



**Leadership, security and challenge of development in the Nigeria's fourth republic
(2015- 2023): A Literature Perspective**

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Abstract

Insecurity and leadership have consistently challenged national development in Nigeria. Guaranteeing security of life and property and overall development are fundamental duties of the state. This study, thus, attempts to examine the challenges of leadership and security in development in Nigeria. This study uses secondary sources of data collected from journal articles, newspapers and internet sources. The results were analysed through content analysis. System theory is adopted as framework upon which the study was analysed because of its relevant to the study. Finding from the study indicated that there is apparent leadership failure culminating to chaos, instability, destruction and rapid corruption thereby impending development. It, therefore, recommends strengthening institutions of state, credible election and respect for rule of law in order to ensure security and over all development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Fourth republic, leadership, security

1. Introduction

Political leaders worldwide are still actively grappling with the crucial matter of ensuring effective security within their respective territories (Joshua and Olarewaju, 2014). Nwozor (2013) succinctly puts that considerations surrounding national security occupies the central stage of nation-states' top priority. This implies that the security is primarily the responsibility of political leadership. Nigeria's democracy is being threatened severally due to activities or activities of leadership in managing the body polity. Insecurity has worsened, pushing many Sub-Saharan Africans to the margins of survival. Conflict, bad governance and poverty have combined to exacerbate the human insecurity dilemma in Africa. Leadership and development are increasingly important topics, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. These concepts have a significant impact on the well-being of the population, especially the

impoverished masses. When a country possesses abundant human and material resources, one would expect to see substantial development. However, when this expectation is not met, it becomes crucial to analyze the situation critically. The issue becomes even more crucial due to the unequal distribution of poverty and suffering among the people, which cannot always be justified by factors such as hard work or intelligence (Laremont, 2002). Africa, amid abundance, is said to be least developed continent of the Third World. According to Ayittey (2005), Sub-Saharan Africa faces challenges in achieving strong economic performance.

The security crisis in Nigeria is worsening, and the criminal activities are escalating since return to democracy. Kidnapping for ransom, banditry, Boko Haram insurgency, rape, political violence and secessionist movement continue to get prominent.

Ayittey (2005) laments that Nigeria stood at the same stage of development with South Korea in 1960, but four decades later, it found itself mired in convulsive violence and grinding poverty.

It is commonly recognized that security and development are closely connected, relying on and supporting each other. This understanding has contributed to the increased investment in security measures in numerous countries. As stated by Todaro and Smith (2003), starting from the early 1970s, there has been a steady growth in security expenditure, particularly evident in the Middle East and North Africa with an average annual increase of 22%. In 1995, developing countries collectively spent \$1.54 billion on military expenses, constituting 19.3% of the global expenditure on security.

This paper aims to explore the relationship between leadership, security, and national development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

2. Methodology

This study uses secondary and historical sources of data - observation, textbooks, journals, internet, and newspapers materials - and adopts content analysis.

Theoretical Analysis

The study is analyzed based on the adoption of system theory as the scientific framework. The theory is traceable to natural science, Biology to be precise. Subsequently, anthropology developed it to its study and, further adopted in sociology, a little later in psychology and thereafter in the field of political science. System theory is useful in understanding system changes or systemic breakdown and capacity to survive (Varma, 1999). David Easton is largely credited to have pioneered the application of system approach to political analysis. According to him political system exists within an environment of other systems. These systems affect one another negatively and positively (Anifowose & Enemuo, 1999). The survival of Nigeria as

a political system depends on every part of the system among these parts are; internal environment, external environment, and the various states that make the federation. The political leadership is the major part of the superstructure that harmonises and oversees other parts. Anything that affects a part sends positive or negative signal to the whole system. Leadership ineptitude could lead to systemic failure; the same way effective leadership can bring about stability and survival of other parts of superstructure and economic substructure. Although system approach has been criticized as being abstract, it is still useful in the understanding of political events.

3. Conceptual Clarifications

Concepts that are central to this study are explained with references to scholarly perceptions and understanding. These concepts have relevance with leadership, security and development.

Security

Security is a fluid concept which defies a consensual definition (Buzan, 1991; Ayadike, 2013). Security is a state of protection that leaders strive to obtain or maintain to safeguard the different aspects of their policies against both external and internal hazards (Cohen & Tuttle, 1972). Wolfers (1973) suggests that security refers to a condition where individuals or entities are not subjected to any form of peril, whether it be physical or moral aggression, accidents, theft, or decline.

Security, in simple terms, refers to protecting oneself from various socio-economic threats such as hunger, disease, natural disasters, and environmental pollution. In the context of the African continent, security entails safeguarding against threats to life, property, and the territorial integrity of individual nations as well as the collective pan-African entity. However, the actual state of African security contradicts this ideal. Despite having abundant resources, the continent suffers greatly from issues like hunger,

armed conflicts, instability, displacement, and extreme poverty. According to Kufor, individual security encompasses freedom from poverty, illiteracy, hunger, environmental degradation, and oppressive governance.

From foregoing, security is not only about absence of war but also absence of hunger, malnutrition, squalor, alienation, preventable diseases and mutual distrust among the diverse population. So, security transcends the cultural view which reduces it to absence of conflicts and wars. Yusuf (2014) expands on this notion by asserting that the concept of security initially focused on safeguarding nations from military threats and political coercion. Over time, it has evolved to encompass a broader range of non-military security concerns, adapting to the changing circumstances of the era. Nwolise (2006) reinforces this argument by emphasizing that true national security requires a combination of elements: a robust military, a thriving and resilient economy, a satisfied and content population, and an effective government led by patriotic and democratic leaders.

How States Contributed to the Insecurity and Underdevelopment in Africa

During the period of decolonization in the 1960s, the first-generation African leaders encountered a significant failure characterized by their inability to transcend the imposed colonial style of governance. This failure hindered their ability to adapt inherited structures in order to fulfill the aspirations of the people for human security and peaceful transitions of power (Musah, 2004). Instead, these leaders incorporated new institutions that grew apart from traditional structures, resulting in detrimental divisions within the newly formed microstates. Consequently, ordinary individuals no longer perceive themselves as stakeholders in the process of nation-building (Yusuf, 2014). The African State, in many instances, lacks broad popular support and has remained a

superficial entity since gaining independence. The concept of governance carries significant weight, encompassing the creation and assurance of public goods, as well as the responsible management of coercive tools, including weaponry (Musah, 2004).

The pursuit of building a strong state was overshadowed by the establishment of rent-seeking arrangements that prioritized personal loyalty and denied human security to the majority. Initially resembling distorted versions of the liberal democracies of former colonial powers, many African governments transitioned into one-party states (*de facto*) within a decade of independence. This transition stifled healthy competition of ideas and personalities, thwarting the development of checks and balances within the political system. As a result, the one-party state and its variations became catalysts for institutional violence (Musah, 2004). Hutchful (2000) further argues that rulers were compelled to rely on a select group of politically influential individuals from specific regions or factions, chosen primarily based on personal loyalty and ethnic affiliations, in order to maintain their own security. Often, these powerbrokers included influential military commanders and party members with their own political and economic ambitions, thereby creating a security dilemma for the ruler.

As represented by the system approach, leadership quality determines security situation and overall development. All aspects of development are interrupted by security challenges because people would not invest in a volatile environment. Awolowo (1984) corroborated on this in his statement: "The greatness of a nation (national development) does not consist in the abundance of its resources but in the quality of its people." If the leaders have failed to give vision to the people, harness its resources, but instead are corrupt and selfish, it will be difficult, if not impossible for such a country to develop. Dike (2013)

succinctly submits that “clearly, not everybody has the leadership acumen to lead an organization, not to mention ruling a country.” There is apparent leadership failure in Nigeria as clearly put by Ayittey (20005) that, this generation has failed Africa miserably and has left a horrendous trail of chaos, instability, destruction, and vapid corruption across Africa. Nigerian situation was also described by Achebe (1981) as total leadership failure. Over the years, this narrative remains the same.

It can be seen from the above that characters of African leaders have affected democratic stability and general security of the continent.

Development

The term "development" carries diverse meanings depending on the perspective of different individuals and contexts. What may be considered development in one

Development can be understood as a transformative process, involving a shift from one stage to another. In the context of society, it refers to the transition from one social level to a more advanced one. It is a shared aspiration of individuals to elevate society to a higher and more advanced level in various aspects, including the economy, education, culture, politics, science, and technology. Progress in these areas collectively contributes to national development, as it represents the culmination of societal advancement.

Development can be understood as a means of advancing and improving the well-being of individuals and progressing society as a whole. It involves utilizing natural, economic, and human resources to promote the overall benefits of society's members.

society may not hold the same significance in another, given the unique characteristics of each society (Matowanyka, 1991). There is often a misconception that equates development solely with economic growth, measured by the annual increase in per capita income or gross domestic product, without considering the distribution of resources and the level of participation of people in the process of sustainable growth (Mahmoud, 1991; Abdulmalik, 2019).

The World Bank (1994: 33) offers a simplified definition of development as the endeavor to improve long-term living standards. It further specifies that this improvement encompasses various aspects, such as education, healthcare, housing, transportation, infrastructure, industrialization, and technology. According to Arinze (2012; 84):

This perspective is supported by Julius Nyerere and Edwin Madunagu (as cited in Igbafen, 2003), who argue that the central objective of any development process should be the enhancement of the overall welfare of citizens. Okeke (1999) further emphasizes that the fundamental aim of development is to attain a satisfactory standard of living within the existing social, economic, and political framework. As mentioned earlier, it can be inferred from this that development is a process with a primary focus on the well-being of individuals.

Similarly, Seers (1972), development is the process through which human personality and needs are realized. Evaluating development requires considering three interconnected conditions: reduction in unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Pearson (1992) defines development as an enhancement in the qualitative and quantitative distribution of available resources. He emphasizes that development encompasses not just a single perspective of social, economic, and political

improvement, but rather, it is a broad term encompassing various strategies aimed at environmental transformation and socio-economic advancement.

Development, according to seers' position, is measured through how economic fortunes impacted on the lives of the citizens not a mere expression of rise in the GDP and GNP. Deprivation, poverty joblessness and wide gap between the rich and the poor are indicative of underdevelopment.

Leadership

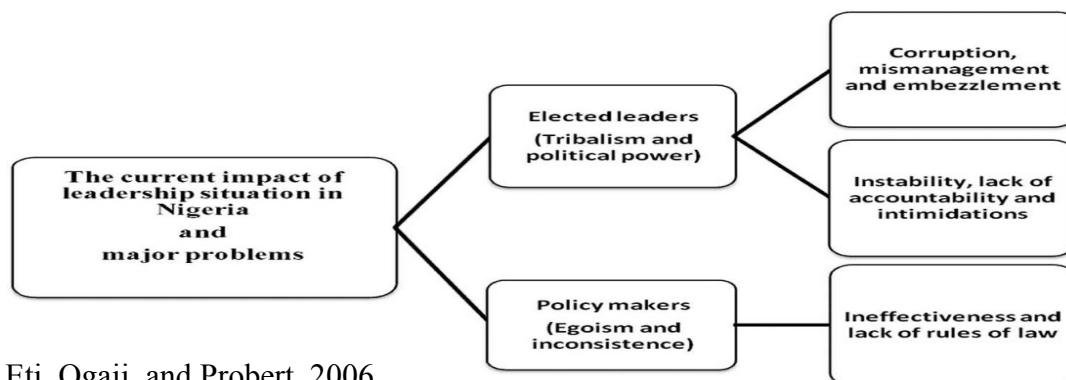
Leadership can be defined as the ability to influence others in such a way that they willingly strive towards the accomplishment of shared group goals. It extends beyond mere power or authority and entails the voluntary compliance of followers. Effective leadership entails not only motivating followers to work, but also inspiring them to work with enthusiasm and confidence (Koontz et al., 1983).

Chemers (2002) sees leadership is the act of exerting social influence to motivate and guide others towards achieving a specific goal, while also promoting unity and consistency within an organization. On the other hand, Ajayi (2012) describes leadership as a prestigious role that grants the individual the authority, influence, and capability to organize, oversee, and govern a society or group under their authority.

Literature states that leadership qualities comprise certain attributes as identified in the paragraph that follows. Therefore, it may not be correct to talk about universal qualities or characteristics of a leader. However, there are certain qualities or attributes that are commonly found in most leaders. These characteristics can be summarized as follows:

- a) A leader should have the ability to motivate and inspire those they lead.
- b) A leader should possess the capability to encourage and energize their team members.
- c) It is important for a leader to maintain an optimistic outlook and avoid pessimism.
- d) A leader should have a well-defined vision and a sense of direction for the organization.
- e) An effective leader should be intelligent and capable of making well-reasoned judgments about events and situations.
- f) A leader should possess emotional stability to maintain composure, make rational decisions, and exercise objective judgment.
- g) An effective leader should have the necessary charisma to engage the emotions of individuals and capture their hearts and minds (Berkley, 1975:186).

Figure 1. Major problems associated with the Nigeria's Fourth Republic.



Source: Eti, Ogaji, and Probert, 2006

The circumstances mentioned above have persistently destabilized and endangered Nigeria's democracy, as well as the neighboring states. There is a continuous and complete absence of the rule of law both within the government and among the people. Currently, Nigeria faces urgent challenges such as the mismanagement of public resources, corruption, instability, and deterioration of infrastructure. The problem of corruption is deeply ingrained and concerning. Transparency International consistently ranks Nigeria's corruption levels as one of the highest globally. Widespread corruption seems to penetrate various aspects of Nigerian society (Eti, Ogaji, & Probert, 2006).

One can see the connection now between leadership and development as asserted by Achebe (1983: 1) that:

The primary issue in Nigeria can be attributed directly to a failure of leadership. The Nigerian character, land, climate, water, air, and other aspects are not fundamentally flawed or problematic. The root cause lies in the absence of effective leadership.

Oluwasanmi (2007: 75) buttresses that:

“Many African countries have not experienced the type of selfless leadership that has benefited several Asian nations in overcoming the legacy of colonial rule. Instead, our leaders often maintain residences in Europe, the USA, and even countries like Japan, India, or South Africa. Unfortunately, we

have not seen followers who share the same vision as original leaders like Ahmadu Bello, Awolowo, or Azikiwe, and who possess the commitment, contentment, and passion necessary to build upon the strong foundations they laid. These foundations have deteriorated over time. Nigeria, for instance, has had leaders like the infamous “evil genius” Babangida and the murderous kleptomaniac Abacha. Most Nigerian leaders have displayed a lack of character, direction, and a selfish focus on self-preservation”.

4. Leadership and Security in the Nigeria’s Fourth Republic

The Republic began on May 29, 1999, marking the end of military rule and the transfer of political power to the democratically elected executive president, Olusegun Obasanjo. The transition to democracy after years of military rule brought about a release of pent-up anger and frustration from various segments of society. In the initial years, there was a proliferation of ethnic militias (Jega, 2002), as the legacy of prolonged military involvement in politics, characterized by repression and dehumanization, led different ethnic groups to assert their identities and make excessive demands on the system. These demands often manifested as violent conflicts, which had severe implications for national security. Ethnic groups such as the Odua People Congress (OPC), the Bakassi Boys of Africa, the Arewa People's Congress (APC), the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and the Ijaw Youth Movement

(IYM) emerged to promote ethnic nationalism (Agbaje, 2003). Subsequently, the Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDVF) and the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) were also formed.

The activities of these ethnic groups, along with ethno-religious and communal conflicts, as well as the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency, have contributed to a deteriorating security situation in the country. Ensuring effective leadership in securing the state has become a crucial issue for the sustainability of democracy. During President Obasanjo's tenure, his administration took measures to address the violent activities of the militia groups, including issuing a shoot-on-sight order, which had a deterrent effect on some of these groups. Diplomacy, 13% derivation principle, creation of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) among others was part of strategies to quell the Niger Delta militancy (Joshua, 2014). In addition to that was choice of Goodluck Jonathan as Musa Yar'adu's running mate that many believed to be a political appeasement to the South-south region as the cash-cow of Nigerian economy.

As part of effort to sustain peace in the oil-rich region, President Yar'adua introduced amnesty programme for Niger Delta militants to lay down their arms or face state action. The programme yielded result. Jonathan's administration was faced with post-election crisis in 2011 and Boko Haram insurgency in the North-eastern Nigeria. The region has been ravaged by the terrorists with gradual escalation to other parts of the north - Kaduna, Katsina, Niger, Kano and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Jonathan-led administration was widely criticized by Nigerians for allowing the insurgence to fester, and blamed the menace of Boko Haram on the regime (The Source, May 19, 2014: 22). The impunity of Boko Haram reached climax with the abduction of some girls at Chibok Secondary School, Borno State on April 14, 2014. Oluokun (The News, May 19, 2014)

stated that the girls were abducted on 14th April, 2014, the same day there was a bomb blast masterminded by the Boko Haram where over 75 lives were lost. Sarah Sewall, the United Nations Under-Secretary has identified corruption as hindrance to ending insurgency in the North-east (Ameh & Oladimeji, 2014). Okene (2005) lays credence to the above in his statement "ethno-religious and other identity-based conflicts in Nigeria", he submits that during this period, bad leadership was enthroned.

Buhari-led administration started work on 29th May, 2015 after he was sworn into office. On the first day in office, he announced the temporary relocation of the Chief of Army Staff to Maiduguri, Borno state and creation of an Army Division to contain Boko Haram militants. (Yamma & Yahuza, 2021).

In May 2018, Opinion Poll was conducted to assess Nigerians' rating of the President Buhari-led administration after three years in office. The Centre for Democracy and Development released the report and revealed that 40 percent of Nigerians approved the Presidents' performance, while 44 percent disapproved, with the remaining 16 percent neutral. According to the Centre, the rating implied that the President was rated below average by Nigerians (Yamma & Yahuza, 2021).

According to the poll, the federal government received below-average ratings in the three key campaign promises: Corruption, Security, and Economy. In terms of Security, the poll indicated that only 21 percent of the surveyed Nigerians rated the government's performance as good, while 24 percent and 55 percent rated it as fair and poor, respectively. This regime is glaringly faced with security conundrum across all the geopolitical zones particularly the north. Banditry keeps engulfing states in the north.

According to Amnesty International, at least 112 people were killed, 160 abducted and thousands displaced in communities in



Kaduna and Plateau States from July to August 5, 2021 (Daily Trust August 2021, Tuesday 10). On Saturday 14 August, 2021 more than 30 travelers were slaughtered and butchered by Irigwe youth along Gada-Biyu, Plateau State, Jos while they were returning from commemoration of the new Islamic year (Daily Trust August 2021, Sunday 15). It was said to be a reprisal killing for the mass killing and destruction by bandits a week before. The situation that leads to tense atmosphere and probable religious tension. Prior to that there were cycle of kidnappings in the north: Niger State Transport Authority (NSTA) where more than 18 travelers were kidnapped for ransom; Kagara College of Science, more than 200 students were kidnapped; On the 30th of May, 2021, at least 136 of Tegin Islamic school children were kidnapped and released after 88 days (<https://dailynigerian.com/breaking-days-kidnapped/>). Green Field School, Kaduna, 80 of them are still in captivity; on 30th June, 2021 at Federal Government College, Yauri, Kebbi State, 80 students were abducted and 50 of them are yet to be released as at the time of this study; Jengebe Secondary School, Zamfara, more than 200 students were kidnapped but later gained freedom (<http://ow.ly/KGZ750FT8WG>). It was reported that on Saturday, 14 August, 2021 three security agents were killed, while 15 students and four staff were abducted by unknown gunmen at the College of Agriculture, Bakura, Zamfara State (<https://bit.ly/3i5ht6f>). On Sunday 15 August, 2021 a mother, her baby as well as 11 others were burnt to death by unknown gunmen in Dansadau district of Maru Local Government Area, Zamfara State (<https://bit.ly/3xUaRj4>). On the 1st of September, 2021 73 students were abducted in Zamfara State at the hometown of the governor (<https://dailynigerian.com/police-confirm-abduction-7/>). All these have affected economic activities and stability of academic calendar as the embattled states, for different times, closed down schools

over security challenges. For more than a month now, Kaduna State government has not reopened schools in the State.

In addition to this, is raging of violent Biafran separatist movement in the South-east. The situation that resulted in killing of security agents, northerners and razing down of police stations, immigration offices and other government property in the east particularly Imo and Abia States. This has negative economic implications; inter-state business activities were frustrated and impeded. It was followed by rising prices of food stuff in the East. In the South-west, also, there was rising tide of ethnic nationalism and criminal profiling of people from other parts of Nigeria, north precisely.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

At this point, one can clearly see the relationship among leadership, security and development. Leadership secures the nation for development to thrive, they are interdependent and interlinked.

From the conceptual review of leadership, security and development, this paper concludes, without mincing words, that leadership has been in crisis in Nigeria, thus insecurity manifests in different form, and development remains elusive. Nigeria is like a man sitting on a keg of gun powder that could explode any moment. Until Nigerian leaders demonstrate capacity to peace building and shun sectional agenda that trigger ethnic nationalism, insecurity and underdevelopment will continue to stay permanently in the country.

Having discussed poor leadership as an impediment to security and development, the following are identified as rectifiers to those problems:

Firstly, leadership should be regarded as a call to serve and shoulder responsibility. Therefore, anyone aspiring to hold such a position must not only be prepared but also willing to assume complete accountability for their office and the consequences of their actions and inactions. Psychologists



have important role to play in expunging the idea that leadership is an opportunity for personal aggrandizement at the detriment of common good.

Secondly, the masses have roles to play if Nigeria is to have good leaders and experience meaningful development. They should strive to put good and trusted people into offices without minding tribes, religion, party affiliation and money. Then, they should hold their leaders responsible and accountable for their actions and stop worshipping them. It is in this way that Nigeria can witness progress and meaningful development.

Thirdly, strengthening of democratic institutions which enable limited government and checks and balances in the governing process. This can be achieved through de-personalization of public offices, independent judiciary and vibrant legislature. Citizens in turn have necessary role to play here by meaningful and active political participation vis-à-vis civil activism for ensuring accountability and transparency in governance.

Fourthly, credible election is a substance required to the enthronement of popular leaders and legitimate governments. Where there is credible electoral process, regimes fear ballots more than bullets; electorates/masses use the power of ballots to renew and withdraw their mandates for good and bad leaders respectively.

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