
NILDS

Journal of Democratic Studies

Volume 5, No. 2, 2024

Copyright 2024

Published by

National Institute for

Legislative & Democratic Studies,

National Assembly,

Abuja.

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or otherwise) without prior written permission of both the copyright holder and the publisher.

This journal is published subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition being imposed on the subsequent user.

EDITORS

Christopher O. Ngara, PhD

Hassan Yerima, PhD

Ganiyu Ejalonibu, PhD

Mr. Patrick N. Udefuna

Mr. Livinus A. Nandi

Editor-in-Chief

Editor

Associate Editor

Marketing Editor

Editorial Secretary

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman

Professor Sam Egwu

Professor Adele Jinadu

Professor Habu Mohammed

Professor Usmar Tar

Professor Michael Abiodun Oni

Professor Shola Omotola

Professor Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso

Professor Terkura Tarnande

Professor Rotimi Suberu

DG. NILDS - Chair

Independent National Electoral
Commission, Benue

Independent Research Lagos

Bayero University, Kano

Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA)

Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo

Federal University, Oya-Ekiti

Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo

Benue State University, Makurdi

Bennington College, USA

Information for Subscribers: The Journal of Democratic Studies (NILDS-JDS) is published Bi-annually. For submission instructions, subscription and all other information visit <http://nilds.gov.ng> or email nildsjds@nilds.gov.ng.

Aims and Scope: The NILDS Journal of Democratic Studies (NILDS-JDS) wishes to attract submissions of high-quality research covering all areas of democracy and political governance. It encourages the submissions of original contributions or authoritative research surveys that advances knowledge about democracy, politics, society, international relations, and legislative studies. The journal is interdisciplinary in scope and welcomes full-length articles, policy analysis, book reviews and research notes that draw from, or can advance knowledge and practice of democracy and governance. NILDS-JDS also provides a forum for interaction between policy and practice on questions of governance, law, constitutionalism, policy making and Institutional development, in order to catalyse policy debates among scholars, researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders. Articles to be published must meet the highest intellectual standard and be at the cutting edge of research in their field, making worthwhile contributions to democratic theory and practice. NILDS-JDS will only consider publishing manuscripts that make a significant contribution from either a theoretical, empirical perspective or a blend of both approach in terms of originality, rigour and reach. In particular, we do not wish to publish manuscripts which replicate existing results and/or are limited in scope/applicability and thus more suitable to specialized field journals.

Contents

Politics of Inconclusive Election and the Role of Elites in Nigerian Politics:
A Review of Gubernatorial Elections in Northern Nigeria 2019-2023

Yan Idris Gadau & Musa Umar Adam

Framing Green Finance: The Role of Political Advertising and Legislative
Messaging in Nigeria's Sustainable Development Agenda

Etimbuk E. Obot & Mohammed Manzuma-Ndaaba Ndanusa

Assessment of Civil-Police Relations and Conflict in Greater Banjul Area,
the Gambia (2019-2024)

Hassan M. Jarra

Examining the Role of Resource Control and Ethnic Crisis in Benue Killings

Paul Terlumun Bemgba & Ene Vincent-Orugbo

Creating Political Legitimacy: Electoral Democracy Versus Good
Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-2023)

Adesina M. ALABI

Democratic Resilience in West Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Governance,
Civil Society, and Public Participation in Nigeria and Burkina Faso

Ishaka Dele & Shuaibu Umaru Yelwa

Nigeria's Long-Term Socio-Economic Development: Exploring
the Agriculture Value Chain Pathway

INAKU, Jacob Sunday & NANDI, Livinus Ature

Book Review:

Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism

Umar Abdullahi

Politics of Inconclusive Election and the Role of Elites in Nigerian Politics: A Review of Gubernatorial Elections in Northern Nigeria 2019-2023

Yau Idris Gadau & Musa Umar Adam¹

Abstract

Election is one of the vital mechanisms that allow citizens to select their representatives who take charge of their leadership. Elections in most contemporary democracies have been a serious dilemma due to the massive irregularities associated with their conduct, which affect the credibility of the election and turn to inconclusive elections. Inconclusive elections in Nigeria became the biggest challenge that has been troubling the Nigerian democratic journey, and it has been used either as a source of winning the election or to disrupt the election process through some illegitimate ways. The study, therefore, examined the role of elites in determining the outcome in favor of the ruling party during the gubernatorial election in Northern Nigeria from 2019-2023. The paper used a qualitative research approach where both primary and secondary data were collected using in-depth interviews with some selected stakeholders as informants, and secondary data were also collected from journals, books, and government documents. The study found that there is a mixed reaction toward the factors that determine the outcome of the gubernatorial election such that the incumbent factor plays a significant role in determining the election outcomes, the study also found that the political elites use all avenues to win the election at all costs using state resources, court litigation and security agency and manipulation to change the election result in favor of their party and candidates. The study recommended that to avoid elite interference in election outcomes, the appointment of the INEC chairman and other positions should be independent of the government, and all other stakeholders should stick to their assigned duties and responsibilities.

Keywords: *Democracy, inconclusive election, elite, Governorship, Northern Nigeria*

¹ Department of Political Science Faculty of Social Sciences Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi State yaugadau@basug.edu.ng +2348035779447

Introduction

Democracy is widely recognized as the best form of government in most parts of the world today (Nnanyelugo & Nwafor 2013). Democratic doctrines and election processes globally guarantee people's sovereignty to choose their representatives at all levels of government and also educate leaders to depend more on bargaining rather than intimidation and force to sustain and maintain their legitimacy. This process has not always been conducted free and fair without some degree of malpractice and violence that ultimately used to generate disagreement between the parties involved (Sule & Sambo, 2020; Samihardj, Murnawan, & Lestar, 2021). Elections all over the globe are usually marred with some degree of malpractice in their conduct. For example, in the 2010 United Kingdom election, 232 electoral malpractice cases were reported by the police, with 216 cases in England, 9 in Scotland, and 7 in Wales, while 25 cases were affirmed in Northern Ireland (Isobel & Johnston, 2017).

Over the years, Nigeria has witnessed, with increasing dismay and fear, its inability to hold free, fair, peaceful, and credible elections with results that are universally acknowledged and respected (Uchechukwu, Uchenna, & Vincent, 2023). These fundamental challenges facing the conduct of the elections have resulted in the cancellation of the election results and declared them inconclusive. As opined by Abiagu & Abada, (2023) that the electoral irregularities that characterized the 2019 elections and the associated violence that followed the irregularities led to a loss of 756 Nigerians in which the northern part of Nigeria maintained its lead as the hotbed of electoral violence with 570 deaths and there was a report of 137 deaths during the recently held 2023 elections. Consequently, this paper aims to study inconclusive elections and the roles of elites between the 2019-2023 governorship elections in Northern Nigeria.

Conceptual Exposition

This section discusses the conceptual exposition that constitutes the subject matter and tries to establish the link between the theoretical frameworks. These concepts include democracy, election, inconclusive election, the influence of elites on election outcomes, and Northern Nigeria.

Democracy

Democracy is a political system that provides frequent constitutional chances for replacing the ruling officials and a social mechanism that allows the greatest possible section of the public to influence significant decisions by choosing among competitors for political office (Babatunde, 2014). The democratic revolution around the world started with the military revolution in Portugal, which overthrew many decades of authoritarianism and generated arguments, but finally successful democratic transition in the country. Furthermore, the third wave of global democratization spread to other countries like Spain and Greece, and later to Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 between the mid-1990s, the percentage of democratic countries in the world increased from 27 percent in 1974 to more than 60 percent. These changes show that democracy has become the foremost form of government around the world (Diamond, 2005).

This has successfully led to the moving away from a single-party to a multi-party democratic political system since the 1990s, ending single-party political systems and military dictatorships in some countries like Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1991 and even Mobutu appealed to stepping towards democratization process in 1992, ending Apartheid in 1994, Liberal democratic constitutions of Benin (1990), Mali (1992), South Africa (1994), Ghana (1993), Malawi (1994), Nigeria 3rd and 4th republics (1993 and 1999 respectively), Ethiopia (1995) and Eritrea (1997) has begun to reshape the democratic face of the African countries, (Gebrewold, 2009; Ronke & Devid 2012).

Democracy has gained worldwide recognition. It has grown in popularity since its introduction and is regarded as an absolute requirement for growth and development. There is no commonly acknowledged definition of democracy because, over the years, several versions of democracy have emerged (Babatunde, 2014). The concept of democracy in governance has established a space for the people collectively to manage and protect their interests by making and enforcing their own rules and laws, and this gives people the power to choose their fate (Rochineng, 2017).

Furthermore, democracy came with the idea of election, which is one of the recent practices of democracy and the implementation of elections is fundamentally the people's power to select their leaders. Democracy and elections are two sides of the coin that are meticulously related, the operation of elections, which is the people's desire, characterizes the perpetuation of a democratic system in a country. However, these changes pose enormous challenges in the country's electoral process. The electoral process in these countries can be regarded as the entire election cycle starting from the demarcation of electoral boundaries, registration of voters, candidate nomination, and election campaigns others include setting election time and announcement of election results along with the setting tribunal for resolution of electoral conflicts between associations and other groups (Elekwa & Okechukwu, 2014).

African regional democracies have had difficulties conducting unrestricted, fair, credible, and clear elections since the elections are flawed by serious irregularities, electoral fraud, election-related violence, and inconclusive ballots. This is why most African states fervently desire to key into current technological systems in the conduct of elections to reinforce the quality of the electoral process (Victor, 2018).

Elections

Elections are essential to any liberal democracy and are often used to assess whether or not democracy is progressing (Adewale, 2022). Elections, according to Ejumudo, cited in Victor (2015, pp 2-27), "...are the technical means or instruments of ensuring popular participation in governance by citizens who choose their representatives in conformity with the dictates of modern democracies and the hallmark of legitimacy". Therefore, African countries have had at least four multi-party elections since independence, indicating how democratic institutions in those countries passed the test of endurance. In the 1990s, more than 150 multi-party elections took place in Africa (Teshome, 2008). Elections all over the globe have been associated with some degree of malpractices and manipulations from all ramifications. Elections to fill public offices were first held in 1923. This was because the Clifford constitution, which replaced the Nigerian council, introduced electoral principles that galvanized political activities, especially among the elected

Nigerians (Nnenna & Mohammed, 2020).

Elections in the African continent and Nigeria in particular have been associated with serious irregularities that jeopardize democracy's survival to the point that democratic stability isn't guaranteed (Sule & Sambo, 2020). Since the exception of the democratic regime in Nigeria, the conduct of the election has witnessed dismay, fear, and incapacity to hold free, fair, peaceful, and open elections with results that are universally acknowledged and respected. The challenges associated with the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections around the globe have made various countries adopt technology in their election process to reduce the level of indecency in the conduct of the election process.

The significance of information and communication technology in human society has become an inevitable and fundamental operation and activity of the society (Paul & Omolayo, 2018). This has made information and technology a part of human effort and has been used in every institution of government in different countries. Since independence to the present date election, the country has experienced serious challenges in conducting a free, fair, and credible election that is free from the elite's inference due to the materials benefit attached to the political position in the country and as such the election management reveals a disturbing degree of partiality and gross incompetence in discharge of these sacred duties they were established to perform for Nigeria and inability to effectively manage the conduct and deleterious effects on the nations effort at instituting credible and virile democratic system (Uchechukwu, Uchenna & Vincent, 2023).

Accordingly, the use of technology during the election is a global trend that cuts across different nation-states. Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission has introduced technology in the elections process using Smartcards, which resulted in the improvement of the quality of the elections in the country the use of technology during the elections made it difficult to manipulate electoral figures, citing the transparency of technology as an essential feature in credible elections (Tombari & Kaunert, 2023). The gross wrongdoing concerning the conduct of the election by elites in the county using all avenues at their disposal has led to the cancellation of the election result and declaration of it inconclusive, as witnessed in the election in Ekiti, Ondo, Bayelsa, Kano, among others.

Inconclusive elections

An inconclusive election has been seen as an election that does not decide the winner in the final conduct, the election is said to become inconclusive and this form of election is one out of numerous proportions of badly conducted elections and needs to be carefully addressed otherwise such an election can undermine the success of democratic regime (Mohammed, 2015). During electioneering campaigns, political rallies, and parades in the build-up to the 2015 and 2019 general elections, the political elite from different political parties employed hate speeches and various propaganda tools to project the programs of the parties and their candidates to their supporters while destroying the images of political opponents and inciting their supporters to violence.

The dramatic changes in our lives nowadays have been the prevalent proliferation and use of digital technology, in which information and communication that rely on the internet become tools (Abdulganiyu & Yusuf, 2020). Information and communication technology has been applied to the election process in almost every country around the world. One of the improvements of e-voting is to enhance participation and remedy weaknesses related to old voting techniques and apply e-voting simplifiers, and enable people to make their opinions known and cast their votes, an imperative requisite for a positive democratic process (Ahmada, et al, 2015).

The significance of e-voting has led to the development of card readers in the Nigerian election process, which has greatly improved the election process in the country. However, despite the reshaped and improvement of the election process through the introduction of information and technology in the election process yet it has been met with a lot of challenges, such as inadequate funding, lack of IT specialists, unreliable electricity supply, and a growing level of cybercrime (Ahmada et al, 2015).

The cases of inconclusive elections have been increasing due to the transformation in the electoral process in which technological gadgets were introduced, such as permanent voters' cards and smart card readers, which have been successful in countries like Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Malawi, etc. The long practice

preconception of marking elections a do-or-die affair had made strong political party contenders formate violence to scare away potential voters, which can lead to violence in a bid to win the elections (Eigege, 2016).

Mohammed (2019) argues that two sorts of inconclusive elections occur in Nigeria nowadays, and equally are rooted in the conduct of the election. First, is INEC declared inconclusive election mainly arising from the conduct-of-first-ballot election and is normally followed by electoral violence, the use of political party thugs to scare away voters, carting away of election materials, or arising from electoral misconducts such as the non-use of SCR in some PUs or election has not been held in other places and the second is Tribunal or court declared inconclusive election, which happens when the Tribunal or the Court gives a judgment and declares an election inconclusive.

Similar research conducted by (Nkwede & Emordi, 2020) pointed out Section 26 of the Electoral Act (2010) which believes that an election is scheduled, but there is likely to be a serious breach of the peace INEC should postpone the election and in Sub-Section 26 (2) of the Electoral Act, “there shall be no return for the election until polling has taken place in the area or areas affected.” Sub-Section 4 of Section 26 stipulated that a declaration might be made if the result in the affected areas would not affect the overall outcome of the election. Another reason why an election can be declared “inconclusive” as stipulated in Section 53 (2) of the 2010 Electoral Act is over-voting. When the votes cast at an election in any polling unit exceed the number of registered voters in that polling unit, the result of the election for that polling unit shall be declared void by the Commission. To this end, another election may be conducted on a date to be fixed by the commission, where the result at that polling unit may affect the overall result in the constituency.

From the above two perspectives, a study conducted by Abah & Nwoku, (2020) believes that the series of inconclusive elections recorded over time was the inability of politicians to play by the rules. In a similar study, findings indicated that ballot snatching, destruction of election materials, killing of ad hoc and permanent staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the announcement of poll results under duress, the disappearance of the returning officers with election results, over-militarization of the poll, and the issue of the fake military officers are

also found to have been responsible for the inconclusiveness of elections (Babatola et al., 2019).

In a similar study conducted, Ikechukwu (2019) revealed that the increasing spate of inconclusive elections in Nigeria has become more keenly contested by politicians and henceforth re-run elections are inevitable; Inconclusive elections increase because neither erring politicians nor their parties are sanctioned for perpetuating electoral ills that breach the successful conclusion of the electoral process and nothing challenges INEC's capacity to deal with inconclusive elections more than INEC itself.

Declaring an election inconclusive is also informed by other factors such as electoral violence, snatching of electoral materials, over-voting, and non-usage of the Smart Card Reader (SCR) in the conduct of elections as such more than 300 people were reported to have been killed in 2019 general election (Imosemi., et al 2019; Mohammed, 2015). Another research conducted by Chidi and Chukwu (2017) found that the declaration of inconclusive elections arises from a lack of elections in some electoral units; cancellation of election results from some polling or electoral units due to irregularities; serious security breaches in significant areas of the electoral districts, among

Elitism

The involvement of elites in the management of the affairs of Nigeria was achieved through the introduction of the elective principle by the Clifford Constitution of 1922, the then Governor-General of Nigeria (Eziho, 2020). The political elites in Nigeria are a conglomeration of individuals who occupy or have occupied any strategic position in the political, economic, and social institutions of the country. A 'fusion of elites' is visible in Nigeria where elites from different segments, such as traditional and religious leaders, nationalists, bureaucrats, and military, have amalgamated into a new ruling elite, based on state power and elites use their political and economic power and establish their private companies because they are well-placed to gain government contracts and subsidies (Smita, 2022).

Based on the above assertion, the election in the country since independence as an arena of warfare and a struggle to climb up the leadership at various levels of the government. In a study conducted by Olawale, (2021), the political elite uses political party platforms to capture power through an electoral process that is often marred by irregularities and violence, with the belief that this will enable them to engage in primitive accumulation of public wealth. This has indicated that the struggle to win state power and control its resources at all costs is the root of the violence associated with elections in Nigeria. A similar study also indicated that the existence of the elite has not produced any positive outcome for energy and citizens. Party elites use different strategies, including hate speech, to achieve electoral success, which often culminates in pre-electoral violence.

Governorship Election

Governorship elections are a democratic process where individual voters choose a governor who, by law, takes the responsibility of managing the affairs of the particular state for the period stipulated by the constitution. February 2019 marks another year for Nigerians to vote for their next president and the election of the state governors, and all federal and state legislators. The elections were conducted between the major opposition parties of the All Progressives Congress (APC) against the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP), along with many smaller parties (Page & Tayo, 2018). Moreover, the 2019 General election like any other election conducted in the country was heralded with tension, blame games, anticipated violence, and campaign of calumny, threats, and the desire to win at all costs. Over 70 political parties were registered and about seventy-three (73) parties fielded candidates for the Presidential Election (Sule, 2019).

The governorship elections showed a shift in voter preference in some states compared to the General election in 2019. In Kano State, for example, President Buhari, got 77.5% of the votes, while the APC incumbent governor managed to count less than 9000 more votes (50.23%) than the PDP challenger. In Bauchi State, the incumbent APC governor lost to PDP candidates despite the APC having 77.9% of the votes in the presidential election. In Sokoto State, the PDP candidate won with a minimal margin of 342 votes, whereas the APC candidate

won 56.2% of the votes in the presidential election (Angerbrandt, 2020). Table I.2: below shows the final results of the inconclusive elections conducted in five Northern Nigeria States. In these states, the factors that call for the declaration of inconclusive elections differ. In Plateau state, the total number of voters cancelled was more than the difference in the number of voters of the two major candidates. In Bauchi state, the margin between the winner and competing candidates was less than the total number of votes cancelled in some polling units. In the case of Adamawa, Kano, and Sokoto the total number of cancellations was higher than the margin of lead votes between the two leading candidates (Mohammed, 2010).

Table 1.1: Indicated the State Where Inconclusive Election Occurs

States	Total Registered Votes	APC	PDP	Margin	Cancelled
Plateau	2,480,455	583,255	538,326	49,377	44,929
Bauchi	2,462,843	465,453	469,512	4059	45,312
Adamawa	1,973,083	334,996	367,471	32,475	40,988
Kano	5,457,747	987,819	1,041,576	26,655	128,572
Sokoto	1,903,166	486,145	489,558	3,413	75,403

Source: *Author's compilation*

Table 1.1 above indicates the first round of the election where the inconclusive election occurred in which the margin of votes exceeded the margin between the two top major aspirants of the APC and PDP leading to the declaration of the election inconclusive by the INEC citing the electoral act that whenever the total number of the cancelled votes exceeds the number of votes margins the election must be declared inconclusive and the commission must fix another date for the re-run election to complete the process.

Table 1.2: The Final Results of the Inconclusive Elections in Five Northern Nigerian States in the 2019 Gubernatorial Election

States	APC	PDP	Margin	Cancelled Votes	Final Result	Final Result	Wining
					APC	PDP	
ADAMAWA	334,996	367,471	32,475	40,988	336,386	376,552	PDP
BAUCHI	465,453	469,512	4,059	45,312	500,625	515,113	PDP
KANO	987,819	1,041,576	26,655	128,572	1,033,695	1,024,713	APC
PLATEAU	583,255	538,326	529,400	49,377	595,582	546,813	APC
SOKOTO	486,145	489,558	3,413	75,403	511,611	512,002	PDP

Source: *Mohammed (2019; IRI/NDI)*

Table 1.2 above also indicates the final election results after the first round, which led to the cancellation of the election result by the INEC, referencing the electoral act, the election showing the winner after the re-run election, in which the PDP won in three states, while the APC goes in two states.

Theoretical Framework

This paper utilized classical elite theory propounded by Gaetano Masca, (1939). The elite theory opined in every existing society, the majority of the existing economic resources, intellectual, and cultural are in the hands of a small group of individuals who use them to exercise power over the rest of the population (Mariotti, 2020). Influence of power always flows from the elites at the top downwards to the masses, through elite-biased public policy. For the elite to defend their interest against the masses, the instruments used include coercion through the military, police, or militia groups; manipulation and domination through all forms of education, and media (Dantoro, 2009). The relevance of the theory to the election process in Nigerian political dispensation is that the political leaders and elite use to manipulate the election process to win the election at all costs through different mechanisms using security agencies colliding with the election management staff and other stakeholders who are responsible for being part in the election exercise.

Methodology

The paper used a qualitative method of data collection where the data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Concerning the primary data, in-depth interviews were conducted with some selected informants from INEC, political parties, security agencies, and the Judiciary. The secondary sources of the data were based on published material such as journals, articles, newspapers, and government reports.

Data Presentation and the Discussion of the Major Findings

This section presents the data collected and the discussion of the major findings of the paper. The data collected are from the interviews generated from the field with all the selected informants for this paper.

Accordingly, Nigeria's election has featured unprecedented manipulations and violence, which make it a do-or-die affair. This trend makes the electoral system challenged whenever an election is conducted in the country, from within and outside the country where the election has been manipulated. Since the return of the democratic dispensation in 1999, the election conducted every four years has progressively put the election umpire into a questionable position where both local and international observers blame the commission for giving special treatment in favor of the party in power and its candidate in the elections.

Two major themes were developed to guide the paper, including "Electoral Fraud and Political Influence using state resources."

Electoral fraud and political influence have been considered as one of the most key aspects that creating political disorder in the Nigerian political development process, since the rebirth of the democratic journey in 1999 to the present day all the elections being conducted in Nigeria have been challenged with a full allegation of electoral fraud and political influence towards the outcomes of the elections.

During the conduct of this study, the informants gave divergent views on the outcome of the 2019 gubernatorial election. The responses of the informants on

one hand suggested that the government used all the avenues at its disposal to manipulate the election outcome in the affected state, which led to the inconclusive election in 2019. It is against the above assertion that the study conducted by Casimir, Omeh, and Ike, (2013) viewed electoral fraud as an illegal interference with the process of an election and Acts of fraud affect vote counts to bring about an election result, whether by increasing the vote share of the favored candidate, depressing the vote share of the rival candidates, or both. During an interview based on the above themes:

Key informants II & III opined that:

“The political elites in power have a hand in determining the outcome of the election in many states during the 2019 gubernatorial election in Kano and Plateau because the government in power uses different sorts of electoral fraud to directly or indirectly controls most stakeholders like security operatives and indirectly uses the electoral commission to create delays and inconsistency to manipulates the outcome of the elections”

Another Key informant added that:

“The incumbent factors play significant roles in determining the outcome of the election because many stakeholders are loyal to the government even those that were under the federal government agencies, political elites used their power within it to influence the outcome of the election as seen in the Kano and Sokoto state 2019 gubernatorial elections were thugs and violence were perpetuated to course changes in the results”

The responses of the informants from various stakeholders have indicated that the incumbent factors have positively influenced the outcome of the election in two states, Kano and Plateau states. At the same time, the key informant also lamented that incumbent factors did not play a significant role in determining the outcome

of the election in the state of Bauchi state. The responses of the informant above indicated a similar study conducted by Obiagu et al. (2019) that in Nigeria, the inconclusive election had become a new political instrument for incumbents to keep power or ensure that their favored candidates obtain it by any means necessary. This was obvious in the Imo governorship election in 2011, when the incumbent governor used the inconclusive arrangement to postpone the declaration of poll results while unsuccessfully attempting to influence the outcome of the race. The technique, however, worked in the state during the 2015 gubernatorial election, when the incumbent governor used it to keep power. In another study conducted by Terrence (2021) that in some other places the uses Cross River as a reference point to indicate how the politicians use all avenues of widespread violence before, during, and after the election in all three senatorial districts, which resulted in house destruction, political assassinations, politically motivated kidnappings, ballot box stealing and result manipulation and related irregularities to influence the election outcome.

The responses from all the interviews confirmed that the incumbent had in one way or the other affected the outcome of the elections conducted in their respective states, except Bauchi state, where the government in power lost the election to the opposition candidates. Smita (2022) posits that after the introduction of multiparty elections, power did not concentrate in the hands of the president, but power got decentralized to other positions. Yet, the elites took charge of these power positions and utilized them in a way to establish a wider and overlapping system that was corrupt at its foundation. This reflects how the state that got rich resources as a gift of nature, which it could utilize to develop its conditions, has become a curse (Mohammed, 2021). The state, instead of establishing an inclusive development model, turned out as an extractive and exclusionary institution that extracts resources but the benefits are never equitably distributed in the society and are utilized by a few called elites. Pareto, rightly, states in his work (*The Mind and Society*, 1935) that the circulation of the elite is a constant process in which the power shifts from the governing elite to the non-governing elite, and this power is never held by the masses, which is practically visible in a Nigerian context.

The second theme developed during the conduct of the interview was the “frequent use of state resources by the political elites.”

Every election needs resources to accomplish on the part of the commission and the political parties, and their candidates in all the activities. Candidates and political parties the uses of state resources during the election, particularly the incumbent powers, cannot be overemphasized in the current nature of the Nigerian democratic dispensation. Concerning the current study, the state resources are under the control of the state governors, and during the election, state resources have been used for political campaigns and have served as tools for gaining more support due to their material strength.

Informants III assessed that:

“The incumbent uses the state’s resources to finance the political party and their candidates and also to collide with the other stakeholders to influence the election outcome as witnessed in the 2019 gubernatorial election in Kano where the then government in power uses the state resources to buy votes and some part of the security agency to intimidate voters and create serious political unrest that will affect the outcome of the final election”

This assertion is in line with the research conducted by Amobi and Uchechukwu (2016) posits that the government in power uses state resources to finance elections or to support their candidacy during the election. The same views were captured by local media tagging Amechi the former River state gubernatorial and APC campaign director of Buhari’s 2015 presidential campaign as he praised single-handedly raised the funding of governorship campaigns of at least five APC governors, including that of the former speaker, Governor Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto State and separately, Amaechi is accused of diverting £140 million of state funds into Buhari’s presidential campaign, with reports he paid for media, consultants and private jets.

In an interview conducted on the uses of resources, the informants lamented.

During the interview, informants I & III lamented that:

“The incumbent didn’t play any role in the outcome of the Bauchi state inconclusive election because the incumbent government, Mohammed Abdullahi Abubakar of APC, lost to the Bala Mohammed Abdulkadir of the opposition PDP new government. This shows you that the incumbent factors were not the reference point for winning or losing the election as far as the Bauchi state election is concerned.”

Another key informant I also added that:

“As per as Bauchi state is concerned, the government in power hasn’t influenced the outcome of the election because during the gubernatorial election in 2019, the government in power lost to the opposition, which indicated that the security agencies were on neutral ground to save the voters and election material to have free elections away from violence”.

The response of the above informant has indicated that inconclusive elections were attributed to the violation of the electoral provisions hence section 26(1) of the Electorate Act says that an inconclusive election is said to have occurred when the date of the election has been appointed and there is every possibility of breach of peace due to natural disasters or any other emergencies the commission may postpone the election and shall, in respect of the area, or areas concerned appoint another date for the holding of the postponed election.

It is also therefore specified in section 47 (3) of the electoral Act which states that where a smart card reader or any other technological device deployed for the accreditation of voters fails to function in any unit and a fresh card reader or technological device is not deployed, the election in that unit shall be canceled and

another election shall be scheduled within 24 hours if the Commission is satisfied that the result of the election in that polling unit will substantially affect the final result of the whole election and the declaration of a winner in the constituency concerned (Electoral Act, 2020).

The paper found that an inconclusive election has multifarious factors attached to it; on one hand, it resulted from a serious breach of electoral regulation by some stakeholders. The paper found that an inconclusive election was the product of the desperation of politicians to manipulate the election process in their favor; weak organizational and administrative management of elections by the electoral body, and inadequacies with the legal framework of the election (Mohammed, 2019). The political elites use security agencies also to rig the election in favor of their political candidacy or to win the election at all costs as witnessed in the study conducted by (Ndubuisi, 2020) that the election in Ondo state clearly stated that the security forces were deliberately deployed to scuttle the election process for the love candidates to the election at all costs. This has also become a serious problem in Nigerian polity as many people spoke out against the pattern, but the government continued to hold on position in deploying massive military personnel during elections, even though the elections are turning into a form of warfare (Olaniyan & Babatunde, 2015).

Other fundamental issues that have been considered serious challenges in which course inconclusive elections were the weak institutional and organizational arrangements when it comes to preparation for the conduct of the election in Nigeria, the election materials normally arrive at the polling units late, and the election starts and ends. The central problem that will make the election questionable is for the election management body to delay the election process to hold on to the exact time stipulated in the Electoral Act and Constitution.

Conclusion

Inconclusive elections in Nigeria have been one of the major impediments to the Nigerian electoral process, which has continued to feature in the Nigerian electoral process, particularly since the reversal of the democratic dispensation in 1999.

Each election conducted in the country inconclusive election continue to continuing to disrupt the smooth running of the election. From 2019 to date, the country has experienced an influx of occurrences of inconclusive elections, which have affected the credibility of the electoral institutions responsible for managing the elections in the country. However, this paper examined the politics of inconclusive elections and the role of elites in Nigeria: a review of governorship elections in northern Nigeria 2019-2023, it was found that the paper observed that inconclusive elections became serious challenges to the success of the democratic journey in Nigeria because the causes of the inconclusive has been the sources of serious concern which demand total restructuring of the electoral process. Inconclusive elections became tools used by the political elites to win the election or disrupt the election process and benefit from the re-run election.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made for the Nigerian government, INEC, and future researchers:

- Firstly, the Nigerian government should devote to continuous training, retraining, and capacity building of INEC officials to enhance their proficiency in utilizing technology in the electoral process. This would improve the efficiency of election management and minimize errors and irregularities.
- Secondly, the appointment of the INEC chairman and other related stakeholders in the election process should not be directly from the political office holders, which, in turn, will directly influence the election outcomes
- Thirdly, the government should also allocate sufficient funds for the procurement and maintenance of up-to-date technological infrastructure to support the electoral process, which ensures the reliability and security of these systems and is essential to building public trust in the electoral system.
- Fourthly, the government must strengthen the legal framework and election

guidelines governing elections to address issues related to inconclusiveness.

- Fifthly, INEC and the political parties should enhance transparency and accountability in discharging their stated responsibility concerning the electoral process by providing regular updates and detailed information on electoral guidelines and rules that everyone should adhere to have an election free from any interference. Improving communication with stakeholders can help enhance the credibility of INEC and foster trust among the electorate.
- Sixthly, they must also engage in outreach programs and civic education initiatives to educate the political leaders and the public about the importance of non-interference in the electoral process, and how their actions contribute to inconclusive election outcomes. Empowering voters with knowledge can lead to greater participation and confidence in the electoral system.

References

- Abah, E. O. & Nwokwu, P. M. (2016). Inconclusive Elections in Nigerian Democracy: Causes and Cures. *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies*, 9(1): 59-72,
- Abdulganiyu, A. A., and Yusuf, J. (2020). Motivation: Adoption of an online voting system for the upcoming Nigerian General Election 2023. *GSJ*, 8(4): 1-16,
- Adewale, H. I. (2022). Democratic and Electoral Process in Nigeria: A Forecast into the 2023 General Election. *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, Vol 18(2): 145-176.
- Ahmada. S; Alida S. Abdullah. J. b and Rozita B. A. (2015). Issues and Challenges of Transition to e-Voting Technology in Nigeria. *Public Policy and Administration Research* Vol.5, (4): 95-103 www.iiste.org
- Amobi, P. C and Uchechukwu, P. C. (2016). Financing Electioneering Campaign and Use of State Resources in Nigeria: An Appraisal of the 2015 Presidential Elections. Being a paper presented at the 4th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Political Science Association – South East Zone (NPSA-SE) held at Imo State University, Owerri, between 17 and 19 October 2016
- Angerbrandt. H (2020). Party system institutionalization and the 2019 state elections in Nigeria, *Regional and Federal Studies*. Vol. 30(3): 1-26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2020.1758073>
- Babatola, A. M, Paul. A. A. Adebayo, A. D. (2019). Socio-Political and Economic Implications of the Inconclusive Elections in Nigeria: Issues and Threads in the 2019 General Elections. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*. 3(9) 310-318
- Babatunde, A. A. (2014). Democracy and Democratic Consolidation in the Nigerian Fourth Republic: Issues and Challenges. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 19 (10): 5-10.
- Casimir, A., Omeh E., and Ike, C. (2013). Electoral Fraud in Nigeria: A Philosophical Evaluation of the Framework of Electoral Violence. *Open Journal of Political Science*. 3(4). 2013
- Chidi O. V. and Chukwu. E. J. (2017). A Prognostic Analysis of Implications of Inconclusive Elections on Democracy in Nigeria, 2019 and Beyond. *South East Journal of Political Science*; Vol 3 No.1, 2017.
- Dantoro, H. D. (2009). Concepts and models in public policy formulation and analysis. Pyla-mark Publisher.
- Eigege, J. (2016). Socio-Legal Implications of Inconclusive and Re-Run Elections in Nigeria, National Judicial Institute, Abuja. Being a paper presented at the Staff Seminar Series on 17 May 2016.
- Elekwa N.N. and Okechukwu E.I (2014). Ethics, Accountability, and Transparency in the Conduct of Elections in Nigeria. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* (OMAN Chapter) Vol. 4, No.3. 2014
- Emordi, A.T. and Nkwede, J. O (2020). INEC, Political Parties and the Politics of Inconclusive Elections in the 2019 General Elections in Southeast Nigeria. *Ife Social Sciences Review* 2020 / 28(1),
- Eziho, O. P. (2020). Elitism, Election, and Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. A Study of Rivers State from 2003-2019. *Journal of Law and Global Policy*. 5(1). 2020.
- Gebrewold B. (2009). Anatomy of Violence: Understanding the Systems of Conflict and Violence in Africa Helmut Schmidt University/University of the Federal Armed Forces, Germany
- Ikechukwu, U. G. (2019). Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Inconclusive Elections and Democratic Consolidation: A Study of 2019 General Elections in Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 24 (8): 13-21.
- Mariotti, C. (2020). Elite Theory. The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Interest Groups, Lobbying and Public Affairs Publisher: Springer
- Mohammed, H. (2015). Inconclusive Elections and The Electoral Process in Nigeria's Post-2015 General

Elections. <https://www.academia.edu/34370124>

Mohammed, H. (2019). *The Dilemmas of Democracy Civil Society and Development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic*. Bayero University, Press. 2019.

Nnanyelugo, O and Nwafor, K. A. (2013). Social Media and Political Participation in Nigeria during the 2011 General Elections: The Lapses and the Lessons. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences* 1(3): 29-46.

Nnenna, E. A and Mahmud M. M. (2020). A Historicism of INEC and the Conduct of Elections in Nigeria: The First Two Decades of the Fourth Republic (1999-2019) in Focus. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* 4(5). 2020

Obiagu, U. C, and Abada, I. M. (2023). Government interference in election administration and lethal electoral irregularities in Africa: Evidence from Nigeria. [tps://doi.org/10.32388/FEUGJY](https://doi.org/10.32388/FEUGJY).

Obiagu. U. C, Ifeanyichukwu. M. B, Mbah. P. O, Omeh, P. H. and Udeh, C. O. (2022). The Limiting Effects of Inconclusive Gubernatorial Elections towards the Democratic Consolidation of the Nigerian State. *The African Review* 1(34): 1-34.

Olaniyan. A. and Babatunde. O. A. (2015). Election as Warfare: Militarization of Elections and the Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria. *International Affairs Forum Spring* 71-89.

Olawale, A. M. (2021). Political Party Elite and Election-Related Violence in Nigeria: The Nexus And Implications For Democracy And Governance. *Simulacra*, 4(1), 101–114. <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v4i1.10520>

Opportunities. Review of International Geographical Education (RIGEO), 11(6), 196-204. doi: 10.48047/rigeo.11.06.24

Page. M. T. and Tayo. S. (2018). Countdown to February 2019: A Look Ahead at Nigeria's Elections. Chatham House Africa Programme July 2018

Paul, T. A. and Omolayo, A. E. (2018). The Impact of ICT in the Conduct of Election in Nigeria. *American Journal of Computer Science and Information Technology*. 6 (1): 1-6.

Rochineng, K. (2017). The Application of the Democracy Concept In the Election For Regional Head. *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*. (62) 111-120.

Ronke M. and Devid A. K. (2012). Electoral Administration and the Consolidation of Democracy: An overview of the 2011 General election in Nigeria. *International Journal of Physical and Social Sciences* 2(5) 43-68.

Sambo. U. and Sule. B. (2021). Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Process of Electoral Conduct in Nigeria: The Phenomenon of Election Postponement and Its Effects on the Outcome and Performance of the 2019 General Election. *Wilberforce Journal of the Social Sciences* 6(1) 226-258.

Samihardjo R, Murnawan, and Lestari S. (2021). Review of International Geographical Education E-Voting in Indonesia Election: Challenges and Opportunities. *Review of International Geographical Education* ISSN: 2146-0353 SPRING, 2021.

Samihardjo, R.; Murnawan.; and Lestar i, S. (2021) E-Voting in Indonesia Election: Challenges and

Smita, (2022). Understanding Elitism in the Nigerian Context. At <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368388176>.

Sule. B. (2019). The 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria: An Analysis of Voting Pattern, Issues, and Impact. *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space* 15 (2) 129-140

Terrence. E. R. (2021). Security Challenges and Election Management in Nigeria. *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development*. 2021 Available online at <http://journals.rcmss.com/index.php/jggsda>; 33-43

- Teshome, W. B. (2008). Democracy and elections in Africa: Critical analysis. *International Journal of Human Sciences*. 5(2) 1-14
- Tombari, R. S. and Christian K. (2023). Technology, Cyber Security and the 2023 Elections in Nigeria: Prospects, Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of African Elections*. DOI: 10.20940/JAE/2023/v22i2a4
- Uchechukwu, O. G, Uchenna, U. T, and Vicent, O. O. S (2023). Democracy and 2023 General Election: Retrospect and Prospect> *Direct Journal of Social Science and Educational Studies*. 11(11). 54-66.
- Victor. W. C. (2018), ICT and Elections in Nigeria: Rural Dynamics of Biometric Voting Technology Adoption, <http://www.africa-spectrum.org> 13(6): 2-27.

Framing Green Finance: The Role of Political Advertising and Legislative Messaging in Nigeria's Sustainable Development Agenda

Etimbuk E. Obot & Mohammed Manzuma-Ndaaba Ndanusa¹

Abstract

This study examined how political advertising can be employed to highlight legislative support for green finance and promote sustainable development practices in Nigeria. It also investigated the level of public awareness of green finance, the perceived effectiveness of existing legislative frameworks, and the influence of political campaign messages on public perception and behavioral adoption of sustainable practices. The study adopted a survey research design and targeted key stakeholders involved in political communication and legislative processes, including the general public, legislative aides, political campaign strategists, and environmental advocates. Drawing on data from 384 respondents selected through purposive and convenience sampling methods, the study revealed a substantial knowledge gap: 60% of respondents had never heard of green finance, and 61% were unaware of initiatives supporting it. Although 45% perceived legislative frameworks as somewhat supportive, 42% viewed them as not supportive. While 75% acknowledged that political advertising plays a role in raising awareness, only 1% had encountered green finance messaging frequently. A striking 93% of respondents believe environmental issues should be prioritized in campaign messages, and 79% indicate a willingness to adopt green finance practices if legislators actively promote them. The study concluded that political advertising remains an underutilized tool for advancing public engagement with green finance and recommends strategic messaging that links environmental and economic benefits to encourage public participation in sustainability efforts. It recommended the launch of coordinated national campaigns that emphasize the economic and environmental benefits of green finance while encouraging lawmakers to actively promote sustainability through targeted political messaging.

Keywords: *Green Finance, Political Advertising, Legislative Framing, Sustainable Development, Political Communication*

¹ Department of Democracy and Governance National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies National Assembly, Abuja, Nigeria

Introduction

Green finance is an emerging concept in the finance industry aimed at supporting the global transition to a greener economy (Bhatnagar & Sharma, 2022). It is a type of finance that addresses concerns related to global climate change and other factors that pose environmental and sustainability risks to an economy. It entails funding concepts and initiatives or establishing financial structures that encourage a more ecologically conscious and environmentally friendly economy, like lowering emissions of greenhouse gases and encouraging renewable energy. According to Abbas, Wang, Belgacem, Pawar, Najam, and Abbas (2023), green finance is an important tool for encouraging investment in renewable energy sources and attaining environmental sustainability. It is a term that environmental, social, and governance investment decisions are highly considered while promoting long-term economic growth and social outcomes. Green finance involves mobilising capital towards activities that promote sustainability and the reduction of negative environmental impacts. Kripa and Ilollari (2023) describe green finance as a financial activity that uses various financial tools, including loans, debt arrangements, and investments, to produce better ecologically sustainable outcomes.

Given the significance of green finance on a worldwide scale, political communication is essential to raising public awareness and influencing public perceptions regarding green financing and the detrimental effects of global warming. According to Bassey, Jacob, and Ngonso (2024), political communication is a vital factor in the political growth and creation of every society. Through strategic political advertising efforts, political messages could be crafted to further raise awareness on the strategic importance of green financing in a world that is currently overly dependent on the use of fossil fuels and other non-renewable energy resources for economic activities. This effort may significantly contribute to the promotion of the adoption level of green financing measures by private individuals, government agencies, businesses, NGOs, and other bodies in terms of planning, policy formulation,

and implementation. Nonetheless, at the forefront of taking proactive measures towards effective political communication on the strategic importance of green finance as it relates to highlighting legislative support for sustainable development are lawmakers.

In line with the global pursuit of low-carbon development, sustainable development practices have become increasingly central to national policy agendas. These practices involve the implementation of policies and activities that promote environmental protection, economic viability, and social equity in an integrated manner. In the context of green finance, sustainable development practices guide the allocation of capital to environmentally responsible sectors such as renewable energy, waste management, green transportation, and sustainable agriculture. However, the successful implementation of these practices depends not only on financial commitments but also on the effective communication of their value and legislative backing. Thus, political communication, particularly through strategic messaging and advertising, plays a crucial role in shaping public understanding, building consensus, and driving behavioural change necessary for sustainability. Nigeria's efforts toward sustainable development can therefore be amplified through deliberate political messaging that links legislative actions to green financing frameworks and the broader sustainability agenda.

In Nigeria, the legislative arm of government is saddled with the responsibilities of lawmaking, oversight, and representation. The 10th Nigerian House of Representatives' 2023–2027 legislative agenda includes climate change and environmental sustainability (The People's House, 2023). Despite the fact that the 10th Legislative Agenda acknowledges the concerns of climate change and environmental sustainability, it says nothing about green finance, its programs, or how it might help with these issues. Notwithstanding this observation, the degree to which green financing measures are adopted in order to support a low-carbon society may be greatly influenced by public knowledge of the legislative framework and support for sustainable development and a greener economy. This is because communication negligence as regards the importance of green finance may lead to a continued increase in greenhouse gas emissions, therefore causing more environmental, health, and sustainability hazards for Nigerian society.

Furthermore, it is observed that most campaign messages crafted in the form of advertisements in Nigeria focus largely on traditional economic issues, with little or no attention paid to the significance of environmentally conscious development and greener financing. This raises a lot of concern about the extent of public awareness of the legislative support for a greener economy. Considering the fact that how political messages are crafted could suggest legislative support for sustainable growth and more environmentally friendly funding, understanding the role of political advertising in promoting green finance and showcasing legislative support for green finance initiatives is crucial. Through effective political communication, citizens could be better informed of the various legislative frameworks and policies around green financing and how to take positive advantage of the information received.

Given that most of the campaign messages in Nigeria are designed to address more traditional or economic issues that relate to infrastructural development, education, and human empowerment, often overlooking promoting green financing initiatives, this research is intended to address this gap by exploring how political advertising can be crafted by Nigerian lawmakers to showcase legislative actions that support sustainable development. By investigating the intersection of political communication and sustainable development, this study seeks to provide insights on how political campaigns can be effectively leveraged by Nigerian lawmakers to promote public understanding and engagement in sustainability efforts.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the level of public awareness and understanding of green finance initiatives and the legislative frameworks supporting them in Nigeria.
2. investigate the role of political advertising in promoting legislative support for green finance and sustainable development among Nigerians.
3. assess the impact of political campaign messages on public perception and adoption of green finance initiatives in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Green Finance in Environmental Sustainability Discourse

The term “green finance” has no universally accepted definition among scholars. Green finance, as defined by Höhne, Khosla, Fekete, and Gilbert (2012), is a wide term that encompasses monetary investments that support environmentally responsible projects. It also includes sustainable environmental products and policies that encourage the development of a more sustainable economy. In other words, green finance is not restricted to climate change and involves a variety of other environmental activities such as industrial pollution control, water and sanitation, or biodiversity protection. Similarly, PricewaterhouseCoopers (2013) defines green finance as financial services as well as goods that take ecological factors into account during the borrowing process, as well as afterwards evaluation, and risk control. These services and products are offered to encourage environmentally conscious investments and carbon-free initiatives, businesses, industries, and technologies.

The category of financing known as “green finance” aims to boost inflows of capital into a nation while upholding sound, environmentally conscious practices. According to the UN Environment Programme (n.d.), green finance refers to a rise in the amount of money flowing to sustainable development initiatives from the governmental, commercial, and non-profit sectors. In order to reduce carbon emissions and build climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable infrastructure, Lui and Wu (2023) define green finance as financial instruments (like green bonds), agreements, mechanisms, and ecologically friendly operational practices, as well as the disclosure of these agreements. According to Mishra and Kannaujia (2023), green financing refers to actions taken to protect the environment, lessen the effects of greenhouse gases by funding renewable energy sources that expand green space, and aid in other sustainable development projects.

Climate change brought on by global warming and the associated environmental and health risks are the primary drivers behind green finance. While there are global observations of the impending dangers of a high-carbon economy, there are a lot of factors driving the adoption of green finance globally. This ranges from government policies, legislative frameworks, and communication plans, all

of which are essential in promoting the transition to environmentally economic initiatives. However, challenges such as low public awareness, limited policies, or financial barriers may pose a challenge to the adoption of green finance. Ozili (2022) argues that though research findings have shown that green finance has the potential to make a significant difference in the environment, society, and climate change mitigation, its implementation is hampered by factors like lack of knowledge of green finance, varying definitions of the term, a lack of coordination in policy, conflicting policies, and a dearth of financial institutions' and investors' economic motivations.

Nonetheless, green financing instruments such as ecological bonds and green loans greatly support environmentally friendly projects and promote low-carbon economies. Legislative frameworks, policies, and global agreements, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria, could contribute significantly to the adoption level of green finance by individuals, private businesses, government bodies, and other corporate organisations. Beyond legislation, how these policies or frameworks are communicated to the public may also contribute to its adoption. The idea of sustainable development through green financing is hinged on ensuring balanced economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity. Argiman and Osman (2019) argue that sustainable development cannot be ascertained without the proper use of financial resources. Through financial mechanisms like green finance, broader objectives of environmental sustainability, such as transitioning to a carbon-free economy, supporting renewable energy projects, and promoting long-term environmental protection, could be actualised. According to Ejumudo (2015), sustainable growth necessitates a unified multidisciplinary strategic management and planning that transcends constrained political, legal, economic and ethical, and ethical limitations.

Legislative Support for Green Finance

Green Finance Platform (2021) reports that policymakers and regulators around the world are increasingly adopting green finance measures in a shift towards creating green finance policies and regulations that go beyond market-driven solutions. This approach aims to institutionalise green finance as a core component of sustainable

economic growth and climate action. The 2021 figures from the *Green Finance Platform (2021)* reveal a 264 percent increase in 684 national and sub-national environmentally friendly financing policies and regulatory initiatives in 100 developed and developing countries since 2015. This shift indicates a gradual adoption and implementation of frameworks by policymakers to address issues associated with global warming and ecological sustainability. This serves as commendation to the 2015 Paris Agreement for its clear overarching vision coupled with an openness for institutional diversity (Dikau & Volz).

In Nigeria, it is the duty of the legislative arm of government to make laws that promote democracy and good governance. This is also actualized by creating laws and policies that encourage green finance and environmental sustainability. The Legislative Agenda of the 10th House of Representatives for 2023-2027, though it does not capture the concept 'green finance', clearly states environmental sustainability as part of the House's plan to promote a greener economy. This could be translated into formulating and promoting laws and policies that support a low-carbon economy through quality legislation and strategic awareness campaigns. According to Fu, Lu, and Pirabi (2023), effective communication strategies are essential for increasing public knowledge and gaining support for climate change policies. Through this, both the government and business communities may recognize how important it is to fund ecologically friendly projects and sustainability goals.

In the same vein, highlighting how policymakers could help strengthen Nigeria's green financing, Ozili (2024) suggests that the Central Bank of Nigeria issue green bonds, create a green bank, create a differentiated cash reserve requirement as a lender incentive, implement an environment protection strategy (EPS) disclosure requirement, and set up green finance labs or climate regulatory sandboxes. Similarly, *the Economic Commission for Africa (2024)* recommends that African countries should explore innovative green financing mechanisms to promote a green transition in order to mitigate the effects of global warming, suggesting the need for policymakers to take creative approaches towards ensuring viable policies and programs are created around green financing.

Sustainable Development Practices

Scholars have emphasized that sustainable development cannot be achieved without aligning financial systems and resources with environmental and social objectives. For instance, the OECD's Global Outlook on Financing for Sustainable Development emphasizes the need for mobilizing both public and private financial flows and highlights the importance of integrating financial systems into the broader sustainable development agenda to ensure that investments are directed towards long-term, inclusive growth (OECD, 2018). Similarly, research stresses that the financial system plays a pivotal role in sustainable development, especially in developing economies, where aligning financial processes and outcomes with sustainability goals remains an ongoing challenge due to barriers such as financial exclusion and institutional weaknesses (Ogbuabor & Okoro, 2021).

Furthermore, the literature asserts that sustainable growth requires a multidisciplinary and integrated approach that transcends traditional sectoral boundaries. Sustainable development economics, for example, is described as a holistic paradigm that reconciles environmental protection, economic growth, and social equity and calls for interdisciplinary collaboration to address complex systemic challenges (Lengauer, 2023). This approach recognizes the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental dimensions and advocates for integrated strategies that go beyond political, legal, and ethical constraints to achieve lasting progress (Magomedova et al., 2023). These perspectives are particularly relevant for developing economies like Nigeria, where green finance can facilitate the funding of projects in clean energy, sustainable agriculture, and climate adaptation. However, achieving sustainability is not only a matter of resource allocation but also of institutional will, public engagement, and policy coherence. Therefore, effective political communication through campaigns, legislative messaging, and public discourse is essential in promoting awareness, legitimacy, and uptake of sustainable development practices.

Political Advertising

Political advertising refers to the use of strategic marketing communications to promote a political candidate, party, or government institution so as to influence

public perception and/or electoral outcomes. Through political advertising, a political candidate, lawmakers, or political institutions could consciously communicate plans, achievements, or government policies to the public in order to gain trust. Political advertising, according to Olalekan and Sam (2018), is communication intended to influence people and organizations to carry out favorable actions in order to gain the support of the electorate. This is done by an identified sponsor, political party, or their third parties.

Beyond gaining the support of electorates, political advertising could be engaged by political actors to consciously bring the public into the know of governments policies or activities geared towards the promotion of democracy and good governance. Through political advertising, an agenda could be set for public discussion. Hence, how political messages are framed could significantly influence public perception and discussions about political issues. Depending on the framing angle, which may be tilted towards issue-based messaging, showcasing campaign promises, or evoking emotional appeals, effective political communication can significantly help shape public opinion, build trust, and influence electorate decisions, as the case may be. It could also be useful for disseminating political information, forming public opinion, influencing a candidate's political image, and fending off criticism and charges from the opposition (Liaw, Moiden, & Yacob, 2022).

Public Awareness and Adoption of Green Finance

The goal of political advertising is to create or increase public awareness on political issues and activities of political institutions or a political candidate. As such, how political messages are crafted and the strategic use of media channels play a crucial role in the promotion of green financing measures and encouraging its adoption by the public. However, it is worth noting that though communication plays a role in the dispersal of political information to the public, other factors such as mistrust in political messages, literacy level, exposure, and economic concerns may impede how a message is received, perceived, or adopted by an individual. Bertsou (2019) observes that political distrust has been a norm, now existing for decades in many established democracies. Similarly, Winsovd, Haugsgjerd, Saglie, and Segard (2023) explain that widespread political mistrust is frequently seen as an indication of

democratic illness, whereas great political trust is frequently seen as an indication of a healthy democracy. All these factors may contribute significantly to how the public perceives or adopts government messages.

Nonetheless, studies from other countries have shown that awareness campaigns and public education have contributed immensely to the adoption of green finance initiatives (Orabi, 2020; Li, Ma, Khan, & Zhao, 2023; Patro, Cherian, & Batra, 2024). Therefore, just as some political campaigns adopt issue-based messaging approaches where a political candidate or an institution focuses on informing the electorate of their plans and frameworks for education, healthcare, and the environment, a similar approach may also be adopted for the promotion of green finance initiatives, highlighting legislative support for sustainable development.

Theoretical Framework

The framing theory is adopted to explain how political messages about green finance can be created and communicated to reflect legislative support for sustainable development.

The Framing Theory

The framing theory was first proposed by Ervin Goffman in 1974. The theory emphasizes how the media package and send information to the public. Goffman, in his book *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, described frames as mental structures that affect how people receive, perceive, and understand the world around them. In Framing Theory, communication plays an integral role in how our minds and worldviews are shaped around events, issues, topics, or occurrences. It also plays a critical role in how these events are understood.

Effective communication is very important in every political discourse. How political messages are framed or presented can influence how they are received or interpreted by the public. In other words, through strategic framing of political messages, green finance can be integrated into political campaigns in order to maximize public support and increase public participation in governance. This

effort will not only indicate legislative support for sustainable development; it will also heighten public awareness of green finance, its benefits, and how the public could benefit from government policies and frameworks on green financing. Through strategic political communication, green finance may be framed as not just an environmental issue but also an economic opportunity that creates jobs, boosts industries, and reduces reliance on fossil fuels. Strategically, messages could be framed for various segments of the electorate, such as urban and rural voters, in view of sensitizing the masses on the benefits and the need for adoption of sustainable development practices.

Methodology

The population of the study comprised key stakeholders involved in political communication and legislative processes within Nigeria. Specifically, the study targeted four main groups, namely the general public, legislative aides to Nigerian Federal lawmakers, political campaign strategists, and environmental stakeholders. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques were adopted for the study, ensuring that only those knowledgeable about the subject matter were selected as samples of the study. At the same time, individuals who were readily accessible and willing to participate (through online surveys) were chosen as part of the study's sample.

A total of 384 samples were drawn from the four distinct groups within the population: 320 from the general public, 60 legislative aides, 15 political campaign strategists, and 9 environmental and sustainability advocates. The rationale for this selection was the need to gather diverse perspectives from relevant stakeholders knowledgeable of the subject matter. It was also to ensure a balance of expertise with broad public opinion, further enriching the study's findings.

Presentation of Data

Table 1: Respondents' Awareness and Understanding of Green Finance

Questions	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Have you heard of the term 'Green Finance' before?</i>	Yes	154	40%
	No	230	60%
	Total	384	100%
<i>How familiar are you with initiatives that support Green Finance in Nigeria (for e.g. Nigeria's Climate Change Act (2021), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Guidelines, Nigerian Sustainable Banking Principles (2012) etc.?</i>	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
	Very familiar	38	10%
	Somewhat familiar	111	29%
	Not familiar at all	235	61%
	Total	384	100%
<i>To what extent do you think legislative frameworks support Green Finance in Nigeria?</i>	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
	Very supportive	50	13%
	Somewhat supportive	172	45%
	Not supportive at all	162	42%
	Total	384	100%

Data from Table 1 reveal that the majority of the respondents (60%) have not heard the term green finance before. In the same vein, 61% of the respondents claimed not to be familiar at all with initiatives that support green finance in Nigeria. Furthermore, findings from the table show that the respondents perceive the legislative frameworks in Nigeria as somewhat supportive (45%) and not supportive at all (42%) of green finance.

Table 2: Role of Political Advertising in Promoting Green Finance

Question	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
<i>To what extent do you agree that political advertising could play a role in raising awareness of Green Finance and sustainable development practices in Nigeria?</i>	Strongly agree	88	23%
	Agree	200	52%
	Disagree	73	19%
	Strongly disagree	23	6%
	Total	384	100%
<i>How often have you seen political campaign messages in Nigeria that promote Green Finance or sustainable development initiatives?</i>	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
	Frequently	4	1%
	Occasionally	88	23%
	Rarely	154	40%
	Never	138	36%
	Total	384	100%
<i>In your opinion, should political campaign messages also emphasize environmental issues such as Climate Change, Green Finance, Green Bonds etc.?</i>	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	357	93%
	No	27	7%
	Total	384	100%

The data presented in Table 2 indicate that a significant portion of respondents (52%) believe that political advertising could contribute to raising awareness about green finance and sustainable development. Similarly, 40% of respondents reported that they rarely encounter political campaign messages in Nigeria that focus on green finance and sustainable development efforts. Notably, an overwhelming 93% of respondents expressed the view that political campaign messages should prioritize environmental issues, including green finance.

Table 3: Impact of Political Campaign Messages on Public Perception and Adoption of Green Finance

Question	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
<i>To what extent do you agree that political campaign messages could influence public awareness and adoption of Green Finance and other sustainable development initiatives?</i>	Strongly agree	38	10%
	Agree	200	52%
	Disagree	115	30%
	Strongly disagree	31	8%
	Total	384	100%
<i>Would you consider adopting Green Finance measures (e.g., investing in renewable energy) if lawmakers promoted it more through targeted political campaign messages?</i>	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	303	79%
	No	12	3%
	Maybe	69	18%
	Total	384	100%

Findings from Table 3 show that the majority of respondents view political campaign messages as veritable tools for raising public awareness, which could lead to the adoption of green finance initiatives or other sustainable development measures. Similarly, 79% of the respondents said they would consider adopting green finance measures if lawmakers actively promoted it during political campaigns.

Discussion of Findings

RQ1 - What is the current level of public awareness and understanding of green finance initiatives in Nigeria?

Findings from the study revealed an awareness gap among the respondents as the majority of those surveyed (60%) had not heard the term “Green Finance” before. Only 40% of the respondents claimed to have heard of green finance, further corroborating the existence of a gap in public awareness, suggesting a possibility of low adoption of green finance initiatives among the population. Similarly, 61% of

the respondents reported not being familiar at all with initiatives supporting green finance, as shown in Table 1, indicating an urgent need for increased awareness campaigns and educational outreaches to raise public awareness of green finance and the frameworks put in the place for public benefits. Nonetheless, 10% of the surveyed respondents claimed to be very familiar with green finance initiatives while 29% said they were somewhat familiar with initiatives supporting green finance in Nigeria. These findings suggest that green finance, as a concept, has not been effectively framed or communicated to the public. The absence of clear frames that link green finance to everyday concerns such as economic growth, job creation, and environmental protection may result in the public not engaging with the concept. Also, media and political campaigns may not have framed green finance as a national priority, thereby reducing its visibility and perceived relevance.

Furthermore, data from Table 1 revealed a mixed perception regarding legislative support for Green Finance. While 45% of the respondents felt that legislative frameworks were somewhat supportive of green finance initiatives, a considerable number of respondents (42%) perceived legislative frameworks not to be supportive at all. Only 13% of the respondents felt that the frameworks are very supportive. This indicates skepticism among the surveyed population regarding the effectiveness of existing legislative measures in promoting Green Finance. This split perception suggests that while some progress may have been made in the legislative domain, many people still feel that the existing policies and frameworks fall short in adequately promoting green finance initiatives. The lack of perceived support could be due to unclear policies, poor implementation, or a general lack of visibility around green finance legislation.

The findings suggest that lawmakers and media outlets might not be framing legislative initiatives around green finance in a way that highlights their significance or effectiveness. For example, if legislation is framed as ineffective or bureaucratic, the public may naturally view it in that light. On the other hand, if policies are framed to show their tangible benefits through case studies, success stories, or economic advantages, people are more likely to perceive the legislation as supportive and impactful. The public might also not be exposed to positive frames about Green Finance legislation, where the benefits and progress made are highlighted.

Negative framing, whether due to poor media coverage or ineffective political communication, can contribute to skepticism about legislative support.

These findings indicate that while there is some awareness of green finance, significant gaps remain in public understanding and engagement with the concept. Moreover, respondents perceive the legislative support for green finance in Nigeria as being inadequate, suggesting the need for stronger, more visible policy frameworks and efforts to promote green finance initiatives at both governmental and grassroots levels.

RQ2: How do political advertising and campaigns influence public perception of legislative efforts to promote green finance and sustainable development?

Data from Table 2 were used to provide answers to this question. Results in Table 2 showed a strong acceptance from respondents (75%) that political advertising plays an important role in raising awareness of green finance and sustainable development. The majority of the respondents either strongly agreed (23%) or agreed (52%) that political advertising could help raise public awareness of Green Finance and the need for sustainable development. These findings indicate a strong belief by respondents in the effectiveness of political advertising in promoting environmental issues. However, a few respondents 25% expressed some level of scepticism by either disagreeing (19%) or strongly disagreeing (6%) on the effectiveness of political advertising in promoting green finance and sustainable development. Findings from this table reveal that political advertising has the potential to act as a powerful frame that shapes public perception if strategically crafted to focus on relevant issues to people's lives, such as economic development and environmental sustainability. Framing political advertisements around positive outcomes such as job creation through renewable energy and long-term environmental benefits can significantly enhance public awareness and support for Green Finance. The 25% scepticism suggests that some people may not be seeing political advertisements that clearly or effectively communicate Green Finance issues due to either message framing, personal concerns, or interests.

Furthermore, on the frequency of exposure to political campaign messages that promote green finance and sustainable development, only 1% of the sampled respondents claimed to frequently see campaign messages related to green finance and sustainable development, while (23%) reported to occasionally see such messages. Additionally, the majority of the respondents (40%) said they rarely saw, while 36% said they have never seen political campaign messages that promote green finance and sustainable development. Findings from this Table reveal a significant gap in the visibility of political campaign messages related to green finance. It also correlates with the study's findings of the low awareness level of green finance initiatives by respondents, as captured in Table 1 of the study.

The low visibility of Green Finance in political campaigns suggests that the frame of reference for political messaging currently prioritises other issues. While people think political advertising can raise awareness of green finance, they are simply not seeing enough messaging about it, which weakens its potential impact. Exploring respondents' opinion if political campaign messages should emphasise environmental issues such as Green Finance, an overwhelming (93%) of the respondents agreed that it should. Nonetheless, a few respondents (7%) felt it should not. Findings from this study reveal that the frame of political discourse is currently missing a key element: environmental sustainability. Given the high level of public support for integrating Green finance into political campaigns, lawmakers and political strategists have a significant opportunity to reframe their messages to reflect environmental concerns. Framing green finance as not only a sustainability issue but also as a means of economic advancement can help address public demands and enhance the effectiveness of political messaging. Although findings from the study show that green finance-related political messaging is not prominently visible, the substantial backing for prioritising environmental issues in political campaigns offers lawmakers and political strategists a chance to enhance public engagement and promote awareness of sustainable practices.

RQ3: What impact do political campaign messages have on public engagement and adoption of green finance initiatives in Nigeria?

Data from Table 3 was used to provide answers to this question. From the table, the majority of the respondents (62%) either strongly agreed (10%) or agreed (52%) that political campaign messages influence public awareness and adoption of green finance. This finding suggests that well-crafted political campaign messages can effectively shape public attitudes towards green finance. However, a segment of the sampled respondents disagreed (30%) and strongly disagreed (8%) to the impact of political campaign messages on green finance adoption. This finding indicates the need for more effective communication strategies to engage the segment of the population having some level of scepticism regarding the impact of political campaign messages on the adoption of green finance initiatives. For this group of people, political messages may be framed employing more persuasive tactics through evidence-based arguments that showcase successful Green Finance initiatives or the tangible benefits of these initiatives, such as economic gains and environmental protection. This could help address the concerns of those sceptical about green finance, encouraging a more positive reception.

Furthermore, data from Table 3 show that the majority of their respondents (79%) were willing to consider adopting Green Finance measures if lawmakers actively promoted these initiatives through political campaigns. This shows a strong willingness among the public to embrace sustainable financial practices, provided there is sufficient political endorsement through strategic political communication campaigns, outreach, and education of government frameworks regarding green financing. Nonetheless, a few respondents (3%) said they would not consider its adoption, while 18% of the respondents were uncertain, suggesting that while the majority are ready to act, some may require further convincing or clearer guidance on how to adopt Green Finance measures. To bridge this gap, messages could focus on clear, actionable messages that not only reflect the benefits of green finance but also simplify the adoption process for the public. Educational initiatives, coupled with strong political endorsement, could help turn uncertainty into action, further boosting Green Finance adoption.

Recommendations

The National Assembly, through the Senate Committee on Ecology and Climate Change and the House Committee on Climate Change, should:

1. Call on the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and the Ministry of Information to launch national campaigns and educational initiatives to raise public awareness of green finance and legislative frameworks supporting it. These initiatives should frame how compliance with green finance practices can drive economic growth, create jobs, and promote environmental sustainability.
2. Urge political actors through a press briefing and widely circulated press releases on the need to incorporate green finance and sustainable development practices into political campaigns, encouraging the use of frequent, targeted political advertising to raise voter awareness and promote public support for green policy initiatives.
3. Direct the Ministry of Environment to work with Climate, Development or Marketing Communications Experts to develop a communication framework that showcases successful case studies and the benefits of green finance while offering clear, practical steps for public adoption, especially for sceptical groups.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study reveals significant gaps in public awareness and understanding of green finance initiatives in Nigeria. While political advertising of green finance has the potential to raise awareness, its current visibility is low, limiting its impact on public engagement. However, the strong support for prioritising green finance in political advertising presents an opportunity for lawmakers to reshape their communication strategies. By integrating environmental sustainability into political messaging and promoting clear, actionable benefits, lawmakers can drive public adoption of Green Finance initiatives, supporting both economic growth and sustainable development.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, J., Wang, L., Belgacem, S., Pawar, P., Najam, H., & Abbas, J. (2023). Investment In Renewable Energy And Electricity Output: Role Of Green Finance, Environmental Tax, And Geopolitical Risk: Empirical Evidence From China. *Energy*. 269, 126683. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.energy.2023.126683>.
- Argiman, E. & Osman. A. (2019). Green Finance for Sustainable Development: A Theoretical Study. *Eurasian Journal of Researches in Social and Economics*. 243-253. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352787309_green_finance_for_sustainable_development_a_theoretical_study
- Bassey, B., Jacob, O. & Ngonso, B. (2024). Political Communication, Citizens Mobilisation And Participatory Democracy In Nigeria: A Critical Review. *Nigerian Journal of Communication review*. 2,(1), 144-155.
- Bertsou, E. (2019) Political Distrust and its Discontents: Exploring the Meaning, Expression and Significance of Political Distrust, Societies, MDPI. 9(4), 1-18.
- Bhatnagar, S.& Sharma, D. (2022). Evolution of Green Finance and Its Enablers: A Bibliometric Analysis, Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews. 162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rser.2022.112405>.
- Dikau, S. & Volz, U. (2023). Central Bank Mandates, Sustainability Objectives and the Promotion Of Green Finance. *Ecological Economics*. 184. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S092180092100080X>.
- Economic Commission for Africa (2024). Innovative Green Financing Mechanisms Could Help Africa Mitigate Climate Change Effects. Retrieved from: <https://www.uneca.org/stories/innovative-green-financing-mechanisms-could-help-africa-mitigate-climate-change-effects>
- Ejumudo, K. (2015). Sustainable Development in Nigeria: The Policy Gap and Action Dilemma. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*. 6 (23), 78-85.
- Fu, C., Lu, L., & Pirabi, M. (2023). Advancing green finance: a review of sustainable development. *Digital Economy and Sustainable Development*. 1(20). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44265-023-00020-3>
- Green Finance Platform (2021). A New Era of Government Intervention on Green Finance Measures. Retrieved from: <https://www.greenfinanceplatform.org/news/new-era-government-intervention-green-finance-measures>.
- Höhne, N., Khosla, S., Fekete, H., & Gilbert, A. (2012). Mapping of green finance delivered. The Netherlands: Ecofys.
- Kripa, E. And Ilollari, O. (2023). Green Finance Management Challenges in Developed And Developing Countries. Cukurova 10th International Scientific Research Conference April 2-4, 2023/ Adana, Turkey. Pp: 533-540. Retrieved From: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371875551_green_finance_management_challenges_in_developed_and_developing_countries
- Lengauer, U. (2023). Sustainable development economics: Bridging environmental and social goals. *Journal of Agricultural Science and Botany*, 8(2), 229.
- Li, X., Ma, L., Khan, S., and Zhao, X. (2023). The Role of Education and Green Innovation in Green Transition: Advancing the United Nations Agenda on Sustainable Development. *Sustainability*. 15(16): 12410. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151612410>
- Liaw, J., Moiden, A. and Yacob, K. (2022). The Importance of Communication in Political Campaign. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(12), 1022 - 1030.
- Liu, Chen and Wu, S. (2023). Green Finance, Sustainability Disclosure and Economic Implications. *Fulbright Review of Economics and Policy*. 3(1): 1-24.

Magomedova, N., Kozubenko, A., & Lorsanova, Z. (2023). Socio-economic and theoretical and methodological aspects of sustainable development. E3S Web of Conferences, 451, 01024. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202345101024>

Mishra, K. and Kannaujia, A. "Green Finance": A Powerful Tool for Sustainability. Social Science Journal for Advanced Research. 3 (6): 1-7.

OECD. (2018). Global Outlook on Financing for Sustainable Development 2019: Time to Face the Challenge.

Ogbuabor, J. E., & Okoro, A. S. (2021). Integrating finance for sustainable development in weak institutional contexts: Opportunities and disruptions.

Olalekan, O. and Sam, S. (2018). Empirical and Methodological Analysis of Political Advertisements. *Review of Journalism and Mass Communication*. 6, (1): 12-2

Orabi, M. (2020). The Extent of Awareness Regarding Green Financing Among Jordanian Commercial Banks From The Perspective Of Investment Department Managers. *International Journal Of Scientific & Technology Research*. 9 (10): 8-18.

Ozili, P. (2022). Green Finance Research around the World: A Review of Literature. *International Journal of Green Economics* 16(1): 1-120.

Ozili, P. (2024). The Role of the Central Bank In Greening The Nigerian Financial System. Retrieved from: https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/120157/1/MPRA_paper_120157.pdf

Patro, U., Cherian, A., and Batra, K. (2024). A Study of Awareness and Knowledge of Green Finance among University Students. *International Journal of Novel Research and Development*. 9(4): 94-120.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (2013). Exploring green finance incentives in China. Retrieved from http://www.pwccn.com/webmedia/doc/635163938836835335_green_finance_incentives_oct2013_eng.pdf

The People's House, 2023. Legislative Agenda of the 10th House of Representatives (2023-2027). Retrieved from: <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Legislative-Agenda-of-the-10th-House-of-Representatives.pdf>

UN Environment Programme (n.d). Green Financing. Retrieved from: <https://www.unep.org/regions/asia-and-pacific/regional-initiatives/supporting-resource-efficiency/green-financing#:~:text=Green%20financing%20is%20to%20increase,sectors%20to%20sustainable%20development%20priorities>.

Winsvold, M., Haugsgjerd, A., Saglie, J., and Segard, S. B. (2023). What makes people trust or distrust politicians? Insights from open-ended survey questions. *West European Politics*, 47(4), 759–783. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2023.2268459>

Assessment of Civil-Police Relations and Conflict in Greater Banjul Area, the Gambia (2019-2024)

Hassan M Jarra¹

Abstract

The police force is established to protect the lives and properties of the people and maintain law and order. In recent times, there have been conflicts between the police personnel and civilian population in Gambia. This study examined civil-police relations in the Gambia. The study was hinged on the social contract theory which has a central focus that the police force is a brain-child of the collective resolve of the people. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, utilizing both primary and secondary data. The primary data were gathered through the administration of questionnaire while article journals, books and periodicals served as secondary data. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample size of 300 out of a population of 459,000 in Greater Banjul Area, Gambia. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (cumulative frequency tables, simple percentage and mean average. The study found that the civilian population has not been too satisfied with the police efforts in combating crime. Also, there has been conflicting issues between the police force and civilians which is escalated by the inadequate conflict management skills on some police officers to manage crises. The study recommended that proper training on conflict management should be implemented for police personnel as well as the police force should ensure conflicts with the civilians are resolved amicably.

¹ Federal University of Lokoja Institute of Governance and Development Studies. jarrakay@hotmail.com

Introduction

Civil-police relations play a crucial role in ensuring public safety, democratic governance, and sustainable peace in any society. In transitional democracies such as The Gambia, where decades of authoritarian rule were followed by a democratic opening in 2017, the relationship between law enforcement agencies and the civilian population remains a delicate and evolving dynamic. The Greater Banjul Area which includes Banjul, Kanifing Municipality, and parts of the West Coast Region has witnessed increasing incidents of tension, confrontation, and mistrust between the police and sections of the civilian population, especially from 2019 to 2024.

The period under review has been marked by several high-profile incidents involving police use of force, suppression of protests, and allegations of corruption and misconduct. These events have contributed to a growing public perception of the police as instruments of political control rather than protectors of public interest. At the same time, the police face challenges such as inadequate resources, limited training, and high expectations to manage a growing urban population facing youth unemployment, drug-related crimes, and civic unrest.

This article aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of civil-police relations and the nature of conflict in the Greater Banjul Area between 2019 and 2024. Specifically, it examines the causes of conflict between civilians and the police, the institutional responses to these tensions, the role of civil society in mitigating disputes, and the impact of on-going police reforms. By analysing key incidents, legal frameworks, and community perspectives, this study seeks to identify the structural challenges and opportunities for improving civil-police relations in The Gambia.

In doing so, the paper contributes to broader discussions on post-authoritarian reform, accountability in law enforcement, and conflict prevention in urban contexts. The assessment is grounded in conflict resolution theory, public security literature, and human rights principles, with a view toward informing policy and practice in the country's on-going democratic transition.

One of the primary functions of every government is to safeguard the lives

and assets of its population from both foreign and internal threats. There are established security services that undergo training to uphold peace and preserve order. According to Reiner (2021) the police and other Para-military organisations are responsible for preserving security within the country. Recently, there have been instances where the Police have been mobilized to address incidents of internal or domestic violence, unrest, and rioting. For Jose (2019), in situations of violence, it is often believed by policy makers and the wider population that the Police should be deployed to manage the crisis. The involvement of the police in domestic security matters may be attributed to the Cold War era. The primary purpose of the police force is to address internal acts of violence. However, due to a decrease in external threats and an increase in internal disputes, they have been overburdened and strained beyond their capacity. As a result, governments have enlisted the Police Intervention Unit to address domestic problems.

Jose (2019) documented cases in Los Angeles and the United Kingdom when the police have been summoned to intervene in domestic problems. The Los Angeles riot of 1992, sometimes referred to as the “Rodney King” riots, was a notable instance of civil unrest in the United States that necessitated military action. The police and other paramilitary authorities were unable to effectively manage the extensive looting of stores and vandalism of properties until the military intervened. Jose (2019) asserted that the security personnel brought back order on the fourth day of the unrest, however this action resulted in several negative outcomes, including fatalities and injuries. Reiner (2021) posits that the police lacked sufficient training and equipment for that specific mission especially in many African states and the Gambia is really not an exception.

The African continent has witnessed police intervention in response to civil unrest, rallies, or riots. Countries throughout the continent, such as Guinea, Senegal, Algeria, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Gambia and others, have witnessed uprisings in which the police have actively participated in managing conflicts. Kristen (2023) said that the recent large-scale uprisings had exerted significant pressure on long-established tyrants, leading to the overthrow of autocratic leaders in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. A 2020 study of U.S. racial justice demonstrations reports police using excessive force even against clearly peaceful or symbolic protesters

(Kajeepeeta & Johnson 2020). They contended that the use of coercive powers by the State security apparatus (Police force) had led to extensive extrajudicial deaths and injuries.

Gambia has witnessed a multitude of kidnappings, terrorist incidents, election violence, livestock theft, banditry, armed robbery, and other societal ills that pose a threat to the country's overall survival. The Gambian police force has long been afflicted by a lack of adequately trained personnel, training, and other necessary resources required to effectively safeguard the lives and possessions of residents. The police force has been sent several times to uphold peace in volatile regions (Musa, 2014; Nwolise, 2007). However, despite the efforts of the police force, their civil relationship with the civilians have been called to question by many as reports of clashes, distrust have been reported in recent times (Ayuk, 2024). This study seeks to examine the civil-police relations in the Gambia, Greater Banjul Area.

Historical Background of Civil-Police Relations in the Gambia

The historical evolution of civil-police relations in The Gambia is deeply rooted in its colonial and post-colonial experiences. Policing in The Gambia, as in most British West African colonies, was designed to maintain order and protect colonial interests. According to Killingray (1986), colonial policing in British Africa was highly militarized, racially hierarchical, and focused more on suppressing dissent than providing security to the local population. This legacy shaped The Gambia's early police institutions and their approach to civil order.

After independence in 1965, the structure of the police remained largely intact, reflecting the continuity of colonial administrative institutions. Despite being under civilian leadership during President Jawara's era, the Gambian Police Force (GPF) continued to function as a centralized and command-driven institution with limited public accountability (Jallow, 2003). Scholars argue that while the Jawara government was relatively democratic, it did little to transform the police from a control-oriented institution into a service-oriented one (Perfect, 2010).

The Jammeh era (1994–2016) severely damaged public trust in law enforcement institutions. The culture of fear, impunity, and human rights violations became

widespread, with little to no accountability mechanisms in place. The police, in many instances, operated under directives from the executive without independent oversight, contributing to a breakdown in community relations and undermining the legitimacy of the force. Reports from Amnesty International (2015) and the Gambia Centre for Human Rights and the Rule of Law document widespread abuses by police, including torture, unlawful detention, and harassment of journalists and opposition figures. Mendy (2018) explains that during this period, civil-police relations deteriorated due to the pervasive culture of fear and impunity. The police were viewed less as protectors of public safety and more as agents of state-sponsored violence. The TRRC (Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission) findings have further confirmed that the police often acted outside the law, with little regard for human rights norms.

The political transition that began in 2017, following the electoral defeat of Jammeh and the ascension of President Adama Barrow, was seen as a critical turning point. Promises of democratic reform, security sector transformation, and greater accountability raised hopes for a new era in civil-police relations. Efforts were made to restructure the GPF, including community policing initiatives, human rights training, and collaboration with civil society organizations. However, despite these positive intentions, progress has been uneven.

Between 2019 and 2024, historical patterns of mistrust and conflict continued to shape interactions between civilians and the police. The lingering influence of authoritarian practices, insufficient institutional reforms, and emerging socio-political tensions have contributed to a volatile environment. Understanding this historical context is essential to fully grasp the complexities of civil-police relations in the Greater Banjul Area today. According to the **Security Sector Reform (SSR) Baseline Report** (2018) prepared by the Ministry of Justice with international support, there were significant gaps in oversight, training, and operational standards in the GPF. Civil society organizations such as the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** have since played an increasing role in documenting and addressing police misconduct, though progress has been slow.

Conceptual Review

Security

Security, in the context of civil-police relations, refers to the protection of individuals, communities, and the state from threats that undermine peace, safety, and social stability. Traditionally viewed in terms of crime control and state sovereignty, security today includes broader dimensions such as human dignity, justice, and freedom from fear (UNDP, 1994).

In fragile and transitioning democracies, police institutions play a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions of security. When police uphold justice and human rights, they contribute to peace and societal cohesion. However, when their actions are repressive or politically motivated, they become sources of insecurity. In The Gambia, where past policing practices were associated with state violence, the challenge is to rebuild a security system based on service, not domination. The democratic transition since 2017 provides a unique opportunity to promote inclusive and human-centred security by aligning policing with the rule of law and citizen welfare.

Various scholars have provided definitions for the idea of security. However, the notion of security may be defined by some factors - tranquilly, protection, happiness, and societal progress achieved by safeguarding and preserving human life. It is also related to the promotion of human dignity in the face of threats to life or physical harm. Security encompasses the progress and advancement of the society in which we reside (Otu & Apeh, 2022).

Buzan (2021) defines security as the condition in which nations are free from dangers and have the ability to maintain their sovereign identity and functional integrity in order to counter hostile developments that pose a danger to human life. According to this definition, security refers to the state in which individuals in a society are protected from many negative experiences such as fear, harm, oppression, anxiety, danger, poverty, injury, and maybe even death (Bodunde et al, 2014).

Conflict

Conflict, within the context of civil-police relations, refers to tensions, confrontations, or violence that arises from disputes between the police and civilians. These conflicts may stem from systemic inequalities, excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests, or biased law enforcement (Nwolise, 2008). In urban centres like the Greater Banjul Area, these dynamics are exacerbated by youth marginalization, political protests, and unresolved grievances, which often trigger police responses that intensify hostilities rather than resolve them.

Internal Security Operations

Internal security operations include the efforts of domestic security services, such as the Police, Customs, and Immigration Services, to counteract threats originating within a state or country. The Gambian Police Force is founded to uphold law and order, as well as apprehend and detain those who have committed offences. Azinge (2013) observed that internal insecurity risks encompass incidents such as riots, strikes, religious confrontations, communal clashes, terrorism, and protests. These events often lie beyond the authority and constitutional responsibilities of the police force (Azinge, 2013). According to the Gambian constitution, the police have the overall responsibility of maintaining peace and order, safeguarding lives and property, and ensuring the appropriate implementation of all laws and regulations within the community. Internal security operations are specifically formulated to address internal problems inside a nation. Gambia has been afflicted by a multitude of religious crises, post-election violence, disputes between farmers and herders, ethnic conflicts, and other issues.

According to Ogaba (2020), internal security is the state of being free from any factors that could disrupt internal unity and the overall existence of a nation. It is also the ability of a nation to maintain its core institutions in order to achieve socio-political, economic objectives, uphold important values, and meet the needs of its citizens. Regardless of the many schools of thought, such as classical, traditionalist, non-traditionalist, or state-centric, it can be deduced that security primarily focuses on safeguarding both living and non-living entities from harm or damage.

Police

Anderson (2013) defines police as a civil force entrusted with the task of monitoring public order and law enforcement for the prevention and punishment of their breaches. Adedipe (2005) defined police as an organ of government that is charged with public safety. They are responsible for the civil society security. The constitution defines police clearly in terms of prevention and detection of crime, preservation of law and order, protection of lives and property, and enforcement of law and order.

Civil-Police Relations

Civil-police relations describe the nature and quality of interaction between police institutions and civilian populations. This interaction is shaped by mutual perceptions, institutional conduct, historical legacies, and societal expectations. In democratic societies, civil-police relations should be rooted in mutual respect, transparency, and accountability (Bittner, 1970; Abolurin, 2010). However, in post-authoritarian states like The Gambia, past abuses, lack of reform and mistrust continue to influence how citizens perceive and interact with police forces.

Community Policing

Community policing is a strategy that promotes collaboration between the police and the community to proactively address safety concerns and reduce crime (Skolnick & Bayley, 1988). It emphasizes prevention, decentralization, and partnership-building. In post-2017 Gambia, efforts to implement community policing have faced challenges such as resource limitations, lack of training, and resistance to institutional change. However, when effectively implemented, community policing enhances mutual trust and reduces conflict potential.

Trust and Police Legitimacy

Trust is the belief that the police will act fairly, lawfully, and in the best interests of the public (Tyler, 2006). Legitimacy is closely related, referring to the public's

perception that the police have a rightful authority to enforce laws and maintain order. When trust erodes due to police misconduct, corruption, or lack of responsiveness, legitimacy suffers (Tankebe, 2013). In The Gambia, rebuilding trust after years of impunity under the former regime remains a pressing challenge.

Security and Human Rights Nexus

The balance between maintaining public order and respecting civil liberties is critical in democratic governance. Policing in fragile democracies must adhere to principles of proportionality, necessity, and legality (Buzan, 2021). When security forces prioritize regime protection over human rights, it undermines democratic norms and exacerbates social tensions. In The Gambia, the challenge is to reform the security sector to align with democratic values and ensure that policing respects constitutional rights.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is based on the idea of Social Contract proposed by Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679), John Locke (1632 – 1704), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778). Ogunnoki (2018) observed that social contract theory is a widely utilized framework for elucidating the genesis of the State. The contributions of Thomas Hobbes will have a major influence on this research. The English Civil War between 1642 and 1651 had a profound impact on Thomas Hobbes' thinking. As a result of the conflict, he published a work called 'Leviathan', which was inspired by the Holy Bible and refers to a sea monster. The publication was a work of fiction in which Hobbes provided a justification for the existence of an absolute sovereign with the authority to uphold law and order. He expressed his belief that the condition of nature is a result of his interpretation of human nature, and that all individuals are equal in both intellect and physicality (Otu & Apeh, 2022).

According to Hobbes, man is inherently self-interested and he argued that in a state of nature, his actions are driven by emotions, cravings, and appetites rather than intellect or reasonable thinking (Gaubu, 2003). Existence in the state of nature was characterized by perpetual hardship, ceaseless strife, and a state known as 'Warre',

in which individuals were pitted against one another. The human existence in this state was described as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short,” since there was no universally recognized governing authority. In the state of nature, there was a notable absence of moral principles, and progress in industry was severely hindered due to the pervasive psychological fear of violence and death. Hobbes theorized that three factors contribute to the emergence of conflict, which he referred to as ‘Warre’: i) competition, ii) difference, and iii) love of glory. Therefore, those who desired to protect themselves chose to leave the state of nature and form a society and government by entering into a social compact. The social contract is a binding agreement in which individuals willingly relinquish their inherent rights and authority. This agreement is irrevocable by the parties involved or their descendants (Otu & Apeh, 2022).

The police are an instrument of the state to maintain law and order in the society. The civilians are to be protected by the state (police) but in a situation whereby there is distrust, conflicts between the police and civilians, there is bound to be anarchy.

Overview of Gambian Police Force and Civilian Complaints

The main autonomous internal security, law enforcement, and intelligence organisation in The Gambia is The Gambia Police Force. An inspector general of police is in charge of the force and reports to the Ministry of the Interior. There are now 5,000 officers in the force, both plain clothed and in uniform. A special squad dedicated to fraud and commercial offences combats corruption on behalf of the Gambia Police Force. The Gambia River Police, established in 1855, was the country’s first law enforcement agency. Previously, British troops and a small local militia made up of traders, freed slaves, and other residents provided security in the small colonial settlements. The duties of the River Police included preventing insurrection, enforcing taxation, and managing smuggling. The paramilitary Gambia Constabulary was established in 1866 to further reinforce its 10 soldiers, who received assistance from the local militia (Hughes, A., & Perfect, D. 2006). The number of constables was raised from 40 at the founding to 100 in 1870. At this point, the colony was cleared of all imperial forces, and local militia and the

Constabulary were left to handle law enforcement (Davidheiser & Hultin, 2012).

In 1895, the Frontier Police were established. The Gambia Company was founded in 1901 as a result of the West African Frontier Force's 1900 formation, and it too contributed to the colony's security. The district head in the Protectorate was in charge of security. The British enacted an ordinance in 1909 allowing the chiefs to choose "badge messengers," who were given the same powers as the colony police and could maintain order. Francis has observed that "the local population perceived the police and security services, despite their limited presence, as essentially foreign, even though Gambians staffed the lower level of the force" (Davidheiser & Hultin, 2012).

In response to a widely circulated video on social media depicting officers of the Police Intervention Unit in full riot gear physically assaulting an unarmed and non-aggressive civilian, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued a strong condemnation of the act. The incident, reportedly occurring on 10 March 2022, is under investigation by the Commission. In its statement, the NHRC asserted that the use of excessive force by law enforcement officials constitutes a serious violation of human rights and cannot be justified under any circumstances. The Commission described the conduct of the officers as inhumane, degrading, and a clear breach of legal and ethical standards. It further confirmed that the matter had been raised with the Office of the Inspector General of Police for appropriate action (NHRC, 2022). A Police Officer is not only a guardian of the law but is also expected, as a duty bearer, to respect and protect the human rights of all people, including those who are even suspected of breaking the law. By the adoption in 2020 of the Guidelines on Policing Public Assemblies in The Gambia, the Gambia Police has placed upon itself the obligation to put in place mechanisms and standards for the peaceful management of assemblies and demonstrations. Having a group of officers acting contrary to the spirit of the Guidelines is both disheartening and disturbing.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) reaffirms its firm stance against impunity and all forms of human rights violations, emphasizing that police brutality is unacceptable in any democratic society. Law enforcement officers are expected to operate within the bounds of the law, observing due

process and upholding the rule of law, even when dealing with individuals suspected of criminal activity. The NHRC urges the Inspector General of Police to promptly identify and hold accountable the officers involved in the incident captured on video, where a civilian was seen being assaulted. Such actions are unlawful and must be met with appropriate disciplinary and legal consequences (NHRC, 2022).

Furthermore, the Commission reminds all members of the security forces of their responsibility to uphold and protect human rights at all times, regardless of whether violations occur under command authority or personal initiative. As The Gambia continues to consolidate democratic governance and the rule of law, it is imperative for all citizens and institutions to act lawfully and responsibly. Resorting to violence undermines national peace, security, and sustainable development (NHRC, 2022).

Methodology

Methodology is a crucial aspect of research that focuses on the framework of the research process. Goundar (2012) defines research methodology as the comprehensive phrase that describes the systematic process of conducting research. Researchers have several options when it comes to doing research. Typically, a research methodology comprises a study plan, means for collecting data, and data analysis techniques. This work utilizes a survey research strategy, collecting primary data through the distribution of questionnaires and obtaining secondary data from various sources such as journals, textbooks, government documents, online articles, and magazines. The Likert scale format of questionnaire was utilizing and the coding is as follows: 5 = strongly, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 23. The survey was conducted in the Greater Banjul Area, which includes the capital city of The Gambia and its surrounding communities. As of 2024, the estimated population of this region is approximately 459,000 (Worldometer, 2024). Due to the large population size, the study employed purposive sampling to select a targeted sample of 300 participants, consisting of both police officers and civilians. Purposive sampling was employed to select respondents based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives.

The sample comprised police officers currently serving in the Greater Banjul Area, as well as civilians residing in the same region who have direct experience or knowledge of civil-police relations. Participants were chosen for their ability to provide rich, detailed information pertinent to the study's focus. Additionally, the selection considered factors such as rank, age, and background to ensure a diverse range of perspectives within the sample. Only individuals who were available and willing to participate were included to facilitate meaningful data collection.

Data Presentation and Analysis

2.7 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Analysis of Respondents by Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	175	53.7	53.7	53.7
	Female	125	46.3	46.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output (Version 23)

Table 1 displayed the analysis of respondents' gender. Male respondents were 175 representing 53.7% of the sample while female respondents were 125 representing 46.3%. This implies that male respondents were the majority.

Table 2: Analysis of Respondents' Age Bracket

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16 - 25 years	70	16.7	16.7	16.7
	26 - 35 years	95	53.7	53.7	70.4
	36 - 45 years	70	16.7	16.7	87.0
	46 years and above	65	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output (Version 23)

Table 2 displayed the analysis of respondents' age bracket. Respondents within the age bracket of 16-25 years were 70 and this represent 16.7%, 26 – 35 years age bracket were 95 (53.7%), 36 – 45 years were 70 (16.7%) while 46 years and above were 65 (13.0%). From the results it showed that majority of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 26 – 35 years old. This implies that youth respondents were the majority.

Table 3: Analysis of Respondents' Educational Qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	First School Leaving Cert	65	20.4	20.4	20.4
	Secondary School	60	16.7	16.7	37.0
	Diploma	36	9.3	9.3	75.9
	First Degree	89	38.9	38.9	85.2
	Postgraduate	50	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output (Version 23).

Table 3 displayed the analysis of respondents' educational qualification. First school leaving certificates were 65 (20.4%), Secondary school holders were 60 (16.7%), Diploma holders were 36 (9.3%), and First degree holders were 89 (38.9%) while holders of postgraduate certificates were 50 (14.8%). This implies that majority of the respondents are first degree holders.

Table 4: Analysis of Respondents' Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Senior Police personnel	96	31.5	31.5	31.5
	Junior Police Personnel	85	24.1	24.1	55.6
	Civilians	119	44.4	44.4	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output (Version 23)

Table 4 displayed the analysis of respondents' occupation. Senior police personnel were 96 (31.5%), junior police personnel were 85 (24.1%) while civilians were 119 (44.4%). This indicates that majority of the respondents were civilians.

Table5: Descriptive Analysis of Civil-Police Relations in Gambia (GBA)

Items	N	Mean	Decision
Residents are satisfied with the police efforts to curtail conflicts	300	2.4	Disagree
The police force has been proactive in managing conflicts between them and civilians	300	2.7	Disagree
The police force do not have adequate skills to manage conflicts between them and civilians	300	3.1	Undecided
The police force has a good cordial relationship with the civilians	300	3.2	Undecided
Civilians clash with the police force has been frequent in recent times	300	4.0	Agree
Clash between the police and civilians are usually not properly resolved amicably	300	2.8	Disagree
The police force and the civilians share security information often in order to reduce crime	300	3.4	Undecided
Valid N (list wise)	300		

Source: SPSS Output (Version 23).

Table 5 above displayed the descriptive analysis on civil-police relations in the Gambia. From the result, majority of the respondents disagreed that they are satisfied with the police efforts to curtail conflict as shown by the mean score of **2.4** (Disagreed).

The mean score of **2.7** (Disagreed) revealed that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that the police force has not been proactive in managing conflicts between them and civilian.

The mean score of **3.1** (Undecided) indicated that there are divided opinions on whether the Gambian police force have the requisite skills to manage conflicts between them and civilians.

Also, the mean score of **3.1** (Undecided) indicated that there are divided opinions from the respondents on whether the Gambian police force has a good cordial relationship with the civilians.

Civilians clash with the police force has been frequent in recent times as revealed by the mean score of **4.0** (Agreed).

The mean score of **2.8** (Disagreed) indicated that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that clashes between the police and civil population are sometimes not resolved amicably.

There is divided opinion on whether the police force and civilians share security information often in order to reduce crime as this is shown by the mean score of **3.4** (Undecided).

Discussion of Findings

The study utilized a survey design and copies of questionnaire were administered to both police officers and civilians in Greater Banjul, Gambia. From the findings, it showed that both male and female participated in the survey. Also, the study ensured the youths participate in this survey as respondents of 26-35 years old were the majority in the distribution. Besides, the respondents' level of education cut across first school leaving education to tertiary education. This was done to ensure respondents opinions on civil-police relations is well informed on their personal experience and the ability for them to express their perceptions or opinions on the dealings of the police force in Gambia.

From the results regarding the research questions, findings revealed that there have been conflicts between the police force and civilian population in the Gambia in recent times and there are factors that could be attributed to this frosty relationship. From the study findings, the relationship between the police and civilians has not be totally friendly or cordial and some police personnel do not have adequate conflict management skills to resolve conflicts with civilian population and being proactive to nipping conflicting issues in the board. These findings collaborated with that of Ayuk (2024) report which revealed that victims of police brutality sue Gambia

before the ECOWAS court for remedy. Despite this shortcoming on the part of the police force, some civilians are ready to share relevant security information with the police force to combat criminal activities.

Conclusion

Improving civil-police relations in The Gambia requires a multi-faceted approach that includes training, community engagement, accountability, and socioeconomic development. By prioritizing trust-building measures and fostering collaboration between law enforcement and citizens, The Gambia can create a safer and more harmonious society. All stakeholders, including the government, civil society, and the general public, must work together to achieve this goal.

Recommendations

The police play very important function in our society by maintaining law and order and roles prescribed by the constitution. The civilians are to be protected by the police force and those who go against the law ought to be sanctioned according to the existing laws of the state. This study examined the civil-police relations in Gambia. From the findings the study concludes that conflicts between the police force and civilian populations have been frequent in recent times and inadequate conflict management skills on the part of the police force have been one of the major reasons why their relationship with the civilians is frosty.

Civil-police relations are crucial for ensuring public safety, fostering trust, and maintaining societal order. In The Gambia, strengthening these relations is essential to build confidence in law enforcement and ensure the security of all citizens. In enhancing better police-relations with the civilian population, this study outlined the Following key recommendations to improve civil-police relations in the country.

Enhance Police Training and Education

To build trust, police officers must be well-trained in community policing, conflict resolution, and cultural sensitivity. Training programs should emphasize

the importance of human rights, ethical conduct, and effective communication. Continuous professional development can help officers adapt to evolving societal challenges and maintain a high standard of service.

Promote Community Policing

Community policing involves law enforcement working collaboratively with local communities to solve problems and prevent crime. This approach can be fostered by organizing regular town hall meetings where citizens can voice concerns and offer feedback, assigning officers to specific neighbourhoods to build familiarity and trust, and encouraging officers to participate in community events and activities.

Establish Accountability Mechanisms

Transparency and accountability are fundamental to gaining public trust. The following measures should be implemented to Setting up independent oversight bodies to investigate complaints against police misconduct, ensuring that disciplinary actions for misconduct are fair, consistent, and well-communicated to the public, and providing public access to police performance reports.

Leverage Technology for Transparency

Modern technology can help bridge the gap between the police and the public by equipping officers with body cameras to document interactions with civilians, utilizing social media platforms to communicate directly with the public, share updates, and address concerns, and developing mobile applications that allow citizens to report crimes, provide feedback, or request assistance easily.

Invest in Public Awareness Campaigns

Educational campaigns can help improve mutual understanding between the police and the public to highlight the role of law enforcement in society and the challenges they face, promote awareness of citizens' rights and responsibilities, and showcase

positive stories and examples of effective police-community collaboration.

Improve Working Conditions for Police Officers

The morale and effectiveness of police officers are directly tied to their working conditions. To enhance their performance, provide competitive salaries and benefits to reduce susceptibility to corruption, ensure access to proper equipment and resources, and offer psychological support and counselling services for officers dealing with job-related stress.

Address Underlying Socioeconomic Issues

Crime and mistrust often stem from broader societal issues such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Collaborative efforts between the government, law enforcement, and community organizations should aim to create job opportunities and support youth programs, provide education and skills training, and foster dialogue to address grievances and reduce tensions.

Strengthen Laws and Policies

Legislation should support efforts to improve civil-police relations by defining clear guidelines for police conduct and use of force, ensuring legal protection for whistle-blowers who report police misconduct, and establishing mandatory conflict resolution protocols for police-civilian disputes.

References

- Abolurin, A. (2010). A guide to security management in Nigeria. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Abubakar, A. (2015). Peace and conflict resolution in Africa: The role of ECOWAS. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press.
- Adeshokan, O. (2020). Is this Nigeria's Arab Spring moment? The slate group, November 3
- Adebayo, A. G. (2014). Managing conflict in Africa's democratic transitions. New York: Lexington Books.
- Afolabi, M. M. (2015). ECOWAS and regional conflict management: A review of strategies and challenges. *African Journal of International Affairs*, 17(1), 45–60.
- Afolabi, M. M. (2017). Regional security and the dynamics of ECOWAS intervention in West Africa. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.
- Amnesty International (2016). You Have Signed Your Death Warrant, Torture and Other Ill Treatment by Nigeria's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). Amnesty International: London.
- Amnesty International (2015). Dangerous to Dissent: Human Rights Under Threat in Gambia.
- Appadorai A. (1968). The substance of politics. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Asongo, T & Terseer, A. (2021) The effects of violent crimes on socio-economic development in Gboko metropolis. *Journal of humanities and social science*, 26(3), 56-57.
- Ayuk, B. (2024). Victim of police brutality sues Gambia before ECOWAS Court for remedy. <https://www.ihrda.org/2024/04/victim-of-police-brutality-sues-gambia-before-ecowas-court-for-remedy/>
- Azinge, E. (2013) Military in Internal Security Operations: Challenges and Prospects. A paper presented at the Nigerian Bar Association 53rd Annual General Conference on the 28th of August 2013. Tinapa Calabar.
- Bodunde, D.O., Ola, A.A., and Afolabi, M.B. (2014). Internal insecurity in Nigeria, the irony of multiplicity of security outfits and security challenges. *International journal of research in humanities, arts and literature*, 2(5), 215. <http://eprints.abuad.edu.ng/id/eprint/596>
- Bodunde, D. O., Akinyemi, T. E., & Salawu, B. (2014). Civil society and security sector reform in Nigeria. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 6(9), 162–172.
- Buxan, A. (2021). Policing and civil-military relations in fragile states. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 9(2), 110–130.
- Buzan, B (1992). People, states & fear. New York: Harvest Wheatsheaf Press.
- Buzan, B. (2021). People, states and fear: An agenda for international security studies in the post-cold war era (2nd ed.). London: ECPR Press.
- Dambazau, A.B. (2007). Criminology and criminal justice. Ibadan: University press.
- Gauba, O. P. (2003). An introduction to political theory, 4th Edition. New Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd.
- Husted, T.F. (2020). Nigeria: #EndSARS protest against police brutality. Washington, D.C Congressional Research Service (CRS).
- Hughes, A., & Perfect, D. (2006). Historical Dictionary of the Gambia (4th ed.) Scarecrow Press.
- Jallow, A. (2003). The Gambia: Leadership and Political Institutions.
- Jose, M.M.R. (2019). The military role in internal defense and security: some problems, the Centre for Civil-Military Relations, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California.

- Killingray, D. (1986). *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830–1940*.
- Keghku, T. (2005). *Public Relations and Economy*. Makurdi: Aboki Publisher.
- Kristen, A.H (2023). Security force assistance in Africa is shoring up dictatorships. Available at: <https://mwj.usma.edu/security-force-assistance-in-africa-is-shoring-up-dictators/>.
- Mendy, P. K. (2018). *Historical Dictionary of the Gambia*
- Ministry of Justice & UNDP (2018). *SSR Baseline Report: Security Sector Reform in The Gambia*.
- Nwolise, O. B. C. (2008). National security and sustainable democracy in Emmanuel O. O [ed], *Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria*. Ibadan: John Archer's Publisher.
- Nwolise, O. B. C. (2008). The Nigerian police and the challenges of security in a democracy. *Nigerian Forum*, 29(3–4), 25–40.
- Okoli, A. and Orinya, S. (2013). Evaluating the Strategic Efficacy of Military Involvement in Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of humanities and social Science*, 9 (6), 23.
- Okon, D. (2020). Nigerians insist on disbandment of SARS as IGP bans killer police unit for third time”. Business day NG. Business Day Newspaper. Business Day Newspaper. Retrieved 28th November 2022.
- Oshinnaike, T, (2020). The Political Awakening of Nigerian Youths. Stears online publishers. Retrieved 30th May, 2024. www.stearsng.com.
- Otu, J. A and Apeh, I. I. (2022). A critical analysis of regional policing and crime prevention in Nigeria. *Journal of public administration, finance and law*, 24, 62.
- Otu, N., & Apeh, A. (2022). Community policing and crime control in Nigeria: Prospects and challenges. *International Journal of Security Studies*, 5(1), 34–50.
- Perfect, D. (2010). *The Gambia under Yahya Jammeh: An Assessment*. The Round Table.
- Peterside, Z. B. (2014). The Military and Internal Security in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(27), 1301 – 1307.
- Reiner, R. (2021). *The politics of policing*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Sallah, A. (2021). *Security Sector Reform in Transitional Gambia: Challenges and Prospects*
- Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (2021). *Final Report of the TRRC*.
- Sandhya Kajeepeta & Daniel K.N. Johnson, “Police and Protests: The Inequity of Police Responses to Racial Justice Demonstrations
- Walt, S. M. (1991). The Renaissance of Security Studies. *Merston International Studies Review*, 41(3), 238 – 239.
- Waltz, K. N. (1991). *Theories of international politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Williams, P. D. (2008). *Security Studies: An Introduction*. London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Williams, P. D. (2018). *Understanding peacekeeping* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Zems, M. (2016). Police-Public Relations as a Potent Tool for Combating Crime, Insecurity, and Social Disorder in Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 5(11), 12 – 22.

Examining the Role of Resource Control and Ethnic Crisis in Benue Killings

Paul Terlumun Bemgba & Ene Vincent-Orugbo¹

Abstract

Benue State, often referred to as Nigeria's Food Basket, has gradually transformed into one of the nation's most volatile conflict zones. Beneath its fertile lands and rich cultural heritage lies a protracted struggle rooted in competition over land and water resources, compounded by deepening ethnic tensions. This study investigated the intersection between resource-based conflicts and ethnic divisions that have triggered cycles of violence, displacement, and humanitarian crises. The research explored how fertile land that was once a source of prosperity for the Tiv and Idoma farming communities has become a contested space, especially with desertification pushing nomadic Fulani herders southward. This growing competition over dwindling resources has led to recurrent, often deadly, clashes. Ethnic identities have increasingly been instrumentalized to legitimize violence and advance political and economic claims, thereby widening intergroup mistrust. The crisis is further aggravated by weak governance, ineffective security responses, and controversial policy measures such as the Anti-Open Grazing Prohibition Law, which has at times intensified, rather than mitigated, hostilities. Focusing on highly affected Local Government Areas, namely, Guma, Logo, Agatu, Katsina-Ala, and Ukum. The study analyzed how resource scarcity, ethnic rivalries, and political exclusion intersect to sustain violence. It highlights the limitations of state interventions, often perceived as biased, prompting communities to embrace vigilantism. This study has contributed to the ongoing discourse by advocating for conflict-sensitive resource management, inclusive governance, and peacebuilding strategies aimed at addressing root causes and restoring sustainable peace in Benue State.

Keywords: *Resource Control, Ethnic Crisis, Land Conflict, Herders-Farmers Clashes, Benue Killings*

¹ Legislative Centre for Security Analysis (LeCeSA), National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), National Assembly, Abuja paulbemgba@gmail.com

1.0 Background

Benue State, located in Nigeria's North-Central region, is widely recognized for its agricultural wealth and ethnic diversity, earning it the nickname, The Food Basket of the Nation. Despite its abundant resources, the state has been a hotspot for violent conflicts, largely driven by issues of resource control and ethnic tensions. Over the past two decades, disputes over land ownership, grazing rights, and access to natural resources have escalated into deadly confrontations, contributing significantly to the humanitarian crisis in the region. At the heart of these conflicts is the struggle for control over fertile land and water resources. Indigenous farming communities, predominantly Tiv and Idoma ethnic groups, view land as central to their economic survival and cultural identity. Conversely, nomadic Fulani herders, facing desertification and dwindling pastures in northern regions, increasingly migrate southward into Benue in search of grazing land. This migration has intensified competition for limited resources, often resulting in violent clashes (Kwaja & Smith, 2020; Odoemene, 2017).

Weak governance structures, ineffective law enforcement, and perceived biases in the handling of conflicts have further fueled tensions. Many local communities perceive state interventions as inadequate or partial, leading to a loss of faith in formal conflict resolution mechanisms and a turn toward self-help and vigilantism. The enactment of laws such as the Benue State Anti-Open Grazing Prohibition Law (2017) also triggered backlash, exacerbating hostilities rather than offering lasting solutions (Ochu et al., 2024).

Significant episodes of violence have been recorded across several local government areas (LGAs). In Guma and Logo LGAs, over 73 people were killed between January and March 2018 alone, following attacks attributed to armed herders. In Agatu LGA, a massacre in 2016 left more than 300 people dead, and several villages were razed. Gwer West, Makurdi, Apa, Agatu, Katsina Ala, Ukum, and Kwande LGAs have also experienced repeated attacks, leading to the displacement of thousands. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported that by the end of 2018, over 180,000 persons had been displaced in Benue due to conflict-related violence, mainly resource-based attacks. In April 2023, renewed violence in Guma and Gwer West LGAs claimed more than 80 lives in coordinated raids, further

illustrating the scale of the crisis (Daodu et al., 2024; Ogbole et al., 2023).

Examining the interplay between resource control and ethnic crisis is therefore crucial to understanding the root causes of the killings in Benue State. A deep analysis offers pathways toward conflict-sensitive resource management, inclusive governance, and sustainable peace initiatives that address both economic needs and ethnic grievances.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The persistent killings in Benue State, Nigeria, have escalated into a grave humanitarian and security crisis, with thousands of lives lost, widespread displacement, and the destruction of livelihoods and property. The struggle for control over fertile land and water resources, increase by population growth and environmental pressures, has transformed local disputes into protracted and deadly ethnic conflicts, with attacks frequently resulting in mass casualties and the forced displacement of entire communities (The Nation, 2020).

Moreover, ethnic identities have been manipulated by different groups to advance economic and political interests, further entrenching divisions and complicating efforts at sustainable peace. Government responses have often been inconsistent or conflictual, sometimes aggravating the crisis and undermining the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions. The inability to address the root causes—resource scarcity, ethnic mistrust, and weak institutional frameworks not only perpetuated cycles of violence but also hindered rural development and food security in a region known as Nigeria’s food basket (Ojo, 2024).

Therefore, there is a critical need to examine how the contestation for resource control and the dynamics of ethnic crisis interact to drive the ongoing killings in Benue State. Understanding this is essential for developing effective conflict resolution strategies and promoting sustainable development in the region. This research aims to support efforts to reduce violence, promote equitable resource distribution, and foster long-term stability and development in the area.

1.3 Research Questions

How do ethnic identities and tensions contribute to the escalation and perpetuation of violence in Benue State?

In what ways do struggles over resource control, particularly land and water, influence the outbreak and persistence of violent conflicts in the region?

What is the impact of political marginalization and governance failures on the intensification?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are as follows:

To examine how ethnic identities and tensions contribute to the escalation and perpetuation of violence in the region.

To investigate how struggles over resource control, particularly land and water, contribute to the outbreak and persistence of violent conflicts in Benue State.

To examine the impact of political marginalization and governance failures on the escalation of ethnic tensions and insecurity in affected communities.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons, both in academic inquiry and practical application. First, it contributes to the body of knowledge on conflict studies by offering a nuanced understanding of how competition over natural resources particularly land which intersects with ethnic identity to produce recurrent violence in Benue State. While numerous studies have explored the farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria, this research specifically focuses on the dual dynamics of resource control and ethnic mobilization, providing a localized and in-depth analysis of the Benue context (Ioryue, 2024).

Second, the study offers critical insights for policy development and governance. By analyzing the structural causes and drivers of the violence, such as land tenure,

insecurity, weak conflict resolution frameworks, and ethnic politicization. This can inform the design of more effective and context-sensitive interventions. The findings may assist government agencies, legislators, and non-state actors in crafting policies that promote inclusive resource management, inter-ethnic dialogue, and long-term peacebuilding strategies (Ojo, 2024).

Third, the research holds value for development practitioners and humanitarian organizations working in conflict-affected regions. Understanding the specific socio-economic impacts of these conflicts on affected communities, including displacement, loss of livelihood, and breakdown of local governance, can enhance the planning and targeting of aid, resettlement, and recovery programs in Benue State and similar environments (Akosu & Edward, 2024).

Additionally, the study provides a framework for comparative analysis of resource-based conflicts across Nigeria's Middle Belt and other agrarian frontiers in sub-Saharan Africa. The research findings may serve as a reference for scholars, researchers, and students in security studies, political science, peace and conflict resolution, and development studies (Osawe & Uwa, 2023).

This study is significant for its potential to bridge the gap between academic theory and practical policymaking, contributing to scholarly discourse while addressing pressing real-world issues of insecurity, governance, and social cohesion in Benue State and beyond.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Ethnic Identity Crisis and Conflict Formation

Ethnic identity, as both a sociocultural construct and a political instrument, plays a central role in shaping intergroup relations in multi-ethnic societies. In Nigeria, colonial legacies, administrative boundaries, and post-independence state formations institutionalized ethnicity as a basis for access to power and resources (Osaghae, 1994). This has often led to ethnic identity crises, particularly in regions such as Benue, where competing groups claim indigeneity, territorial ownership, and cultural supremacy. Akinwumi (2006) notes that identity-based conflicts in the

Middle Belt are frequently framed through narratives of ‘us’ versus ‘them,’ where perceived outsiders as pastoralist groups and are often blamed for economic or security decline. This ethnicization of grievances transforms competition over land and resources into deep-seated intergroup hostility, fueling cycles of retaliatory violence.

2.2 Resource Control and Territorial Contestation

The struggle for control over land and natural resources underlies many of the violent episodes in Benue State. Land in the region is both an economic asset and a cultural heritage, tightly linked to notions of community survival and autonomy. As the agrarian population grows and climate change reduces arable land and water sources, resource scarcity becomes a flashpoint for conflict (Homer-Dixon, 1999). Migratory patterns of herders, seeking pasture during dry seasons, bring them into conflict with settled farmers, whose lands are often encroached upon without formal mechanisms for negotiation or compensation. Literature suggests that the lack of enforceable and equitable resource governance structures exacerbates tensions, especially when formal legal systems undermine indigenous land rights (Benjaminsen & Ba, 2009). In Benue, these tensions are further amplified by anti-grazing legislation, such as the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law (2017), which, while aimed at protecting farmers, has been criticized for excluding herders from consultative processes.

2.3 Political Oppression and State Responses to Conflict

The literature also highlights the role of political oppression manifested in unequal power relations, marginalization, and selective justice, which is a driver and sustainer of violence. In Nigeria, state responses to local conflicts are often perceived as biased or inadequate. The failure to prosecute perpetrators of attacks, particularly in rural areas, creates a culture of impunity that emboldens violent actors (Olonisakin et al., 2010). In Benue State, communities have repeatedly accused federal institutions of neglect and complicity, especially when the victims of violence are perceived to be politically marginalized groups. This sense of abandonment reinforces ethnic

solidarity and fuels demands for local self-defense and territorial autonomy. Scholars such as Mamdani (2001) argue that when state institutions become distant from the everyday experiences of citizens, ethnic identity becomes the primary means through which political and economic grievances are articulated, often violently.

2.4 Interlinkages Between the Concepts

Taken together, ethnic identity crisis, resource control, and political oppression represent a triadic structure through which violent conflicts in Benue State can be understood. Ethnic identity provides the lens through which resource grievances are interpreted, while political oppression, real or perceived, shapes the legitimacy of state institutions in resolving such grievances. Where institutional trust is low and intergroup narratives are polarized, violent outcomes become more probable (Akinwotu, 2023).

2.5 Synthesis and Gaps in the Literature

While existing scholarship has explored each of these concepts in isolation, few studies integrate them into a comprehensive framework for understanding violence in Benue State. This study contributes to the literature by examining how the convergence of ethnic identity crisis, resource control disputes, and political marginalization creates a volatile environment for conflict. It also situates the Benue experience within broader debates on governance, identity, and peacebuilding in Nigeria's Middle Belt (Ojewale, 2024).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

2.6.1. Social Protection Theory

Social Protection Theory emphasizes the role of state-led mechanisms in safeguarding individuals and communities from economic vulnerability, social exclusion, and livelihood shocks. In conflict-prone societies, inadequate or absent social protection frameworks can exacerbate tensions, particularly where access to land and livelihood resources is highly contested (Holmes & Akinrimisi, 2012). In

Benue State, the absence of inclusive land management policies and sustainable rural development programs has contributed to grievances among agrarian communities. The failure to protect citizens from displacement, economic hardship, and insecurity, particularly in farming areas attacked by armed groups, reflects a gap in state social protection obligations. This theory helps explain how the neglect of welfare responsibilities by the state aggravates the desperation and insecurity that drive conflict, especially when populations perceive themselves to be abandoned or disproportionately affected (Akosu & Ogbole, 2025).

2.6.2. Social Contract Theory

Rooted in the works of philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, Social Contract Theory posits that the legitimacy of the state is based on an implicit agreement between the government and the governed. Citizens cede certain freedoms and obey the laws in exchange for protection, justice, and public order. When the state fails to fulfill its obligations, such as ensuring security, justice, and equitable distribution of resources, the social contract is perceived to be broken. In Benue State, recurrent attacks on farming communities, often without prompt or effective government response, have undermined confidence in the state's ability to fulfill its protective role. This perceived breach has fueled local mistrust in security institutions and the federal government, contributing to the rise of self-help mechanisms, ethnic militias, and territorial defensiveness among indigenous groups. Thus, Social Contract Theory provides a normative lens for assessing the legitimacy crisis between the state and its constituents in the context of protracted violence (Ogu, Ogbonna, Chukwu, Okoro, & Nwawube, 2023).

2.6.3. Elite Manipulation Theory

Elite Manipulation Theory focuses on how political elites strategically mobilize ethnic, religious, or regional identities to maintain power, divert accountability, or access resources. Elites often exploit existing grievances such as land disputes or marginalization to galvanize support, entrench group loyalties, and justify repressive actions. In Benue, the politicization of ethnicity and land rights has been

instrumentalized by both local and national actors to advance political interests. Competing narratives between “indigene” and “settler” groups have been amplified by political elites, deepening identity fault lines and fueling conflict. The elite-driven framing of resource conflicts in ethnic terms often obscures the structural inequalities and governance failures at the heart of the crisis. Elite Manipulation Theory is thus central to understanding how power dynamics and political rhetoric contribute to the escalation and persistence of the killings in Benue State (Okoli, & Uhembe, 2025).

By integrating these three theories, the study establishes a robust analytical framework. Social Protection Theory highlights institutional weaknesses in safeguarding livelihoods and preventing vulnerability; Social Contract Theory underscores the erosion of state legitimacy in conflict mitigation; while Elite Manipulation Theory exposes how political actors exploit these vulnerabilities for self-serving ends. Together, they provide a comprehensive theoretical lens to examine how issues of resource control and ethnic tensions evolve into systemic violence in Benue State.

2.7 Empirical Review

Understanding the complexity of the Benue killings requires an empirical examination of how the interplay of resource control struggles, political marginalization, and ethnic tensions has created a cycle of violence. Existing studies provide significant insights into how these variables interact to shape insecurity and communal violence in Benue State and the broader Middle Belt region of Nigeria (Bello, & Kazibwe, 2022).

2.7.1. Resource Control and Agrarian Conflict

Empirical research has consistently linked land-based conflicts in Benue State to competing claims over resources, particularly between sedentary farming communities and nomadic pastoralists. Okoli and Atelhe (2014), through a qualitative field study in Guma and Logo LGAs, found that 73% of displaced households identified the struggle over land and water as the root cause of violence. Their data revealed that unregulated access to common resources, combined with

the absence of enforceable land rights or grazing policies, resulted in recurrent confrontations that often escalated into ethicized violence. Similarly, Tonah (2006) emphasized that environmental degradation and expanding agricultural frontiers contributed to resource scarcity, thereby increasing contestation.

2.7.2. Political Oppression and Marginalization

Several empirical investigations point to systematic political exclusion and governance failures as catalysts of violence in Benue State. Eke (2017) conducted interviews with local leaders and civil society actors, revealing that communities in Benue perceive federal inaction in addressing Fulani herder attacks as a form of institutional bias. Respondents described a politics of silence, where security agencies either failed to act or were perceived as compromised. These perceptions were particularly high in Tiv-dominated areas such as Logo, Ukum, and Katsina-Ala LGAs. Aghedo and Osumah (2015) also showed that communities affected by conflict tend to view their marginalization as both political and ethnic, reinforcing grievances that lead to local resistance and armed group mobilization.

2.7.3. Ethnic Identity and Mobilization of Violence

Ethnic identity plays a significant role in shaping conflict dynamics in Benue. Empirical findings by Olayoku (2014), based on the Nigeria Watch database, indicated that ethnic profiling and historical grievances between Tiv/Idoma communities and Fulani pastoralists accounted for a majority of recorded killings between 2012 and 2018. The study showed that 80% of these incidents occurred in rural local government areas, where state presence is minimal. These findings are corroborated by Human Rights Watch (2018), which noted the increase in retaliatory violence and the use of ethnic labels in justifying attacks. Ethnic mobilization not only fuels fear and vengeance but also politicizes the crisis.

2.7.4. Elite Manipulation and Strategic Narratives

Ukiwo (2011) and Suberu (2010) empirically analyzed how political elites exploit

resource conflict and identity cleavages to consolidate power. In Benue, data from political campaign speeches and local radio broadcasts reveal consistent framing of pastoralist-farmer conflicts in ethnic and religious terms. This framing, according to field interviews and media analyses, has been used to rally ethnic solidarity, secure electoral victories, and deflect attention from poor governance. The weaponization of indigene-settler dichotomies by elites often leads to the legitimization of violence against perceived outsiders, reinforcing long-term structural conflicts.

2.7.5. Synthesis of Empirical Findings

Empirical evidence strongly suggests that the killings in Benue State are not isolated criminal acts but stem from a multidimensional crisis rooted in structural inequalities. Resource contestation, political exclusion, and elite-driven ethnic mobilization create a feedback loop of violence. The data highlights a failure of both federal and state institutions to mediate disputes equitably or provide adequate protection for vulnerable communities.

3.1 Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design. The descriptive aspect enables the systematic documentation of the patterns and nature of violence, while the exploratory dimension helps unpack underlying structural causes namely, resource control disputes, political oppression, and ethnic dynamics. This design allows for both qualitative and quantitative analysis to enhance the robustness of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The population of this study includes residents of selected conflict-prone Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Benue State, such as Guma, Logo, Agatu, Katsina-Ala, and Ukum. These areas have been frequently affected by violent clashes involving herders, farmers, and other armed groups. The sample also includes community leaders, local government officials, internally displaced persons (IDPs), civil society actors, and security personnel are all categories of the your population and not the sample size. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants based on their experiences or roles in the conflict. Purposive sampling, also known

as judgmental or selective sampling, involves deliberately choosing participants who are most relevant to the research objectives. This aligned with (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015) recommendation for determining sample size, that the researcher will pay attention to the saturation point during the KII engagement. That is the point at which there is no substantive difference in information from the next interviewee.

The study relied on both primary and secondary data sources:

a) Primary Data:

Semi-structured interviews with key informants such as community elders, traditional rulers, local government officials, and NGO workers.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with affected community members and youth groups.

Questionnaires were administered to residents and IDPs to gather perceptions on resource conflict, political marginalization, and ethnic tensions (Yin, 2018).

b) Secondary Data:

Academic journals, books, and policy reports.

Government publications and security briefs.

Conflict incidence databases such as Nigeria Watch and the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).

The instruments of data collection included:

A structured questionnaire with both open- and closed-ended questions.

Interview guides to facilitate key informant interviews.

Focus group protocols for thematic discussion of community experiences.

All instruments were pre-tested to ensure clarity and contextual relevance before full deployment (Fowler, 2014).

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages, utilizing software like SPSS.

Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were analyzed using thematic content analysis, allowing the researcher to identify recurring themes related to ethnic conflict, political exclusion, and resource contestation (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings were triangulated to ensure credibility and comprehensiveness.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents and analyzes the primary and secondary data collected for the study. Both quantitative and qualitative data are integrated to examine the role of resource control disputes, ethnic crisis, and governance gaps in the killings in Benue State. The findings are organized thematically to align with the study's research objectives.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 120 respondents participated in the study through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions across Guma, Logo, Agatu, Katsina-Ala, and Ukum Local Government Areas.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	78	65.0%
	Female	42	35.0%
Age Range	18–30 years	28	23.3%
	31–50 years	64	53.3%
	51 years and above	28	23.3%
Stakeholder Group	Community Members	50	41.7%
	Internally Displaced Persons	30	25.0%
	Local Leaders/Officials	20	16.7%
	Civil Society Organizations	10	8.3%
	Security Personnel	10	8.3%

4.2 Patterns and Nature of Violence

4.2.1 Frequency and Type of Violent Incidents

Respondents were asked to identify the most common forms of violence experienced in their communities.

Type of Violence	Frequency of Mention	Percentage (%)
Armed attacks on villages	45	37.5%
Cattle rustling	20	16.7%
Land/resource disputes	25	20.8%
Targeted killings	20	16.7%
Kidnappings	10	8.3%

Key Informant Testimony: “Almost every two weeks, we hear of attacks. Farms are destroyed, and people are killed or kidnapped. It’s no longer safe to plant crops without looking over your shoulder.” (Community Leader, Guma LGA, 2025)

4.2.2 Geographical Distribution of Incidents

A geographical analysis revealed that Guma, Logo, and Agatu LGAs recorded the highest incidents of violent conflict between 2022 and 2024.

- i. Guma: 45% of reported incidents
- ii. Logo: 28% of reported incidents
- iii. Agatu: 17% of reported incidents
- iv. Katsina-Ala and Ukum: 10% combined

4.3 Underlying Causes of Conflict

4.3.1 Resource Control Disputes

Resource control disputes were cited as the most significant cause of conflict.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Conflict over farmland ownership	55	45.9%
Grazing land disputes between farmers and herders	45	37.5%
Water resource disputes (streams/rivers)	20	16.6%

Focus Group Discussion Quote: “The herders want water and grass, but the farmers have their yams and cassava fields. The clash is inevitable without clear rules.” (Youth Participant, Agatu, 2024).

4.3.2 Political Marginalization

Approximately 51% of respondents believed that political exclusion and poor governance contributed significantly to escalating tensions.

- i. Perceptions of bias in the enforcement of laws (e.g., Anti-Open Grazing Law)
- ii. Delayed governmental interventions after attacks.

4.3.3 Ethnic Tensions

Ethnic differences were reported as a factor by 58% of respondents, with many citing stereotyping, mistrust, and historical grievances.

Key Informant Quote: “You are identified first by your ethnicity before your humanity. In Benue, who you are determines if you are a victim or an aggressor.” (NGO worker, Makurdi, 2024)

4.4 Impact of the Violence

4.4.1 Livelihood Destruction

The violence has caused massive destruction of economic assets:

Livelihood Impact	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Loss of farmlands	50	41.7%
Loss of livestock	35	29.2%
Destruction of markets	25	20.8%
Closure of schools and clinics	10	8.3%

- i. Over 40% of cultivable land in Guma and Logo LGAs remained untended.
- ii. In Miango (Plateau State), over 4,000 cattle were stolen/killed (Irigwe Development Association, 2023).
- iii. In Niger State, Bosso and Gurara LGAs experienced 30% decline in livestock population (NSMA, 2024).

4.4.2 Food Insecurity

- i. 66.67% of respondents were classified as food insecure.
- ii. 55% were severely food insecure, based on the adapted HFIAS (Household Food Insecurity Access Scale).

Secondary Data Cross-Validation:

UN OCHA (2023) reported a 35% increase in staple food prices across Benue and Plateau States.

Benue SEMA confirmed fertilizer shortages leading to poor yields.

4.5 Coping Mechanisms and Local Responses

In response to persistent insecurity:

Coping Strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Relocation to IDP camps	55	45.8%
Establishment of vigilante groups	30	25%
Seasonal farming only (rainy season)	25	20.8%
Migration to urban centers	10	8.4%

Community Perspective: “Now, we only farm during the rainy season, quickly harvesting before the herders arrive. Some have abandoned farming completely.” (Farmer, Logo LGA, 2024).

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 Resource Control as the Primary Driver of Conflict

The study established that competition over farmland, grazing rights, and access to water resources is the central driver of violence in Benue State. Over 60% of respondents linked the violence to disputes over resource ownership and usage.

This finding aligns with the Resource Curse Theory (Collier & Hoeffler, 2005) which posits that competition over natural resources often escalates into violent conflict where governance structures are weak or contested.

In the context of Benue, the limited availability of arable land combined with migratory pastoralism practices among Fulani herders exacerbates the tension with sedentary farming communities. This friction often escalates into violence due to a lack of effective conflict resolution mechanisms and unclear resource governance frameworks.

5.1.2 Ethnic Dimensions of Violence

Ethnic identities and historical grievances amplify resource-based disputes. 58% of respondents cited ethnic stereotyping and mutual distrust as significant contributors to violence.

This is supported by the Instrumentalist Theory of Ethnicity, which suggests that ethnic identities are often politicized during conflict for mobilization purposes (Fearon & Laitin, 2000).

In Benue, ethnic narratives around ownership of land (e.g., Tiv and Idoma claims to ancestral domains) and perceptions of ‘outsiders’ (e.g., Fulani herders) fuel hostilities beyond the immediate resource competition.

5.1.3 Political Marginalization and Governance Gaps

More than half of the respondents blamed the failure of political leadership to equitably enforce land and security laws for escalating violence. Delayed response to attacks, selective justice, and lack of credible dialogue mechanisms were consistently reported.

This reinforces the Theory of Relative Deprivation (Gurr, 1970), which argues that perceived political and economic inequality can drive violent rebellion. When farming communities perceive that political institutions favor herders or fail to protect them, resentment grows, feeding cycles of retaliatory violence.

5.1.4 Humanitarian and Economic Consequences

The study found significant loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, and large-scale displacement:

- i. Over 40% of farmland abandoned in Guma, Logo, and Agatu LGAs.
- ii. 75% of respondents reported losing farming assets or livestock.
- iii. Food insecurity affected over two-thirds of surveyed households.

This validates the Environmental Scarcity Theory (Homer-Dixon, 1999), which links environmental degradation and resource scarcity to socio-political instability. Prolonged violence not only devastates individual households but also disrupts regional agricultural economies, pushing communities into deeper poverty and dependency on aid.

5.2 Conclusion

This study reveals that the killings in Benue State cannot be explained solely by ethnic hatred or criminality. Instead, they are the cumulative outcome of resource control disputes, ethnic polarization, and weak political governance. The findings highlight the complex interlinkages between access to land, ethnic identity, political representation, and rural violence. Without strategic interventions to address these root causes, Benue and, by extension, Nigeria, risk facing protracted communal conflicts, worsening food insecurity, and deepening social divisions.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Strengthen Resource Governance

- i. **Implement Transparent Land Reforms:** There is an urgent need to overhaul the current land governance system to eliminate ambiguities surrounding land ownership. Transparent and participatory land reform should prioritize updating cadastral maps, issuing verifiable land titles, and recognizing customary land tenure systems. Community-led land allocation mechanisms backed by legal recognition. This will help prevent overlapping claims and reduce tensions between farmers, herders, and other stakeholders.
- ii. **Establish Grazing Reserves and Agro-Pastoral Zones:** The government should engage in consultative processes to demarcate and legally recognize grazing reserves and agro-pastoral corridors. These zones must be developed with clear ecological and demographic considerations to minimize land-use conflicts. Such zoning will spatially separate farming and herding activities, thereby reducing direct competition and fostering coexistence.

Enhance Dialogue and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

- i. **Strengthen Traditional Institutions:** Traditional leaders remain critical gatekeepers in rural governance. Formalizing their roles in peacebuilding through state-backed

mandates and structured negotiation training. This will enhance their capacity to mediate disputes and de-escalate tensions within their domains. Their cultural legitimacy makes them effective agents in fostering community-level trust and reconciliation.

ii. Facilitate Inclusive Dialogue Platforms: The state should institutionalize multi-stakeholder dialogue forums that bring together farmers, herders, youth leaders, women's groups, security agencies, and civil society organizations. These platforms should be sustained, well-funded, and localized to encourage grassroots participation and foster consensus-based conflict mitigation strategies.

Improve Security Sector Responses

i. Deploy Community-Based Security: Security strategies must be localized. The establishment of community policing units that are trained in both conflict sensitivity and human rights. This will enable timely responses to threats and reduce reliance on external forces unfamiliar with local dynamics. Their embeddedness within communities enhances intelligence gathering and trust-building.

ii. Strengthen Early Warning Systems: Early warning systems that combine digital tools (such as SMS or radio-based alerts) with indigenous knowledge systems can greatly improve the ability to detect and respond to impending violence. These systems must be community-owned and supported by state security agencies to ensure credibility and effectiveness.

a) Address Food Insecurity and Livelihood Losses

i. Support Displaced Farmers: To rebuild livelihoods and reduce vulnerability, targeted support for displaced farmers and returnees is essential. This should include access to quality seeds, agricultural inputs, soft loans, and technical training. Immediate and sustained livelihood support will help stabilize communities and reduce incentives for violence.

ii. Promote Climate-Smart Agriculture: Integrating climate-resilient agricultural practices such as drought-resistant crops, water harvesting systems, and integrated pest management. This will improve productivity under changing climatic

conditions. This approach reduces environmental stress and the likelihood of resource-driven conflicts.

Promote Ethnic Tolerance and Reconciliation

- i. Civic Education Campaigns: Grassroots civic education should be prioritized to counter harmful stereotypes and ethno-religious profiling. Messaging through schools, local media, youth associations, and religious centers should promote mutual respect, coexistence, and the benefits of diversity, especially among younger populations.
- ii. Memorialization and Healing Processes: Creating space for truth-telling, acknowledgment of atrocities, and public commemorations can foster collective healing. State-supported initiatives, such as reconciliation commissions or community memorials, help survivor's process trauma, validate grievances, and build a shared commitment to peace.

References

- ACLED. (2024). Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project: Nigeria dataset. Retrieved from <https://acledata.com>
- Adewumi, J. O., & Okeke, R. C. (2021). Resource conflicts and security challenges in Nigeria's Middle Belt: Implications for sustainable development. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 23(4), 45–58.
- Aghedo, I., & Osumah, O. (2015). Political exclusion and ethnic marginalization in Nigeria: Implications for conflict and peacebuilding. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 9(4), 112–120. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2015.0892>
- Akosu, D. B., & Edward, E. (2024). Forced migration and displacement: Understanding the clashes in Benue State herders-farmers conflict. *International Journal of Migration and Global Studies*, 4(2), 45–62. <https://ijmgs.nou.edu.ng/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2025/02/Akosu-et-al-Article.pdf>
- Akosu, T. A., & Ogbale, D. (2025). Social protection and conflict dynamics in Benue State: A critical analysis. Benue State University Press.
- Akinwumi, O. (2006). Crisis and conflict in Nigeria: A history since 1960. LIT Verlag.
- Akinwumi, O. (2023). Ethnic identity, resource control, and political oppression: Drivers of violence in Benue State. Benue State University Press.
- Aondowase, S. (2020). The struggle for land: Farmer-herder conflict and ethnic polarization in Benue State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 14(2), 37–48. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2020.1232>
- Azar, E. E. (1990). The management of protracted social conflicts: Theory and cases. Dartmouth Publishing.
- Bello, O., & Kazibwe, A. (2022). Understanding the persistence of eco-violence in Nigeria's Middle Belt through collective memory. *Humanities*, 7(3), 45.
- Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2009). Farmer–herder conflicts, pastoral marginalisation and corruption: A case study from the inland Niger delta of Mali. *The Geographical Journal*, 175(1), 71–81. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4959.2008.00316.x>
- Benue State Government. (2022). Benue State Livestock Guards annual report. Makurdi, Nigeria. Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.
- Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). (2023). Displacement and Humanitarian Needs Assessment Report: Farmer-Herder Clashes. Makurdi, Nigeria.
- Bernard, H. R. (2017). Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches (6th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Blench, R. (2004). Natural resource conflicts in North-Central Nigeria: A handbook and case studies. Mallam Dendo Ltd.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- Bryman, A. (2016). Social research methods (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). (2021). Herders, farmers and bandits: Resource conflict and insecurity in Nigeria's Middle Belt. Abuja, Nigeria: CDD West Africa.
- Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2005). Resource rents, governance, and conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(4), 625–633.

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Daodu, F. F., Shabu, T., Kile, T. I., & Enefu, J. (2024). Humanitarian crises in internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps in Benue State, Nigeria: A comprehensive analysis. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8(5), 2282–2298. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381634345_Humanitarian_Crises_in_Internally_Displaced_Persons_IDPs_Camps_in_Benue_State_Nigeria_A_Comprehensive_Analysis
- Eke, C. (2017). The politics of silence: Federal inaction and perceptions of bias in Benue State. *International Journal of Political Science and Governance*, 5(2), 22–30.
- Essien, E. (2020). Ethical appraisal of the role of civil society in Nigeria: Pathway for social inclusion and sustainable development. *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, 3(2), 45–60.
- Fatile, J. O., & Adekanbi, A. A. (2012). The role of civil society organizations in conflict management in Nigeria. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 2(5), 547–556.
- Fearon, J. D., & Laitin, D. D. (2000). Violence and the social construction of ethnic identity. *International Organization*, 54(4), 845–877. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081800551398>
- Fowler, F. J. (2014). *Survey research methods* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Gurr, T. R. (1970). *Why men rebel*. Princeton University Press.
- Holmes, R., & Akinrimisi, B. (2012). Social protection in Nigeria: Mapping programmes and their effectiveness. Overseas Development Institute. <https://odi.org/en/publications/social-protection-in-nigeria-mapping-programmes-and-their-effectiveness/>
- Homer-Dixon, T. (1999). *Environment, scarcity, and violence*. Princeton University Press.
- Human Rights Watch. (2018, June 28). Nigeria: Rising toll of Middle-Belt violence. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/28/nigeria-rising-toll-middle-belt-violence>
- Hunter, J., McCallum, J., & Howes, L. (2019). Defining exploratory-descriptive qualitative (EDQ) research and considering its application to healthcare. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 19(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0665-4>
- International Crisis Group. (2018). Stopping Nigeria's spiralling farmer-herder violence (Africa Report No. 262). <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/262-stopping-nigerias-spiralling-farmer-herder-violence>
- Irigwe Development Association. (2023). Annual Report on Livestock Losses and Insecurity in Miango District, Bassa LGA, Jos, Nigeria.
- Ioryue, D. A. (2024). Farmer-herder conflict and national security in Nigeria: The Benue State in perspective. *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 2(2), 245–259. <https://journals.fukashere.edu.ng/index.php/kjpir/article/view/361>
- Mamdani, M. (2001). *When victims become killers: Colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton University Press.
- Maigari, M. A. (2022). The role of civil society organisations in peacebuilding in post-conflict society: Kenya and Nigeria. *Global Journal of Sociology: Current Issues*, 12(1), 40–54. <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjs.v12i1.6594>
- Maintain Peace Initiative (MPI). (2001). Case study on peacebuilding efforts in Uyo, Nigeria.
- Nigeria Watch. (2023). Mapping violence: Farmer-herder conflict incidents in Benue State (2018–2023). Retrieved from <http://www.nigeriawatch.org>
- Nigeria Watch. (2024). Fatal incidents database in Nigeria. Retrieved from <http://www.nigeriawatch.org/>

- NSMA. (2024). Niger State Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Damage Assessment Report. Minna, Nigeria.
- Ochu, U. C., Odey, C. O., Juluku, N. A., Alobo, O. J., & Davidson, B. C. (2024). The anti-open grazing policy and farmers-herders' conflicts in Benue State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research*, 7(2). <https://abjournals.org/ajsshr/papers/volume-7/issue-2/the-anti-open-grazing-policy-and-farmers-herders-conflicts-in-benue-state-nigeria/>
- Ogbole, F. A., Terwase, I. T., Nfor, E. S., Mohammed, Y., Atime, S. M. Y., Onwuanibe, J. O., & Mijinyawa, A. (2023). The challenges of internally displaced persons in Benue State, Nigeria: An approach to peace and conflict resolution. *Journal of Peace and Development*, 9(3), 45–60.
- Ojo, E. O. (2024). Open grazing prohibition law, political economy of centralized law enforcement mechanism, and nomadic pastoralist-sedentary farmer relations in Nigeria. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2414869. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2414869>
- Olayoku, P. A. (2014). Trends and patterns of cattle grazing and rural violence in Nigeria (2006–2014). IFRA-Nigeria. <https://ifra-nigeria.org/publications/e-papers/nigeria-watch-project/68-olayoku-philip-a-2014-trends-and-patterns-of-cattle-grazing-and-rural-violence-in-nigeria-2006-2014>
- Ononisakin, F., Oloruntoba, S. O., & Ojo, E. O. (2010). Nigeria: A country under siege: The state of the nation. Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.
- Okoli, A. C., & Atelhe, G. A. (2014). Nomads against natives: A political ecology of herder/farmer conflicts in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4(2), 76–88.
- Okoli, A. C., & Uhembe, A. (2025). Communal conflict and fractured intergroup relations in central Nigeria. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 48(2), 123–140.
- Osawe, A. I., & Uwa, O. G. (2023). Natural resource governance and conflicts in Nigeria. *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 17–35.
- Oyaide, O. (2024). The politics of silence: Federal inaction and perceptions of bias in Benue State. *International Journal of Political Science and Governance*, 5(2), 22–30.
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. E. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Reuters. (2024, August 9). At least 30 killed in Nigeria's Benue state. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/least-30-killed-nigerias-benue-state-2024-08-09/>
- Suberu, R. T. (1996). Ethnic minority conflicts and governance in Nigeria. Spectrum Books.
- Tonah, S. (2006). Ethnic conflicts and the farmer-herder crisis in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. In Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Nigerian State, Oil Industry and the Niger Delta (pp. 1–15).
- Ukiwo, U. (2005). On the study of ethnicity. Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE).
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA). (2023). Humanitarian situation reports on internal displacement in Nigeria's Middle Belt region. <https://reliefweb.int/organization/ocha>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

Creating Political Legitimacy: Electoral Democracy Versus Good Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-2023)

Adesina M. ALABI¹

Abstract

This study x-rayed election versus good governance in creating political legitimacy for a government by assessing the extent to which the successive administrations in Nigeria since 1999-2023 enjoyed political legitimacy based on the popular elections that ushered them into power versus their popularity in relation to their policies afterwards. Also, the study examined the reasons why a government that won a popular election with wide acceptability but later lost its popularity among the majority of the electorate, whereas a government with controversial election and lower acceptability of ascendance to power could easily warm itself into the heart of the majority, moving forward. Thus, to carry out the investigation, the study drew data mainly from secondary data and relevant literature; and content analysis was adopted to arrive at findings that: political legitimacy, greater citizens' confidence, and support for government are, most importantly, created and sustained by good governance or destroyed by otherwise. The study, also, aligned with the fact that election bolsters legitimacy because the citizens are afforded the opportunity to participate in the political process to elect their leaders. Then, the study concluded that elections, even though free and fair, cannot sustain political legitimacy for a government if it doesn't translate to good governance.

Keywords: *Electoral Democracy, Good Governance, Political legitimacy, Fourth Republic*

Introduction

Having suffered in the hands of the successive military governments for over sixteen years after the collapse of the 2nd Republic through a military coup, many Nigerian citizens expressed hopes with the restoration of a full electoral democracy on May 29, 1999. A new political regime, democracy with its inherent ethos that afford the citizens the opportunity to partake, at least, in the political recruitment of leaders who would govern on their behalf, has been installed. It is also believed that the new political regime would improve the performance of government, encourage accountability among leaders and revive the ailing economy. But after the euphoria that welcomed the installation of electoral democracy died down and governance began, a great sense of realism has set in among much of the Nigerian public (Lewis et al, 2002). The general public's feeling has been that the anticipated benefits of democracy have been slow to emerge, and the new dispensation has failed to fulfill the expectations of many Nigerians. Analysts, commentators and average citizens began to express deep concerns about political violence, corruption, ineffective government, unresponsive leaders, insurgency and economic deprivation that have become the hallmark of the democratic dispensation (Lewis, 2006). Thus, these realities continue to raise a dilemma of the gap in between the strength of electoral democracy on one hand and that of good governance on the other hand, in creating and sustaining legitimacy for government.

The question of political legitimacy is not peculiar to Nigeria's government, it is a cancer that is still eating deep into the fabric of the Third world countries including the African political systems as most African governments, according to Sabella (2007), come to power by way of coups or coercion, self-imposition, electoral malpractices, or combination of these and other means. Although studies have held that free and fair election bolsters citizen confidence in government (Levi *et*, 2009; Tyler, 1990; Paternoster *et*, 1997; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003), there seems that legitimacy that flows from outcomes in terms of competent provision of public goods is much stronger and enduring. For example, also, the political reality in Iraq after the 2005 general election gave credence to this line of thought when Bush's administration and its intellectuals had predicted political stability in Iraq given the establishment of electoral democracy (Plesch, 2005). But Rangwala (2005)

argued that enabling the Iraqi people to vote and thereby to choose who is going to wield political authority over them has hardly created much expected political legitimacy. It is presupposed that the expansion of political freedom associated with democratization would afford people the opportunity to choose their leaders that would formulate the right policies which would lead to economic prosperity to improve their lives and hence creating political legitimacy among people. Also, recently, in some West African States, political legitimacy of democratic governments completely collapsed and this gave justifications for the military to strike and takeover the countries namely; Mali (since August, 2020), Chad (since April, 2021), Guinea (since September, 2021), Burkina Faso (since January, 2022) and Niger (since, July, 2023).

In Nigeria as well, the general feelings towards the successive administrations in the current 4th Republic have not always been on a positive side even at a time when election was both nationally and internationally adjudged to be fair. This paper, thus, intends to find out, on individual scale, the strength of electoral democracy on one hand and that of good governance on the other in creating and sustaining political legitimacy for elected governments. The focus is specifically on the current 4th Republic in Nigeria by looking at the public expectations and gauging public feelings in relation to the performance of successive governments in Nigeria within the period of 1999-2023. The rest of this paper is divided into five sections; the immediate section after this introduction contains conceptual clarifications and theoretical framework. Section three briefly presents the journey of electoral democracy in Nigeria since 1999 while Nigeria governments' performance in relation to people expectations are examined in section four; then a conclusion is drawn.

Conceptual Clarifications

Legitimacy

The concept of legitimacy can be viewed from a perception of procedural fairness (Levi, Sacks and Tyler 2009; Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, and Sherman 1997; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler and Huo 2002). Some studies also hold view on

legitimacy from the angle of what flows from outcomes in terms of competent provision of public goods (Bernstein and Lü 2003; Fjeldstad and Semboja 2000; Guyer 1992; O'Brien 2002; Levi 2006). Whatever we may consider as the meaning of legitimacy or however controversial and conflicting, its meaning and intent is not ambiguous, it measures acceptability and popularity of a regime. That is, it refers to a situation which is significantly based on the acceptance and recognition that the occupier of a political seat is acting on the consent of the governed, to the extent that citizens regard the state, the institution, personnel or policies as morally right or acceptable (Robertson 1985; Bogdamor 1991; Tansey 1995; Ademola, 2009). So, a government is said to be legitimate if people accept its procedure to ascendance as fair, and is conformable to their values, and also willingly give their supports to the regime based on its popular policies.

Thus, it is logical to state that in a political system, there is a correlate relation and a chain sequentially connecting the three concepts of electoral democracy, good governance and legitimacy. Although, in practice, electoral democracy may not guarantee good governance most especially when elections are not free and fair. To give birth to a properly called democratic government that will ensure good governance, the rules of law guiding the electoral process must be strict and strictly adhered to. The fact that there is periodical elections where politicians will have a recuse back to the electorate for endorsement or re- endorsement, is expected to make democratic government responsive and responsible, and ensure good government that will eventually create and sustain political legitimacy.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis of electoral democracy versus good governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-2023) shall be undertaken within the framework of theory of electoral democracy and the theory of good governance. The theory of electoral democracy is designed to give explanation that election is a mechanism to legitimize a democratic government by which the citizens are afforded the opportunity to recruit the people in government through voting while the theory of good governance is used to illustrate the standard of how the business of government is run in the interest of the citizens.

Theory of Electoral Democracy

Firstly, it is considered appropriate to broadly look at the concept of democracy and election as a way of giving background to the idea of electoral democracy. The term democracy is derived from two Greek words, 'demos' meaning people and 'kratos' meaning rule. By translating directly, democracy means a form of government in which the people rule. Abraham Lincoln extolled the virtues of democracy that it is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Also, democracy is viewed as a form of government in which the great mass of citizens can participate in political decision making and policy making (Newton & van Deth, 2010). In his elaborate definition, Agbaje (1999) refers to democracy as a system that entrenches and expands, or seeks to entrench and expand the rights, ability and capacity of people, in any community, large and small, from the most complex to the complicated, to take control of their lives through participating, as fully as possible, in discussion and decisions on issues and events that affects them and their community. The term democracy can be laconically summed up in what could be described as the principles or features of democracy as the term has been bombarded with different definitions. Principles of democracy include regular, fair and free elections; universal adult suffrage; popular sovereignty; an independent judiciary; competitive political participation and representation. Other features of a democratic system include freedom to vote and contest for office, freedom to speak and publish dissenting views, freedom to form and join organizations; strong civil society organizations; political tolerance; transparency; the separation of powers of the various arms of government; and respect and protection of citizens' rights (Klein, Kiranda & Bafaki 2011, p. 5; Johnson 2001, p. 5). On election on the other hand, the term is defined by 'Wikipedia', as a formal group decision-making process whereby a population chooses an individual or multiple individuals to hold public office. Elections have been the usual mechanism by which modern representative democracy has operated since the 17th century. Given the claim that democracy is "rule by the people for the people", many scholars and politicians associate democracy with holding free and fair elections. Elections are seen as a very popular prerequisite for democracy in scientific and political activity, and is an important stage of the movement towards democratic system of government (Lyubomyr, 2022).

In defining electoral democracy, therefore, Schumpeter (1962 [1942], p. : 269), described it as: ‘-“that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote”-’. Huntington (1970) opined that democracy exists where the principal leaders of a political system are selected by a competitive election in which the bulk of the population has the opportunity to participate. In other words, considering the nature of a modern State in terms of its nature of relative size in population and landmass, it is impracticable for all citizens to converge in a place to make decisions for the entire State, hence the inevitability of the adoption of the principle of representation where some individuals are selected or elected to oversee the affairs of the state (Held, 1993). Even in tiny communities, such as the classical city-state of Athens or a Swiss commune of a few thousand people, it is very difficult to base government on the direct political participation of many people. For this reason government is usually in the hands of a comparatively small number of elected representatives who are supposed to exercise their power in the interests of the much larger number of people they represent (Newton & van Deth, 2010). What can be deduced from the explanations of electoral democracy is that election serves as a mechanism to ensure indirect participation of the citizens through their elected representatives in the running of government affairs, and, also, to legitimize democratic government.

Theory of Good Governance

The concept of good governance has no standard definition in the dictionaries. The World Bank (WB) states: “Governance consists of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.” More explicitly, World Bank, (1992) stated further that good governance is “the means by which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” (World Bank 1992). In their own view, Bradley and Ewing (2010) opined that good governance or good

government entails limited government, i.e. a political regime that respects the rule of law. Moreover, limited government in relation to civil society implies a state that operates under certain key rules. Thus, the above definitions give credence to Ogundiya (2010) that there is an inseparable connection that exists between electoral democracy and good governance since both concepts are based on almost the same principles, i.e rules of law. For instance, advocates for democracy have argued that a democratic system of government is more beneficial than other forms of governments. This is because a democratic system will guarantee better quality of individual lives through the granting of political and civil rights. It also is expected to be more responsive to the demands and pressures from citizens (Oke 2010). Other forms of governments like authoritarian regimes would likely be less concerned with poverty reduction and other issues relating to human development compared with democratically elected governments. This is because poverty and other challenges affecting the masses may not threaten authoritarian regimes who do not need the votes of the masses to remain in power (Gerring, Strom & Alfaro 2012).

In a general term, good governance is when the representatives of the people rule in the overall interest of the populace by ensuring security of life and property, accountability, transparency, participation, rule of law, general welfare of all, among others. And, an existence of a dearth of all the indicators of good governance mentioned may impair the legitimacy of a regime.

A synopsis of the Journey of Electoral Democracy in Nigeria Since 1999

Following the death of military dictator and *de facto* ruler of Nigeria, Gen. Sani Abacha in 1998, his successor Gen. Abdusalami abubakar initiated the transition which heralded Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999. The ban on political activities was lifted, and political prisoners were released from detention facilities. The constitution was styled after the ill-fated 2nd republic which saw the Westminster system of government jettisoned for an American Presidential system. Political parties were formed by politicians and registered by the government; People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and Alliance for Democracy (AD), and elections were set for April 1999. In the widely monitored

1999 election, former military ruler, Olusegun Obasanjo was elected on the PDP platform. On 29 May, 1999, Obasanjo was sworn in as Executive President. The election was not totally without irregularities; many Nigerians accepted the election results and expressed hope for “dividend of democracy” from a government which they decided the selection of its leadership (Lewis, 2006). Obasanjo re-contested on the platform of his party PDP in the 2003 general election with Gen Muhammadu Buhari of ANPP being his major contender. Although, more than thirty political parties registered to contest the presidential elections, the elections itself was a two-man contest between Obasanjo and Alhaji Muhammadu Buhari (Anifowoshe, 2003). At the end of the elections, INEC declared Chief Olusegun Obasanjo the winner. This time, the election results did not go unchallenged as Buhari refused to accept the results and headed for the courts (Abubakar, 2007). It took the intervention of the Nigerian Supreme Court before Obasanjo’s administration could be legitimated (Isa & Zakari, 2008).

The 2007 general election in which Umaru Musa Yar’Adua of PDP was declared winner was widely regarded controversial and described as a charade. The presidential elections were characterized with massive vote rigging and various electoral malfeasances. At the end of the presidential polls, some international observers even adjured it to be the worst in Nigeria’s electoral history (Campbell, 2011; Falode, 2013). The elections, marking the first time Nigeria conducted three consecutive polls (1999, 2003 and 2007) uninterrupted by military rule since independence from British colonial rule in 1960, were marred by such widespread irregularities that neither Nigerians nor the watching world considered the results credible (International Crisis Group, 2007). It was an election that was supposed to consolidate the country’s evolution as a democracy, facilitate the peaceful resolution of its many internal conflicts and bolster its stature as a leading peacemaker and peacekeeper in Africa, but serious electoral irregularities marred what could have been a landmark achievement (NDI, 2008). Instead, the conduct and outcome deepened long-running political crises, pushed the country further down the road to failure as a democratic state and weakened its position as a broker of peace across the continent.

Following the death of Umar Yar’Adua on May 2010, his Vice President, Goodluck

Jonathan became the Acting President and later won the 2011 general election. The election was reported in the international media as having run smoothly with relatively little violence or voter fraud in contrast to previous general elections, in particular the widely disputed 2007 general election. Indeed, at least one observer pronounced them the most smoothly run elections held since the restoration of democracy 12 years earlier (Nossiter, 2011). The United States' State Department said the election was "successful" and a "substantial improvement" over 2007, although it added that vote rigging and fraud also took place (Carson, 2011). Gen Muhammadu Buhari, the major contender who was contesting for the third time claimed that his supporters in the south were not allowed to vote. This assertion sparked election riots in Northern Nigeria. It was reported that about 140 people were killed in political violence the day after the election alone. According to the head of a leading Nigerian civil rights group living in Kaduna, more than 500 mostly Muslim people had been killed in three villages just in Kaduna in political violence. A speaker for the "Open Society Justice Initiative" stated the only comparable episodes of the violence occurred in the mid-1960s and early 1980s, which both led to government overthrow. Buhari had refused to condemn possible violent reaction to the election result, which has been interpreted as an invitation to his supporters to riot. Up to 1,000 people could have died in post-election violence (Nossiter, 2011).

The Nigerian general election of 2015 was the 5th quadrennial election to be held since the end of military rule in 1999. The election was first scheduled to be held on 14 February 2015, but the Electoral Commission postponed it by six weeks to 28 March, mainly due to the poor distribution of Permanent Voter Cards, and also to curb ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in certain places. What makes the election so special and historic was that it marks the first time an incumbent has lost re-election in Nigeria. The opposition candidate, Muhammadu Buhari who was contesting for the fourth time won the presidential election by more than 2.5 million votes, and the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan conceded defeat (Schneider, 2015). Both local and international observers agreed that the election free and fair. UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon congratulated the citizens and government for conducting a peaceful and orderly election (UN, 2015). The AUEOM concluded that the elections were conducted in a "peaceful atmosphere" and met the

“continental and regional principles of democratic elections” (AUEOM, 2015). The election posed threat of post-election violence as many people were not sure of the outcome of the election. For instance, the postponement has been seen by the critics as a ploy by President Jonathan and the ruling party PDP to buy time to sway support from the popular main opposition candidate and former military dictator, Muhammadu Buhari.

The import from the above brief journey of electoral democracy since the inception of the current fourth republic is that Nigerians have been given the opportunity to decide who is to govern their affairs, though the system of selection has not been without the challenges of malpractices that sometimes thwarted the results of political decisions of the people. But the fact that there have been elections whether fraudulent or not, continues to uphold Nigerians’ patience and trust in the system. Nigerians are not directing their dissatisfaction towards the system rather to political leaders and parties (Lewis, 2006).

Election Versus Good Governance in Creating Political legitimacy

This section examines the potency of election and good governance, each, in creating legitimacy in Nigeria since 1999 by looking at the acceptability of elections that ushered in the successive governments in relation to their governance, afterward, in terms of making and executing policies that were considered acceptable by the Nigerian public.

Both general elections of 1999 and 2003 that ushered in Obasanjo’s administration for the first and second term were not declared, locally and internationally, as irregularities-free as rightly stated in the immediate above section. Although many Nigerians accepted that of 1999, obviously for being tired of the military rule and for the hope of getting the dividends of democracy (Lewis, 2006), election results of that of 2003 were not allowed to go unchallenged. Nevertheless, the administration cannot be said to greatly suffer from electoral legitimacy. Obasanjo’s regime went ahead to deepen its political legitimacy by making and executing some certain policies that ensured good governance. For example, Obasanjo carried-out extensive socio-economic and political programmes during the life of his

administration between 1999 and 2007. These policies were designed to broaden and deepen Nigeria's democracy (Falode, 2013). The administration set out from the outset to tackle the myriad of structural problems that afflicted Nigeria's federal political system. Obasanjo's major aim was to create political institutions that will strengthen Nigeria's democratic base and ensure its sustenance in the longer term (Falode, 2013). This was the rationale behind the administration's use of the constitutional provisions, such as the federal character principle and principle of fiscal federalism; and, the use of the concepts of zoning, rotational presidency and power-sharing. These are all tools the administration used between 1999 and 2007 to ensure that the inherent structural and institutional defects in Nigeria's federalism are corrected (Falode, 2013).

Also, President Obasanjo must be credited for implementing a range of policies for economic revival. In trying to ensure Nigeria's economic survival and tackle the challenge of corruption, the administration launched National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS) (Rustad, 2008). The three concepts formed the bridgehead of the administration's socio-economic reform package between 2003 and 2007, and also, his introduction of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in late 2003 breathed new life into the anti-corruption agenda (Rustad, 2008). In analyzing Obasanjo's anti-graft crusade, Ehwarieme (2010) noted that the anti-corruption crusade of the administration had recorded some successes. He also, opines that the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission even in the face of daunting challenges had made some significant progress in at least showing that corruption was unacceptable. The EFCC under Ribadu even went beyond that by actually prosecuting and sentencing an Inspector General of Police Mr. Tafa Balogun and Governor Alamiesighan of Bayelsa State.

Other common credits of the OBJ regime were the reduction in foreign debt, by which his administration paid off a substantial portion of the debt Nigeria owed to the Paris Club in 2006, the establishment of GSM mobile phone networks in the country and his campaign of privatizations (USAID-Nigeria, 2006; Chiakwelu,

2012). These policies significantly reshaped the country's economy and their positive effects were felt by Nigerians, for example, a growth rate of 2.58 per cent in May 1999, ended with 6.06 per cent growth in May 2007, and inflation rate dropped from 11.91 per cent to 8.55 per cent. Also, the administration was able to grow the external reserve from \$7.11bn to \$42.30bn (Alade, 2023), among others. Therefore, the public perception of Nigerians about the government and governance began to change for better despite their experience during the military era. Although the third term effort clouded other aspects of his presidency during late 2005-2006, it is not hard to argue that Obasanjo created legitimacy for his administration through good governance.

The 2007 general election that ushered in President Umaru Yar'Adua to office was generally considered a charade. The elections, in the view of Nigerians and the many international observers alike, were the most poorly organised and massively rigged in the country's history. That victory was bitterly disputed by many Nigerians including broad-based labour, religious and civil society groups. It was stated that the election pushed the country further towards a one-party state and diminished citizens' confidence in electoral institutions and processes (Africa Report, 2007). According to Suberu (2007), the 14 and 21 April 2007 general elections that should have been a milestone for democracy threatens instead to be a millstone, as an electoral process riddled with corruption and malfeasance raises doubts about prospects for democratic stability and consolidation in Nigeria. Thus, the declared winner, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, assumed the presidency on 29 May with less legitimacy than any previously elected president (Africa Report, 2007). This left the newly elected President with an uphill task of creating legitimacy for an unpopular new government.

However, the first bold step taken by Yar'Adua to warm himself into the hearts of Nigerians and International Community was to publicly admit that the election that brought him to power was flawed, and went ahead to set up an electoral reform committee, headed by Justice Muhammadu Uwais (rtd) to look into the country's electoral process and administration with the aim of normalizing the anomalies (Ehwareme, 2010). A fact, which even his critics had attested to, was that, unlike his predecessor, Yar'Adua operated within the realm of the law. He didn't pay lip

service to the rule of law and due process he preached. The courts regained the freedom they lost during his predecessor's tenure. They handed down verdicts that cancelled political victories even though his party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was the victim. He was also noted to be the first President to publicly declare his assets (Ehwarieme, 2010).

Considering the strategic position of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria's economic, the purposeful way in which the Yar'Adua administration dealt with the militancy crisis in the area largely increased people's confidence in his government. Shortly after his inauguration, his administration approached the MEND crises with an understanding of the pressing situation and a new policy was adopted called "Presidential Amnesty Programme" that would help to proffer solution to the menace of violence in the Niger Delta (Aderogba, 2016). This Amnesty programme that was worked out for the agitating youth whose destructive activities had reduced Nigeria's oil output by almost half, was good intention of Yar'Adua's government to address the agitation in the region by granting unconditional amnesty to militants hoping the gesture would effectively stop the ranging restiveness in the oil bearing area (Imongan, 2015). The programme initially proved to be monumental success as peace that eluded the immediate government as far as creeks was concerned, was restored to the Niger Delta. Crude oil production reached it all time height of 2.6 million barrels per day as at that period (Imongan, 2015; Aderogba, 2016).

With all these elements of good governance and his expressed desire to take up the challenge of developing the country's economy to make her one of the twenty top-most economies in the world by the year 2020, the available statistics under Yar'Adua's administration did not indicate an economic improvement as inflation moved from 8.55 per cent to 14.10 per cent while unemployment rate increased from 12.30 to 19.70 per cent. In International Trade and Finance, the official exchange rate moved from N128.29/\$ to N149.99/\$, the external reserves declined from \$42.30bn to \$37.47bn as the current account balance as percentage of GDP dropped from 25.31 per cent to 8.33 per cent (Alade, 2023). Nevertheless, the Musa Yar'Adua administration which came to power in May 2007 through a highly flawed electoral process was later accepted by the people and it enjoyed a reasonable level of legitimacy from Nigerian public, perhaps due to his style of governance that

was considered as relatively following the rules of law (Ehwarieme, 2010). So, it is convenient to state that Yar'Adua created legitimacy for his administration through quality of government, despite the questionable and widely unacceptable election that ushered him to power.

Goodluck Jonathan was first sworn in as Acting President on May 6th, 2010 based on the constitutional provision after the death of his boss, President Yar'Adua. He was later substantially elected as President in the 2011 general election which was widely accepted among Nigerians most especially the southern part of the country. The election was reported in the international media as having run smoothly with relatively little violence or voter fraud in contrast to previous elections in particular the widely disputed 2007 general election. According to Nossiter (2011), indeed, at least one observer pronounced them the most smoothly run elections held since the restoration of democracy 12 years earlier. In order words, ab initio, Jonathan administration enjoyed electoral legitimacy. But the legitimacy began to suffer a set back within the first year of the administration as a full-fledged government when President Jonathan announced the removal of fuel subsidy on January 1st, 2012 by directing the Petroleum Pump Price Regulatory Agency (PPPRA) to ensure the implementation of a new pump price increase from ₦ 65 to ₦ 141, but later, amidst outcry and stiff opposition from the public, got reduced to ₦ 97 after a 5-day sustained nationwide protest which claimed about twenty-five lives (*The Guardian*, 2012). The announcement of the removal of oil subsidy by the President caused civil unrest that almost collapsed the state of Nigeria as the organized labour mobilized Nigerians to demonstrate against what they considered obnoxious, draconian and highly inhuman policy of the federal government. The Nigeria Labour Congress leadership opined that the action of President Jonathan showed that the federal government did not listen to the popular demand of the people. And, government must be made realize that sovereignty lies with the people and not the government (*The Punch*, 2012). For the first time in the history of citizens' protest in Nigeria, the people were united across religious and ethnic divides, with protests in major cities across the country. Protests by Nigerians in Diaspora were held in major cities around the world; in UK, Canada, USA, Ghana, South Africa and other countries (Social Action, 2012).

Therefore, the government of Jonathan that was welcome by Nigerians with appreciable level of support based on his fair ascendance, later found itself in legitimacy problem ensued from the removal of fuel subsidy which people considered, perhaps erroneously, as bad governance. Since that time the administration continued to battle with the legitimacy problem for the rest of the tenure, and perhaps led to Jonathan's defeat in the 2015 general election. Nevertheless, there are certain credits that cannot be taken away from the Jonathan administration. Among others, in 2010, President Jonathan assured Nigerians as well as Nigeria's external friends that he would break the jinx of flawed elections in the country. To an appreciable extent, according to Adamolekun, (2011), the administration of Jonathan delivered on his promise by reforming the country's electoral system and administration so that the electoral process can gain public confidence.

The 2015 general election that brought President Buhari to power was not only special and historic for being the first time an incumbent has lost re-election, but also the election that marked the first time in the current fourth republic when both local and international observers agreed on the conduct of election to be free and fair. No candidate contested the results of the election in the court of law. Therefore, the declared winner, President Buhari entered office with enormous goodwill and support from Nigerians with great expectations and high hopes. When he came on board, however, the first 100 days in office of Buhari's administration was the only period during which the generality of Nigerians could remember as having the 'honeymoon' with the administration. After this initial period, it seemed the government went into slumber acting as if unprepared for governance and unable to consolidate its victory (Zubairu, 2016).

Moving forward, the eight years administration of Buhari was described to have witnessed a relentless upsurge in human misery, rising national debt, two recessions, record of unemployment and inflation levels, and receding foreign direct investment. For instance, the naira exchanged officially at N197.8 to \$1 in June 2015, it was N460.97 to \$1 by April 2023, while at the parallel market where most buy, and it was N747. In 2015, annualised inflation was in single digits at 9.0 per cent, but by December, 2022 the inflation rate

hit 21.47 per cent, and by March, 2023, it climbed to 22.04 per cent (Alade, 2023; The Punch Editorial, 2023). In addition, the naira redesign policy under Buhari's government severely knocked the economy as Nigerians were still living in hardship and businesses were incurring losses because of the policy, with the banks experiencing liquidity problems and the new banknotes still scarce. Also, food insecurity was alarming because of Fulani herdsmen tormenting farmers on their farms. And, by December, 2022, Nigeria's debt stood at N44.7 trillion from N12.12 trillion in June, 2015 (The Punch Editorial, 2023). So, all these negative economic indicators which actually translated to hardship for the citizens made the administration Buhari find it hard to sustain the legitimacy acquired through the popular election that brought it here into power.

Conclusion

This study examined the strength of electoral democracy and the strength of good governance in creating and sustaining legitimacy for a government, taking the current Nigeria's fourth republic as the focus of analysis. It was discovered that some administrations were welcome to power with appreciable level of popularity and support but failed to maintain the warm relationship with the public due to low performance in governance. On the other hand, some democratic regimes in the current dispensation came to power with fraudulent and widely criticized electoral victories but were later able to win the confidence of the people after its inauguration, based on what the public considered as better performance. The paper, therefore, argues that, while agreeing with the notion that election bolsters legitimacy for a new regime, sustainability or otherwise of the legitimacy largely depends on formulation and implementation of good policies for the good of the society. That is, the main sources of political legitimacy are situated in the output from the political system, and have to do largely with the quality of governance. Good governance in terms of protection of life and properties, absence of corruption, rule of laws, employment opportunities and general economic prosperity, among others, are the indicators of good governance that can actually create, maintain and sustain political legitimacy for a government. The strength of

election to create political legitimacy, even though free and fair, can be short-lived if it doesn't translate to good governance.

References

- Abubakar, M. (2007, April 24). "AC, ANPP Protest Yar'Adua's Victory". The Guardian. Lagos.
- Adamolekun, L (2011) "A Transformation Agenda For Accelerating National Development", an Inauguration Lecture on May 26th, 2011 as part of the series of events marking the inauguration of President Goodluck Jonathan's ascension to power on May 29, 2011, <http://saharareporters.com/2011/05/28>
- Ademola, A (2009) "Contesting "Good Governance" in Nigeria: Legitimacy and Accountability *Perspectives in Journal of Social Sciences*, 21(3): 212-224
- Aderogba, A (2016) Government Amnesty Programme and Peace Efforts in the Niger Delta Region: An Analysis of Newspapers' Coverage. *European Scientific Journal*, 12(20) 1857-7881
- African Union (2015), Release of AUEOM preliminary statement on Nigeria election, retrieved March, 2015
- Africa Report (2007) "Nigeria: Failed Elections, Failed States?" in International Crisis Group.
- Alade, A (2023) "How economy fared under Obasanjo, Yar'adua, Jonathan, Buhari" Dailytrust online Newspaper <https://dailytrust.com/how-economy-fared-under-obasanjo-yaradua-jonathan-buhari/>
- Anifowoso, R. & Babawale, T. (2003). 2003 General Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria. Irankad, Lagos.
- Ariyo, A. Tobi (2001) "Democracy in Nigeria" in Adefulu R.A and Olaitan, W.A (eds) Issues in Nigerian Government and Politics, Ijebu-ode: RAD Consultancy.
- Campbell, J. (2011). Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, INC., New York.
- Chiakwelu, E. (2012). "Nigeria's Foreign Debts Payments Reflect Devastating Transfer of Wealth". USAfricaOnline. Retrieved January 23, 2012 from www.usafricaonline.com/nigeriadebts06.echiakwelu.html
- Diamond, L (1988) "Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria: The Failure of the First Republic", London: The Macmillan Press
- Enemuo, F (1999) "Democracy, Human Right and the Rule of law" in Anifowose Remi and Enemuo Francis (eds) Elements of Politics, Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd
- Falode, A. J (2013). "Nation-building Initiatives of the Olusegun Obasanjo Administration in the Fourth republic 1999-2007" in University of Mauritius Research. *Journal, Reduit, Mauritius*, 19(22)
- Hermet, Guy (1991), "Introduction: The Age of Democracy", International Social Science Journal, No.128
- Healey J, and Robinson, M (1994), "Democracy, Governance and Economic Policy: Sub-Saharan Africa in Comparative Perspective", Nothingham: Russell Press Ltd.
- Imongan E. O (2015). "Amnesty Programme In Nigeria: Understanding Justice And Equity In The Niger Delta Region. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research (IJPAMR)*, 3(2) 39-47. Retrieved June 26, 2016 from <http://www.rcmss.com>
- Isa, Y.I. & Zakari, M.Y (2008), "The Courts and the Management of Elections in Nigeria", in S.M.
- Omodia (Eds) Managing Elections in Nigeria. Onaivi printing and Publishing Company, Keffi.
- Johnnie Carson (2011). "The Recent Elections in Nigeria". Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs.
- Levi, M et al (2009) "Conceptualizing Legitimacy and Measuring Legitimacy Beliefs, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53: 354-75.
- Lewis, P *et al* (2002) "Down to Earth: Changes in Attitudes Toward Democracy and Markets in Nigeria,"

Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 20, Michigan State University

Lewis, P (2006), "Performance and Legitimacy in Nigeria's New Democracy" in Afrobarometer working paper No. 46, Michigan State University

Natufe, O. I (2006) "Governance and Politics in Nigeria", A lecture delivered on Nov. 21, 2006 at the staff and graduate seminar Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Benin, Benin-City, Edo State, Nigeria

NDI- Nigeria (2008) "Final NDI Report on Nigeria's 2007 Elections", National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, Abuja

Nossiter, Adam (2011). "Nigerians Vote in Presidential Election". The New York Times. Retrieved 17 April 2011.

Oni, E. O (2014), "The challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria 1999-2007" in International Journal of Politics and Good Governance, 5(1).

Paternoster, R et al (1997) "Do Fair Procedures Matter? The Effect of Procedural Justice on Spouse Assault, *Law and Society Review*. 31(1): 163-204.

Plesch, D (2005). Neo-Conservative thinking since the onset of the Iraq", in A. Danchev & J. Macmillan (Eds), The Iraq war and Democratic politics. London: Routledge

Rangwala, G (2005). "Democratic transition and its limitations", in A. Danchev & J. Macmillan (Eds), The Iraq war and Democratic politics. London: Routledge

Schneider, J (2015), "Buhari wins, Jonathan concedes", NewsAfrica, retrieved 31 March, 2015

Statement attributed to the spokesman for the Secretary-General on the conduct of peaceful election in Nigeria, New York: UN, retrieved 30 March, 2015

Sunshine, J and Tyler, T. R (2003), "The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping Public Support for Policing, *Law & Society Review* 37(3): 513-548.

Smith, David (2011). "Goodluck Jonathan opens unassailable lead in Nigeria's presidential election". London: The Guardian.

Suberu, R T (2007) "Nigeria's muddled Elections, *Journal of Democracy*, 18(4): 95-110.

Social Action (2012) "Fuel of Dissent", Social Development Integrated Centre, 33, Oromizeke layout, D-line, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Retrieved from <http://www.saction.org>

The Punch Editorial, (2023) "The Buhari Years: An Era of Gross Economic Fiasco" <https://punchng.com/the-buhari-years-an-era-of-gross-economic-fiasco/>

USAID-Nigeria (2006) "Democracy and Good governance Assessment of Nigeria", USA: ARD, Inc.

World Bank (1992), "Governance and Development", Washington D.C.: World Bank.

Zubairu, A (2016) "APC's Honeymoon Over! (ii)" in The Lawmaker; Africa's First Bi-Monthly Legislative Magazine, Vol. 17 No. 380.

The Guardian, January 17, 2012:2

The Punch, January 12, 2012:2

Democratic Resilience in West Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Governance, Civil Society, and Public Participation in Nigeria and Burkina Faso

Ishaka Dele¹ & Shuaibu Umaru Yelwa²

Abstract

This study examined democratic resilience in West Africa through a comparative analysis of Nigeria and Burkina Faso, focusing on governance structures, civil society engagement, and public participation. Anchored on Conflict Transformation Theory, Democratic Theory, and Human Security Theory, the research explored how democratic institutions, civic actors, and participatory practices shaped each country's ability to withstand political disruptions. The study adopted a qualitative research design based solely on secondary sources, including scholarly articles, institutional reports, and datasets from international organizations. The analysis assessed institutional strength, civic engagement, and the inclusiveness of political processes between 2014 and 2024. The theoretical frameworks guided the understanding of how democratic systems can either adapt to or collapse under pressure from authoritarianism, insecurity, and governance failures. Through this lens, Nigeria was observed to maintain relative institutional continuity, driven by a decentralized federal system and a vibrant civil society despite prevalent corruption and electoral malpractice. Conversely, Burkina Faso displayed democratic fragility, with repeated military coups, weakened institutions, and repressive environments curtailing democratic consolidation. Civil society's ability to influence governance was more constrained in Burkina Faso, while public participation in Nigeria, though uneven, showed signs of growth, particularly among youth. The study concluded that democratic resilience depends on institutional depth, responsive governance, and active civic engagement. It recommended strengthening democratic institutions, safeguarding civil liberties, and enhancing inclusive governance mechanisms to reinforce resilience. This research contributes to the discourse on democratic sustainability in transitional African states facing internal and external pressures.

Keywords: *democratic resilience, governance, civil society, public participation, West Africa*

¹ National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, National Assembly, Abuja. +2348060507986 Email: d120064real@gmail.com
² University of Abuja Department of Political Science and International Relation Email: dumaryelwa@gmail.com

Introduction

Democratic resilience encompasses the ability of a political system to adapt, endure, and respond effectively to both internal and external challenges while safeguarding core democratic values such as accountability, the rule of law, political inclusiveness, and civic engagement. In recent years, democratic governance in West Africa has come under severe strain due to persistent insecurity, political instability, economic underperformance, and a resurgence of authoritarian tendencies. Particularly troubling has been the re-emergence of military coups in countries such as Mali (2020 and 2021), Guinea (2021), and Burkina Faso (2022 and 2023), which signal a regression in the region's democratic gains (International IDEA, 2023).

Nigeria and Burkina Faso represent two important case studies in examining the varying manifestations of democratic resilience in the West African sub-region. Nigeria, despite its numerous challenges including electoral irregularities, political violence, corruption, and declining public trust in institutions has managed to sustain a civilian democratic regime since 1999. The country's federal structure, active civil society organizations, and periodic elections have provided some buffers against authoritarian relapse (Agbibo, 2021; Omilusi, 2022).

In contrast, Burkina Faso has experienced repeated interruptions in its democratic evolution, with military takeovers interrupting elected governments. Although the 2014 popular uprising that ousted longtime President Blaise Compaoré was initially hailed as a victory for democratic accountability, the subsequent security crisis, coupled with weak institutions and governance deficits, facilitated a return to military rule (International Crisis Group, 2022; Nsaibia, 2023). Civil society and the general public have played pivotal roles in both resisting and facilitating political change in both countries, highlighting the complex interplay between governance structures, civic engagement, and state legitimacy.

This study explored and compared the democratic resilience of Nigeria and Burkina Faso through the lenses of governance effectiveness, the vibrancy of civil society, and the extent of public participation. Understanding these dynamics is crucial not only for evaluating democratic consolidation in West Africa but also for proposing context-specific reforms that can strengthen institutional safeguards and foster inclusive, participatory governance in fragile democracies

Conceptual Review

Democratic Resilience

Democratic resilience has emerged as a critical lens for evaluating the quality and sustainability of democratic systems, particularly in fragile or transitional contexts such as those found in West Africa. It encompasses a system's capacity to endure and adapt amid crises whether political, social, or economic while safeguarding core democratic values such as accountability, rule of law, inclusivity, and citizen participation. While the concept broadly refers to the ability of democracies to resist erosion and recover from setbacks, scholars have provided deeper insights into the mechanisms, actors, and norms that underpin this resilience.

Larry Diamond (2019) emphasizes institutional integrity and normative commitment as foundational to democratic resilience. According to him, democracies survive not only through robust institutions like constitutional courts, independent media, and electoral bodies but also through the commitment of elites and citizens to uphold democratic norms. Civic education and a democratic political culture, he argues, play critical roles in fostering public vigilance and political accountability. Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018), offer a complementary perspective by focusing on the informal norms that act as the guardrails of democracy. They contend that mutual toleration among political actors and institutional forbearance are crucial to preventing democratic backsliding. When these unwritten rules are disregarded, especially in polarized societies, formal democratic structures can be manipulated for authoritarian ends. Their work underscores the fragility of democratic institutions when trust and restraint among political elites erode.

In contrast, Mechkova, Lührmann, and Lindberg (2019) adopt a participatory approach, highlighting the role of bottom-up democratic engagement. Their research shows that democratic resilience is significantly enhanced when civil society is active, political opposition is strong, and citizens are meaningfully involved in governance. They argue that public participation not only strengthens institutional legitimacy but also provides a bulwark against authoritarian tendencies by empowering collective action and fostering accountability from below. Together, these perspectives present a multifaceted understanding of democratic resilience

one that balances institutional strength, normative behavior, and civic engagement as co-dependent pillars of democratic sustainability.

Governance

Governance plays a central role in shaping democratic resilience, as it encompasses the mechanisms, institutions, and practices through which public authority is exercised and state-society relations are managed. Good governance, defined by accountability, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, and inclusiveness, strengthens public trust and enhances the legitimacy of democratic institutions. Conversely, governance failures such as corruption, impunity, and weak institutional capacity can accelerate democratic backsliding and state fragility. In this context, governance is examined through the lenses of institutional performance, leadership accountability, and state capacity in Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

Fukuyama (2013) underscores that state capacity the ability of the state to implement decisions effectively is a key dimension of governance and a prerequisite for democratic resilience. He argues that even well-designed democratic systems can collapse without an effective bureaucracy, law enforcement, and service delivery mechanisms. In weak states, democratic forms may exist, but without substance or sustainability (Fukuyama, 2013). Kaufmann, Kraay, and Zoido-Lobaton (1999) developed the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) and argue that governance is multidimensional, comprising voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. Their work demonstrates empirically that countries with strong governance systems are more likely to maintain democratic stability and promote inclusive development. Poor governance, on the other hand, erodes state legitimacy and provokes discontent, often exploited by authoritarian actors.

Hyden, Court, and Mease (2004) focus on the quality of governance, arguing that the legitimacy of governance institutions depends not only on their technical capacity but also on the extent to which they are perceived as fair, inclusive, and responsive. In Africa, they note, governance challenges such as neopatrimonialism, ethnic favoritism, and weak institutional checks have hampered democratic

consolidation. Strengthening governance, therefore, requires reforms that promote institutional autonomy, citizen oversight, and leadership accountability. More so, these perspectives highlight that democratic resilience in contexts like Nigeria and Burkina Faso hinges not only on the presence of democratic structures but also on the effective, transparent, and accountable exercise of public authority.

Civil Society

Civil society plays a pivotal role in the sustainability and resilience of democratic systems. Broadly defined, civil society encompasses a range of non-governmental organizations, community groups, professional associations, media, and advocacy networks that operate independently of the state and engage actively in the public sphere. The vibrancy, autonomy, and effectiveness of civil society are critical in promoting accountability, advocating for democratic reforms, and safeguarding political freedoms, especially in fragile or transitioning democracies such as those in West Africa.

Gyimah-Boadi and Logan (2020) argue that civil society is a cornerstone of democratic resilience in Africa, acting as a watchdog over state power and a vehicle for citizen mobilization. They emphasize that civil society organizations (CSOs) play a vital role in challenging abuses of power, demanding transparency, and promoting political inclusivity. Their research highlights how robust civil societies in certain African states have served as bulwarks against authoritarianism. Diamond (1994) views civil society as a crucial element of democratic consolidation. He asserts that a strong civil society not only checks the power of the state but also cultivates democratic values among citizens through civic education, public deliberation, and grassroots participation. According to Diamond, when civil society thrives, it fosters pluralism and restrains the centralization of authority, thereby increasing the resilience of democratic institutions.

Putnam (1993) provides a complementary perspective through his concept of social capital. He contends that networks of civic engagement, trust, and reciprocity embedded in civil society strengthen democratic governance. Putnam's empirical work in Italy shows that regions with dense civil society networks tend

to have more effective and accountable institutions, as civic participation enhances cooperation between the state and society. However, these scholars underscore that civil society is not merely a supplementary actor but a foundational pillar of democratic resilience. Its ability to inform, mobilize, and organize citizens serves as a counterweight to authoritarian excesses and a catalyst for democratic deepening in societies like Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

Public Participation

Public participation is a fundamental component of democratic resilience, reflecting the extent to which citizens engage in political processes such as voting, civic activism, public consultations, and policymaking. It embodies the principle of popular sovereignty and serves as a critical measure of democratic health. When citizens actively participate in governance, they contribute to accountability, inclusivity, and the legitimacy of political institutions. Conversely, widespread apathy, disenfranchisement, or exclusion often signals democratic decay and institutional disconnection.

Bratton (2019) emphasizes that high levels of citizen participation, particularly through voting and political engagement, are essential for democratic consolidation in Africa. He notes that participation not only legitimizes democratic institutions but also empowers citizens to demand accountability and responsive governance. Bratton's research in sub-Saharan Africa shows that countries with vibrant electoral and civic cultures are more resistant to authoritarian reversals. **Gaventa and Barrett (2012)** provide a broader perspective, arguing that public participation enhances state responsiveness and social inclusion. Their global review of participatory governance initiatives shows that when citizens are involved in decision-making processes, outcomes are more equitable, transparent, and sustainable. They advocate for institutionalizing participatory spaces to deepen democracy and prevent marginalization, especially among vulnerable groups.

Dahl (1989), a foundational theorist in democratic studies, contends that meaningful participation requires not just the right to vote but also access to information, freedom of association, and the ability to influence public discourse.

For Dahl, effective participation is one of the key criteria for a “polyarchy”—a fully functioning democracy. He warns that when these conditions are eroded, democratic institutions risk becoming hollow or unresponsive to the people they serve. In the context of Nigeria and Burkina Faso, examining public participation reveals important dynamics of inclusion, political awareness, and civic engagement. The level and quality of citizen involvement in each country’s political life directly affect the strength and resilience of its democratic systems.

Theoretical Framework

Participatory Democratic Theory and Democratic Resilience

Participatory Democratic Theory provides a robust framework for understanding democratic resilience, especially within the context of West African states like Nigeria and Burkina Faso. Rooted in classical democratic ideals and further developed by theorists such as Carole Pateman (1970), Benjamin Barber (1984), and Archon Fung (2003), the theory emphasizes the direct involvement of citizens in political decision-making processes, beyond just voting in periodic elections. It asserts that democracy is strengthened when citizens actively participate in governance, engage with political institutions, and influence public policy at various levels.

Pateman, (1970) argues that political participation is not merely a means to influence government but a process that educates and empowers citizens, fosters civic virtue, and deepens democratic culture. This perspective is particularly relevant to fragile or transitioning democracies where institutions are often weak and citizen trust is low. In such contexts, participatory democracy serves as a mechanism for building legitimacy, promoting accountability, and resisting authoritarian tendencies. Barber (1984) takes this further by advocating for a model of democracy where citizens are co-creators of policy and not passive recipients of elite decisions. He contends that democratic resilience is directly tied to the degree of civic engagement, public deliberation, and institutional openness to grassroots participation. This is particularly pertinent in West Africa, where the marginalization of civil society and limited participatory channels often correlate with democratic instability. Fung (2003) introduces the concept of “empowered participatory governance,” which

focuses on practical institutional arrangements that allow ordinary people to engage meaningfully in public decision-making. He argues that resilient democracies are those that adapt institutions to include participatory practices, especially in addressing complex socio-political challenges.

Applying this theory to Nigeria and Burkina Faso, participatory democratic theory explains why varying levels of public participation and civic engagement have led to divergent democratic outcomes. Nigeria, despite its challenges, maintains a multi-party system, periodic elections, and a vibrant civil society, which have collectively contributed to its relative democratic continuity. In contrast, Burkina Faso's recurrent military interventions and weaker participatory structures reveal the fragility of its democratic institutions. Thus, participatory democratic theory not only clarifies the mechanisms through which democratic resilience is built or undermined but also underscores the importance of inclusive governance, civic education, and institutional reform.

Governance Structures:

Institutions and Stability in Nigeria and Burkina Faso

Governance structures, encompassing political institutions and their stability, play a crucial role in shaping the resilience or fragility of democracies. The institutional arrangements within Nigeria and Burkina Faso highlight contrasting trajectories of democratic consolidation in West Africa, reflecting broader regional dynamics. These differences are rooted in historical legacies, institutional design, political culture, and the capacity of state institutions to withstand internal and external shocks.

Nigeria's Federal Presidential System and Institutional Continuity

Nigeria operates under a federal system of government with a presidential democracy enshrined in the 1999 Constitution. The country is characterized by a multi-party system and periodic elections held every four years. Nigeria's federal structure divides power among the central government and 36 states, allowing for decentralization and accommodating its diverse ethnic and religious composition

(Adebayo & Adekunle, 2021). Despite significant challenges, including widespread corruption, electoral irregularities, and governance inefficiencies, Nigeria has sustained civilian rule uninterrupted since the return to democracy in 1999. Key institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the judiciary have played critical roles in maintaining political continuity. While INEC has faced criticism for logistical challenges and allegations of bias, its consistent conduct of elections has been pivotal in the democratic process (Osaghae, 2023). The judiciary, although occasionally compromised by political interference, continues to serve as a forum for electoral disputes and constitutional interpretation, thereby reinforcing the rule of law. These institutions function as anchors in Nigeria's democratic architecture, contributing to the system's resilience despite persistent governance flaws (Adejumobi, 2022).

Moreover, Nigeria's vibrant civil society and active media environment have bolstered governance by demanding accountability and transparency. The interplay between state institutions and societal actors fosters a degree of checks and balances essential for democratic durability (Mustapha, 2022). While challenges remain, such as ethnic tensions, corruption, and security threats, Nigeria's institutional framework provides a platform for managing conflict and facilitating political competition, crucial for democratic survival.

Burkina Faso's Governance: Institutional Weakness and Democratic Fragility

Burkina Faso presents a contrasting case marked by institutional instability and recurrent disruptions to constitutional governance. The country experienced a popular uprising in 2014 that ended the 27-year rule of President Blaise Compaoré, raising hopes for democratic renewal (Yaro, 2023). However, this optimism has been undercut by subsequent political turbulence, including military coups in 2022 and 2023 that interrupted the democratic process. Unlike Nigeria, Burkina Faso's institutions are considerably weaker, particularly in the realms of civil-military relations and institutional autonomy. The military's recurrent interventions indicate a fragile separation between civilian authority and military power, which undermines democratic consolidation (Crisis Group, 2023). The coups have been

justified by the military as necessary to address rampant insecurity linked to jihadist insurgencies, which have devastated large parts of the country (ICG, 2023). This insecurity exacerbates institutional weaknesses, as the government struggles to maintain control and provide basic services.

The constitutional framework in Burkina Faso has been repeatedly tested and broken, revealing the fragility of rule of law and institutional enforcement mechanisms. Weaknesses in the judiciary, electoral bodies, and legislature limit their capacity to serve as effective checks on executive power or military influence (Konate, 2022). Political institutions are further undermined by limited resources, corruption, and lack of public trust, which fuels cycles of instability and limits prospects for democratic resilience. Civil society and political parties in Burkina Faso face significant constraints due to insecurity and political repression, reducing public participation and limiting the pressure on institutions to uphold democratic norms (Kafando, 2023). The fragile institutional environment hampers the establishment of stable governance structures capable of withstanding crises, contrasting sharply with Nigeria's relatively more robust system.

More so, the governance experiences of Nigeria and Burkina Faso illustrate how institutional strength, legitimacy, and autonomy critically influence democratic stability. Nigeria's federal system, despite its flaws, incorporates institutional mechanisms and societal engagement that have enabled the country to manage political competition and survive governance challenges. In contrast, Burkina Faso's institutional fragility, compounded by military interference and insecurity, has led to recurrent breakdowns of democratic order. These contrasting cases emphasize that democratic resilience depends not only on formal constitutional provisions but also on the functionality and credibility of institutions tasked with upholding democracy. The military's subordination to civilian authority, an independent judiciary, and credible electoral management bodies are indispensable for democratic endurance (Diamond, 2020). Furthermore, security challenges, if not effectively addressed within democratic frameworks, can become catalysts for authoritarian regression, as seen in Burkina Faso.

Ultimately, the comparative analysis suggests that strengthening institutions, promoting civil-military dialogue, enhancing state capacity, and fostering inclusive governance are vital strategies for consolidating democracy in West Africa. Nigeria's experience offers lessons on the importance of institutional continuity and societal engagement, while Burkina Faso's challenges highlight the risks posed by institutional fragility and insecurity to democratic governance.

Civil Society Engagement in Nigeria and Burkina Faso: Roles, Challenges, and Impact

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are critical actors in democratic governance, acting as intermediaries between the state and the citizenry. They promote transparency, accountability, and civic education, thereby strengthening democratic resilience. In West Africa, the role of civil society varies significantly depending on political context, institutional capacity, and state-society relations. Nigeria and Burkina Faso offer contrasting examples of civil society engagement, reflecting divergent democratic experiences in the region.

Civil Society in Nigeria: Robustness and Diversity

Nigeria has one of the most vibrant and diverse civil society sectors in Africa, shaped by a history of activism against military rule and for democratic reforms (Fawole & Fawole, 2021). Nigerian CSOs range from grassroots community-based organizations to national advocacy groups, focusing on a broad spectrum of issues including human rights, governance, anti-corruption, electoral transparency, and social justice (Ojo & Akinola, 2022). This sector has grown substantially since Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999, benefiting from a relatively open political space and legal protections under the constitution.

Prominent organizations such as the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and Enough is Enough Nigeria (EiE) have been instrumental in shaping democratic norms and practices. The CDD engages in policy research, voter education, and election monitoring, contributing to the credibility of electoral processes (CDD, 2023). EiE, a youth-led movement, mobilizes citizen activism to

demand accountability and fight corruption, leveraging social media and grassroots mobilization to enhance public participation (Adeoye, 2022). These organizations exemplify the proactive role Nigerian civil society plays in holding government institutions accountable and fostering democratic awareness. Furthermore, Nigerian civil society has shown resilience even under political pressures, including state harassment and legal restrictions. CSOs often collaborate with international partners to strengthen advocacy efforts and build institutional capacity (Ibeanu, 2021). Their engagement in electoral observation, policy dialogue, and public education has been vital in mitigating electoral fraud and promoting transparency, which enhances the legitimacy of Nigeria's democratic institutions (Mustapha & Adedeji, 2022). Nevertheless, challenges remain. Funding constraints, government suspicion, and occasional crackdowns on activists hinder the full potential of civil society. Moreover, the heterogeneity of civil society actors sometimes leads to fragmentation and rivalry, which can dilute collective impact (Ojo, 2023). Despite these hurdles, the sector remains a cornerstone of Nigeria's democratic landscape.

Civil Society in Burkina Faso: Vibrancy under Threat

Burkina Faso's civil society has historically played a significant role, especially notable during the 2014 popular uprising that ended Blaise Compaoré's long authoritarian rule. Civil society groups, including trade unions, youth organizations, and human rights defenders, mobilized citizens and pressured the government toward democratic transition (Yameogo, 2022). This period demonstrated the potential power of civil society in challenging entrenched authoritarianism and fostering democratic aspirations. However, the political landscape has dramatically changed following the military coups of 2022 and 2023. The coups, which disrupted the constitutional order, ushered in a period marked by increasing repression of civil liberties, including freedoms of assembly, expression, and association (Human Rights Watch, 2023). The junta's intolerance for dissent has led to restrictions on CSO activities, the closure of media outlets, and arrests of activists, creating a climate of fear and self-censorship (Amnesty International, 2023).

This repression has severely curtailed the capacity of civil society to operate effectively. Many organizations face obstacles in organizing public protests or

engaging with the government on policy issues. The shrinking civic space undermines civil society's ability to monitor governance, advocate for reforms, and educate the public on democratic rights and responsibilities (Kafando, 2023). Consequently, the post-coup environment has weakened one of the key pillars necessary for democratic resilience. Despite these challenges, Burkina Faso's civil society remains engaged, albeit cautiously. Some CSOs have shifted focus toward humanitarian assistance and community resilience in response to escalating insecurity from jihadist insurgencies (International Crisis Group, 2023). Others continue to seek avenues for dialogue with transitional authorities to safeguard democratic gains (Tapsoba, 2023). The determination of these actors underscores civil society's persistent, though constrained, role in Burkina Faso's political dynamics.

Comparative Reflections

The divergent experiences of civil society in Nigeria and Burkina Faso reflect the broader political contexts shaping democratic resilience in both countries. Nigeria's relatively open political environment has enabled a thriving civil society sector capable of influencing governance and fostering democratic accountability. In contrast, Burkina Faso's ongoing political instability and authoritarian repression have constrained civil society, limiting its effectiveness as a democratic watchdog. This comparison highlights the importance of a supportive political and legal environment for civil society to flourish and contribute meaningfully to democracy. As scholars emphasize, robust civil society engagement is indispensable for democratic deepening, serving both as a check on state power and a conduit for citizen participation (Putnam, 2020; Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2019). In conclusion, strengthening civil society institutions, protecting civic freedoms, and fostering constructive state-society relations are critical for enhancing democratic resilience in West Africa. Nigeria's experience offers valuable lessons on the benefits of a vibrant civil society, while Burkina Faso's challenges illustrate the risks when civic space is restricted. Addressing these dynamics is essential for sustaining democracy in the region.

Public Participation and Political Culture in Nigeria and Burkina Faso: Dynamics, Challenges, and Prospects

Public participation is fundamental to the health and resilience of democracies. It reflects the extent to which citizens are actively involved in political processes, ranging from voting and civic activism to engagement in policy dialogues and decision-making. The quality and vibrancy of public participation shape political culture, which in turn influences democratic stability and governance outcomes. In West Africa, Nigeria and Burkina Faso provide contrasting but instructive examples of how public participation interacts with political culture to impact democratic resilience.

Public Participation in Nigeria: Challenges and Emerging Civic Activism

Nigeria, Africa's most populous democracy, has a complex and often contradictory record on public participation. On the one hand, the country holds regular elections under a multi-party system, providing formal avenues for citizen involvement. On the other hand, electoral participation has been inconsistent and frequently undermined by systemic challenges. Voter apathy is a significant issue, fueled by widespread disillusionment with political elites, electoral malpractice, and a persistent culture of vote-buying (Akinola & Ojo, 2021). Reports of violence during elections further discourage citizen turnout, raising questions about the inclusiveness and credibility of electoral processes (Ezekwesili, 2022).

Despite these challenges, recent developments signal an important shift in Nigeria's political culture toward increased civic consciousness and youth engagement. The #EndSARS protests of 2020, sparked by widespread condemnation of police brutality, exemplified how Nigerian youth have harnessed public participation beyond the ballot box. The movement rapidly mobilized millions across cities, leveraging social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to organize protests, share information, and demand government accountability (Adebanwi, 2021). This digital activism showcased a new form of political participation rooted in grassroots mobilization and online engagement, challenging

traditional political actors and signaling a demand for deeper democratic reforms (Ibrahim & Musa, 2023).

Moreover, social media has become a crucial tool for political participation in Nigeria, enabling marginalized voices to be heard and facilitating real-time monitoring of government actions (Olaniyan & Agbaje, 2023). This digital public sphere has transformed the political culture by fostering greater political awareness, enhancing transparency, and encouraging citizen activism, particularly among younger generations (Obi, 2022). However, this form of engagement also faces obstacles, including government censorship, misinformation, and digital divides that limit access for some population segments (Nwafor & Eze, 2023).

Public Participation in Burkina Faso: From Mobilization to Repression

Burkina Faso's political culture has been shaped by cycles of popular mobilization and military interventions. The 2014 uprising, which led to the ousting of long-time president Blaise Compaoré, was a watershed moment demonstrating the capacity for collective political participation. Citizens from diverse social groups—students, trade unions, civil society organizations, and ordinary citizens—mobilized extensively, reflecting a vibrant political culture energized by demands for democratic governance and accountability (Sanou, 2022).

However, the subsequent period has been marked by setbacks. The military coups of 2022 and 2023 disrupted constitutional rule and ushered in a period of political repression. Restrictions on freedoms of assembly, speech, and the press have severely curtailed opportunities for public participation (Human Rights Watch, 2023). The junta's control over political space has generated widespread skepticism and disillusionment toward formal electoral processes, which are viewed by many as lacking transparency and credibility (Diallo & Kaboré, 2023). Consequently, political apathy has increased, with many citizens feeling alienated from governance structures. Nevertheless, political awareness remains relatively high in Burkina Faso, rooted in a history of social mobilization and civic activism (Ouédraogo, 2023). Past experiences, such as the 2014 protests, highlight the latent potential for democratic renewal, contingent on the restoration of civil liberties and the reestablishment of

inclusive political institutions (Sawadogo, 2023). Even under military rule, informal networks and community groups continue to engage politically, often focusing on humanitarian and security issues exacerbated by jihadist insurgencies (International Crisis Group, 2023). These forms of civic engagement, though constrained, suggest that political culture in Burkina Faso is resilient and could be a foundation for future democratic revitalization.

Comparative Insights and Implications

The experiences of Nigeria and Burkina Faso illustrate how public participation and political culture are deeply intertwined and shaped by broader political contexts. Nigeria's political culture is characterized by a mixture of formal electoral participation and emergent digital activism, reflecting both the challenges of entrenched electoral malpractice and the transformative potential of youth-led movements. The #EndSARS movement exemplifies a shift toward more assertive, issue-based civic participation that transcends traditional electoral politics. In contrast, Burkina Faso's political culture reflects a pendulum swing between popular mobilization and political repression. While coups and authoritarian crackdowns have dampened formal participation and increased public skepticism, the underlying civic awareness and history of activism suggest a potential for democratic resurgence. The trajectory of public participation in Burkina Faso underscores the importance of protecting civil liberties and ensuring institutional inclusiveness for democratic consolidation. Both cases affirm the centrality of enabling environments for public participation: democratic governance flourishes where citizens feel empowered to engage politically without fear of repression, and where political institutions are responsive to popular demands (Bratton, 2019; Putnam, 2020). The use of social media as a participatory platform, especially in Nigeria, also highlights the evolving nature of political culture in the digital age, which offers new avenues for engagement but also new challenges for democratic accountability.

More so, public participation remains a vital element of democratic resilience in West Africa. Nigeria's blend of electoral challenges and vibrant civic activism demonstrates both the fragility and potential of its political culture. Burkina Faso's

experience, marked by popular uprisings and military repression, underscores the fragility of democracy where institutional and civil liberties are compromised but also highlights the enduring spirit of political engagement. Strengthening democratic resilience in both countries requires safeguarding civic freedoms, promoting inclusive political dialogue, and supporting innovative forms of participation that reflect evolving political cultures.

Comparative Insights and Challenges in Democratic Resilience: Nigeria and Burkina Faso

Nigeria and Burkina Faso, two pivotal West African states, offer insightful case studies into the dynamics of democratic resilience amid complex socio-political landscapes. While both countries share a commitment to democratic governance, their experiences underscore divergent trajectories influenced by institutional strength, civil society engagement, and security contexts. This comparative analysis highlights how Nigeria's relative institutional continuity contrasts with Burkina Faso's fragile democratic structures, while also identifying common challenges that impede democratic consolidation in both countries.

Institutional Continuity and Civil Society in Nigeria

Nigeria operates a federal presidential system that, despite persistent governance challenges, has maintained civilian rule uninterrupted since the return to democracy in 1999. The country's democratic institutions, such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the judiciary, and legislative bodies, have played a critical role in sustaining political continuity and managing transitions of power (Agbaje & Adejumobi, 2022). Though these institutions are imperfect and often criticized for inefficiency, corruption, and politicization, their existence provides a framework that supports the rule of law and electoral processes.

Moreover, Nigeria's vibrant civil society sector significantly bolsters democratic resilience. Organizations focused on human rights, electoral integrity, anti-corruption, and civic education actively engage the populace and hold the government accountable. Groups like the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and

Enough is Enough (EiE) have become instrumental in promoting democratic norms and mobilizing public participation (Ojo & Alabi, 2023). The proliferation of digital activism, especially among Nigeria's youth, further energizes civil society's role in shaping political discourse and advocacy (Eze & Okonkwo, 2024). However, Nigeria's democracy is far from flawless. Governance inefficiencies, entrenched corruption, and a weak rule of law often undermine institutional effectiveness. Additionally, widespread political exclusion, especially among marginalized groups and youth, constrains meaningful participation and fuels disillusionment (Akinwale, 2023). Nevertheless, the country's relative institutional depth and active civic space remain important buffers against democratic collapse.

Democratic Fragility and Institutional Weakness in Burkina Faso

In contrast, Burkina Faso epitomizes the vulnerabilities of democratic systems lacking strong institutional foundations and facing acute security challenges. The country's political landscape has been marked by repeated military interventions, most recently the coups in 2022 and 2023, which have disrupted fragile democratic transitions following the popular uprising that ousted long-time ruler Blaise Compaoré in 2014 (Sanou, 2023). The military takeovers have eroded constitutional governance and fostered political instability. Burkina Faso's institutional weaknesses are evident in the limited capacity of civilian governance structures to manage security crises, deliver public services, or foster inclusive political participation. Weak civil-military relations and fragile political institutions have rendered the country susceptible to authoritarian backsliding (Diallo & Kaboré, 2023). Moreover, the state's inability to control vast swathes of its territory, especially in the northern regions plagued by jihadist insurgencies, has further undermined governance and democratic processes (International Crisis Group, 2024).

Civil society in Burkina Faso, once a key driver of political change during the 2014 uprising, now operates under severe restrictions. The post-coup environment has seen increased repression of civic freedoms, limiting the space for advocacy and citizen mobilization (Human Rights Watch, 2024). These conditions have fostered public skepticism towards electoral processes and diminished trust in state institutions, deepening democratic fragility.

Youth Unemployment, Rule of Law, and Political Exclusion

Despite their divergent paths, Nigeria and Burkina Faso face several shared challenges that impede democratic consolidation:

1. Corruption: Corruption remains pervasive in both countries, undermining public trust and weakening governance institutions. In Nigeria, corruption infiltrates various levels of government, distorting policy implementation and resource allocation (Transparency International, 2023). Similarly, in Burkina Faso, corruption erodes the already fragile state capacity, exacerbating governance failures and fueling grievances that militant groups exploit (World Bank, 2024).

2. Youth Unemployment: High rates of youth unemployment in both countries contribute to political disillusionment and social unrest. Large youth populations, when marginalized from economic and political opportunities, are more susceptible to radicalization or political apathy (UNDP, 2023). In Nigeria, youth unemployment remains a structural challenge that limits civic participation despite high political awareness (Adeyemi, 2023). In Burkina Faso, unemployment compounds the difficulties of governance and security, especially in conflict-affected areas (Sawadogo, 2024).

3. Weak Rule of Law: Both countries struggle with enforcing the rule of law consistently and impartially. Judicial inefficiencies, political interference, and limited access to justice weaken citizens' confidence in legal systems (Akinyemi, 2023). In Nigeria, electoral disputes and human rights violations often go unresolved, while in Burkina Faso, weakened institutions and military dominance have further eroded legal norms (Diallo & Kaboré, 2023).

4. Political Exclusion: Marginalization of ethnic, regional, and socio-economic groups reduces inclusivity and fuels tensions. In Nigeria, ethnic and regional divisions complicate political representation and resource sharing (Mustapha, 2023). Burkina Faso faces similar challenges with ethnic and regional disparities, compounded by security issues that limit political participation in affected areas (Ouédraogo, 2023).

5. Security Threats: Terrorism and Insecurity

Security concerns represent one of the most significant hurdles to democratic resilience in both nations. Northern Nigeria and the Sahel region of Burkina Faso face severe threats from terrorism, insurgencies, and armed banditry. In Nigeria, Boko Haram and other insurgent groups continue to destabilize the Northeast, causing humanitarian crises and undermining state authority (International Crisis Group, 2023). These security challenges restrict citizens' political participation and divert government focus from democratic deepening to counterterrorism. Similarly, Burkina Faso's struggle with jihadist violence across its northern and eastern territories has resulted in widespread displacement, state fragility, and a breakdown of governance (Sawadogo, 2024). The security vacuum exacerbates political instability and provides cover for authoritarian tendencies, further hindering democratic consolidation.

However, Nigeria and Burkina Faso illustrate contrasting but instructive experiences in democratic resilience. Nigeria's institutional continuity and active civil society provide a foundation for sustained democratic engagement, albeit amid governance challenges. Burkina Faso's democratic fragility reflects the vulnerability of political systems lacking strong institutions and facing acute security threats. Yet, both countries grapple with common obstacles: corruption, youth unemployment, weak rule of law, political exclusion, and insecurity that undermine democratic governance. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive reforms to strengthen institutions, promote inclusive governance, empower youth, and enhance security while safeguarding civil liberties. Moreover, supporting vibrant civil societies and fostering political cultures that value participation and accountability will be critical to the democratic futures of Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

Recommendations

- 1. Strengthen Democratic Institutions:** Both Nigeria and Burkina Faso must prioritize the reinforcement of democratic institutions such as independent electoral commissions, judiciaries, and anti-corruption bodies.
- 2. Enhance Civil-Military Relations:** Given the history of military interventions

in Burkina Faso and security challenges in Nigeria, reforms aimed at ensuring civilian supremacy over the military are critical.

3. Promote Inclusive Governance and Political Participation: To address widespread political exclusion and youth disillusionment, governments should create platforms for inclusive dialogue and participation. Governments should also tackle electoral malpractices such as vote-buying and violence to restore citizens' confidence.

4. Protect and Empower Civil Society: Civil society organizations in both countries must be protected against repression and provided with legal and financial support.

Leverage Regional and International Support: Regional bodies like ECOWAS and the African Union should continue enforcing democratic norms through timely interventions, mediation, and sanctions when necessary.

5. Manage Security Threats through Multi-sectoral Approaches: Addressing terrorism and insecurity in the Sahel and northern Nigeria requires not only military strategies but also socio-economic development, community engagement, and cross-border cooperation.

Harness Technology Responsibly: Governments and civil society should collaborate to promote digital literacy, regulate misinformation, and use technology to enhance political participation and government transparency.

Conclusion

This study highlights the divergent trajectories of democratic resilience in Nigeria and Burkina Faso, underscoring the complex interplay of institutional capacity, civil society strength, security dynamics, and political culture. Nigeria's relative institutional continuity and vibrant civil society contrast with Burkina Faso's democratic fragility, marked by recurrent military coups and weakened governance structures. Despite the challenges of corruption, insecurity, political exclusion, and economic hardship that both countries face, the presence of engaged citizens, active civil society, and regional democratic frameworks offers pathways for consolidation. However,

without concerted efforts to strengthen institutions, foster inclusive governance, and ensure security, democratic gains remain fragile.

The future of democracy in West Africa hinges on multi-level cooperation among governments, civil society, regional bodies, and international actors. By implementing comprehensive reforms that address the root causes of instability and empower citizens, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and their neighbors can reinforce democratic resilience and promote sustainable development. Ultimately, democracy's survival in West Africa depends not only on formal structures but also on the commitment of leaders and citizens alike to uphold democratic principles, engage in peaceful dialogue, and collectively resist authoritarian tendencies. With sustained efforts and strategic partnerships, the prospects for democratic stability and growth in the region remain cautiously optimistic.

References

- Adebanwi, W. (2021). #EndSARS and the Rise of Digital Activism in Nigeria. *African Studies Review*, 64(3), 507-525.
- Adebayo, A., & Adekunle, A. (2021). Federalism and Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *Journal of African Studies*, 12(2), 88-102.
- Adejumobi, S. (2022). Electoral Integrity and Democratic Stability in Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science*, 17(3), 45-63.
- Adeoye, F. (2022). Youth Activism and Democratic Accountability in Nigeria. *Journal of African Civic Engagement*, 11(2), 56-73.
- Adeyemi, O. (2023). Youth Unemployment and Political Engagement in Nigeria. *Journal of African Development*, 15(1), 58-74.
- Agbaje, A., & Adejumobi, S. (2022). Institutional Resilience and Electoral Integrity in Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science*, 20(2), 110-126.
- Agbiboa, D. E. (2021). *They Eat Our Sweat: Transport Labor, Corruption, and Everyday Survival in Urban Nigeria*. Oxford University Press.
- Akinola, A., & Ojo, E. (2021). Electoral Participation and Political Culture in Nigeria. *Journal of African Politics*, 18(2), 134-149.
- Akinwale, T. (2023). Political Exclusion and Democratic Governance in Nigeria. *Nigerian Political Review*, 8(1), 35-50.
- Akinyemi, F. (2023). Judicial Challenges and Rule of Law in West Africa. *West African Law Journal*, 11(3), 97-112.
- Amnesty International. (2023). Burkina Faso: Human Rights Under Threat After Military Coups. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/04/burkina-faso-human-rights-crisis/>
- Barber, B. R. (1984). *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. University of California Press.
- Bratton, M. (2019). Citizens and the State in Africa: New Data and Emerging Trends. Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 180.
- Bratton, M. (2019). Popular Participation and Democratic Quality. *Journal of Democracy*, 30(1), 120-135.
- Carothers, T., & Brechenmacher, S. (2019). *Closing Space: Democracy and Human Rights Support under Fire*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). (2023). *Annual Report on Electoral Monitoring in Nigeria*.
- Crisis Group. (2023). Burkina Faso: Security Crisis and Military Rule. International Crisis Group Report No. 308.
- Dahl, R. A. (1989). *Democracy and Its Critics*. Yale University Press.
- Diallo, M., & Kaboré, S. (2023). Governance and Political Instability in Burkina Faso. *West African Journal of Political Science*, 21(1), 45-62.
- Diamond, L. (1994). Rethinking Civil Society: Toward Democratic Consolidation. *Journal of Democracy*, 5(3), 4-17.
- Diamond, L. (2019). *Ill Winds: Saving Democracy from Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition, and American Complacency*. Penguin Press.

- Diamond, L. (2020). The Resilience of Democracies in Africa: Institutions and Governance. *Journal of Democracy*, 31(1), 78–92.
- Eze, J., & Okonkwo, N. (2024). Civil Society and Digital Activism in Nigeria. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 14(1), 29–47.
- Ezekwesili, O. (2022). Challenges to Electoral Integrity in Nigeria. *Journal of Election Studies*, 27(4), 89–102.
- Fawole, W., & Fawole, O. (2021). Civil Society and Democratic Development in Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science*, 26(4), 215–230.
- Fukuyama, F. (2013). What is Governance? *Governance*, 26(3), 347–368.
- Fung, A. (2003). Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 11(3), 338–367.
- Gaventa, J., & Barrett, G. (2012). Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement. *World Development*, 40(12), 2399–2410.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E., & Logan, C. (2020). Civil Liberties and Popular Protest in Africa. Afrobarometer Policy Paper.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E., & Logan, C. (2020). Civil Liberties and the Role of Civil Society in Africa's Democracy. Afrobarometer Policy Paper No. 66.
- Human Rights Watch. (2023). Burkina Faso: Repression Following Military Coups. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/03/15/burkina-faso-repression-post-coup>
- Human Rights Watch. (2024). Burkina Faso: Post-Coup Repression and Civic Space. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/02/10/burkina-faso-repression>
- Hyden, G., Court, J., & Mease, K. (2004). Making Sense of Governance: Empirical Evidence from Sixteen Developing Countries. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Ibeanu, O. (2021). The Role of Civil Society in Nigerian Democracy. *Journal of African Governance*, 8(1), 34–49.
- Ibrahim, M., & Musa, I. (2023). Youth and Social Media in Nigerian Politics. *African Journal of Political Communication*, 9(1), 72–88.
- IDEA. (2021). The Global State of Democracy Report. Stockholm: International IDEA.
- International Crisis Group (ICG). (2023). Jihadist Insurgency and Political Instability in Burkina Faso. Report No. 326.
- International Crisis Group. (2022). Burkina Faso's Worsening Security Crisis: Strengthening Civil-Military Relations.
- International Crisis Group. (2022). Saving Burkina Faso's Transition.
- International Crisis Group. (2023). Boko Haram and the Security Crisis in Nigeria. Report No. 360.
- International Crisis Group. (2023). Jihadist Violence and Governance in Burkina Faso. Report No. 345.
- International Crisis Group. (2024). Security Challenges in Burkina Faso. Report No. 375.
- International IDEA. (2021). The Global State of Democracy Report 2021: Building Resilience in a Pandemic Era. Stockholm: International IDEA.
- International IDEA. (2021). The Global State of Democracy Report 2021.
- International IDEA. (2023). The Global State of Democracy Report 2023: The Road to Democratic Recovery.

Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Kafando, B. (2023). Civil Society in Post-Coup Burkina Faso: Constraints and Prospects. *West African Political Review*, 19(1), 89-105.

Kafando, B. (2023). Civil Society Under Siege: Democratic Prospects in Burkina Faso. *West African Review*, 10(1), 120–135.

Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Zoido-Lobaton, P. (1999). Governance Matters. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 2196.

Konate, S. (2022). Judicial Independence and Democratic Consolidation in Burkina Faso. *African Law Review*, 14(4), 57–75.

Levitsky, S., & Ziblatt, D. (2018). How Democracies Die. Crown Publishing Group.

Mechkova, V., Lührmann, A., & Lindberg, S. I. (2019). “The Accountability Sequence: From De-Jure to De-Facto Constraints on Governments. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 54(1), 40–70.

Mustapha, A. (2023). Ethnic Politics and Federalism in Nigeria. *African Studies Quarterly*, 19(2), 72-90.

Mustapha, A. R. (2022). Civil Society and Media in Nigeria’s Democracy. *Media, Culture & Society*, 44(5), 910–927.

Nsaibia, H. (2023). “Burkina Faso and the Coup Trap.” War on the Rocks.

Nwafor, C., & Eze, M. (2023). Government Censorship and Misinformation in Nigerian Digital Politics. *Media and Society in Africa*, 11(1), 23-40.

Obi, C. (2022). Social Media and Political Mobilization in Nigeria. *Journal of Digital Politics*, 5(2), 110-125.

Ojo, A., & Alabi, R. (2023). Civil Society’s Role in Nigeria’s Democratic Development. *Journal of Democracy in Africa*, 16(3), 135-150.

Ojo, E. (2023). Fragmentation in Nigerian Civil Society: Causes and Consequences. *African Social Movements Journal*, 15(3), 70-85.

Ojo, E., & Akinola, A. (2022). Mapping Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria. *Journal of Development Studies*, 29(2), 150-168.

Olaniyan, T., & Agbaje, A. (2023). Digital Divide and Civic Engagement in Nigeria. *African Media Studies Journal*, 12(1), 58-73.

Omilusi, M. (2022). “Elections and the Quest for Democratic Resilience in Nigeria. *African Journal of Democracy and Governance*, 9(2), 45–61.

Omodia, S. M. (2010). “Political Parties and the Democratic Process in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 22(1), 33–38.

Osaghae, E. (2023). Electoral Management and Democratic Stability in Nigeria. *Electoral Studies Quarterly*, 20(1), 34–51.

Ouédraogo, P. (2023). Political Participation and Marginalization in Burkina Faso. *Burkina Faso Political Review*, 7(2), 95-110.

Pateman, C. (1970). Participation and Democratic Theory. Cambridge University Press.

Putnam, R. (2020). Democracy and Civic Engagement. Princeton University Press.

Putnam, R. D. (1993). Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton University Press.

- Sanou, K. (2022). The 2014 Popular Uprising in Burkina Faso. *Journal of African Social Movements*, 14(2), 112-130.
- Sanou, K. (2023). Military Coups and Democratic Transitions in Burkina Faso. *Journal of African Politics*, 24(1), 80-95.
- Sawadogo, J. (2023). Prospects for Democratic Renewal in Burkina Faso. *African Journal of Democracy Studies*, 12(1), 101-118.
- Sawadogo, J. (2024). Security and Political Stability in the Sahel Region. *Sahel Security Review*, 12(1), 60-78.
- Tapsoba, S. (2023). Navigating Political Repression: Civil Society in Burkina Faso's Transition. *African Journal of Democracy Studies*, 12(1), 45-60.
- Transparency International. (2023). Corruption Perceptions Index: Nigeria and Burkina Faso. Retrieved from <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023>
- UNDP (2022). Democratic Governance and Peacebuilding. Retrieved from undp.org.
- UNDP. (2022). Governance for People and Planet: Advancing Sustainable Development through Democratic Institutions.
- UNDP. (2023). Youth Unemployment in West Africa: Implications for Governance. UNDP Regional Report.
- Yameogo, T. (2022). The 2014 Popular Uprising in Burkina Faso: Civil Society's Role in Political Change. *Journal of African Social Movements*, 14(2), 112-130.
- Yaro, J. A. (2023). The 2014 Uprising in Burkina Faso: Political Change and Democratic Hopes. *Journal of West African Politics*, 18(2), 100–114.

Nigeria's Long-Term Socio-Economic Development: Exploring the Agriculture Value Chain Pathway

Inaku, Jacob Sunday¹ & Nandi, Livinus Ature²

Abstract

This study investigated the role of agriculture in enhancing socio-economic development in Nigeria, using the ex-post facto research design. It utilized secondary data from 1981 to 2022, which were sourced from the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, and the World Bank. The secondary data were analyzed using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation technique. The result showed that the agricultural sector output has a positive and significant impact on socio-economic development in Nigeria. Other results showed that industrial output and services output have a positive and significant effect on economic development in Nigeria. The study concluded that the agricultural value chain is crucial in achieving socio-economic development in Nigeria. Thus, the study recommended that the government should invest heavily in the agricultural sector by increasing the budgetary allocation and providing basic infrastructure to the sector for improved productivity.

Keywords: *Socioeconomic development; Agriculture, Agriculture value chain; Nigeria; Ordinary Least Squares*

¹ University of Calabar inakujacobs@gmail.com

² National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), livinusnandi@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Over the years, Nigeria, like other developing countries, has pursued the objective of accelerating economic growth and development. For this to be achieved, the agricultural sector has been upheld as one that could accelerate the process of economic growth and development. This is because apart from providing food for the teeming population, agriculture is the source of raw materials that other sectors utilise in their production process (Ijaiya & Abdulaheem, 2000; Idisi, Ebukiba & Sunday, 2019). The rearing of animals also provides agro-allied products for industrial growth and development. In line with this, Abayomi (2006) stated that increasing agricultural productivity is sacrosanct for achieving successful industrialisation.

In Nigeria, in the pre- and immediate post-independence period, agriculture was the dominant economic activity; employing over 60 per cent of the population, providing about 70 per cent of federal government revenue and constituting almost 80 per cent of Nigeria's total exports. Statistics have shown that the share of agriculture in total output was about 63.5 per cent in 1960, making it the dominant economic activity during that decade (CBN, 2009). However, this impressive role played by agriculture has since diminished following the discovery and subsequent exploitation of oil in commercial quantities, especially beginning from 1970. Since then, the hitherto flourished sector has been neglected in preference for the perceived lucrative oil production with no second thought concerning its enviable position in economic growth and development.

Statistics showed that the share of agriculture in total gross domestic product declined sharply from 48.8 per cent in 1970 to 23.0 per cent in 1976, and further to 20.2 per cent in 1980. The share of agriculture in total GDP is 18.41 per cent in 1985, 21.77 per cent in 1990, 25.74 per cent in 1995, 21.58 per cent in 2000, 26.36 per cent in 2005, 23.89 per cent in 2010, 20.24 per cent in 2015, 24.45 per cent, and 24.05 per cent in 2022 (CBN, 2022).

The decline in the performance of the agricultural sector, as statistics showed, could be attributed to disincentives created by the macroeconomic policies and programmes. Without addressing the problem of the agricultural sector, it will be

impossible for a country to attain its sustainable development goals. The concern of the policy makers has been the quest to address the agricultural challenges in Nigeria to realise the potential that the sector has. Overall, the sector has suffered from years of mismanagement, neglect and inconsistent government policies. This may not be unconnected to the era of huge oil revenues that today has nose-dived. Hence, there is a need for reexamination of the impact of the agricultural sector on the growth of the Nigerian economy (Idisi, Ebukiba & Sunday, 2019).

The poor performance of the agricultural sector in Nigeria has also affected the socio-economic development indicators over the years. In terms of the Human Development Index, the United Nations (2025) ranked Nigeria at the 156th position out of 193 countries sampled. This is a setback from the 151st position it was in 2004. Other macroeconomic indicators, such as rising inflation rates, decaying infrastructures, poor standard of living, as a result of decreasing gross domestic product and low per capita income, high levels of poverty, endemic corruption, etc., have shown that the country has not fared well over the years. The argument now is that, given the poor performance of socio-economic indicators as presented here, it is rather debatable as to the role of agriculture in enhancing economic development.

From the foregoing, this study examines the role of the agriculture sector and, hence, the agriculture value chain to socio-economic development in Nigeria. This study comprises five (5) sections. Section one is the introduction. The review of literature and theories is the focus of section two. Section three presents the methodology. Presentation and analysis of results is the focus of section four, and section five presents the conclusion.

2. Conceptual Review

2.1 Economic Development

The concept of economic development in itself is broad-based and multi-dimensional. According to Kane (2004), economic development means a qualitative change in what or how goods and services are produced through shifts in resource use, production methods, workforce skills, technology, information, or financial

arrangements. Thus, development involves a process of economic, political, and social change in a progressive direction towards a better social wellbeing for the members of the society (Okobiah, 1984; AbdulRaheem, 2003). Chambers (2007) views economic development as shifting from ill-being to well-being. It is generally argued that economic development increases the capacity of a nation's economy to create wealth for residents. For this reason, development depends upon the development of a nation's building blocks, such as labour, financial capital, facilities and equipment, know-how, land, and other physical resources such as public and private infrastructures (Kane, 2003).

The three basic objectives of development include (i) to increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life sustaining goods (basic needs) such as food, shelter, health and protection; (ii) to raise the living standards of the people including higher incomes, job creation, better education and health, attention to cultural and human values, etc.; (iii) to expand the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only about other people and nation states but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery (Idisi, Ebukiba, & Sunday, 2019).

Several indicators of economic development have been advanced in the development literature. Some of these indicators include:

- i. **Gross domestic product:** This is the total monetary value of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders over a specific period, usually quarterly or annually.
- ii. **Gross National Product:** This is the total monetary value of all final goods and services produced by the citizens and businesses of a country in a given year, regardless of whether the production occurs within the country or abroad.
- iii. **Human development index (HDI):** This is a composite statistical measure developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assess and compare the level of human development in different countries. HDI measures three key dimensions of human development, which are health, education, and standard of living.

- iv. **Per Capita GDP:** This is a measure of the average economic output per person in a country. It is calculated by dividing a country's total GDP by its population.
- v. **Literacy Rate:** This is the percentage of people within a specific age group-usually aged 15 years and above, who can read and write a simple statement about their everyday life with understanding.
- vi. **Life Expectancy:** This is the number of years an individual is expected to live, assuming that current age, specific mortality rates remain constant throughout their life.
- vii. **Unemployment Level:** This is the number of people who are without work, currently available for work, and actively seeking employment.
- viii. **Poverty Rate:** The poverty rate is the proportion of people whose income or consumption falls below the national or international poverty line, indicating the level of poverty within a population.
- ix. **Birth Rate:** This is the number of live births occurring in a population during a specific period (usually a year), per 1,000 people in the total population.
- x. **Death Rate:** This is the number of deaths in a population, during a specific period (usually one year), per 1,000 people in the total population.
- xi. **Infant Mortality Rate:** This is the number of deaths of infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births in a given year.
- xii. **Accessibility to quality Healthcare:** This refers to the ability of individuals and communities to obtain timely, affordable, and effective health services that meet established standards of care and lead to better health outcomes.
- xiii. **Accessibility to Clean Water Supply:** This refers to the ability of individuals and households to obtain safe, sufficient, and affordable water for drinking, cooking, personal hygiene, and sanitation, without risk to health; and
- xiv. **Access to Infrastructure:** This refers to the availability and usability of essential physical systems and services such as transportation, electricity, water, sanitation, communication, and housing that support the functioning of a society and enable economic and social development.

2.2 Agriculture

Agriculture involves the cultivation of land, raising and rearing of animals, for the production of food for man, feed for animals, and raw materials for industries. It involves forestry, fishing, processing and marketing of these agricultural products. Essentially, it is composed of crop production, livestock, forestry, and fishing (Idisi, Ebukiba, Sunday, 2019). The role of agriculture in reforming both the social and economic framework of an economy cannot be overemphasised. It is a source of food and raw materials for the industrial sector. It is also essential for the expansion of employment opportunities, for the reduction of poverty and improvement of income contribution, for speeding up industrialisation and easing the pressure on the balance of payment (Idisi, Ebukiba, Sunday, 2019). In effect, it has been the main source of gainful employment, which the nation can feed its teeming population, a regenerative source of foreign exchange earnings, a means of providing the nation's industries with local raw materials and as a reliable source of government revenue (Idisi, Ebukiba, Sunday, 2019).

The agriculture sector is composed of four components, namely the crop subsector, livestock subsector, forestry subsector, and fishery subsector. The crop subsector is a component of agriculture that is involved with crop production. It is thus an aspect of agronomy that deals with crop production and management. Activities in this subsector include food crops farming, cash crops farming, fruits and nuts, fibre farming, and wood farming. Livestock agriculture involves the rearing of farm animals for man's use. Activities in this subsector include livestock farming, dairy farming, and poultry farming. Animals reared in Nigeria include: Cow, Goat, Sheep, Cattle, Pig, Horse and several others, while poultry birds include chicken, turkey, duck, pigeons, and others. Rearing activities are mainly undertaken by local farmers and nomadic Fulanis.

Forestry agriculture involves the planting and management of forest trees. The Nigerian Forests support a wide range of forest industries, which include both the formal and informal sub-sectors. The formal sector is essentially wood-based and is fairly well developed, and comprises mechanical wood industries, including sawmills, veneer and plywood manufacturers, particle board, paper and paperboard manufacturers. The informal forest sector comprises an informal wood-based

sector, which is the country's largest user of wood (most of which is burnt as fuel) and the non-wood forest products. Fishery farming involves the rearing and management of fish and other aquatic animals. Fishery in Nigeria is mainly done by the artisanal sector. The coastal and brackish waters constitute the major areas of production, followed by inland rivers and lakes, and production from aquaculture is still low.

3. Theoretical Review

Several theories of economic development are reviewed in this section as they relate to this study. Specifically, this study is anchored on two theories, namely: The Leis theory of development and the Rostow's stages of growth model of economic development. The Lewis theory of development was propounded by *Arthur Lewis in 1954* to explain the growth of a developing economy in terms of a labour transition between two sectors, the capitalist sector and the subsistence (agricultural) sector. In the Lewis model, the underdeveloped economy usually consists of two main sectors:

- i. The traditional, overpopulated rural subsistence sector characterised by zero marginal labour productivity, which is a situation that permits Lewis to classify this as surplus labour in the sense that it can be withdrawn from the agricultural sector without any loss of output, and
- ii. The high-productivity modern urban industrial sector in which labour from the subsistence sector is gradually transferred to (Lewis 1954).

According to the theory, surplus labour from the traditional agricultural sector is transferred to the modern industrial sector, whose growth over time absorbs the surplus labour, promotes industrialisation and stimulates sustained development (Lewis 1954; Amaghionyeodiwe and Udejaja, 2003). Hence, this theory is applicable in this study in that an increased investment in the subsistence agricultural sector has the potential of increasing aggregate productivity, which could lead to economic development.

The Rostow's stages of growth model of economic development was developed by Walt Whitman Rostow in 1960. According to the Rostow theory, the transition path from underdevelopment to development can be described in terms of a series of steps or stages through which all countries must follow to move gradually from the underdevelopment state to the developed state. The theory identifies five stages through which developing countries have to pass to reach an advanced state of an economy. These stages include: Traditional society; Preconditions for take-off; Take-off; Drive to maturity, and Age of high mass consumption.

According to Rostow's model, a country has to follow some rules of development in order to reach the take-off stage. These rules according to the theory include that: the investment rate of a country has to be increased to at least 10 per cent of its GDP; one or more manufacturing sectors with a high rate of growth has to be established; and an institutional, political and social framework has to be created to promote the expansion of those sectors (Rostow, 1960).

This theory applies to this study in that since Nigeria is a developing economy, the activities in the agricultural sector could serve as a precondition for the take-off process to catapult the economy into a development path. Thus, the proper harnessing of agricultural sector activities could provide a strong take-off process for achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

4. Empirical Review

Herve, Wilfrid and Edwige (2004) examined the influence of agriculture on gross domestic product in China and three Sub-Saharan countries (Cameroon, Congo and Burkina-Faso), using data from 1990 to 2001. The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation technique was used in estimating the equation. Results showed that agricultural productivity has a positive effect on overall gross domestic product in China, Congo and Burkina-Faso, but a negative effect in Cameroon. Awe and Ajayi (2009) analysed the contribution of the agriculture and petroleum sectors to the growth and development of the Nigerian Economy for the period 1960-2010. The study revealed that the R² for agricultural revenue was significant. About 60 per cent of the movement was explained by the relationship. Also, a dynamic

relationship exists between the revenue from the non-oil sector and economic development.

Aminu and Abdulrahman (2012) investigated the contribution of the agricultural sector and the petroleum sector to the economic growth and development (GDP) of the Nigerian economy between 1960 and 2010. The study applied the OLS technique and found that the agricultural sector is contributing more than the petroleum sector, though they both have a positive impact on economic growth and development of the economy. They concluded that a good performance of an economy in terms of per capita growth may therefore be attributed to a well-developed agricultural sector and capital.

Thus, Yusuf (2014) empirically investigated the role of agriculture in economic development in Nigeria, using annual data covering the period 1981 - 2012. The study employed the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) method and found that agriculture plays a significant role in economic development in Nigeria. The study recommended that agriculturally friendly government policies and policy orientation should be put in place to enhance the development of the agricultural sector for economic development.

Uma et al. (2014) assessed the effect of agriculture on Nigeria's economic growth, using data spanning from 1970 to 2009. The study employed the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) technique within the framework of the Error Correction Modelling. The study found that the contributions of crop production, livestock, and fishing to economic growth were statistically insignificant. Only forestry contributed significantly to growth during the period of study. However, the combined effect of the variables was significant.

Chukwuma and Ezenekwe (2014) examined whether agriculture matters for economic development in Nigeria. They modelled life expectancy against agricultural output and agricultural expenditure, amongst other variables. They found that agricultural output has a negative and significant impact on life expectancy in Nigeria. The impact of agricultural expenditure was found to be positive but insignificant on life expectancy. Real gross domestic product and industrial output were also found to influence life expectancy. The study concluded that agriculture

matters for economic development, but that can be achieved with corresponding and simultaneous development of other crucial sectors, such as education, health, and industry, will not yield positive results for economic development in Nigeria.

Sertoğlu, Ugural, and Bekun (2017) empirically examined the impact of the agricultural sector on the economic growth of Nigeria, using time series data from 1981 to 2013. The study employed the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) and revealed that real gross domestic product, agricultural output and oil rents have a long-run equilibrium relationship. The error correction result showed that agricultural output had a positive impact on economic growth. Based on the result, the study recommended that the government and policy makers should embark on diversification and enhance more allocation in terms of budgeting to the agricultural sector.

Idisi, Ebukiba, and Sunday (2019) investigated the impact of the agricultural sector on the economic growth of Nigeria for the period covering from 2008 to 2017. The study employed the OLS technique. The findings showed that agricultural products are positive and statistically significant at 5% level of significance, as it relates to the level of gross domestic product. A 1% increase in total agriculture output will result in a 2.78% increase in gross domestic product. The study recommended that the government should increase its spending on these areas.

5. Performance of the agricultural sector in Nigeria

This section carries out an analysis of the performance of the agricultural sector in Nigeria. The performance of agriculture in Nigeria is measured in terms of its percentage share in the aggregate gross domestic product. Figure 1 presents the share of agriculture in total gross domestic product in Nigeria from 1981 to 2022. As shown in the figure, the share of agriculture in total gross domestic product rose from 12.3 per cent in 1981 to 14.1 per cent in 1985 and increased further to 23.0 per cent in 1988 and declined consistently to 20.52 per cent in 1992. The share of agriculture in total gross domestic product rose again consistently from 23.73 per cent in 1993 to 21.9 per cent in 1998 but declined rapidly to 21.5 per cent in 2000 (CBN, 2022).

The share of agriculture in total gross domestic product rose from 24.73 per cent in 2001 to an all-time high of 37.35 per cent in 2002, but fell sharply to 27.51 per cent in 2004 and fluctuated between 24.92 per cent and 2.3 per cent from 2003 to 2008. The share of agriculture in total gross domestic product rose to 27.03 per cent in 2009 but declined consistently from 23.9 per cent in 2010 to 20.24 per cent in 2014. Meanwhile, the share of agriculture in total gross domestic product rose 20.866 per cent in 2015, 24.45 per cent in 2020, fell to 23.70 per cent in 2021 and increased to 24.05 per cent in 2022 (CBN, 2022).

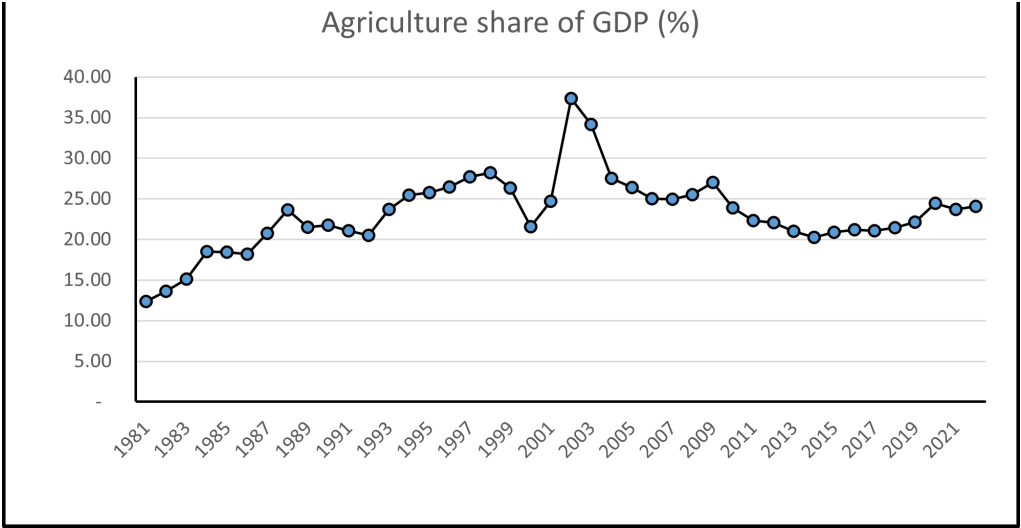


Fig. 1: The share of agriculture in total GDP in Nigeria (1981-2022)

Source: Researcher's computation from Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin, 2022.

6. Methodology

6.1 Model specification

The empirical model for this study is anchored on the Lewis theory of development and the Rostow stages of growth theory of development. From the preceding theoretical postulates, the role of agriculture in economic development can be

evaluated. This study followed the works of Herve, Wilfrid and Edwige (2004) and specified an equation, expressing economic development, represented by per capita income, as a function of agricultural output, industrial output and services output, written functionally as:

$$PCI = f(AGR, IND, SEV) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where:

PCI = per capita income, measuring economic development;

AGR = agricultural sector output in Nigeria;

IND = industrial sector output in Nigeria; and

SEV = services sector output in Nigeria.

An equation in its implicit log form can be expressed as follows:

$$LOG(PCI) = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 LOG(AGR) + \alpha_2 LOG(IND) + \alpha_3 LOG(SEV) + U \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

α_0 = The intercept term; α_1 , α_2 and α_3 = the coefficients to be estimated; and U = the error term.

The expected signs of the parameters of the equations are expressed as follows: $\alpha_1 > 0$, $\alpha_2 > 0$, $\alpha_3 > 0$. This means that an increase in agricultural output, industrial output, and services output should lead to an increase in per capita income, and hence economic development.

6.2 Estimation technique

The ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression technique was used in estimating the specified model. The OLS technique is applied based on the Gauss–Markov theory, which states that of all econometric estimators, the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimator is the best linear unbiased estimator (BLUE) with minimum error.

6.3 Data sources

Data used for the estimation were obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria publications such as the Statistical Bulletins and the Annual Report and Statement

of Accounts (various issues), the National Bureau of Statistics, and the World Bank. Data were collected on an annual basis from 1981 to 2022.

6.4 Analysis of results

6.5 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. From the table, per capita income has a mean value of 225,807.7 with the maximum value of 925,981.1 and the minimum value of 1,853.14, during the period of analysis. Agricultural output has an average value of 9,450.26, with the maximum value of 47,944.06 and the minimum value of 17.05 during the period of evaluation. Industrial output has a mean value of 10,941.04 during the period of evaluation, with the maximum value of 62,278.99 and the minimum value of 50.33. Lastly, the services output has a mean value of 20,589.79 during the period of evaluation, with the maximum value of 89,112.99 and the minimum value of 66.20.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	PCI	AGR	IND	SEV
Mean	225807.7	9450.626	10941.04	20589.79
Median	77015.71	3133.470	2519.430	4144.150
Maximum	925981.1	47944.06	62278.99	89112.99
Minimum	1853.140	17.05000	50.33000	66.20000
Std. Dev.	271838.1	12611.17	15709.99	27395.81
Skewness	1.039902	1.465765	1.755511	1.118660
Kurtosis	2.831109	4.328597	5.427753	2.795609
Jarque-Bera	7.619693	18.12831	31.88720	8.832910
Probability	0.022152	0.000116	0.000000	0.012077
Sum	9483922.	396926.3	459523.8	864771.3
Sum Sq. Dev.	3.03E+12	6.52E+09	1.01E+10	3.08E+10
Observations	42	42	42	42

Source: Authors' computation (2025)

6.6 Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the correlation analysis for the variables captured in this study. From the correlation matrix, there is a high positive correlation between per capita income and agricultural output, given the correlation coefficient of 0.987. Similarly, there is a high positive correlation between per capita income and industrial output, given the correlation coefficient of 0.968. Lastly, there is a positive correlation between per capita income and services output, given the correlation coefficient of 0.993. The conclusion from the correlation analysis showed that agricultural output, industrial output and services output have exerted a high relationship with per capita income and hence economic development in Nigeria during the period of analysis.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

	PCI	AGR	IND	SEV
PCI	1.000000	0.987471	0.968691	0.993230
AGR	0.987471	1.000000	0.991216	0.979417
IND	0.968691	0.991216	1.000000	0.956624
SEV	0.993230	0.979417	0.956624	1.000000

Source: Authors' computation (2025)

6.7 Analysis of regression results

The result of the regression analysis is presented in Table 3.

Dependent Variable: LOG(PCI)

Method: Least Squares

Date: 06/06/24 Time: 00:02

Sample: 1981 2022

Included observations: 42

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	4.233554	0.043234	97.92240	0.0000
LOG(AGR)	0.300346	0.035343	8.498068	0.0000

LOG(IND)	0.193231	0.047214	4.092691	0.0002
LOG(SEV)	0.370284	0.036549	10.13117	0.0000
R-squared	0.999480	Mean dependent var	10.92875	
Adjusted R-squared	0.999439	S.D. dependent var	2.145845	
S.E. of regression	0.050823	Akaike info criterion	-3.030540	
Sum squared resid	0.098153	Schwarz criterion	-2.865047	
Log likelihood	67.64134	Hannan-Quinn criterion.	-2.969880	
F-statistic	24350.71	Durbin-Watson stat	0.242802	
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: Authors' computation (2025)

From the Table, the estimated coefficient of agricultural output is positive (0.30), showing that there is a positive relationship between agricultural output and per capita income in Nigeria. This result is in line with theoretical expectations, showing that an increase in agricultural activities has resulted in an increase in per capita income and hence economic development in Nigeria. The result in real terms showed that a 1% increase in agricultural output resulted in a 0.30% increase in per capita income and hence economic development in Nigeria. Agricultural output was also statistically significant in its influence on economic development at the 5% level of significance, given its zero (0.0000) probability value.

In the same vein, the estimated coefficient of industrial output is positive (0.19), showing that there is a positive relationship between industrial output and per capita income in Nigeria. This result is in line with theoretical expectations, showing that an increase in industrial activities has resulted in an increase in per capita income and hence economic development in Nigeria. The result in real terms showed that a 1% increase in industrial output resulted in a 0.19% increase in per capita income and hence economic development in Nigeria. Industrial output was also statistically significant in its influence on economic development at the 5% level of significance, given its low probability value of 0.0002.

Lastly, the estimated coefficient of services output is positive (0.37), showing that there is a positive relationship between services output and per capita income in

Nigeria. This result is in line with theoretical expectations, showing that an increase in services sector activities has resulted in an increase in per capita income and hence economic development in Nigeria. The result in real terms showed that a 1% increase in services output resulted in a 0.37% increase in per capita income and hence economic development in Nigeria. Services output was also statistically significant in its influence on economic development at the 5% level of significance, given its zero (0.0000) probability value.

The high values of the R-squared (0.999480) and the Adjusted R-squared (0.999439) showed that the estimated model has a very high explanatory power. The high F-statistic of 24350.71 with its zero (0.0000) low probability value showed that the overall model is statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. This means that the explanatory variables have a joint effect on the explained variable.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was undertaken to assess the role of the agriculture value chain as a pathway to enhancing socio-economic development in Nigeria. The agriculture sector has been upheld as a catalyst for speeding up the rate of economic growth and development. However, the performance of the sector has not been impressive in Nigeria over the years. Such performance has generated a debate as to the role of agriculture in socio-economic development in Nigeria. Investigating this debate was the focus of this study. The result of the analysis showed that agricultural sector output has a positive and significant impact on per capita income, which was used as a measure of economic development. Other results of the study showed that industrial and services output have a positive and significant effect on economic development in Nigeria. The conclusion from the study is that the agricultural value chain is crucial in achieving socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Based on the results, the study recommends that:

- i. The Nigerian government should invest heavily in the agricultural sector by increasing the budgetary allocation to the sector for improved productivity; and
- ii. There is also a need for the government to provide basic infrastructures like

motorable roads, steady electricity, functional storage facilities, water supply, communication facilities, etc., to help improve agricultural productivity for socio-economic development.

References

- Abayomi, F. (2006). An overview of the Nigerian agricultural sectors. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 8 (3), 7-16. Retrieved from Abayomi, F. (2006) An Overview of Nigerian Agricultural Sectors. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 8, 7-16. - References - Scientific Research Publishing
- AbdulRaheem, Y. (2003). Globalisation and Nigeria's Economic Development. Being the text of a paper presented at the 4th Annual National Conference of the Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSAN).
- Amaghionyeodire, A. L. & Udejaja, E. A. (2003). The petroleum sector and the Nigerian economy. *Nigerian Journal of Economics and Development Matter (NJEDEM)*, 01, 61-91.
- Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) (2009). Annual report: Agriculture credit guarantee scheme fund. Abuja: (ACGSF) A.B. Agaje & Co.
- Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) (2022). Statistical Bulletin, Volume 33, December 2022. Abuja, Nigeria.
- Herve, A., Wilfrid, L. & Edwige, K. (2004). Role of agriculture in economic development of developing countries: Case study of China and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). *Journal of Agriculture and Social Research*, 4(2), 1-18. Role Of Agriculture In Economic Development Of Developing Countries: Case Study Of China And Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) | *Journal of Agriculture and Social Research (JASR)*
- Lewis, W. A. (1954). Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour. *Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies* 22:139 191. Retrieved from: Lewis, W.A. (1954) Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor. *The Manchester School*, 22, 139-191. - References - Scientific Research Publishing
- Idisi, P. O., Ebukiba, E. S. & Sunday, G. A. (2019). The impact of the agricultural sector on economic growth in Nigeria (2008-2017). *International Journal of Management and Commerce Innovations*, 7(1), 61-69. [PDF] Food Security, Economic Growth and Price Stability Nexus and Conceptual Issues | Semantic Scholar
- Iyaja, G. T. & Abdulraheem, A. (2000). Commercial banks' credits to the agricultural sector and poverty reduction in Nigeria: A calibration analysis. *Nigerian Journal of Agricbiz and Rural Development*, 1, 143-157. Retrieved from: Ijaiya, G.T. and Abdulraheem, A. (2000) Commercial Banks Credits to the Agricultural Sector and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria. *Nigeria Journal of Agricbiz and Rural Development*, 40, 12. - References - Scientific Research Publishing
- Kane, M. (2004). Public sector economic development. Concepts and approaches. Retrieved 12/04/16 from <http://www.econ.iastata.edu>.
- Okobiah, O. S. (1984). The nature and elements of national development and integration in L.O.S Okobiah and E.N.H Udo and integration (5-17).
- Rostow, W. W. (1960). *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Uma, K. E., Eboh, F. E., & Obidike, P. C. (2014). Human capital development and economic growth in Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 5(18). 1-9. Poverty, Underdevelopment and Emerging Economies: Nigerian Focus
- Yusuf, S. A. (2014). The role of human capital in economic growth: A comparative study of Nigeria and Ghana. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(31), 122 – 132.
- Awe, A. A. & Ajayi, S. O. (2009). Diversification of Nigerian Revenue Base for Economic Development: The Contribution of the Non-Oil Sector. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(3):138-143. Retrieved from: Awe, A. A. & Ajayi, S. O. (2009). Diversification of Nigerian Revenue Base for Economic Development: The Contribution of the Non-Oil Sector. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.6(3), pp.138-143.
- Aminu, U. & Abdulrahman, A. Z. (2012). An Empirical Analysis of the Contribution of Agriculture and Petroleum Sector to the Growth and Development of the Nigerian Economy from 1960-2010. *International*

Journal of Social Sciences and Education, 2(4):758-769. Retrieved from: (PDF) An Empirical Analysis of the Contribution of Agriculture and Petroleum Sector to the Growth and Development of the Nigerian Economy from 1960-2010

Yusuf, S. A. (2014). Role of Agriculture in Economic Growth & Development: Nigeria Perspective. Munich Personal RePEc Archive (MPRA). Retrieved from: (43) Role of Agriculture in Economic Growth & Development: Nigeria Perspective

Chukwuma, D. & Ezenekwe, Uju. (2013). Does Agriculture Matter for Economic Development? Empirical Evidence from Nigeria. Journal of Finance & Economics. 1(1):61-77. (PDF) Does Agriculture Matter for Economic Development? Empirical Evidence from Nigeria

Sertoglu, Kamil & Sevin, Ugural & Victor Bekun, Festus. (2017). International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues: The Contribution of the Agricultural Sector on the Economic Growth of Nigeria. International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues, 7(1):547-552. Retrieved from: (PDF) International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues The Contribution of Agricultural Sector on Economic Growth of Nigeria

Book Review: Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism

Umar Abdullabi¹

Introduction

“Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” has five chapters, which Lenin perceived as five stages of capitalist development. Themes covered in the book reflect the increasing concern over the issues that surround capitalism as an approach to development, especially in Africa and other underdeveloped countries. The book established the linkage between Empire-building and capitalist competition. In the various chapters, Lenin sought to demonstrate that Imperialism was the ultimate expression of Capitalism’s demand for new markets in order to sustain continuous growth and expansion. All the issues treated in the book are treated from a unifying perspective, hence offering a more comprehensive coverage as well as richer coverage of issues. The issues covered are:

- i. Concentration of production and monopolies;
- ii. Banks and their new roles;
- iii. Finance capital and the financial oligarchy;
- iv Export of capital; and
- v. Division of the world among capitalist associates.

¹ Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Central Business District, Abuja, Nigeria. bunrah84@gmail.com Phone No: 09021167714

In chapter 1, the author examined the “Concentration of Production and Monopolies”. The author argued, in this chapter, that the rapid concentration of production in big enterprises is one of the major characteristics of Capitalism. This motivated the author to perceive Capitalism in its imperialist stage as an approach that directly leads to the most comprehensive socialization of production. The author rightly pointed out that the foregoing drives the capitalists against their will as conscience into some sort of a new social order, a transitional one from complete free competition to complete socialization. Production becomes social, but appropriation of surplus values remains private.

In chapter 2, the author wrote on “Banks and their New Role”. The author rightly observed that the principal as well as the basic function of banks is to serve as middlemen in the making of payments. In doing so, the banks have transformed inactive money into active money, but that goes into capital, yielding a profit. The banks collect all kinds of money revenues and place them at the disposal of the capitalist class. The Stage of capitalist development is characterized by the concentration of capital, which brought about the crucial role the banking system plays in a capitalist economy. Lenin aptly captured the fact that the capitalists put their money in banks and with the increase in their deposits, at a stage, the banks are forced to sell a large chunk of their shares to the capitalists, hence the interests of banks and industry converge to finance capital.

In chapter 3, the author focused on “finance capital and financial oligarchy”. It was rightly pointed out that the rise of finance capital created a new requirement for investment, which further created the need to export finance capital to backward countries. The central assumption here is that the advanced capitalist societies can become overripe, a situation that makes them look for opportunities for investment in countries with low wages, cheap raw materials, scarcity of capital, cheap land, among others. Such backward countries are destinations for investment. From the argument of Lenin, that the export of capital from 1870 through the First World War became a bloody colonization of Africa, a continent with vast untapped resources.

In chapter 4, the author wrote on “Export of Capital” and pointed out that capitalism is commodity production at its highest stage of development. Export of

capital brought about by the development of Capitalism led to the centralization of capital as well as all revenues, transforming thousands of scattered economic enterprises into a single national capitalism, and then into a world capitalist economy. Essentially, this fourth stage in the development of Capitalism was characterized by the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations. Just as monopolists obtained more or less of total possession of the industry of their own country, so, too, would an international cartel develop with the rise of finance capital.

In chapter 5, Lenin wrote on “Division of the World among Capitalist Associations” leading to the formation of Monopolist capitalist associations, cartels, syndicates, and trusts, which first divided the home market among themselves and obtained more or less complete possession of the industry of their own country. However, under capitalism the home market is inevitably bound up with the foreign market because capitalism long ago created a global market. With the increase in the export of capital and as the foreign as well as colonial connections and spheres of influence of the big monopolist associations expanded in many ways, things naturally turned towards an international agreement among these associations and towards the formation of international cartels. Therefore, the fifth stage focused essentially on the division of the world among imperialists.

Critical Assessment of the Book

The work of Lenin on “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” is relevant even in contemporary time because it provides a means, not just for understanding of imperialist expansionism, but wars between imperialist states too. As Lenin was writing the book, he witnessed the First World War in the history of Mankind. Between 1914 and 1918, the global most advanced capitalist nations turned every effort to bloody conflicts, killing fifteen million people in the process. Thus, Lenin’s work on Imperialism reveals a sick logic to the “Great War”, especially with respect to the competitive dynamics of the cartel, which were reproduced in the global arena, hence making the quest for profit backed by the military might of rival states.

The work of Lenin is equally relevant in contemporary times because one of the conclusions of the book is that anti-imperialism is not an optional peace at home and its opposite abroad. This is because imperialism provides a linkage between domestic and foreign affairs.

It is a truism that “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” is open criticism, particularly with regard to its historical specificity. Lenin’s characterization of finance capital applied more accurately to Germany than rivals like France and Britain, especially his perception of the roles of banks as being restricted to serving as middlemen in making payments.

However, the book by Lenin under review has other shortcomings apart from the ones mentioned earlier. The book focused essentially on mono-cultural economic explanations for imperialism which contradicted the fact that capital investment during the scramble for Africa was not as high as might be expected, suggesting that there were other factors that were responsible for the scramble for Africa. Lenin failed to look at many other variables that shaped or re-shaped the character of Capitalism around the world. In this regard, Lenin did not recognize political variables that propelled capitalism, such as the need for policy internationalization, export of culture to other places with a view to dominating them politically, etc. This argument is derived from the fact that capitalism, democracy and even religious freedom are all derived from liberalism, hence imperialism should have been perceived by Lenin in holistic terms. Lenin also failed to acknowledge the fact that capitalists from backward countries can invest in another backward country for profit maximization. In contemporary times, imperialist states do not normally go to war, but settle their differences through pacific means. The logic behind this could be found in the theory of complex interdependency that has bound capitalist countries together due to their interlocking foreign investments and interests. This shows that Lenin did not envisage the benefits derivable from the globalization of trade and investments in his book.

More so, it is important to understand that colonization of Africa, in particular, has been understood as a complicated mesh of trade considerations, a desire for military strongholds and naval base, rivalry between European powers, among others, which were driven only in part by the agitation of Monopolists. This shows

that Lenin was not totally correct in his claim that colonialism in Africa was purely for economic domination of Africa for the purpose of capitalist expansionism. Therefore, colonization of Africa could be perceived rightly from the angle of politics, strategic, economic, cultural, as well as other variables that drive international politics.

Conclusion

Lenin views imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, characterised by monopolies, financial predation, and exploitation of resources in colonised regions, the role of finance capital and its impact on global finance. While J.A. Hobson in his book, "Imperialism: A Study" argues that imperialism is driven by economic interests, particularly the need for capitalists to expand their markets and resources. He critiques imperialism for its negative financial, economic, and moral impacts on colonized societies. Said in his book, "Culture and Imperialism," also asserts that imperialism has had a profound impact on contemporary culture and politics, shaping power dynamics, identity formation, and cultural representations. Rosa Luxemburg's "Accumulation of Capital" argues that capitalist expansion is driven by the need for new markets, resources, and labour, often achieved through imperialism and violence. Finally, on the assessment of imperialism, Lenin and Luxemburg emphasised its exploitative nature, and Hobson critiqued its negative consequences. Said's "Culture and Imperialism" has significantly influenced postcolonial studies.