



POLITICS, GOVERNANCE AND THE CHALLENGES OF NATION-BUILDING IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Editors' Note - - - - -	1
2. Address of welcome by the Head of Department - - - - -	3
3. Dean's Address - - - - -	5
4. Vice Chancellor's Address - - - - -	6
5. A Nation First: The National Question in Nigeria and Pathways for Resolution Professor Samuel Egwu - - - - -	7-25
6. Governance Malaise and the Problematique of Legitimacy in Contemporary Nigeria Professor R. Ayo Dunmoye-- - - - - -	26-40
7. Logic and Methods of Political Inquiry: Some Basic Issues Professor Makodi Biereenu-Nnabugwu - - - - -	41-60
8. An Assessment of Aggravation of Corruption in Nigeria under President Jonathan's Administration Lawal, Ebenezer Ejalonibu, Ph.D; Adebisi Oluwashina Moruf, Olatunji, I. A., Ph.D; & Abdullahi, Mu'awiyya - - - - -	61-83
9. Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict and National Development in Nigeria Akhanolu Lilian Nnenne - - - - -	84-97
10. Monetization and Elections in Nigeria's Democracy: The 2019 General Elections Experience Ebi, Lawrence Alfred & Akwen, Tyoyila Gabriel & Ejembi, Emmanuel Adakole - - - - -	98-113
11. Matching Opposition and Ruling Party Ideals: The Governance Dilemmas of the All Progressives Congress Egbe, Olawari D., Ph.D.; Gogo, O. David, Ph.D. & Koko, I. Epoweide, Ph.D.	114-137
12. Conflict and Internal Displacement of People in Nigeria Gomment, Thomas Imoudu, Ph.D - - - - -	138-146

13. Prospects and Challenges of Rural Infrastructure in Nigeria: Implication for Sustainable Economic Development
Dr C.U. Idoko - - - - -147-164
14. China's Defence Policies and its Hegemonic Roles in South Asia.
Abubakar Isiaka Alfa - - - - - 165-175
15. Assessment of Good Governance and Human Security in Nigeria
Isiaq, Atanda Abdulwaheed, Ph.D & Lawal, Divinefavour Ohida - 176-186
16. Analysis of Local Government Financial Accounting and Reporting in Nigeria: An Implication for Effective Governance
Jimoh, Ihiovi Ojo, Ph.D & Awen, Benjamin Iorsue, Ph.D - - 187-199
17. Pervasive Corruption in Nigeria: A Historical Examination of Corruption in Nigeria's Public Space Between 1966-1975
Joel Augustus-Daddie, Ph.D - - - - - 200-208
18. Geography Education and Good Governance: Challenges for Nation Building in Nigeria
Lawali, Musa & Aliyu, Mohammed - - - - - 209-218
19. The Imperative of Education as a Catalyst for Women Participation in the Politics of Nigeria's Fourth Republic
Ibrahim, Mohammed Nasiru, Ph.D & Popoola, Bamidele Babatunde 219-229
20. Governance and Human Security in Nigeria
Audu, Daniel; Birat, Sylvester; Zagi, Idris Zagi; Aluwong, Jeremiah S. & Bakut Christiana Jonathan - - - - - 230-243
21. Political Socialisation and Good Governance: Challenges for Nation Building in Nigeria
Aliyu, Mohammed & Lawali, Musa - - - - - 244-255
22. Thematic Analyses of Armed Banditry and Human Security in Nigeria 2011-2020: A Focus on Zamfara State
Adegbe, Samson Ojonugwa & Isah, Simeon Onuche - - - 256-274

23. Electoral Integrity and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999-2019
Zekeri, Momoh & Amaha, Stephen - - - - - 275-284
24. Governance and Human Security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic
Matawal Adamu Bitrus - - - - - 285-299

ASSESSMENT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Human security is very important but sometimes it is an elusive goal in Nigeria. While the first part of the Nigerian constitution emphasizes security of lives and properties a cursory look at virtually every region in Nigeria would show how this has become a mirage. In many ways, North eastern part of Nigeria represents a microcosm for the panorama of Boko Haram menace that threatens human existence and impedes development in the region. The epistemic clashes between Farmers and Herders have overwhelmed the states of the North central. The proliferation of violence and activities of the dreaded bandits have almost reduced the Northwest to a jungle. The outcome of the ENDSARS protest brought another dimension to the debate of insecurity in Nigeria. In a democratic system, social justice is crucial but it remains an elusive goal in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper seeks to critically examine the issues above through the lens of human security perspective. A qualitative research method is adopted for the study. The data used in this study is gathered from secondary sources such as books, journals, Newspapers and publications from conference proceedings, government organisations, and international organisations. This paper seeks to advance that human security hinges upon good governance as they work together to ensure a sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: good governance, human security, insecurity,

Introduction

The incessant myriad of challenges embattling the birth of good governance in Nigeria after decades of liberation from the British colonial masters is fast becoming a pebble in the pie, considering that Nigeria often gets described as a leader in Africa. While her vast size, sparse population, and impressive array of unexploited natural and mineral resources—especially

Iron ore, platinum, gas, oil, gold, copper, phosphates, bauxites, aluminium, and zinc—have attracted the attention of major world powers in the world to the country, she plays a major economic and political role in Africa and wields influence globally (Gbogbo, 2011). However, since 1999, governance conditions have improved broadly, but corruption, ethnic-ethnic-Religious tensions, violations by security forces, discrimination against women and sexual minorities, and governmental tensions, the intimidation of political rivals and media remains a major problem amongst others.

Reviewing the cavalcade of anomalies that plagued the electoral process in the country such as historically low turnout, pervasive buying of votes, and widespread violence, on a wave of frustration with corruption, economic malaise, and growing insecurity has raised stronger questions about Nigeria's democratic governance. On many fronts, from the human security perspective, Nigeria faces problems. The conflict between the military and two International Terrorist Organizations (ITOs) identified by the United States-Boko Haram and an Islamic State-affiliated group. The Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) splinter group has killed tens of thousands in the past. Ten years, millions have been displaced and triggered a protracted humanitarian crisis. The war has also destabilized neighbouring countries-areas in the larger Lake Chad Basin region of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Amidst a wider deterioration in security conditions in the north-eastern part of Nigeria, the dispute between pastoralists and farmers in the Southwest has recently escalated. Cattle rustling, abduction, ethnic massacres, and emerging radical Islamist violence are included. In the Middle Belt of Nigeria, conflicts over access to resources overlap with ethno-religious wars. Christian and Muslim religious cleavages between cultures continue to skyrocket. In the South, oil crime and militancy are the order of the day. The rich Niger Delta-crisis has impeded growth for decades and led to insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea (Mbama, 2011).

With substantial oil reserves, comprehensive agricultural and service sector capacity, and a youthful population, they equipped Nigeria to emerge as a global economic superpower with a rapidly rising population (World Bank, 2003). But corruption, the lack of infrastructure, unemployment, and the inability to diversify the economy away from the output of oil have limited the growth and development of the economy. Across a variety of metrics, the country already ranks among the least developed countries in the world (Shehu, 2006). According to some research, Nigeria is estimated to be home to the largest population living in extreme poverty in the world and one of the most corrupt nations in the world (Agbu, 2003). This is especially the case concerning the wide assortment of problems that occurs within the nexus of governance, human security and development—a triad of themes to which we shall briefly access.

Good Governance

The promotion of good governance can be set against the context of stability, prosperity, and human development. This complex intersection of development, stability, and governance is especially complicated with Nigeria, which has a sad yet increasing record of crime and violence, economic hitches and political frailties. In its ideal form, the nexus serves as the

base of the human security approach. It arose in 1994 because of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). They designed it with an understanding of recently defined security challenges, such as environmental issues, identity politics (ethnicity, faith, gender), and criminal terrorist groups in mind. Good governance upends a specific single definition that ensures global recognition. As a result, various interpretations of the definition have emerged. The World Bank (2003) summarized good governance and a detailed account of its key components. In this context, the Bank contends that government consists in the exercising of power in the name of the people, while good governance is doing so in ways that respect the integrity and needs of everyone within the state. According to this viewpoint, good governance is founded on two critical core values: inclusiveness and accountability.

According to Madhav (2007), good governance is linked to the ethical foundation of governance, which must be assessed concerning particular standards and goals that may be established. According to Ozigbo (2000), as quoted in Okpaga (2007), before discussing good governance, it is important to first explore the meaning of the term governance. Governance, according to him, refers to how people are ruled and how state relations are administered and controlled. Thus, governance refers to how a country's politics are carried out. Ansah (2007) described governance as a state's institutional and systemic structures, decision-making mechanism, and execution capability, as well as the relationship between government officials and the public. It is on this note that we shall turn to a reflection of Nigeria's historical trajectory of governance, and development issues from the human security perspective. Also, an attempt will be made to provide a remedy through the human security perspective.

Human Security

For far too long, the definition of human security has been influenced by the traditional notion of a possibility of war within diverse groups or entities in a state and between sovereign states with clashing interests. However, human security is a generic concept and an emerging paradigm that provides full insight and understanding of local, national and international vulnerabilities. Human security, in contrast to the neo-realist idea of national security, rejected an emphasis on the state but stressed that "... human security is people-centred." Therefore, the two crucial points of reference for human security are, first "individual security," with a focus on "their safety and empowerment" (John Locke 1632-1704). Therefore, human security goes beyond just people's security as related to war, conflicts and fear. In contrast to the neo-realist perception, it enlarges the tentacles of security from territorial security to the security of the people. The 1994 Human Development Report provides a full insight into Human Security by outlining the seven major aspects of the concept:

1. Economic
2. Health

3. Personal
4. Political
5. Food
6. Environmental
7. Community

However, the aforementioned 1994 HDR view of human security is not totally encapsulating. In 2006, the United Nations (UN) said that “human security is necessary in response to the sophistication and interconnectedness of old and new security threats.” Human security encompassed “good government and human development” besides uncertainty and contingency. This feature thus provides the principle, interdependency and interconnectedness of good governance, human security and development.

Reflections on Governance and Human Security in Nigeria

Nigeria’s history of prolonged military rule and almost incessant violence and its pronounced political fragmentation represent a crucial backdrop for its current political landscape. Governance in Nigeria has come a long way in the past two and half decades with four transitional elections and as many as over 10 million registered voters (Aremu, 2014). Historians have pointed to the virtually interminable warfare between the indigenous populations of what is now Nigeria during the pre-colonial period. After the initial years of political struggles associated with the British invasion, the colonial rule impregnated, incubated, and gave birth to what is known today as Nigeria. Following independence, the almost constant civil war (1967-1970) between Biafra and the republic of Nigeria led to the death of 45,000 to 100,000 military personnel, displacement of over 2,000,000-4,500,000 Nigerians (Wikipedia, 2021).

The amplified fragmentation of Nigerian politics considering the diverse entities that make up the country has resulted in some noteworthy consequential effects. First, violence has intensified in the country, thus making life to be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short, as posited by Hobbes in the state of nature. Second, this has meant that in Nigeria, security historically has been privatized and dispersed. Examples include the development of peasant and community defence organizations, the proliferation of private forces hired to protect a wide assortment of economic enterprises, the private forces of criminal syndicates, as well as a slew of other manifestations. Third, in a State that has been historically weak, illegitimate, or even completely absent in many areas, the economic enterprises has often operated totally outside government structures – a phenomenon that would otherwise count as contraband trade which led to the closure of all state land borders by President Muhammadu Buhari in August 2019.

By the dawn of the twentieth century, Nigeria's oil sector attracted huge attention in the international market and made inroads towards industrialization. Global influences and ideas – particularly those associated with Western Modernity – grew considerably during this epoch of increased global contact. (Tobi, 2006) posited that good governance encompasses the effective utilization of economic resources by the government. Unfortunately, the inability of a good governance system to use effectively the economic dividends that stem out of oil production in transforming the lives of the people after decades of democratic rule has thus led to poverty and underdevelopment; insecurity; corruption; mass illiteracy; unemployment; sections movement, religious wars, Boko haram, herders' farmers clash, end sars movement amongst others. These cankerworms are threatening the economic growth of the country (Mustapha, 2008).

Discussion of Findings

The lack of sovereign power of the state to provide optimal security for her citizens not only permits the downward spiral of economic growth and development, breakdown of law and order, and sectoral clashes but also makes it difficult for communities that are satisfied with the status quo to accomplish goals that they strongly believe as being in their common interest. Because there are no institutions or authorities that can enact, interpret and enforce laws, the policy of unity and cooperation that will bring mutual benefits if communities cooperate will bring hatred, anarchy, ethnic clashes, and inter-state wars when they do not. Therefore, leading to a National crisis. The security of the state, especially the security of the population, needs the swift attention from the government both locally and globally (Collier & Lakoff, 2015)

According to Nigerian analyst Chris Ngwodo, Boko Haram is "a symptom of decades of failed government and elite delinquency finally ripening into social chaos". In the last seven years, 1,157 children have been abducted from seven schools in seven separate towns: BuniYadi, Chibok, Dapchi, Kankara, Mahuta, Kagara, and Jangebe. Around December 2020 and February 2021, the last four abductions [786 students] occurred. We had yet to recover from the shock of the kidnapping of 27 students from the Government Science Secondary School in Kagara, Niger State, When 317 students were kidnapped from the Government Girls Secondary School Jangebe in Zamfara State, photographs later revealed that the school in Kagara had dilapidated facilities and was poorly guarded.

Most recently, according to a BBC report on 30th May 2021, about 150 students were kidnapped from an Islamic School in Niger State. On Thursday, June 17th, the BirninYauri Public University in the Kebbi State of Nigeria was attacked by armed bandits. Three teachers and several students have gone missing according to a report from the Organization for World Peace (OWP, 2021). Rather than finding a lasting solution to the incessant kidnappings of the Boko harams and armed bandits, schools in high-risk areas are being shut down temporarily.

The North-West is rapidly becoming a safe harbor for militant organizations such as the Islamic State in West African Province [ISWAP], a Boko Haram splinter cell. So it's easy to infer that we're dealing with a terrorist problem when you remember the bandits' bravado, audacity, and deadly nature; it gives the impression that they are Boko Haram under a different guise, or maybe individual terrorists.

However, intelligence from think tanks, credible experts, and news sources suggests that, although our vulnerability is multifaceted, an accurate diagnosis of the current security threat will show that it is mostly a case of ex-herders going rogue. These ex-herders, whom we now refer to as bandits [because of their crimes], lack a centralized order and are dispersed. Interactions with the bandits have shown that most of their brutality is motivated by grievances against the state rather than a political or social agenda, effectively negating the terrorist angle. However, various individual armed bandits wreaking havoc in communities are vulnerable to a close association with or indoctrination into Boko Haram, so we must be cautious.

There is a pandemic of insecurity in the North, and unlike Covid-19, vaccination cannot be the panacea. It is the responsibility of the Nigerian government to figure out what brought us here and how we can get out of this mess. What we are seeing is the manifestation of decades of bad governance, injustice, and greed in the shape of a hydra-headed mutant. Northern Nigeria is on the verge of collapse, and something must give.

Pastoralism has been negatively impacted by several conditions over the last few decades, including climate change, population increases, cattle rustling, and an increase in agriculture. Open grazing has been the norm for herders, and to deal with the effects of deforestation, scarcity, and desertification on their conventional grazing paths, herders started to prey on and damage farmland. These trends in the south are referred to as "Fulanization" and "Islamization" by insensitive and/or prejudiced fellow citizens. The clashes with farmers and uniformed vigilantes from various tribes in the North are largely underreported. Even in areas with large Christian minorities, where it plays into the media's insistence on portraying the issue as divisive and explosive. Through all of this, some herders have been extorted by police officers and their relatives have been unlawfully executed by militia groups and security forces. The pastoralists have also been affected by cattle rustling, which is a major security challenge; it has drained the herders' livelihoods because they depend on cows for survival. Also, illegal mining adds to the insecurity, and to gain access to mines, syndicates funded banditry and cattle rustling, often to the detriment of pastoralists and other times to ransack and terrorize rural populations. To put an end to the herders-farmers clash, the Federal government came up with the ruga policy which received a mix of backlashes with little support from citizens and state governors.

Arguably, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is considered the most corrupt institution in Nigeria. According to a public survey by the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), "a bribe is paid 54 percent of interactions with the police. There is a 63 percent probability that an average Nigerian would be asked to pay a bribe each time he or

she interacted with the police. That is almost two out of three. This badge of infamy they wear with pride should terrify anyone who means well for the country, for a notoriously corrupt police force is evidence of a broken society and is a recipe for disaster.

The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit within the force that is meant to be professional and disciplined, has a poor reputation for being violent, acerbic, and harsh on innocent civilians. Paradoxical to the main purpose for which the unit was established, they've gained notoriety for bullying, extorting, and killing unarmed young Nigerians. Their tactic is to stop and check young people with flashy mobile gadgets and vehicles, then suspect them of being "Yahoo Boys," a phrase used to describe internet fraudsters who commit crimes such as identity theft, Business Email Compromise (BEC), online dating scams, bank account hacking, and advance fee fraud. These offenses are heinous and can never be accepted, but it's perplexing how asking a "Yahoo Kid" or any young person who matches the standard for a cut of his "loot" fixes the issue. Refusing to unlock your smartphone or "drop something" through electronic transfer or a nearby ATM will land you in the same grave as a convicted criminal. Thus, the youth has expressed their dissatisfaction.

The perennial nature of this hashtag is evidence of the concerns raised by the Nigerians on the concept of Human Security—citizens' rights, good governance, sustainable development, proper state regulation to ensure safety and development, and so on. The #EndSARS campaign grew out of the concept of "policing by consensus." A scientific analysis of the people's revolt shows clearly that what they wanted was that the unit should be fully dissolved because it has lost credibility in the eyes of the public it is supposed to defend against robberies. They advocated the unit should be replaced by a unit that can do anti-robbery work without attacking, extorting, or murdering poor young Nigerians as a secondary task.

The research reveals that there are a lot of confessed thugs wearing police uniforms in the country. Thus raising whether the remuneration discourages fair and loyal young Nigerians from enlisting or whether recruiting is biased in favour of the unpatriotic and insane individuals as it was discovered that the weirdos (men wearing unbuttoned shirts, bouncing in flip-flops, sipping beer or smoking pot or shisha, and clutching rifles while ostensibly on duty) and thugs who join the police will not even make an elite criminal gang's team.

This manner of thoughtless profligacy is troubling, and how the military becomes a garbage dump for society's scrapings should concern all. Expecting effective policing by these officers is equivalent to cultivating corn and expecting to reap rice. The military lacks a centralized database for convicts and criminals, unwittingly allowing ex-convicts to enlist; As a result, we have a police department made up of questionable personalities. Many in charge of police training institutions yield to "orders from above" from conventional authorities, politicians, and senior police officers, enlisting many suspicious characters.

Remedy through Human Security Perspective

Now, reducing the cost of government and the benefits that come with elected service should be mandatory and non-negotiable. COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the economy, causing energy prices to plummet, and the federal government to withdraw subsidies, and electricity tariffs to rise. Since the rug is being pulled out from under the foot of the masses, it is unjust for elected officials to continue to enjoy their opulence, which is subsidized by tax. Public servants should serve as role models of self-sacrifice. True austerity reforms must begin at the top.

Nigeria should include the academic discipline of 'paleontology' in her educational curriculum as this will help to expose the ills of terrorism, and other merchants of violence while also helping to train civilians on how to detect and combat crimes and the need for a strong civil-military relationship. This is a project currently being worked upon by the researcher and his team as this will help the country to trivialize preventing National issues with seeds capable of germinating into a perennial problem for the country.

For Nigeria, the solution to problems related to human security and well-being in violence-stricken communities involves the development of a new national security policy and a program related to the promotion of human security. Such policies would consider the multitude of issues we have seen in the case of the end SARS protest, herders-farmers clash, Book Haram menace, etc. These include the proper route for formalization, dealing with the challenge of ecocide, eradicating illegal armed groups that feed off the agro-pastoral sector, the establishment of strong tripartite negotiation structures, and so on.

Government must prevent further attacks on the lives and properties of the people irrespective of the socio-cultural, political, and ethno-religious background. In place of the above, a national security code needs to come to terms with the best way to combat primary and index crimes and to determine whether certain routes are safe for movement, production, or inhabitation. The national security code needs to appreciate the enormous institutional requirements involved in achieving this. This represents a key area for foreign help, especially to build State capacity for regulation and conflict resolution. This is also a field the researcher seeks to work upon in the future.

The human security theme of good governance is central to the creation of a national economic policy, peculiar to the unique problems of the different states that make up the republic. The absence of a national economic policy appears as one of the key factors here. Important questions that require attention are: What level or type of economic policy is acceptable and befitting for a state considering her unique problems? How can the best economic environment be made available as soon as possible? What are the best methods to reverse, where possible, accumulated economic damages?

A key factor for resolving conflict is a tripartite dialogue between aggrieved groups, the state/host communities, and the federal government to address their concerns and complaints.

The federal government should explore other conflict resolution mechanisms apart from physical attacks by the military. The Federal government can and should start a dialogue that entails the region's political, traditional, religious, and business leaders, notable personalities, and average citizens to hear their agitations, find ways for corrections where it is needed, accept recommendations and also provide explanations where government policies are been misunderstood or misinterpreted. Overall, this study has revealed that better dialogue needs to be established among farmers, herders, workers, and host communities.

A critical assessment or review of the Rural-Urban Grazing Area (RUGA) policy is highly imperative to prevent a mitigating national crisis. Not only that, the small size of communities within a state is the biggest challenge to its political power. So the focus turns to how the state can use effectively well her power to promote human security within these communities. Capacity building programs for community organizations could be helpful and, in the long run, very rewarding. The development of a national network of NGOs and academic institutions working in the security, agricultural and pastoral sector is being developed by the authors of this work, as this may assist small and isolated communities to get the information they require advancing their interests to the national government and other authorities.

Beyond reducing the influence of geographical isolation and lack of information, cyber connectivity within a network of NGOs can compensate for the lack of political clout in small communities by making them part of a larger and more politically powerful entity. This is probably the most viable and economical vehicle for the community to begin the process of self-empowering empowerment. But there are obvious challenges. Tiny communities need to be educated how internet connectivity can empower them, and they must have access to this service regularly.

Also, literacy is a major challenge in some communities in the northeast, south-south, etc, so non-written forms of internet communication such as Skype may be particularly important in such cases. Further, community members require information as to what resources are available online, and which national and global NGOs are relevant to their struggle. Overall, the community would likely require some initial outside help from an NGO or other group that could help it build support nationally and globally to counter the isolating effects of its remote location and small population.

Conclusion

The paper has examined the synchrony between human security and good governance in Nigeria, the challenges, and prospects. The analysis, which stems from a critical human security perspective, suggests that while the country is not oblivious of the crucial importance of human security and good governance in propelling its development and progress, there are challenges, which undermine their actualization. Nigeria's economy has been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. Perhaps the biggest gamble for the actors considered here has been the federal government reliance on the oil sector as the primary legitimate vehicle of

development. In collapsing economic activities, oil prices experienced a very sharp fall, and the country reduced the daily production of crude oil. It stated in 2019 the price per barrel amounted to 57 U.S dollars per barrel. In April 2020, Nigeria has learned painful lessons regarding the power of crude oil, petrol, and fuel as the price per barrel dropped by 15 dollars. The dangers of relying on the oil sector are well known – rollercoaster prices, elevated exchange rates, a tendency for the shrinkage of other key sectors such as manufacturing, and so on. In Nigeria's case, this danger is exacerbated by a low government take on precious non-renewable resources. The paper has, therefore, recommended measures to address these challenges to enhance the prospects of good governance and enjoying maximal human security in the country; stressing that the time to act is now.

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