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**REPOSITIONING THE NIGERIAN STATE  
THROUGH THE SYNTHESIS OF ARTS,  
RELIGION AND POLITICS**

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## **Abstract**

*Fifty years after independence, Nigeria still confronts several basic problems of insecurity, underdevelopment, electoral malpractices, corruption and poverty, poor standard of education, infrastructure deficit, religious violence, bad leadership and connivance in followership. The thrust of this paper is to closely examine the role of arts, religion and politics in the country and establish the extent to which they can be deployed in repositioning Nigeria for development. Arts, religion and politics in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods were examined and it was discovered that there is a nexus binding arts, religion and politics especially in both the traditional and contemporary lives of the citizens. The paper also established the integration of religion and politics into Nigeria's political space and demonstrated that both religion and politics have been used as instrumentations for positive and negative purposes. The paper concludes that good governance is the antidote to crises and it is the glue that binds arts, politics and religion. Therefore, the paper recommended the funding of arts by governments to promote nation building. With the recognition of religion as a great divisive factor in the Nigerian state, the paper also recommended jettisoning of religious considerations in the formulation and implementation of policies just as it urged religious leaders to maintain neutrality on the political space, among others.*

**Keywords:** Arts, Religion, Politics, Nigeria

## Introduction

Fifty nine years after independence, Nigeria still faces severe problems of insecurity, underdevelopment; corruption and poverty; poor standard of education; poor infrastructure; bad leadership; and connivance in followership. About four decades ago, the national discourse was fixated on replacing military dictatorship with civilian, democratic governance in the belief that democratization would put an end to the myriad of problems confronting the country. Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999 but the country is still besieged by serious challenges and they require immediate and urgent attention. Indeed, it is necessary to rebuild and reposition the country in order to take it to the desired level. For development to thrive in Nigeria, it is imperative, as this paper later recommended, to ensure, that the required prerequisites are instituted in arts, religion and politics and this is the focus of this paper. In view of this, the paper examines the key roles played by the core components of arts, religion and politics in repositioning Nigeria. Art empowers people in society with creative skills that broaden the grounds for participation; creates job opportunities; allows for communication through the transfer of ideas and serves the purpose of perpetuating stability. Therefore, as pointed out by Abakporo (2018: 223), “art cannot be divorced from any society no matter the level of innovation that had taken place within that society.” Religion is integral and plays a vital role in the society. Apart from its significance to the core of human existence it has strong implications for the political, economic, social and other aspects of life. Religious values such as equality, dignity and sanctity of human life are of great benefits to the conceptualization and development of democracy, as well as the democratization process (Tsele, 2001). Even when changes and innovations occur they breed new culture and forms of arts in society. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state (with diverse cultures, religions, languages, ethnic affiliations, customs and ideologies), no serious discourse downplays politics and its nuances. Therefore, scholars and social scientists often aver that politics is a means of survival and it invariably conceptualizes the culture of political socialization and behaviour in contemporary times in Nigeria (Oddih, 2009). A critical examination of the tripod of arts, religion and politics in Nigeria establishes their influence, harmony and synchronization to ensuring the much needed repositioning of this country particularly in the face of current challenges.

In subsequent sections, this paper examines the role of arts, religion and politics in pre-colonial, colonial as well as post-colonial periods in Nigeria. It later recommended measures for making the political landscape more accountable and harnessing inherent potentials in the arts as an instrument for social re-engineering while depicting religion as a key factor in correcting moral decadence.

## **Conceptual Clarifications**

### **Arts**

The word “art” has no universally accepted definition and has been variously viewed by scholars. In the opinion of Tatariewicz (1971:134), art is “the ability to make things consciously (not instinctively); and since conscious ability seemed to follow certain rules...art (is) the ability to make things according to rules.” As such, many human endeavours including religion and politics can be classified as arts because they are created and operated using certain rules. Brookes and O’Neil (2017) describe art as “activities including painting, literature, cinema, and dance, which people can partake in for enjoyment, or to create works which express sublime meanings or ideas of beauty.” A closer examination of these definitions shows that art involves human endeavours for expressing ideas about individual experiences and the world around. Art is an expression of its creator’s imagination and it can be in visual, audio or performance. To Demirel and Altintas (2012), arts provide a window into the political landscape of a country. This is because they are instruments used by their makers to express either negative or positive judgments about the entire political landscape. As such, arts can either be employed to benefit members or used to distort order in the society.

### **Religion**

Many scholars have not been able to reach a consensus on the definition of religion because it is a social construct and has multiple interpretations (Greil, 2009; Van den Heever, 2001). Not only are there different definitions of religion but different methodological approaches shape its definition. Olson (2011) identifies these methodological approaches as economical, theological, sociological, historical, racial, postmodern and psychological, among others. Taylor (2007: 12) is of the view that “religion is an emergent; adaptive network of symbols; myths; and rituals; which on the one hand figure schemata of

feeling, thinking, and acting in ways that lend life, meaning and purpose and, on the other hand, disrupt, dislocate, and disfigure every stabilizing structure." In this regard, religion is double-edged because it provides meaning to lives but its destructive dimension cripples the lucidity of human existence. Perhaps, this explains why Marx (1970:17) describes religion as "the opium of the people." Marx, in his critique of Hegel's philosophy of right, sees religion as an instrument used by the "haves" to oppress the "have nots" and as what that the "have nots" embrace to console themselves.

To James and Mandaville (2010), religion is a relatively-bounded system of beliefs, symbols and practices that addresses the nature of existence, and in which communion with others and otherness is lived as if it both takes in and spiritually transcends socially-grounded ontology of time, space, embodiment and knowing. The world's religions include Buddhism, Hinduism; Islam; Judaism; Christianity; and indigenous religious systems as well as beliefs. It is imperative to state that religion possesses great functional values and believed to have been in existence since time immemorial. Religion constitutes the deepest root of human existence and integrates human life into a coherent whole (Schuurman, 2011). In fact, it stimulates man to controlling his environment by struggling for power, so as to achieve his objectives. In essence, religion empowers man to pursue political power and other forms of power that can make him gain firm control of his environment.

### **Politics**

The word "politics" originated from the Greek word "polis," which means city state. The definition of politics is as varied as its scholars and practitioners. David Easton (1965) viewed politics as the authoritative allocation of values. From this definition, politics can be viewed as the institutions and processes by which governments distribute the state resources in a manner that would not engender violence. To avoid crisis, government must be seen as fair and just in the distribution of these resources and must also be viewed as possessing adequate competence and legitimacy by the citizens. For Lasswell (1951), it is the process of who gets what, when and how. This definition looks beyond government because it views politics as broader than government. Politics has to do with exercise and struggle for power and authority among humans. It encompasses the manner for organizing humans for interactions

through institutionalization of social structures as well as the erection of legal and governmental systems, as posited by Nwoko (1988).

### **Arts in Nigeria**

Arts played significant roles in Nigeria's traditional societies. Before the advent of colonialism, art flourished through the works of artists and craftsmen who engaged in different crafts such as wood carving, terra cotta, pottery, leather works, mat making, calabash carving, stone carving, bronze carving, tusk and horn carving, weaving and dyeing of clothes, brass making, among others. Ndubuisi (2017) asserts that the evidence of artistic skills and crafts were revealed in the discovery of their works in Nok (500BC), Igbo-Ukwu (900 AD.); Benin (1400 AD); and Ile-Ife (1000-1500 AD). Music has also been linked to art and culture because different genre of music existed in the traditional Nigerian societies.

Reaserchers and scholars have given different accounts on arts in pre-colonial Nigeria. Available scholarly evidences have equally established that local institutions, religions, cultural beliefs as well as patterns of trade were disrupted during colonialism and this led to the introduction of new technologies by the Europeans. The new technologies were embraced by local artists in Nigeria and in Africa as they begun to enjoy patronage and change their forms of expression. As a result of these, Clarke (2006) posits that although as early as the sixteenth century African Arts had been taken to Europe as souvenirs and gifts, a relatively significant quantity found its way into the continent. Another account stated that during colonialism, the production of art works declined as it was believed that art making activities had some kind of spiritual connection to the worship of idols (Ogunduyile, Kayode and Ojo, 2008). Therefore, as missionaries embarked on evangelism, they discouraged the worship of idols and this impacted significantly on the production of art works. Interestingly, some scholars posit that during the colonial period, some Europeans looted, excavated, illicitly trafficked and stole some African artifacts. They cited the attacks and looting of artifacts of Benin kingdom and the exiling of the king to Calabar, as examples (Eluyemi, 2002; Onyima, 2016).

After independence, art schools were established in Nigeria and many artists

received different kinds of educational training. However, as a result of backward educational policies and the belief that the study of art was an occupation for individuals who were not intellectually sound, a downward trend pervaded the profession (Ogunduyile, Kayode and Ojo, 2008).

In contemporary times, several challenges have created impediment to the art development in Nigeria. These include inadequate funding; lack of effectiveness of art administrators; the poor state of art councils, public museums and galleries; a system of education that does not promote heritage studies; low visitor-ship and patronage to public museums and galleries; and the migration of great artists, designers and craftsmen for imagined greener pasture (Ogunduyile, Kayode and Ojo, 2008; Shyllon, 2013). There is a critical need to urgently and adequately address these challenges in order to preserve the rich cultural heritage of Nigeria.

### **Religion in the Nigeria**

The three major religions in Nigeria are African Traditional Religion (ATR), Islam and Christianity. In this country, religion has been a double-edged activity. It has contributed positively to different spheres and has also been used to negative ends. A closer look reveals that religion has contributed immensely to Nigeria's economic, political and social life. Through the teachings of the early missionaries, for instance, many lives were saved in various Nigerian communities because the early missionaries were instrumental to engendering social change. In essence, religion has influenced social life and put an end to barbaric acts of killing twins, and also rubbed off on the modes of dressing, architectural designs, and system of marriage in Nigeria (Onwubiko, 1973). In the pre-colonial era, African Traditional Religion was the dominant religion and it helped in instilling values that were instrumental to the economic and political development of society. In traditional societies, for instance, for one to be considered wealthy, one had to be in good standing with one's creator, ancestors and community (Narayan, 2001). Behaviours such as dishonesty, stealing, lies, laziness and indolence were considered shameful and those that exhibited such tendencies were stigmatized.

Religion has also impacted positively on the educational sector in Nigeria.

Through African Traditional Religion, traditional values and virtues have been transmitted to recipients with African identity and personality. Although this form of education was informal; it wielded great influence as the trainings were centered on virtues including honesty, dignity of labour, moderation, peaceful co-existence, hard work, self-reliance, love for neighbours, respect for people and their property and vocations including farming, fishing, hunting, building of houses, among others (Okoro, 2010). Islam and Christianity equally brought about the establishment of Quranic and Missionary schools and adherents subscribed to the tenets of both religions. In addition, English language, the present official language of education, trade and commerce was introduced and engendered by the Christian missionaries. Additionally, several schools at varying levels of education have been established and are managed, especially by Christians and Muslims. Many analysts have depicted religion as one of the major factors engendering nation building and stability in Nigeria. Leaders of the various faith groups enjoy the respect of their followers and often times, in the different places of worship; these leaders give messages of hope; the need to live at peace with one another and need to pray for the government, even when things are not going as expected. Through various messages, prayers, sermons and preaching, religious leaders douse tension and ensure stability (Omotosho, 2014). Religion has also impacted positively on Nigeria's economy because some religious institutions have investments employed workers and pay them salary as part of economic development. Adesina (2013), for instance, pointed out that many churches in Nigeria have enhanced economic development by investing in banking, publishing, schools, broadcasting, entertainment and hospitality industries. Islamic organizations provide funds for agriculture and improve food security by establishing financial institutions and making loans available at interest-free rates to people in order to address poverty and grow entrepreneurship (Abdullahi, 2016; Sapovida, 2015). Over time, religion has played a great role in the provision of health care services in Nigeria. Churches and mosques have established hospitals, orphanages and homes for the aged, handicapped and people with other special needs. The building of health care facilities was started by the early Christian missionaries through cottage hospitals, leprosaria, maternity homes and dispensaries (Williams, 1991). Following the introduction of health care facilities by early Christian missionaries,



governments in Nigeria have sustained the trend by building public health facilities and established the Ministry of Health to oversee the health of the people and the nation. Religious organizations also engage in charitable acts like provision of relief materials to people in times of conflict and natural disaster, provision of financial support for surgeries, free medical tests and treatments, among others. Religion has contributed positively in many ways but it has been argued that it also has negative effects. Several acts of violence have direct correlation to religious intolerance, religious fanaticism, offensive propagation of religious beliefs and doctrines, wrong religious doctrines (Sulaiman, 2016). Several violent communal conflicts with religious undertones have been recorded in different Nigerian states including Kaduna, Plateau, Benue, Taraba and Borno, among others. Mavalla (2014) avers that the frequency of religious crises have led to a breakdown in communication and deepened mutual suspicion between Muslims and Christians. These acts of violence, particularly the violence of Boko Haram insurgents, have led to unnecessary maiming, killings, abductions and destruction of property and lives, devastation, agony, instability and uncertainties in the North Eastern states of Borno Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) and created ripple effects in other parts in the last fifteen years or so. Some scholars have also argued that the prayers, teachings and messages of some religious leaders have doused tension in the country but that of others promote unjust political and economic systems. Agbiji and Swart (2015) have explained that the call for prayers, as well as the various sermons for the embrasure of peace and being hopeful are exhibitions of nonchalance to socio-political and economic challenges facing the country and that these weaken actions geared towards fighting injustice. Besides this, religion has been used to play destructive roles in the country. Although Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion are instrumental to marshalling of economic and political power, Kalu (2010:37) has stated that they are often used by the elite as "instruments of political conflict." When opportunities are made available to people on religious grounds; the struggle that ensues especially when the opportunities are limited provokes conflict in society. The effect that religion has on the Nigerian state has been aptly described by Afolabi (2015) as being positive on the one hand because of the value that the participation of ardent religious believers rub off on the polity and on the other hand, being negative, when viewed from the perspective of sectarian

tendencies in which religious bigots ensured that positions are occupied by their adherents at all cost.

### **Politics in Nigeria**

In pre-colonial period, the system of administration was based on the existence of kingdoms and empires as seen in Oyo Empire, Benin Kingdom, and the Habe Kingdom, amongst others. With the advent of colonial rule, the southern and northern protectorates in Nigeria were amalgamated into one entity in 1914. It has been pointed out that the British colonial government's failure to take into consideration, the heterogeneous peculiarities of the different societies, the people and that their incompatible political development laid the foundation of a faulty Nigerian state (Ayatse and Iorhen, 2013). The faulty foundation laid by the colonial administration paved the way for power struggles and fierce politics along different ethnic and religious divides in the country. In post-independence Nigeria, efforts geared towards true representative governments, the struggle for equitable sharing of power and state resources have generally been futile, in most cases. Politics is considered as a means of survival and as asserted by Oddih (2009), it conceptualizes the culture of political socialization. Few political elites gain the dividends of politics but majority of the populace don't. To perpetuate themselves in power and ensure continued access to the national cake, the political elites have always resorted to self-help; compromises and form alliances without considering its moral implications. A close examination of the electoral process shows that the political class has erected ways of securing party tickets for party primaries without necessarily seeking for votes. This is a pointer that there is absence of internal democracy among political parties in Nigeria and this is buttressed by Adejumobi (2010) who avers that majority of the political parties in Nigeria were merely set up for the purpose of attaining power and not necessarily worthy to be referred to as political parties because they are undeserving of such labels. This has been corroborated by Brown (2013:173) who asserts that political elites have used political parties as platforms for "actualizing the authoritative allocation of values, often times idiosyncratic values which are inconsistent with the parent political-style copied, thus making the attainment of good governance impossible".

Most of the elections in Nigeria have been characterized by electoral disputes, vote buying, court cases, threats against judicial independence, legitimacy crises, intimidation of voters, violence, hate speeches, destruction of lives and loss of properties. Additionally, Kurfi (2005) noted that a key feature of elections in Nigeria is rigging and this had been demonstrated in the general elections of 1964/1965; 1979; 1983; 1993; 1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; and 2019. The primary reason for rigging is the zero-sum nature of politics created by the exploitative character of political elites (Mbah, Nwangwu and Ugwu, 2019). Politics is a weapon used to protect and defend the interests of the political elites, hence the reason for making elections look like war and seen as a “do or die” affair. Political power, once gained, is used to pursue the interests of political elites, ensure that they are recycled and used to compensate their allies. Therefore, in Nigeria, politics is considered as a matter of “life and death because whoever wins in politics wins everything, and whoever loses, loses everything including lives and livelihoods” (Ibeanu and Mbah, 2014:47). Therefore, politics in the country has become a way of amassing wealth and for this reason; many are ready to do anything, including actions that undermine democracy and are inimical to national cohesion and integration.

### **The Synthesis of Arts, Religion and Politics in the Nigerian State**

Music has a link to arts and this has, over time, provided a window to the political terrain in Nigeria. In the late 1970s and 1980s, for instance, Fela Anikulapo Kuti’s songs were often viewed as radicalized and anti-government and so government made concerted efforts to muzzle him. During the military rule in the country, Fela Anikulapo Kuti criticized Nigerian leaders through songs such as *Zombie* and *Beasts of No Nation*, to mention a few. Similarly, Eedris Abdulkareem, a modern day contemporary musician, through the lyrics of his song *Jagajaga*, has condemned the leadership of the country for corruption and insecurity. On the contrary, *One Love* and *Unity Song*, the songs of Onyeka Onwenu were seen as promoting national cohesion and consequently given primetime on radio and television stations nationwide. There is a deliberate association between art and religion, especially in relation to the socio-religious lives of people. For many Nigerian artists, the Christian religion has offered a platform for expression of artworks. Various woodwork designs, stained-glass designs, mosaic-designs, stone carvings

and cuttings, wall decorations and inscribed sculptural designs have found expression in churches. In the traditional religion, art works have also found expression in shrines and as posited by Igbaro (2010), it has been a viable channel for the promotion and spread of religion in Nigeria. Arts has also been employed as an instrument for promoting national unity and foreign policy objectives and a good example include the various dance troupes in Nigeria. The Swange dance troupe which began as a folk dance among the Tiv people of Benue state has been “repositioned and popularized within the precept of cultural diplomacy” (Auwawuer, 2016:143). To encourage intercultural harmony, the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture (BSCAC) has been able to take Swange dance to many countries and in recognition of this, the federal and state governments have often sent the troupe to many parts of the world where it keeps performing for select audiences, bringing back honours to the state and the nation. (Auwawuer, 2016).

Nigeria is a secular state, yet almost all government meetings and ceremonies commence and end with prayers. When officials are to be sworn into public offices, they take oaths of office by using either the Bible or Quaran. Often, government sponsor pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Mecca and most times, the beneficiaries get the pilgrimages as political compensation for patronages. Politics in Nigeria has been so fashioned along religious divides that it has led to the loss of lives of political leaders. It has been averred that the military coup led by Major Chukuma Kaduna Nzeogwu(1937-1967) that led to the killing of Ahmadu Ibrahim Bello(1910-1966) , as well as the reprisal attack by the northern military which led to the killing of Major General Aguyi Ironsi in 1966, had religious and ethnic undertones (Ntamu, Abia, Edinyang and Eneji, 2014).

At different times, religion has provoked tension within the country. In 1973, the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), the apex Islamic authority in Nigeria was established and this made it possible for Nigeria to become a registered member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1985. The membership allowed Nigeria to have access loans and other financial obligations from Muslim countries across the world (Imo, 2008). This membership stirred up anxiety and feelings of apprehension of Muslim domination among Christians in the country. It provoked religious

crises, riots and violent uprising especially in the Northern part of Nigeria. To strengthen the political voices of Christians in Nigeria and challenge the islamization of the country, Pentecostal and Orthodox Christians who previously had opposing doctrinal beliefs united and formed the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) (Kukah and Falola, 1996).

The role ascribed to religion is so important that Kukah (1993) asserted that one needs to; at least, pretend to be religious to occupy some political offices in Nigeria. In Nigeria, religion has often been used as bait by political elites to shop for votes during elections because political elites never shy away from using religion to achieving their objectives. In 1999, for instance, Alhaji Ahmad Sani Yerima won the gubernatorial elections in Zamfara because he promised to introduce Sharia laws in the state (Ayantayo, 2005). As a result of the introduction of Sharia, between 1999 and 2003, Islamic clerics organized Muslim faithful to vote for Yerima and his government gave the voters due recognition by involving them in cardinal segments of the Zamfara state public service. When Legislators were debating the issue of Sharia for the draft of the 1999 Constitution, the Christians in the National Assembly unanimously kicked against its adoption but Muslim legislators remained resolute in ensuring its endorsement. Eventually, the provision on the Sharia Court of Appeal was inserted into the proposed constitution and accepted and this provoked different religious reactions. While the Christians resisted it because they perceived it as a means of islamizing the country, the Muslims saw nothing wrong in its adoption. Subsequently, this created religious tensions and provoked unrest. After Obasanjo assumed office in 1999 twelve states adopted the Sharia and this appeared to have escalated animosity between Muslims and Christians and eventually led to insecurity, killings, destruction of religious building as well as properties (Afolabi, 2015). Afolabi further affirmed that the religious crises that took place in Kaduna led to reprisal attacks on Mosques and Muslims in Abia and Owerri in Eastern Nigeria.

In recent years, religion has been actively used as a major instrument of campaign. This was reflected in the 2011 elections when Muhammad Buhari, (a Muslim) took Pastor Tunde Bakare (a Christian) as his running mate on the platform of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). Buhari eventually

lost the 2011 presidential election to Jonathan Goodluck, a Christian whose electoral success was said to have been determined by religion and appeal to ethnicity, given that the votes that gave him electoral victory were from the Christian dominated areas of the South and Middle-Belt region (Onapajo, 2012). Not giving up on the strategy of adopting a Christian counterpart, Buhari took Prof. Yemi Osinbajo (a Senior Pastor in the Redeemed Christian Church of God [RCCG] as his running mate on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and this can be said to be one of the reasons for the landslide victories recorded in the 2015 and 2019 presidential elections in the country. Political elites recognize the role of religion and some of them resort to patronising religious leaders and religious houses for prayers, as a means of getting more votes during elections. In preparation for the 2011 elections, Jonathan Goodluck worshipped at the Redemption Camp of the RCCG along the Ibadan-Lagos Expressway and was said to have knelt before Pastor Enoch Adebayo for prayers to secure his electoral victory. Religious leaders are expected to be detached from partisan politics but several instances have shown prominent Muslim and Christian clerics endorsing and encouraging their followers to vote for particular candidates, often on the basis of similar religious affiliation. The leadership of *Jama'atu Izatul Bid'ah Wa Iqamatus Sunnah* (Society for Removal of Innovation and Reestablishment of Sunna) for instance, a top Muslim Cleric, Sheikh Kabiru Gombe publicly announced and encouraged their followers to vote for Muslim political candidates (Isah, 2019). Interestingly,, Bishops Matthew Kukah of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sokoto and David Oyedepo of Living Faith Church Worldwide, respectively were in attendance when a media magazine, *Pulse* (18 December 2018) widely reported a reconciliatory meeting between Olusegun Obasanjo and Atiku Abubakar (a presidential candidate for the 2019 election in Nigeria). Their presence ignited controversies over the endorsement of Atiku but both clerics denied the claim.

To get into power at all cost, political elites regularly use financial inducements to garner support from religious leaders. Before the 2015 elections, there were allegations that Jonathan Goodluck donated about 30 million US dollars to CAN under the leadership of Ayo Oritsejafor and the speculations were that its purpose was to get the loyalty of CAN's leadership (Obadare, 2015). Apart from this, it was also reported that millions of Naira was spent on Marabouts

from North Africa and Saudi Arabia by the Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, the National Security Adviser to Jonathan Goodluck to conduct prayers for his re-election into office in 2015 (*International Center for Investigative Reporting*, 4 December, 2015). In the blind pursuit of power, some politicians visit traditionalists to get charms to intimidate political opponents. From time to time, religious leaders, organizations and associations express their views on political issues in the country and religious bodies including CAN; the Christian Council of Nigeria; the Council of Chief Imams and Alfas in various communities; the Ansar-Ud-Deen Association of Nigeria and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, to mention a few, have, at different times, expressed displeasure at kidnapping, electoral violence, banditry, failure to ensure youth participation in elective positions, terrorism and killing of Christians in Northern Nigeria (Adunola, 2019; *Pulse*, 28 May, 2018; *Punch*, 12 February, 2017; *Punch*, 27 July, 2019; *Vanguard*, 29 July, 2018). While some of these religious leaders express their views on political issues with sincerity and from a moral perspective because of the prophetic offices they occupy, some speak for pecuniary motives.

There have been arguments that it is improper to mix religion with politics, yet there is overwhelming evidence of integration of religion and politics in Nigeria. Integration has been provoking religious violence and promoting political instability in the country but if it is constructively deployed it could serve as a positive force that would bring about positive, economic, social, moral and political transformation in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

This paper has shown that if arts is properly employed it can be a veritable instrument of unity. Arts speak a universal language irrespective of ethnic or religious differences. One of the main problems confronting Nigeria is lack of unity. Since arts have the critical potential of uniting the nation, the government needs to deploy arts to ensuring unity in Nigeria. In view of this, this paper recommends the resuscitation of National Arts Fiestas often organized to bring Nigerians together. Arts should be funded by governments to promote nation building. Rather than seeing artists who criticize governments as enemies, such artists should be considered as the voices of the ordinary Nigerians and efforts should be made to correct any

ill portraiture in the works of such artists. In addition, artistes, especially musicians need to continuously use their songs to correct the ills perpetuated by political elites, government and the people in larger society.

Scholars have established that religion has a great divisive potential in Nigeria because it has direct correlation as the causal factor to many devastating crises in the country. In view of this, the paper recommends that true secularism should be adopted at all levels of governance. Governments should discontinue the sponsorship of pilgrims or the promotion of religious activities both in Nigeria and other parts of the world. In the same vein, religious considerations must be jettisoned in the formulation and implementation of policies. A government that considers religious beliefs in taking decisions stands to be accused of partiality by adherents of other religions. Most Nigerians tend to be very religious but this does not transcend into expected actions and attitudes of pious people. Research by scholars into different religions has shown that they all have sound moral codes to guide the day-to-day interactions between the leaders and followers. The Bible, for example, admonishes that one should love one's neighbor as oneself. Other religions also affirm this moral injunction. However, the contemporary occurrences in Nigeria's politicalscape depict greed and manifests as exploitation of public offices for aggrandizement, self-enrichment, religious intolerance, looting of public funds, electoral malpractices and various corrupt practices, among others. This reveals the vacuity of religiosity among many leaders. It is imperative for religious leaders not only to continue to teach moral codes but live by conducts worthy of emulation to promote morality.

There is a need to sensitize the electorate that elections and politics should no longer be framed with religious considerations; rather votes should be based on the consideration of party manifesto and on the credibility of the political candidates. Additionally, instead of meddling in politics for personal gains, religious leaders should play the role of correcting anomalies and encouraging good conduct among political elites. In addition, religious leaders should maintain neutrality on the political space, instead of making utterances that can spur violence or encourage religious divisions. When this is accomplished, more constructive ethos would be engendered in the political milieu.



Good governance is the antidote to crises and it is the glue that binds arts, politics and religion in Nigeria. National integration and democracy cannot be consolidated without institutions and leadership devoid of bad governance. When government is seen as being truly responsive and responsible, the arts and religions will cease to be lethal weapons of destruction and will become instruments for constructively enhancing the betterment of Nigeria.

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**ARTICLE**  
*10*

**LEADERSHIP, DEMOCRACY AND  
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA:  
FOCUS ON THE FOURTH REPUBLIC**

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## Abstract

*Leadership is critical to any country's development because it is a major pivot of democratic government. Democracy is not just trending, it is the most popular representative form of government. This paper discusses the challenges of leadership, democracy and national development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic and used synthesised information from secondary sources. It adopted empirical typology of analysis for both theoretical framework and analysis. The findings showed that leadership has not demonstrated sufficient vision and has inadvertently constituted the main clog to development in Nigeria. The paper concluded that as long as visionary leadership and functional democracy do not exist in Nigeria's socio-economic and political transformations, national development would remain an illusion and unattainable in the 21st century and beyond. Consequently, the paper emphasises the need for visionary, democratic leadership that places national interest above other considerations and reiterated that achieving this requires the deepening of democracy through inclusive broad-based participation of the citizens whose votes truly count during elections and thereafter.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Democracy, National development, Socioeconomic, Political

## **Introduction**

Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960. As a symbol of Nigeria's new status, the British Union Jack was lowered and replaced by Nigeria's flag of Green-White-Green as a symbolic gesture to establish Nigeria's sovereignty. Unfortunately, the newly found excitement of self governance was short lived as the nation's public space was upstaged by a colony of "incompetent leaders" who have impacted negatively on democracy and national development in the country. Therefore, the original vision of the some of the prominent nationalists and the nation's leaders-Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Chief Anthony Enahoro and other departed statesmen, who laboured night and day to birth an Independent Nigeria, remains a mirage (Nzeako & Chuks, 2019).

After independence, Nigeria adopted Parliamentary System of Government, the model used in the United Kingdom. The first Prime Minister was Tafawa Balewa while Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was the Governor General as well as the President; Chief Obafemi Awolowo was the first Premier of Western Region. No sooner had Nigerians got onto the seat of power than the euphoria which greeted the nation's independence began to wane. This was because the leaders failed to offer envisioned leadership and focused direction to governance. All their infractions eventually forced the military to stage the first coup and made incursion into power and politics. The first military coup was led by Major Kaduna Nzegwu in 1966. Things further degenerated and ultimately culminated in the first civil war (1967-1970). Several other coups, counter coups and palace coups took place. Eventually, a Military Head of State, General Murtala Mohammed established a definite timetable for transiting from military to civilian administration. He set up the machinery for transition to civil rule in 1975 but could not see the process through because he was killed in an aborted Military coup on February on February 13, 1976 by Col. Bukar Sukar Dimka Gen., Murtala's Deputy, General Olusegun Obasanjo, supervised the election process and successfully handed power onto the politicians in 1978. After elections had been successfully held in 1978, the political party that produced the president was the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). NPN's Presidential Candidate, Alhaji Shehu Shagaria emerged as the democratically elected civilian leader

in 1979. Unfortunately, the civilian governmentt was plagued by corruption and “prebendal politics” (Richard, 1987) and succumbed to another military coup in 1983.

Suberu (2013) explained that Richard’s (1987) theory of prebendal politics provides and provokes stimulating analyses of Nigeria’s federalism (1987, 1998). The theory shows that the constituent ethnicities of Nigeria’s federal society are the bases for the organisation, mobilisation, and legitimisation of prebendalism’s ethno-clientelistic networks of patronage, corruption, and rent-seeking. Similarly, the innovative Nigerian principle of “federal character,” according to which the country’s ethno-regional diversity must be reflected in all governmental appointments and disbursements, has effectively transformed prebendalism (or the personal, factional, and communal appropriation of public offices) “from an informal norm of political competition into a directive principle of state policy” (Richard, 1987, p,56). Obviously, the fragmentation of Nigeria into a multiplicity of centrally-funded, sub-national states and local governments has vastly expanded and multiplied the access points and conduits for the individual and sectional appropriation of public power and resources. Indeed, the Nigerian federal system operates almost exclusively as a mechanism for the intergovernmental distribution and ethno-political appropriation of centrally collected oil revenues. The system abets, and is enmeshed and subsumed in, an overall context of prebendal and neopatrimonial politics (Suberu, 2013).

During the protracted military rule, Nigerians expressed the desire for democracy as the platform to engender positive political change (Nweke, 2015). Unfortunately, corrupt leadership inherited from military had permeated the democratic era such that, in addition to economic and financial corruption, political corruption ranks very high with the greatest feature of electoral malpractices (Nweke, 2015). After upstaging President Alhaji Shagari in 1983, military administration continued until 1999 when the country returned into democratic practice. It elected Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, (a former Military President) as an Executive President in 1999. Since 1999, all aspects of leadership have come under scrutiny because of the need for improvement in leadership, democracy and national development.

Nweke further asserted that the 1999 democratic military-to-civilian transition saw the emergence of democratic government headed by a retired army general, Olusegun Obasanjo, as the Fourth Republic Nigerian President. Obasanjo's administration was fraught with a subtle militarisation of a civilian government (Nweke, 2015). Akuta's (2009) corroborated Nweke's view:

Sincerely speaking, the only gain we have got in the past 10 years of democracy in Nigeria is simply that we have had a civilian regime. Besides, it has not been really civilian in the true sense of it. Eight years out of the last 10 years (Obasanjo's administration) was a quasi-military government because Obasanjo ruled Nigeria like a military head of state (p.7).

Adagbabiri and Okolie (2019) equally stated that the issue of democracy and national development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic will continue to dominate political discourse by both academics and non-academics because democracy is at the crossroads and national development has only materialised in the imagination of Nigeria's national development planners (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2019). Since Nigeria attained independence in 1960, it has been in search of a workable democracy and envisioned leadership. Nigeria needs to find ways of adapting democracy to the country's numerous stakeholders. This may require the pursuit of consociation, an arrangement that will allow for power sharing among competing groups and political interests in the country (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2019).

Nigeria's renowned first generation novelist Chinua Achebe (1984) noted that political leadership has been one of the main obstacles to democracy and development in Africa. He stated that post-independence political leadership has been everything but productive; it has been distributive rather than productive in orientation, wasteful, and corrupt in political and economic management. Achebe's argument still remains relevant till date. Given the character of the country's leadership, it is not surprising that there have been threats to human security. The threats seem to have direct correlation to the

schism in the ranks of the political elite who lack the hegemony and discipline to engender socio-economic and political stability (Igbodalo, 2012).

All over the world, leadership, democracy and development have been used as pivots for effectively dealing with inter and intra-group conflicts arising from democracy. Sadly, these concepts do not seem to transform into development in Nigeria because Nigeria's experience with leadership and democracy has not been as productive as it ought to be. Some of the reasons include inability to make the electorate's vote count in election processes; preponderance of ethno-religious violence in the polity; prostrate economy; widespread poverty as well as deficit of infra structure. The popular expectations that leadership and democracy will resolve all these challenges have largely been unattainable. It is against this backdrop that this paper has explored the effects of leadership and democracy on national development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

### **Theoretical Issues**

Analytical typologies as an approach, refocus attention on the observable functions of leadership, the personal qualities of a leader or the sources of a leader's authority. Rather than assessing leadership from the sublime perspective of terminal values, the typologies seek to situate the problem within a context of individual and social psychology, group interactions and intergroup processes, as determined by historically concrete configurations of social structures and institutions. Max Weber's (1946, 1958) tripartite ideal-type analytical typology of traditional, rational-legal and charismatic leaders is representative in this regard. Weber employed a leadership-centred approach to political thinking and acting by viewing politics as "the leadership or the influencing of the leadership of a political association, or a state." In other words, it refers to a "human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. Weber distinguishes between the cultural, social and psychological sources of leaders' powers. Leadership is exercised according to traditional, legal-rational or charismatic domination, authority and legitimation (see Table 1; Weber 1946). Weber's typology of the most common "motors" of leadership in pre-modern and modern societies emphasises leaders'

embeddedness in society, and helps solve the research tasks of a comparative nature.

Deutsch (1978) offers a typology of leaders based on the extent of leaders' powers. Devised as a continuum that ranges from strong, successful leaders to relatively weak and unsuccessful ones, Deutsch's typology correlates key features of the leader's personality, the type of support extended by the followers, and, crucially, the fit between the policies advocated by the leader and the prevailing 'spirit of times', or the requirements of the historical situation that the leader can ignore only at his or her own peril (see Table 2).

**Table 1: Weber's Typology of Legitimate Power/Authority**

Type of Legitimate Power/Authority	Source of Legitimate Power/ Authority
Traditional Custom	Perennial institutions
Rational-legal	Legal-bureaucratic procedures
Charismatic	Personal qualities (extraordinary 'gifts') of the leader

Source: Weber (1946, p.44).

**Table 2 Strong versus Weak Leaders**

Leaders	Personal Qualities	Type of Support from Followers	Fit between Leaders' Policies and Situations
Strong	Strong, decisive personality	A large group or coalition of groups strongly united with consistent bonds of attitude and interest	Fit
Weak	Weak, indecisive personality	Few supporters, or many supporters who are weakly united	Lack of fit

Source: Deutsch (1978, p.67).

The theory is apt for this study on Nigeria's leadership because rather than assessing leadership from the sublime perspective of terminal values, the theory situated the problem within a context of individual and social psychology, group interactions and intergroup processes, as determined by historically concrete configurations of social structures and institutions.

## **Conceptual Discourse**

### **Leadership**

Leadership is the manner by which an individual influences the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviour of others. Leaders set a direction for the team, thereby assisting followers to see what lies ahead, and visualise what they might achieve. Leaders also encourage and inspire their followers. Without leadership, a group of human beings quickly degenerates into rancour and conflict because they see things from different perspectives and lean toward different solutions. Leadership helps to point followers in the same direction and harness their efforts. Leadership is the ability to get other people to do something significant that they might not otherwise do. It is all about energising followers toward a goal (Mills, 2005). The Oxford English Dictionary (2018) explains leadership thus:

Leadership is the dignity, office, or position of a leader, especially of a Political party; ability to lead; the position of a group of people leading or influencing others within a given context; the group itself; the action or influence necessary for the direction or organization of effort in a group undertaking.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines a leader as "the person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country." To lead means to "cause (a person or animal) to go with one by drawing them along; show (someone) the way to a destination by preceding or accompanying them." In other words, both goal setting and motivation figure prominently as essential attributes of the notion of leadership. Other languages differ considerably with the meanings of equivalent translatable terms, but have also adopted the English "leader" and "leadership" in the last century (Blondel, 1987).

Leadership is almost exclusively a communication activity. Indeed, effective leaders communicate clearly, promptly, empathically, and keep team members well-versed. Real leaders “walk the talk” by delivering what they promise (Rosenbach, Sashkin & Harburg, 1996). The two expressive qualities of effective leaders are identified as active listening and sympathizing with what people have to say (Rynders, 1999). Leaders know how to listen and possess essential qualities that encourage positive work relations, inspire trust, and augment the result. Effective leaders know people have a necessity to be heard. Lucia (1997) noted that empathy, a leadership trait, is as appreciated as the willingness to listen. Leadership is an essential feature of all government and governance; weak leadership contributes to government failures, and strong leadership is indispensable if the government is to succeed. Wise leadership secures prosperity in the long run; foolhardy leadership may bring about a catastrophe. Lack of leadership routinizes governance. Its political and creative aspects fade away: it becomes no different from administration, focusing solely on pattern maintenance and repetition of the same.

Nigeria’s enormous resources (both human and natural) have been unmaximised by the leaders. Leadership-deficit cut across all levels of governance (federal, states or local governments). Leadership is not only germane to the growth of democracy, it should translate into development. It would appear that Nigerians have been experiencing the Machiavellian concept of politics which implies that the end justifies the means.

### **Democracy**

Democracy, a derivative, came from the Greek words, “demos” which means (the people), and “Kratia” (rule). Therefore, it is a combination which means rule by the people (Supo, 1986). In his famous “funeral oration,” Pericles, the Athenian Statesman declared: “our Constitution is named a democracy, because it is in the hands, of not few, but many” (Supo, 1986, p.40). Democracy, as practised in ancient Greece, or in more recent times in the New England town meetings, was called “direct or pure democracy.” It was a democracy characterised by decision making directly by the people. Representation was not necessary because each citizen was able to voice out his or her own opinion and directly makes binding political decisions for the society.



On village democracy in Africa, Supo (1986) noted that “elders sit under the big tree, and talk until they agree.” In any case, direct democracy is not practicable in modern societies because of their large sizes and populations. Though direct democracy could still be practicable at the village level, the modern states practice representative democracy (p.41).

This affords the citizens the maximum freedom and opportunity to choose their representatives in government at defined regular intervals. This method suggests the existence of different political parties, an election process and free and fair competition among competitors seeking to hold offices on behalf of the larger citizens of the state through the exercise of franchise by the citizens (Nyerere, 1965).

Democracy could be better expressed thus:

- i. Multiplicity of political parties seeking for political power through election.
- ii. Competition for power is open to all qualified citizens free from victimization.
- iii. Elections to political positions are held periodically and through the secret ballot system.
- iv. There is the utilization of the universal adult suffrage in the selection of political leaders.
- v. There is guarantee for the fundamental human rights of citizens.
- vi. There is separation of power among the three tiers of government.
- vii. The rule of law is enforced to the latter.
- viii. Popular decisions are taken through the decisions of the majority in the legislative assemblies as the house is the representative of the citizens (IPU.1994)

Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth American President defined democracy as government of the people, by the people and for the people. This paper is of the opinion that Nigeria's Fourth Republic has not really been practicing democracy. What led to the demise of Nigeria's Second Republic democracy appears to have recurred in the Fourth Republic. Therefore, democracy in Nigeria, could be defined as government of the bourgeois by the bourgeois and for the bourgeois. It would appear that one needs to belong to the class of bourgeois to be able to win elections in Nigeria. Essentially, it does appear that those grounded in development issues rarely get the opportunity to participate in government.

### **Development**

Generally, development implies a high level of economic production and consumption, and well-organised, broad based specialised political institutions which permit political mobilisation and participation in policy-making processes. In extant literature, the concept of development is closely linked with change from traditional to modern ways of life. Social scientists using the development approach see development as a pattern of institutional change occurring in a particular society as a result of modernizing economic and social conditions.

In an attempt to develop general theory, the literature on development has greatly expanded. Most theorists studying development have focused on its economic dimensions. Used interchangeably with "Modernization", "Innovation" and "Change", development is seen by Monte (1973) as a process of achieving parity with the world's most economically developed states in the production of goods and services. In terms of its political, economic and social dimensions, Monte contends that development is progression away from societies organised along traditional, tribal and village lines toward the development of an ideal type modern society approximated but not fully achieved by the world's more industrialised states (Monte, 1973). The problem with this definition is that it fails to specify the nature of progression through which a traditional society passes in its movement toward an ideal type modern society.

Apter (1969) views development as part of modernization and therefore

defines development as the process of consciously directing and controlling the social consequences of increased role differentiation and organisational complexity in a society. According to Akin (1980, p.300), development process is the application of rational thought to the mobilisation and utilisation of two fundamental resources – productive land and the labour of its population – to improving the material conditions of the people as a whole.

Ndekwu (1996) would want the government to address some policy directions in order to confront development issues in Nigeria and other developing states in international relations. According Ndekwu, the policies should address the following:

- i. Policy formulation or design and how to minimize macro-economic policy instability which is reflected in departure from original design, reversals and abandonment;
- ii. Conflict of objectives especially between achieving an economic balance at the cost of social upheaval whose resolution requires the realignment of interests and perception of the leadership and policy makers;
- iii. Timing and sequencing of policies which requires strict sense of priorities; and
- iv. consistency which is of three forms, namely,
  - a) Design or formulation consistency between initial conditions and policy designs, objective function consistency between objective and instruments and strategies, and
  - b) Implementation consistency. If the distortions, contradictions and inconsistencies are recognized in the policy programming and appropriate strategies are put in place to redress them, then the probability of successful policies would be high (Ndekwu, 1996).

## **The nexus between Leadership, Democracy and National Development in Nigeria**

In every political climate, leadership is germane and it is *sine quo non* to democracy and national development because good leadership engenders and promotes development. All over the world, democracy is both projected and promoted because it enables people voice out their opinion on social, economic and political matters. When a leader fails, such a leader is shown the way out through elections. This shows that the citizens understand the power of elections and often reflected it. Nigeria's various crises have emanated from failure of leadership because, among other deficiencies. Nigeria's leadership tradition appears to opt for primordialism which promotes tribal and ethnic proclivities rather than accomplishment. When there is effective and efficient leadership, democracy will thrive and development will take place in all ramifications.

Adefarasin (2015) asserts that Nigeria is blessed with both human and natural resources; yet, it is quite evident today that the country's political independence has not matched economic independence. Nigeria has not been able to develop and join the comity of nations simply because of leadership-deficit. Majority of the leaders that have emerged in post independent Nigeria have exhibited poor leadership qualities, appear unconcerned about national development because of corruption, unethical democratic principles, mediocrity, infractions of law and order, lack of rule of law, injustice, among other violations.

Agbor (2012) states that the United States of America which today ranks as one of the world's most technologically developed nations did not attain greatness by accident rather, it had been nurtured into greatness by successive political leaders. Some of the often mentioned ones include George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, John Kennedy and many other contemporary presidents. Russia offers yet another example of the importance of political leadership in nation building. Before 1917, the Russians suffered under the autocratic misrule of the Czars but today, the Russians ranks with other powerful and developed nations of the world. Russia's development has been linked to the sterling leadership qualities of Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. Without Lenin, the great Bolshevick

revolution of 1917 which transformed Russia into a superpower, would not have occurred, In 1959, Fidel Castro brought down the corrupt and inefficient regime of Fulgencio Batista and mounted a progressive political leadership in Cuba. Cuba's example demonstrates that good leadership lifts the citizens from poverty, ignorance and disease into affluence and contentment. Under the leadership of Fidel Castro, Cuba has been transformed politically, socially and economically and his government has vastly expanded educational opportunities and institutions. These are a few examples of the role of political leadership in nation-building. All the nations of the world that have succeeded did so primarily through good leadership (Chikendu, 1987).

### **Challenges to Leadership, Democracy and National Development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

Lack of envisioned leadership is one of the major problems in Nigeria. This country, for instance, has the capacity for tackling social, economic and political problems but lacks the willpower to confront these challenges because the willpower is largely locked in the hands of leaders at the political and economic levels. The challenges include failure of leadership; corruption; insecurity, insurgency; insincerity; lack of political will; lack of proper vision by the political leadership; lack of accountability in governance; amongst others. Essentially, leadership crisis, a major obstacle to development in this country, involves politicians, scholars, students, social critics, labour leaders and seasoned bureaucrats. All these have continually undermined the democratization process and national development in the country.

Since Nigeria's political independence in 1960, the country has not had the opportunity of being governed envisioned leaders but those often described as "accidental leaders." In other words, the mantle of leadership has continually fallen, by default, on the shoulders of those that lack the capacity, lack the required experience, and are neither prepared nor expectant of such responsibility. This has resulted into "visionless policies." This underscores the fact that most of Nigeria's developmental challenges are rooted in lack of envisioned, sound, and result-based leadership. As Chimee (2009) noted, the three major strands that account for leadership failure in Nigeria are lack of ideology; ethnicity; and corruption. These vices have compromised the

efforts Nigeria's political elites. For effective transformation and national development, the world is consciously moving away from infractions and promoting democratic values; public accountability; transparency; good conscience; fiscal discipline; due process but this progressive effort is being dogged by lack of credible leadership to enforce these democratic ethos. This is the tragedy of the Nigerian nation.

Another serious challenge to democracy and national development in Nigeria is that corruption appears to have been entrenched in all facets of national life. According to Joseph (2001) cited in Osimiri (2009), corruption has compromised governance in Nigeria. In view of the all pervasive effects of corruption, successive governments have embarked on anti-corruption campaigns. The administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, for instance, established the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003 to fight corruption. As Osimiri (2009) noted, the Commission gained such level of notoriety in the country that it is often said that "the fear of EFCC is the beginning of wisdom." EFCC's activities has painted the picture of transparency, openness and accountability but the resultant records have shown that there is much to be desired. The EFCC, especially, under the Obasanjo administration received much commendation from within and outside Nigeria but it has been alleged that it was selective in focus and justice-dispensation and allegedly used as an instrument for silencing political opponents.

Successive elections have shown that elections are gradually becoming part of the political culture in Nigeria. Unfortunately, elections are often manipulated and hijacked by "money bags" and incumbents, who deploy the entire state's apparatus for re-election. The widespread electoral malpractices which often characterises elections in Nigeria are inimical to the consolidation of democracy and good governance. In 2011, allegations of fraud in the general elections provoked violence and massive destruction of lives and property but the 2015 elections under the watch of former President Goodluck Jonathan was described as credible and widely acceptable by the electorate, political gladiators and election observers. The transition was also unique because it was the first time that a sitting president was defeated by an opponent without provoking rancour. The election ushered President

Mohammad Buhari. Unfortunately, this 2015 gain seem to have been lost in 2019 elections especially in Kogi and Bayelsa states.

Insecurity has become prevalent in Nigeria and has festered through non state actors. Perhaps, the most prominent is Boko Haram whose insurgent activities in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) States have retarded socio-economic and political development of the northeast in particular and the country in general. Inability to contain the insecurity spawned by Boko Haram is a strong indicator of the failure of Nigerian state. Other regions of the country are also under siege: Northwest is plagued by banditry just as kidnapping (for ransom) in the Northcentral and southern region has made the country unsafe. Other indices of insecurity include farmers/herders clashes in the middle belt. All these pose serious challenges to democracy and national development because insecurity is progress. The only way to remedy the situation is to confront it . Therefore, the government ought to combine its current military approach with political will so as to effectively and efficiently address the challenges of insecurity, poverty and underdevelopment of the country.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Leadership is a *sine quo non* to, it also drives democracy and national development. Leadership, democracy and national development are interwoven and remain central to all facets of development. Nigeria's history of ethnic and tribal pluralism has greatly affected democracy and national development in the country. Sadly, the prebendal politics of the Second Republic is still playing out in the Fourth Republic; nothing seems to have changed rather, the situation is getting worse. Nigerians need visionary leaders; justice; equity; and fairness to promote national development and instill confidence into the electorate. These are attainable only through committed, visionary, leadership and inclusive functional governance because all these deepen democracy, socio-economic and political transformations as well as national development.

Therefore, this paper concludes that as long as visionary leadership and inclusive functional democracy are elusive, the socio-economic and political transformations and, ultimately, national development will remain an

illusion in the 21st Century and beyond. The paper reiterates visionary, democratic leadership that places national interest above any other parochial considerations. This can be achieved through inclusive broad-based participation of the citizens whose votes truly count during elections and thereafter.

Essentially, therefore, government policies should be put in place to strengthen democratic institutions like Political Parties, National Assembly, Judiciary, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Civil Society, anti-graft agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), among others. These institutions must be allowed to operate independently and effectively to ensure the growth and sustenance of democracy and national development. There is need for positive change through rebranding of the country's value system to promote hard work, integrity, honesty, transparency and accountability at all levels of governance. Similarly, a relatively large percentage of the population needs proper civic education, enlightenment and empowerment to hold their leaders accountable.



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