

Governance and Insecurity Nexus in Nigeria Since 1999: The Place of Leadership

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Abstract

Governance issues like jaundiced leadership, corruption, poverty- all of which have triggered insecurity, are increasingly becoming the norm in Africa. While most leadership is paying lip service to the fight against these menaces, the followership has not only resigned to fate but also contribute their quota in worsening the situation through various acts of criminality. The paper broadly takes a look at how governance issues, political and leadership challenges, have been contributory factors to insecurity in Nigeria. It contends that weak or destructive governance is sometimes the source of insecurity. It also makes the case that, the insecurity-governance link takes various forms, and it points to the centrality of the variable of good leadership, as a panacea. In the midst of that, study also finds that, the state-society gap is a central challenge for Nigerian governance. It therefore recommends that the political leadership in the country needs to build a social contract that is sufficiently inclusive to permit the management of diversity in the country. The theoretical foundation of the work was based on the Systems Theory by David Easton. Methodologically, the study adopted the content analysis as its research tool to explain the study.

Keywords: Governance, Insecurity, Leadership, Nigeria, Systems Analysis.

Introduction

Being safe and having access to excellent governance are fundamental aspects of human existence, which is why they are always guaranteed in the constitutions of the majority of sovereign governments. The 1999 Nigerian constitution explicitly stipulates that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government," and Nigeria is not an exception to this rule. Nigeria has long struggled with issues of bad governance and insecurity, but since 1999, the country has faced unprecedented security and governance concerns. Nowadays, scarcely a day goes by without a mention of some sort of security issue. Unfortunately, this wanton destruction affects both common people and the nation's economic resources. The series of bombings and killings in the north; banditry, kidnapping and armed robbery; political and economic related assassinations as well as the politically influenced communal wars has become a multi-hydra headed monster which has put the Nigerian security apparat under a lot of strain.

The point has to be made that, in Nigeria, as in every other country, it is the quality and characteristics of governance that shape the level of peace and stability and the prospects for economic development. There is no more critical variable than governance, for it is

governance that determines whether there are durable links between the state and the society it purports to govern. The nature of governance is central because it determines whether the exercise of authority is viewed as legitimate. Legitimate authority, in turn, is based on accepted laws and norms rather than the arbitrary, unconstrained power of the rulers. Governance also has an important national dimension relating to the institutional structures and norms that guide a nation's approach to challenges and that help shape its political culture (Chester, et al, 2011). This is especially relevant in looking at Nigeria's place in the emerging nations of the world-being the largest black nation on earth, and its important place in Africa, factors that dramatically affect the political environment in which its leaders make choices.

This paper begins with a conceptual discourse of the terms - governance and insecurity. It then attempts to provide a theoretical base for the study. The theoretical foundation then sets the stage for an analysis of Nigeria's insecurity trends to highlight the intimate link between governance and insecurity patterns. Thereafter, the paper examines governance scenarios and the drivers of governance; it later tries to take a critical look at the role of political and economic inclusion in shaping peace and stability and points to some of the primary challenges Nigerian leaders would face in deciding how to manage inclusion: whom to include and how to 'pay' for it. The paper concludes with a sobering reflection on the challenge of achieving resilient governance.

Conceptual Discourse

Governance

In order to fully entrench accountability, transparency, and widespread participation in the political system, governance is generally defined as a way and manner by which authority is exercised in the administration and management of social, economic, and political affairs in the nation by the responsible institutions (Ibrahim, 2013). In this way, international organisations like the World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and others defined governance as the use of authority or power to oversee the financial, political, and administrative affairs of a nation. Also, International Bureau of Education (IBE), a sister agency of United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defined governance to mean structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation. From the foregoing, this study adopted the IBE definition as a working definition of governance for explicitly included most of the dimension of governance.

Essentially, good governance, in the words of Surendra Munshi (cited in United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2006:4), "signifies a participatory manner of governing that functions in a responsible, accountable and transparent manner based on the principles of efficiency, legitimacy and consensus for the purpose of promoting the rights of individual

citizens and the public interest, thus indicating the exercise of political will for ensuring the material welfare of society and sustenance of the state" On the other side, poor governance is the antithesis of good governance. It is the inability to rule skillfully, competently, and effectively.

Any leadership that lacks justice, responsibility, trustworthiness, transparency, selflessness, and fair play is ineffective. In terms of development, weak governance also means lacking the ability to transform. Sobhan (1998:13) made the following basic claim about the role of governance in development in light of this: "Weak governance originates due to a sequential failure of the state to: a) project a developmental vision; b) demonstrate a commitment to realise this vision, through putting in place policies and programmes, as well as calibrating its allocative priorities to realise this vision; and c) develop a capacity to fulfil its commitments." To mobilise the required support from civil society and the political arena in order to turn the vision into reality, this includes administrative, technical, and political capabilities. The aforementioned, exemplifies or signifies the components of a proper governance systems, the absence of which, could be the catalyst of a chaotic and unstable system. Thus, proper governance is one of those elements that ensure the stability of societies.

Insecurity

According to McGrew, insecurity of a nation is predicated on two central pillars. On one hand, it entails that there is an apparent lack of maintenance and protection of the socio-economic order in the face of internal and external threat. On the other, it entails the lack of promotion of a preferred international order, to minimize the threat to core values and interests, as well as to the domestic order (Tony, et al, 1988). Closely allied to the foregoing, Nwolise explained that insecurity implies the inability of a territory to be secured effectively by a network of armed forces:..., that the people are not secured from external attacks, and devastating consequences of internal upheavals, unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, environmental degradation, pollution and socio-economic injustices (Nwolise, 2006). Nwolise's definition is in line with the direction of this chapter, as it is comprehensive, covering all aspects of insecurity in accord with the Nigerian milieu.

Theoretical Framework

Systems Analysis

David Easton was the first to consider studying politics from a system analysis perspective. According to Easton (1965), the political system is a social interaction that allows for the creation and implementation of authoritative and binding value allocations. He focused on intra system behaviour and chose the political system as his unit of analysis. According to him, all political systems are both flexible and open. He looked at the nature of transactions and exchanges that happen in closed systems yet are driven by societal or environmental

requirements. They gain authority as a result of the environment's support. The examination of the dynamics and variables that influence political stability and instability makes it more relevant to explaining the complex relationships between the problems of poor governance and inequality, insecurity, and poverty in Nigeria since 1999. The political system is an input and output mechanism that deals with political decisions and actions and performs integrative and adaptive functions pertinent to the change of society within the context of the Systems analysis paradigm (Johari, 2011; Almond, 1960). Moreover, the mix of the environment, citizens' demand and support (inputs), and the policy output from the system are core factors that affect the structures and processes involve in the authoritative allocation of values and are thus fundamental to the stability and survival of the political system (Johari, 2011; Easton, 1965).

According to Easton, the demands that citizens make of the political system and the support they give it constitute its inputs. Inputs in this sense are supposedly demands made by the general public. The demands placed on the political system by the political leadership and elites are internal inputs. The institutions that allow the political system to manage the demands placed on it are known as supports, whereas the demands' translated into authoritative policies and decisions are known as outputs. The ability of the political system to meet the inescapable challenges posed by the many forces within, as well as the maintenance of stability and survival of the polity, depend on striking a balance among these crucial political system factors. On the other hand, the political system's incapacity to answer pressing populist demands or constructively react to significant criticism of its policy outcomes has the potential to erode support for it. Additionally, intra-elite disputes over the formulation of policies or the distribution of limited resources, the preference for elite demands, and the inability of the system's institutions and structures to fairly manage citizens' demands can lead to unrest and strain on the political system (Johari, 2011).

Furthermore, within Nigeria's ruling elites, the fight for power frequently has lethal and dangerous dimensions. In Jega's (2007) view, the existence and wealth of the ruling elites are inextricably linked to the state's dominant role in socioeconomic development. Due to the tensions and contradictions within the elites, the demands the elites place on the political system as well as the ensuing processes of policy development and implementation are overwhelmed, which inevitably leads to an unstable environment. In light of the foregoing, the study will now attempt to investigate some of the trends in Nigeria's insecurity.

Overview of Nigeria's Insecurity Trends

Nigeria saw the Niger Delta's environmental activism increase in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This tendency quickly turned violent and eventually crystallised into the infamous Niger Delta insurgency, which nearly brought the Nigerian economy to its knees. The resumption of violent and organised crime, as well as the growth of ethnic militias and religious sects, following the return to democratic administration in 1999, are more

significant in terms of Nigeria's security trajectory. Democracy brought forth a liberal climate that unlocked a Pandora's box of complaints that had previously been repressed throughout time by the repression of military dictatorship.

The Niger Delta militancy peaked in the early 2000s as a result of the aforementioned eruption of grievances, which led to the adoption of a political solution that considerably reduced the unrest. The violence that typified these issues has significantly decreased, even though the underlying causes are still present (Ifesinachi, 2009). The greatest security problem currently exists as a result of the reinforced dimension that violent extremism, represented by Boko Haram, assumed in 2008. The Niger Delta insurgency and the Boko Haram extremist groups in northern and eastern Nigeria both adopted terrorist strategies and techniques, which is how the term "terrorism" entered Nigeria's security vocabulary. It is however, noteworthy that whereas the Niger Delta militants targeted state infrastructure and the oil industry, the Boko Haram extremist group, indiscriminately attacks the civilian population and targets. What also makes this group more destructive is its affiliation with transnational/international terrorist groups that enjoy robust international spread.

In recent times, the major threats to Nigeria's security have been banditry and terrorism which have been accentuated by violent extremism ideologies; separatist agitation and proliferation of ethnic militias; kidnapping for ransom; armed robbery which at times, could be orchestrated by criminal networks; and agrarian/Pastoralists farmers' crises which is a particularly potent threat to national security because they can trigger ethnic and religious interpretation. Others include cattle rustling and banditry; religious, inter-ethnic and intra-communal crises; oil theft and piracy; Sabotage, disruption and vandalism of critical infrastructure; murder and cultism-related violence; cybercrime; political violence, especially election-related violence; and financial and economic crimes such as corruption; money laundering, electoral fraud, trafficking in persons, drugs and arms, and fraud, which trigger or aggravate poverty and inequality which constitute motivations for crimes and threats to internal security.

Some of these problems derives from or are aggravated by economic and social conditions such as erosion of ethical and moral conduct in private and public life, corruption, ethnic and religious intolerance, deterioration of infrastructure and service delivery, steady rise in unemployment and mass poverty, widening social and economic inequality, proliferation of arms and drug abuse.

Insecurity and the Governance Link

This succinct analysis of Nigerian security concerns highlights how serious they are, particularly in the country's North East, where violent outbursts are frequent and chronic. Recent events have made the area even more complicated: The proliferation of local IS or Al Qaeda franchises in outlying, ungoverned areas, as well as (1) the increasing attacks of ISWAP and Boko Haram insurgents on border towns in Borno State and Yobe States that are dispersing large amounts of weapons and trained fighters throughout the region (SIPRI

Yearbook, 2018); (2) the gradual impact of these on farming activities, including desertification, that is severely straining traditional herder/farmer relationships in Nigeria; and (3). Not surprisingly, incumbent Nigerian leaders facing these challenges look to short-term military remedies and extend a welcome to military partners-with the UK, and the United States, the leading candidates.

Governance and insecurity are linked in both directions. Security issues may force the government to make difficult decisions that could worsen the situation by exposing it to increased corruption risks and the precarious position of cooperating with criminal organisations. On the other side, unstable or destructive administration can occasionally be the initial cause of insecurity. This can occur in a number of ways, for as by inviting each ethnic or geographical group to fend for itself, which is a classic security conundrum.

Ethnic divisions, which are easily made political and subsequently militarised into blatant ethnic violence, can lead to the development of a second pattern of insecurity along these lines. How to manage in an environment of ethnic diversity is possibly the greatest problem facing Nigeria's leadership class (Bakken & Rustad, 2018). Although the issue is by no means unique to Nigeria, it is particularly prevalent in that country.

When ethnic divisions result in insecurity, it is common to label it "ethno-religious" as if it were "caused" by long-standing animosities; nevertheless, ineffective political leadership and political entrepreneurs are more frequently to blame. Poor leadership may lead to deeds or omissions that disenfranchise or alienate geographically different communities.

The authoritarian reflex gives rise to a third paradigm, in which "big men" run arbitrary political apparatuses, frequently under a thin democratic veneer. Such leaders typically plot to rig elections or attempt to alter the constitutional term limits—a pattern that has been present in Nigeria in some form or another since 1999.

The nexus between insecurity and governance can take many different shapes, and it emphasizes the importance of the leadership variable. Leaders play a startlingly important role, for good or evil, in 'new' countries like the majority of Nigeria (Stremlau, 2016), where the rule of law is in conflict with the rule of men. Ethnic variety is respected, and inclusive policies are promoted by wise leadership. This issue, which is addressed more below, is especially important given that Nigeria is one of Africa's most ethnically diverse nations, with perhaps over 250 different ethnic groupings.

Governance Trends and Scenarios

The geopolitical shifts brought on by the conclusion of the Cold War changed Nigeria's governance tendencies. Political liberalisation in the former Soviet bloc assisted in setting off global political shock waves, upending the relationships between the Nigerian government and the main countries and significant sources of concessional financing almost at once (Stremlau, 2016). Nigerian people and civil society movements gained space as incumbent administrations lost their ability to count on guaranteed assistance from former external allies.

We may now look more closely at the sources of legitimacy in Nigeria's government institutions thanks to this succinct summary. In the current Nigerian setting, there are two main sources of regime legitimacy. The first form is rights-based legitimacy, which derives from the application of the law, regular elections, and the rotation of political power. Western governments often favour this type. The second, less frequently acknowledged source of legitimacy is what is known as "conventional diplomatic legitimacy," according to which a government, however poorly founded, is no more imperfect than the norm set by its neighbours in the region. In this case, regional governance is at play, and precedents may be established and later confirmed by regional or sub-regional organisations. For example, the election-day itself goes more or less peacefully, the vote tabulation process is opaque or obscure, and the entire process is shaped by a pre-election playing field skewed decisively in favor of the incumbents-which also becomes cannon fodder for later conflicts-and ultimately, insecurity.

Against this backdrop, where is Nigerian governance headed? The key lies in identifying the variables that will shape its context. These include macro variables such as educational access (especially for women), climate change impact and mitigation, development and income growth rates, demographic trends, internet access, urbanization rates, and conflict events.

Other Critical Governance Drivers

The importance and function of numerous strong external players will be one of them. Nigeria's political elites are working hard to create the future they want for themselves. However, the framework in which they make their decisions is directly determined by the latitude that various nations and their leaders have due to global political trends. Western influence is less prevalent and less significant due to the expansion of non-Western centres of power and the reemergence of global polarisation among major nations. This gives the government a lot of leeway to experiment and steer clear of Western tastes, but it can also push the nation to adopt authoritarian, state-capitalist policies when doing so is essential or practical. Africans play a significant role in shaping Nigeria's geopolitical landscape. However, it also represents the effects of the vectors of influence from the Arab, Russian, Chinese, Indian, European, and American societies, which project their distinctions into Nigerian society (Stremlau, 2016). The ramifications for governance are quite obvious if the attitude of the Nigerian political elite aligns with that of significant external voices in favour of stabilisation versus liberal peacebuilding agendas.

The accessibility of the technologies that are transforming the global communications arena to young, rapidly urbanising people will be another factor driving governance developments. Smart phones and laptops provide individuals and groups with relatively unrestricted access to the internet, giving them information-and potentially power-about a variety of topics, including market prices, relatives' opinions in the diaspora, conditions in the neighbouring country, and the personal enrichment of corrupt officials. Corruption and

transparency are going to become major political issues in Nigeria. The balance of power between official and non-official actors will likely shift, as networked activists assert their ability to organize and take to the streets on behalf of diverse causes (for instance, the END-SARS Protest). This could mean that overturning regimes could become easier to do, without necessarily leading to better governance. The same technology vectors can also empower criminal, trafficking, and terrorist networks, all of which pose threats to state sovereignty. In sum, the digitization of Nigerian politics raises real challenges for political leaders and has the potential to increase their determination to digitize their own tools of political control.

The Challenge of Building Resilient Governance

From the discourse, it is becoming seemingly apparent that, the state-society gap is a central challenge for Nigerian governance. The critical task therefore for leadership is to build a social contract that is sufficiently inclusive to permit the management of diversity in the country. To illustrate, when there are quite a sizable number of Nigerian's who live in cities, how will those cities (and surrounding countryside) be governed? What policies and laws will determine relations between farmers/rural and urban dwellers, between farmers and herders, between diverse identity groups living in close proximity or encroaching on each other's farm land, and between public officials, criminal networks and ordinary citizens? The optimistic reply-and it is a powerful one-is that Nigerians will gradually build inclusive political and economic institutions. This, however, requires wise leadership.

Political leaders the world over must therefore balance conflicting demands in this regard. On the one hand, they are aware that robust, receptive state institutions are necessary since weak, brittle states do not promote good governance. However, except in the short term, relying solely on state authority cannot provide political stability. Inclusion in politics and the economy is a prerequisite for legitimate and effective government. The next issue is how to be inclusive. On the plus side, Nigeria has a decentralised political decision-making structure that shares or delegated authority from the centre to local levels (at least on paper). On whether this practise is beneficial, the jury is yet out. It must also be noted that, devolution has occasionally had significant financial and governance repercussions, including acting as a conduit for coercion and corruption.

Who should be included is still another fundamental query. There may be disagreements concerning the legitimacy of the national government's position on this topic between non-official entities and civil society. However, it is expected that governments will make choices and govern after engaging the appropriate parties. Instead of one-sided campaigning, both parties should work to provide a space for debate in order to legitimise the tolerance of diverse viewpoints in society. Nigeria will profit in the ideal case when civil society respects the state's role (as well as the other way around).

The need for inclusiveness begs several problems, such as whether it should be a top priority to include various elites, ethnic constituencies, and a representative group of grassroots

opinion leaders. Should inclusion take place over time or just once? For instance, when dealing with issues that could lead to conflict, is it more beneficial to negotiate a power-sharing agreement amongst important parties and social groupings or is it possible that a periodic "national dialogue" would be beneficial? The question of what levels of society to include and how to ensure that local communities and organisations working at the national level may make their voices heard is also raised by the creation of an inclusive democratic system.

In some societies, traditional, tribal authorities may offer informed and genuinely accepted governance, provided that they are not merely government appointees pursuing decentralized self-enrichment. Legal norms are an integral part of the discussion about inclusivity since they affect every aspect of economic and personal life; this poses a critical question over whether individual rights or group rights take precedence in the normative hierarchy. There is also the question of inclusion of specific demographic cohorts: women, youth, and internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) from rural to urban areas all face issues of exclusion that can have an impact on insecurity and governance. Misguided policies at the national level combined with cultural constraints facing these social groups may increase exclusion and create seeds of future trouble.

In light of this discussion of types of inclusion, the implications for dealing with state fragility and building greater resilience can now be spelled out. Some regimes seem resilient because of their apparent staying power but actually have a narrow base of (typically ethnic or regional) support. The regime in this case captures the state, co-opts the security organs, and dissolves civil society. When a seemingly brittle regime reaches the end of its life, it becomes clear that the state-society gap is really a regime-society gap; the state withers and its institutions become hollow shells that serve mainly to extract rents.

The problems that face the Nigerian government are universal. But the Nigerian society is exposed to especially severe pressures, and the government must operate in an environment of high social demands and limited resources and capacity with which to meet them. These circumstances can generate an authoritarian reflex and the temptation to circle the wagons against all sources of potential opposition. The result is *transitory resilience of the regime* (Martin-Breen, et al, 2011), but shaky political stability, declining cohesion, and eventual insecurity or violent change.

It may be that, the long-term route to political and economic success has been comprehensively documented by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson in their global study of why nations fail or succeed. In this view, nations fail because of 'extractive economic and political institutions' that do not provide incentives for growth and stability. They succeed when there are political conditions that permit a broad coalition to impose 'pluralist political institutions' and 'limits and restraints' on ruling elites (Martin-Breen, et al, 2011). Thus, resilience of both state and society may hinge in the end on the rule of law replacing the rule of men. This we might call *transformative resilience* (Martin-Breen, et al, 2011).

The development of inclusive institutions may involve struggles that enable political and societal actors to check the domination of entrenched rulers and to broaden rule-based participation in governance. For Acemoglu and Robinson, such turning points occur in specific, unique historical circumstances that arise in a society's development.

Conclusion

It is yet too early to know if these institutions can develop in contemporary Nigeria as a consequence of slow tinkering with reformist agendas, as the legacy of smart leaders, or if they can only occur as a result of basic tests of strength between social and political factions. According to Afrobarometer's public opinion polls, we have a strong understanding of what Nigerians expect from their government. Jobs, improved economic management, decreased inequality and corruption, and end deliverables including infrastructure, health, and education are all in high demand (Afrobarometer Policy Paper, 2018).

To achieve those results, efficient governance institutions are needed. We do not yet know if such institutions will continuously develop or if they will only do so when Nigeria's political structure shatters and is completely reorganised. If inclusion is the key component, it will be required to investigate more thoroughly the means by which leaders might 'pay' for including different social groups and demographic cohorts. Even traditional rulers come to realise how costly inclusion and co-optation are. A more difficult version of the same problem confronts enlightened leaders: where to locate and organise the means of broad-based inclusiveness.

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