and women's roles

This study utilised the power and control wheel, also known as the Duluth model, to illustrate the dynamics of domestic violence. Using the Duluth Model, communities may coordinate their responses to domestic violence. Through an interagency framework, justice and human service responses are coordinated with the primary goal of preventing victims of repeated abuse. It was created and implemented in a small working-class city in northern Minnesota between 1980 and 1981. The original organisers in Minnesota aggressively supported the cause for battered women. Duluth was determined to be the finest city in Minnesota for coordinating the efforts of criminal and civil justice authorities responding to domestic violence incidents, including battering. They coined the term "battering" to describe a pattern of persistent abuse by an offender against a current or former intimate partner. Eleven organisations

initiated the original collaboration effort. Included were the domestic abuse intervention project, three mental health organisations, the local shelter for abused women, 911, the police, sheriffs, and prosecutor's offices, probation, the criminal and civil court benches, and probation (DAIP). Its growth and popularity among reformers in other towns were influenced by its activist, reform-focused roots.

Material and Methods

The survey and exploratory research designs were adopted for the study. One (1) Local Government Area was purposively selected from each of the three (3) senatorial districts. These Local Governments Areas were; Dekina, Okene and Lokoja representing Kogi East, Central and West Senatorial districts respectively.

The study population comprised men and women aged 15 and above within the three selected local government areas in Kogi State. The targeted population included men, women survivors of domestic violence, officials of the State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (SMOWASD), State Ministry of Health (SMOH), the gender units of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), gender officers of the State Ministry of Justice (SMOJ).

The estimated population of the three selected study locations was 1,057,200 (NPC, 2021). The Taro Yamane formula was employed to establish a suitable sample size that produced a reasonably accurate statistical outcome, with a degree of accuracy of 95 percent and an error margin of 5 percent.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size
N = Total population
1 = Constant value
e = Margin of error, which is 5%

$$= \frac{1{,}057{,}200}{1 + 1{,}057{,}200\ (0.05^2)}$$

$$= \frac{1{,}057{,}200}{1 + 1{,}057{,}200\ (0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{1{,}057{,}200}{1+2{,}643}$$

$$= \frac{1{,}057{,}200}{2{,}644} = 399.85 ((400).$$

The instruments for data collection were structured questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and In-Depth Interviews (IDI). The quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were adopted. Data generated from questionnaires administered was quantitatively analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) tool. The analysed data was presented in simple descriptive statistics and portrayed in frequency counts and tables. Meanwhile, the data retrieved from IDIs and FGDs conducted were subjected to content analyses using descriptive and narrative styles.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Identified Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Government Mechanisms in Combating Domestic Violence in Kogi State

Variables	SA	A	UD	SD	D	Mean	STD	Mean	Std DEV
Delay in passing judgment on the perpetrators of domestic violence encourages others to do it	185 (46.4)	193 (48.4)	4 (1%)	14 (3.5%)	3 (.8%)	4.3333			0.84274
Listening to multiple friends among couples increases cases of DV	147 (36.8)	176 (44.1%)	6 (1.5%)	32 (8%)	38 (9.5%)	3.9223			1.21815
Inadequate training for law enforcement agents in handling incidences of DV	224 (56.1)	159 (39.8%)	1 (.3%)	12 (3%)	3 (.8%)	4.4536			0.81273

Lack of state protection for the victims encourages more to indulge in the acts	207 (51.9%)	176 (44.1%)		14 (3.5 %)		4.41 3 5	0.81562
Negative family members and community attitudes toward victims of DV	241 (60.4%)	150 (37.6%)		8 (2%)		4.54 3 9	0.69993
Inadequate enforcement of the law on the perpetrators of DV	212 (53.1%)	174 (43.6%)		13(3. 3%)		4.43 3 6	0.79885
High level of illiteracy among women encourages increased incidences of domestic violence	237 (59.4%)	153 (38. 3%)	3(.8 %)	5 (1.3 %)	1 (. 3 %)	4.54 3 9	0.65544
The lack of a constitutional role for traditional institutions inhibits the fight against domestic violence against women	221 (55.4%)	174 (43.6%)		14 (3.5 %)		4.42 3 6	0.81663
Women preference to remain in abusive homes because of their children	219 (54.9%)	166 (41.6%)		14 (3.5 %)		4.44 3 6	0.81826
The stigmatization of divorce in African settings encourages domestic violence	209 (52.4%)	167 (41. 9%)	2 (. 5 %)	17 (4.3 %)	4 (1 %)	4.37 0 9	0.90379

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result shows the challenges affecting the implementation of policies on domestic violence against women in Kogi State. The result revealed that negative family members and community attitudes toward victims of domestic violence and high level of illiteracy among women stimulates incidences of domestic violence in Kogi State, with a mean value of 4.5439 respectively. The result corroborated with a similar study conducted by Dryden-Edwards (2019), where it was reported that social pressure was identified as a risk factor in curtailing the menace of domestic violence against women.

This manifested in such a way that when an individual is subjected to higher pressure from their surroundings, they can be intimidated and remain silent rather than speaking out. This finding was validated by the FGD report from Okene, where a participant remarked thus:

Family pressure and acquaintance hinders one from taking a position on certain sensitive issues for example, the manner in which people look at divorcees in my community is annoying as they are unfortunately stigmatized and isolated leading to low self-esteem and feeling of alienation and rejection. Above all, most of us live in ignorance and can hardly know our rights not to talk of protecting it. Men find it easy to take advantage of us and at any slightest opportunity they exploit. (Source: FGD, 2023).

In another FGD session in Anyigba Town (East Senatorial District), a participant posited:

Like me, I married in my mother's village, and I knew everybody in my husband's village even before we got married. The last time got me beaten, he afterwards went and met my family members to seek forgiveness and promised not to beat me again. But he has been making several attempts to beat me since then. He abuses me verbally and sexually. Unfortunately, I cannot tell him my mind any longer because he will harass me and threaten to divorce and the stigma of a divorcee is more of hell on earth (Source: FGD, 2023)

Also, another significant constraint against the effective implementation of policies on domestic violence against women in Kogi State is Inadequate training for law enforcement agents in handling incidences of Domestic violence against women with a mean score of 4.4536. The implication is that a special unit needed to be established in all police formations and other sister agencies to handle mainly all issues relating to domestic violence against women. This finding is in tandem with Oluremi (2016), who reported that domestic violence against women in Nigeria is usually reported mainly in the social media instead of law enforcement agencies for proper prosecutions.

However, the attitude of women to remain in abusive marriages or unions because of the children is also significant, with a mean value of 4.4436. This result is in agreement with the study conducted by Andrews et al. (2011), which reported that power disparities associated with divorce, shame and self-blame are likely to have the same effect on women encountering domestic violence; the impact is higher for ethnic minority groups and migrant women who are marginalised in such situations.

Also, significant constraint to the effective implementation of policies on domestic violence against women in Kogi State is inadequate enforcement of laws on the

perpetrators of domestic violence against women, with a mean value of 4.4336. The implication is that it is challenging to enforce the law on domestic violence as a result of weak institutions. In most cases, the perpetrator walked home with judgments that are presumed fraudulently procured. This finding substantiated the position of VAPPA (2015) whereof it advocated the need for a comprehensive component of Nigerian legislations addressing violence against women to include punitive provisions for coercion and other harmful traditional practices (HTPs), rape, physical injury, spousal battery and intimidation among others. Also, in the work of Onyemelukwe (2016), it was noted that crimes and punishments have problematic gaps because the cumulative punishment for gang rapists is less than the minimum sentence for any individual offender. This is a major gap in our legislation and should be addressed in subsequent amendments.

Furthermore, lack of a constitutional role for the traditional institutions to empower them to fight against domestic violence against women, with a mean value of 4.4236 is another major constraint that hampers the implementation of government's intervention in the management of domestic violence against women in the state. Traditional rulers are the custodians of culture, therefore, if they are adequately and legally empowered, they can help in tackling the scourge of domestic violence against women. This result is in agreement with Arisi & Oromareghake (2012), Williams (2019), and Arowolo (2020), who collectively identified non-implementation of laws and treaties on domestic violence as major drawback to implementation of government policies and programmes on domestic violence. Also, the patriarchal nature (male-dominated) Nigerian society which is inherently discriminatory against women contributed to unabated cases of domestic violence against women in the state.

Similarly, lack of state protection for the victims of domestic violence encouraged more individuals to indulge in the act and its significance is with a mean value of 4.4135. The finding is this regard, is in tandem with the works of Madu (2015), Ekhator (2019), and Arowolo (2020), which focused on legislation on women's protection at the national level, with little attention given to the legislation, policy measures, and strategies adopted at the state level to combat the social and domestic violence menace. During FGD session conducted in Okene (Central Senatorial District), a female respondent stated clearly:

There's no state protection at all in our area. We are on our own in my community. If you take your case, especially on domestic violence, to the police station, they will end up mocking you and making you the talk of the town. A friend told me that she went to the police to report an issue of beating and sexual deprivation, only for a police officer in that station to demand sex in order to help prosecute her husband. No proper

education and enlightenment on domestic violence against women in my locality (Source: FGD, 2023)

However, the least significant constraint against effective implementation of policies on domestic violence against women in Kogi State is the delay in passing judgment on the perpetrators of domestic violence, which encourages others to do it. This finding corroborated with the interview conducted in Lokoja Town (West Senatorial District), where a female participant posited.

I know of a case of rape that has been going on since two (2) years ago. At last, they were advised to settle out of court. You can now see how the government and their agents discourage women from reporting any sexual violence to the police. In Anyigba, two (2) female participants said, I had an issue with someone around my area last year. He touched my breast violently, and I reported the matter to the police; instead of the police summoning the offender for interrogation, they laughed and taunted me and requested I to go back and settle with the offender. One of the police officers was asking me whether I snapped or videoed the guy at the point he was touching me. And all of them hysterically laughed at me. So, you can see why we cannot report issues like domestic violence in Igala land. (Source: IDI, 2023)

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the implementation of government strategies in combating domestic violence against women in Kogi state, Nigeria is hindered by complex array of challenges. These challenges which ranges from inadequate funding, social cultural and religious barriers, inadequate institutional capacity and lack of effective coordination and collaboration, underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to addressing domestic violence. To enhance the implementation of government strategies, it's imperative to increase funding, intensify awareness and sensitization, build institutional capacity and foster effective coordination and collaboration amongst stakeholders. Ultimately, a concerted effort by policymakers, practitioners, and community leaders is required to prevent and respond to domestic violence, promote gender equality and protect the rights and dignity of women in Kogi State.

Exploring the role of government agencies in the prevention and response to domestic violence can eliminate the complexities of multi-sectoral collaboration and coordination. By assessing the strengths, weaknesses, and synergies among various actors, this work offered recommendations for enhancing inter-agency cooperation, community engagement, and survivor support services, thereby strengthening the overall response to domestic violence in Kogi state.

From the findings, the following recommendations have been put forward. The state government should, as a matter of policy, establish Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) centres in collaboration with private sectors and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to assist victims of domestic violence against women in all the political wards in Kogi state. This will facilitate special attention for the victims in terms of care and treatment for the impact of domestic violence against women, such as psychological and emotional torture, among others. Efforts should be put in place by all the stakeholders to promote campaign against domestic violence, its negative consequences, disseminate necessary information to citizens and ensure that relevant laws are applied to serve as deterrence.

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