THE INFLUENCE OF THE POLITICAL ELITE ON STATE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

The political elite has a significant impact on state governance and policy, influencing choices that have an impact on social, political, and economic systems. This study looks at how the political elite use their power to influence institutional frameworks, resource distribution, and policymaking. The study examines how much elite interests influence government results, frequently putting their own interests ahead of the general welfare, by drawing on theoretical viewpoints on elite theory. The study emphasises the ways in which the elite uphold their power, such as strategic policymaking, patronage networks, and control over governmental institutions. Additionally, it looks at how elite influence affects democratic government, specifically as it relates to citizen involvement, political responsibility, and openness. Although elites have the ability to propel progressive reforms, their control frequently leads to laws that strengthen current power structures, restrict social mobility, and worsen inequality. Additionally, by examining how economic interests, geopolitical pressures, and historical contexts determine policy orientations, the research investigates the significance of both local and international factors on elite decision-making. Depending on the type of leadership and the degree of institutional checks and balances, case studies from different political systems show that elite influence can either build or damage state institutions. The study comes to the conclusion that in order for government to be genuinely inclusive, it is necessary to reinforce the systems that encourage responsibility, public participation, and institutional integrity. Policy changes that increase democratic participation and lessen the concentration of power among a small number of people are necessary to combat elite control. In order to promote sustainable growth and sound governance, this study emphasises the necessity of a more egalitarian political environment.

Introduction

The political elite has a significant impact on state governance and policy, influencing choices that affect social, political, and economic systems. Political power has historically been concentrated in the hands of a small number of people who have a disproportionate amount of influence over public affairs and frequently decide the course of institutional stability and national progress (Dye, 2013; Mosca, 1939). The relationship between political elites and governance has long been studied by academics, who have focused on how institutional frameworks, power consolidation, and elite interests influence policy results (Mills, 1956). The idea of the governing elite is based on the theory of elites, which says that decisions are made by a small group of people with money, political power, and strategic assets, even if there are democratic goals in the society.

High-ranking officials, corporate titans, military chieftains, and powerful stakeholders make up the political elites, who have considerable influence over the creation and application of public policy. Their responsibilities go beyond the legislative and executive branches to encompass unofficial channels of influence like media control, lobbying, and patronage networks (Domhoff, 2014). Elites' power to influence policy is most noticeable in fields like social welfare, foreign policy, and economic regulation, where their own interests frequently take precedence over those of the general public. Critics claim that elite dominance encourages corruption, erodes democratic accountability, and maintains economic inequality, while some academics think that it is essential for stability and efficient governance (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Varied political systems demonstrate varying degrees of elite influence, with authoritarian and democratic regimes displaying varied elite control techniques. While elites in authoritarian nations frequently retain power through force, patron-client relationships, and limited civic engagement in democratic systems, they may function through formalised political parties and legal frameworks (Higley & Burton, 2006).

There are still gaps in our knowledge of the complex relationships between elites and state governance, especially in modern political situations, despite a wealth of study on elite influence. The changing dynamics of elite networks, globalisation, and public accountability mechanisms have received little attention, despite research emphasising elite influence in policymaking (Domhoff, 2014). Elite influence has spread across national boundaries in a period of swift technical breakthroughs and global interconnectedness, impacting transnational governance structures and international policy coordination. Furthermore, little is known about the function of political elites in developing democracies and hybrid political systems. Due to political instability, weakened institutions, and outside influences from international political and financial organisations, elite dynamics fluctuate in many developing countries, making their influence more complicated and fluid (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

Furthermore, whereas the impact of elite control on policy outcomes has been thoroughly examined in the literature to date, methods of elite responsibility and resistance have received less attention. Though their ability to shift power relations is still unknown, grassroots movements, civil society organisations, and alternative governance models pose a growing threat to elite hegemony (Dye, 2013). Furthermore, more academic research is needed to comprehend how elite influence intersects with modern concerns like digital governance, environmental policy, and economic sustainability. By investigating how political elites influence governance structures, policy

decisions, institutional reforms, and the effectiveness of public administration, this study aims to close these gaps. The goal of this research is to offer a more thorough knowledge of power dynamics in contemporary governance by examining elite influence in both established and emerging political systems. In addition to determining possible paths for promoting more inclusive and accountable governance institutions, addressing these concerns is essential for evaluating the wider effects of elite influence on democratic governance, transparency, and equitable policy results. Consequently, the query that must be inferred from the premise is that

(i) The Who is the target audience for public policy and governance?

Research Problem

The tender investigation is that governance and public policy have a crucial role in determining the political, social, and economic structures of any state. These procedures are rarely impartial, though, as they are frequently impacted by a small number of elites who have an outsized amount of decision-making authority. There is still much disagreement over whose interest's elite influence serves. Elites, according to some, are the guardians of stability and advancement, but others maintain that their power largely serves their personal interests at the price of the well-being of society as a whole. This study critically analyses how elites influence government and public policy, determining whether their actions actually help the general public or rather serve to maintain their power. According to elite theory, a small, connected group of people dominate a society's main decisions and frequently put their own interests ahead of those of the majority (Mosca, 1939; Mills, 1956). This viewpoint contends that although democratic institutions may appear to be in place, they are actually run by a small elite that manipulates policy decisions in order to preserve its power (Domhoff, 2014). Pluralist views, on the other hand, suggest that several interest groups vie for sway in order to maintain equilibrium in the creation of public policy (Dahl, 1961). In order to determine if policy decisions represent true public interests or further elite agendas, this study applies elite theory.

Through a variety of strategies, including ownership, lobbying, political appointments, and financial contributions to political parties, elites influence public policy. To create policies that strengthen their economic and political dominance, powerful stakeholders, business executives, and high-ranking government officials work together (Dye, 2013). Economic policies, for example, frequently marginalise small firms and labour concerns while favouring giant corporations through tax cuts and deregulation. In a similar vein, foreign policies might be created to safeguard corporate assets overseas rather than to solve environmental or human rights issues. Governance institutions frequently reflect elite interests, particularly in areas with lax regulatory regimes.

To maintain their power, political elites frequently rig elections, appoint judges, and operate bureaucratic institutions (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).Elite domination is evident in authoritarian governments, when laws are designed to quell opposition and preserve power. Nonetheless, elite influence can still be observed in democratic countries through policy capture, in which laws are crafted to favour influential organisations over the general populace. Although some contend that economic growth and stability are promoted by elite governance, data indicate that the advantages are disproportionately concentrated in the hands of the elites. Research has indicated that in cultures where economic elites have a significant effect on policy decisions, income inequality increases (Piketty, 2014). Furthermore, rather than tackling systemic injustices, social welfare

programs, healthcare improvements, and educational policies are frequently designed to benefit wealthy people. Participatory governance is restricted by the concentration of power in elite circles, which lessens the impact of under-represented groups on important policy choices.

Concerns regarding democratic accountability and equitable development are raised by the elites' hegemony in governance and policy. It is still crucial to consider whose interests elite power over governance and public policy serves. Evidence indicates that elites' power disproportionately benefits their own class, despite their frequent defence of their position as essential to political and economic stability. Institutional changes that improve governance's accountability, openness, and inclusivity are necessary to address this mismatch. Without these adjustments, the continued dominance of the elite will erode democratic values and impede the advancement of equity.

The State

Weber defines the state as a "human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." This definition emphasises the state's role in maintaining order through legitimate coercion. On their part, Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1970) state that the state is "a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms," meaning it serves as an instrument of class domination that enforces the interests of the ruling class. But this paper defines the state as a political association that establishes sovereign control over a defined geographical area, enforcing laws and providing governance for its population.

Public Policy

To Anderson (2015), public policy refers to the system of laws, regulations, actions, and decisions implemented by governments to address societal issues and promote the public good. This definition implies that it is formulated through a complex process involving various stakeholders, including government institutions, interest groups, and the general public. Dye (2017) asserts that public policies aim to guide actions in areas such as healthcare, education, economic development, and environmental protection. Thus, this paper avers that public policy can be understood as a course of action deliberately taken (or not taken) by government authorities to solve public problems. It involves the interplay of political, economic, and social factors in decision-making processes that affect citizens' lives.

Political Elites

By 1956, political elites refer to a small group of individuals who hold significant power and influence in political decision-making within a society. On their part, Higley & Burton (2006) state that elites are individuals who often occupy key positions in government, political parties, military, business, or other institutions that shape public policies and governance. This implies that politics plays a crucial role in policy formulation, leadership selection, and the distribution of resources. According to Pareto's elite theory, elites emerge from society based on their superior abilities, and they continuously circulate between ruling and non-ruling groups (Pareto, 1935). Similarly, thus, this paper argues that power in modern societies is concentrated in a small elite group that dominates political, economic, and military institutions, shaping national and international policies.

Governance

To (1996), governance refers to the processes, structures, and mechanisms through which power and authority are exercised in a society to manage public affairs. This notion implies that it encompasses decision-making, policy implementation, and accountability frameworks involving government institutions,

private sector actors, and civil society. Governance can be categorised into various forms, including democratic governance, corporate governance, and global governance. According to the World Bank (1992), governance consists of three key aspects: the political dimension (how authority is exercised), the economic dimension (how resources are managed), and the administrative dimension (how policies are implemented). Good governance is characterised by transparency, accountability, participation, rule of law, and effectiveness in decision-making (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2010). Thus, the paper aligns with the World Bank's (1992) view of governance. governance.

Elite Theory of Public Policy

The Elite Theory, which draws on the ideas of Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, and Robert Michels, holds that policymaking is heavily affected by a small, organised group of elites with considerable political, economic, or social power. These elites design policies that match their tastes, frequently without participation from the wider public (Field & Higley, 2022). The application of Elite Theory to public policy and governance in general is noteworthy.

Elite theory is based on several basic assumptions. First, it implies that power is concentrated in the hands of a small number of people who control political, economic, and social institutions. These elites are perceived to have intellectual, organisational, or material superiority, which justifies their influence over decision-making processes (Bachrach & Baratz, 2023). Second, the theory holds that policymaking is essentially hierarchical, with choices going from elites to the masses, with minimal public consultation or participation. Third, it highlights the continuity of elite domination, claiming that elites employ systems of control and resource allocation to preserve their power. These assumptions emphasise the top-down aspect of policymaking, which is particularly important for understanding public policy and governance.

For example, the Nigerian National Health Insurance Scheme (NHISS) exhibits elite theory concepts, notably in terms of design and implementation. Political and economic elites, who controlled the critical institutions in charge of formulating and implementing the system, had a significant effect on its evolution. These elites defined the NHIS' operating methods, frequently with little involvement from the public or critical stakeholders. For example, the decision to use health insurance to finance healthcare was heavily influenced by elite tastes, indicating a top-down strategy that ignored the demands and ambitions of the general people (Domhoff, 2021). This elitist nature of the NHIS's design has contributed to challenges such as limited coverage, inadequate risk pooling, and financial barriers for low-income groups, which undermine its goal of achieving universal healthcare coverage.

Elite Theory provides a powerful explanatory framework for understanding how a small number of people wield decision-making authority. It demonstrates how tiny, organised groups may dominate policymaking processes, especially in settings where power and resources are unevenly distributed (Field & Higley, 2022). The idea also sheds light on the role of elite-driven policies in developing public services, as witnessed with the many public policies. 4.5

Elite theory is extremely pertinent to understanding policy and governance generally because it provides a framework for analysing power concentration and its consequences for public policy. The hypothesis outlines how a small number of politicians and stakeholders impacted the scheme's form and operation, frequently prioritising their interests over the requirements of the general public. This has resulted in policy fragmentation and

inefficiencies, such as restricted coverage and financial sustainability issues, which reflect elite preferences rather than the needs of the general public (Bachrach & Baratz, 2023).

Furthermore, elite theory emphasises the absence of public participation in the public policy design and implementation, which has contributed to its failure to attain certain goals. The idea sheds light on the structural concerns connected with elite domination, providing insights into how to overcome these obstacles and promote more equal healthcare policy. In this work, elite theory is used to analyse public policy, offering a more in-depth understanding of its trajectory, problems, and consequences for Nigerian public policy.

The Influence of Nigerian Political Public Policy and Governance

Political elites have a significant influence on governance and public policy. These elites, which include corporate tycoons, legislators, bureaucrats, and traditional leaders, have a big say in how decisions are made and how the country develops. Their power can lead to corruption, inconsistent policies, and bad administration, even if it can also promote political stability and economic advancement. Using scholarly research and empirical data, this study critically analyses how political elites affect governance and public policy in Nigeria. The paper examines the advantages and disadvantages of elite power and makes suggestions for advancing inclusive government, accountability, and transparency. Overview People who hold important political positions and have the ability to influence national policies and governance systems are known as political elites (Dye, 2017). Elected officials, senior bureaucrats, military officers, commercial magnates, and powerful traditional leaders make up Nigeria's elite class. By controlling institutional networks, political ties, and financial resources, these people have an impact on policymaking. Their participation in governance has a big impact on economic expansion, democratic consolidation, and national development.

Political Elites' Beneficial Effects on Governance and Public Policy

(i) Continuity and Stability

When political elites function inside robust institutional frameworks, they help maintain political stability and policy consistency. Effective governance and long-term economic prosperity depend on stability. For instance, elite agreement on economic priorities helped President Muhammadu Buhari's administration introduce the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) (Adeosun, 2020). These agreements help maintain policy coherence by avoiding sudden changes that can have a detrimental effect on the country's economic structure, these agreements aid in maintaining policy coherence.

(ii) Innovation and Development in Policy

By leveraging knowledge, connections, and financial resources to enact progressive reforms, elites can spur policy innovation. For example, political elites who saw the necessity for social welfare measures supported Nigeria's National Social Investment Program (NSIP), which aimed to combat poverty (Eze & Uche, 2021). This demonstrates how elites can contribute positively to social and economic advancement when they are motivated by the interests of the country. Global

Political Elites' Detrimental Effects on Governance and Public Policy

(i) Corruption Capture

Elitelitecapture, or the manipulation of state resources and policy for private benefit, is one of the biggest problems Nigeria's political leaders face. Because of the concentration of power among a small number of elites who shape policy decisions for their own personal gain, Transparency International (2022) lists

Nigeria as one of the nations most affected by corruption. This widespread corruption erodes public confidence in leadership, weakens institutions, and threatens governance.

Discussions of Findings

Naturally, n-state has its own elites. Among these elites are the nation-state's founding fathers. Nigeria's elites in the past, like Ahmadu Bello, Obafemi Awolowo, and Nnamdi Azikiwe, were visionary leaders who aspired to a larger nation-state. Political elitism is one of the issues the Nigerian government is now dealing with. Nigeria's elites are responsible for a number of issues, including political instability, insecurity, poor governance, gender inequality, and many more (Agbaje, 2014; Odubajo & Alabi, 2014: p. 122). The political elites are at the core of these issues.

According to Vurasi (2013), these Nigerian elites use their power to instigate economic downturns and political instability, making the nation a fragile state. Poor governance, fear that leads to negotiations with unknown parties, and "fictional tribes and tribal fictions" are all results of these elites' actions. To stay in power, these elites adopt "divide and rule" philosophies. They have an impact on the development trend; for example, in Nigeria, they determine who receives what and why. In order to achieve their goals, particularly during elections and the electoral process, they also resort to violence and force. The populace now realises that "governance intrigues" in Nigeria because they have created class and calibre in such a way that the poor are hungry, insecure, underdeveloped, and less empowered. Political elites' actions are undermining the policies that bind and uphold Nigerians, the country's economies, and its developmental frameworks.

Nigeria's political system is very diverse, ranging from political structuralism to the foundation that its politicians and political elites build upon. Agreements between social groupings and political elites defined Nigeria's 2019 elections (Ezeajughu, 2021: p. 193ff). Today, Nigerian governance is typified by politicians negotiating informal "bargains" that strengthen their ties with specific social groups but usually compromise official laws, norms, and regulations, which has detrimental implications for the nation-state. The importance of politics in all matters of administration must be acknowledged. It is essential to understand the kind of agreement that exists between the state's elites and social or pressure organisations. This will enable us to monitor significant political players and understand that political negotiations between elites, the government, and organised social groups serve as the foundation for the development of effective, efficient, and accountable public authority.

Politicians' and policymakers' decisions about progressive changes that can result in legitimate, capable, accountable, and responsive states are heavily influenced by political context and procedures. While others continue to live in poverty and violence, this will eventually assist in explaining their processes that allow them to achieve progress in terms of political stability and economic growth (Odubajo & Alabi, 2014: p. 138; Agbaje, 2014: pp. 103-106). Additionally, it has offered data and analytical instruments to demonstrate how to deal with the relationships, structures, and interests that either promote or impede change. Even while all of these have aided in the creation of the nation's initiatives and programs, in order to reduce poverty more quickly, we still need to get a deeper comprehension of the politics of development and how elites affect it.

In order to unravel this new order of governance agenda, this is available for research. The motivations and intents of elites to pursue developmental goals are crucial. Too frequently, the list of factors influencing elite incentives has been explained solely in terms of the domestic sphere, where domestic elites are readily characterised as "lacking political

will," intransigent, or venal, and foreign communities frequently have little influence. However, studies have demonstrated that certain aspects of the global environment can provide political elites with distorted incentives to maintain states' vulnerability and undermine their potential. Because globalisation has created perverse incentives that make it more enticing to follow this path, politicians may purposefully govern poorly. The pursuit of their interests, however, may be one of the elements undermining the favourable incentives for the state-builders of the past, as demonstrated in Nigeria. This is true, even though modern elites live in a globalised world.

Some aspirational individuals in nations such as Nigeria, Colombia, Haiti, Zambia, or Pakistan consider the behavioural incentives established by wealthy nations in a globalised world to be just as significant as the advice given by the developed world, even when it is supported by aid funds (Osuji, 2018: pp. 149-150). First, rich nations are prepared to shell out such exorbitant sums for rare resources like diamonds, oil, gas, and cotton. Therefore, they make it quite evident that one of the best ways to succeed in the South is to grab a piece of the enormous profits that can be made from extracting and exporting such goods. Second, a significant international economy is created by the willingness of some people in the industrialised world to pay a high price for recreational drugs, despite the fact that their governments forbid them. These are evident throughout Africa, as elites use outside interests as justifications and motivations to undermine the economy of Nigeria and other African countries in pursuit of their own goals. Others will favour failed states (Rotberg & Campbell, 2021; Kinnan, 2021), while Nigeria has become a fragile state due to the actions of its elites (Olowu & Chanie, 2016: pp. 1, 4–5).

The same failure displayed by these elites is echoed by the media (print, radio, television, and social media). The Nigerian political class has consistently failed to persuade the general populace that its commercial and political endeavours serve the interests of all Nigerians. The latest being the dispute over tariff rates between Nigerian banks and telecom providers (https://www.Lindaikeji/blog:2021). Millions of Nigerians, regardless of social class, perished in the civil war (1967–1970) that was historically caused by strife among the political elites. The ongoing disputes among Nigerian power brokers over who should receive what and how much of the massive sums of money that the country's petroleum sales bring in were reflected in the resource control debates (Ogbeide & Aghahowa, 2005: p. 222).

Previous democratic efforts in Nigeria were derailed by the country's political elites. These elites play on regional, ethnic, and religious attitudes when there is conflict, struggle, and miscommunication in the nation (among them) over issues (ideological, political, resource, etc.) (Iyekekpolo, 2020: p. 450, Ledum, 2003; Ezeani, 2003). They may control entire masses and the working class with these primitive feelings (Ogbeide & Aghahowa, 2005: p. 223). Because of this mindset, Nigeria is ranked as the second most corrupt country in the world and the seventh poorest country in the world (Transparency International, 2000).

This idea explains why Nigeria's roads, schools, hospitals, energy, water projects, and other infrastructure are all failing. This also explains Nigeria's pervasive property and life insecurity (recent examples include the killings in Owerri, Imo State, and Oyo in May 2021). These days, violence is a political tool. They both directly and indirectly funded insurgencies that are currently compromising Nigeria's security, including Boko Haram and Herdsmen insurgencies (Iyekekpolo, 2020). According to statistics, political instability, corruption, and slow economic growth have all persisted in being widespread in Nigeria. The nation's political unrest and several corruption charges make this clear (Kyarem et al., 2020).

Diezani's corruption case, which involved billions of naira and resulted in the Federal High Court ordering the forfeiture of her assets worth ₦7.6 billion in 2017, the unaccountable $16 billion appropriated for a power project under the Obasanjo administration, and the case of recovering $9.2 million and E74 thousand cash from the former group managing director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) are a few of the prominent corruption cases. Others include the accusations of corruption against the former secretary to the government of the federation (SGF) and the armed money scandal charges against Col. Sambo Dasuki, the former security adviser to President Jonathan, totalling ₦28.3 billion.5. Political instability in the nation is also demonstrated by election violence, rigging, politicians' hunger for power, and many other issues (Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) Report, 2019).

The impacts on the people, setting, and procedures that neopatrimonialism has been linked to in Nigeria were led by Nigerian political elites. These include "godfather" figures connected to Nigeria's political transition and tectonic drifts brought about by armed rebellion or democratic transactions (Gazibo, 2012: p. 4). By guiding their followers into elected office and other significant roles, political elites can exert control over public institutions (Isaac, 2005; Ezeani, 2003). Godfathers not only provide financial support for these officials, but they also successfully incite violence and corruption (Nwaeze, 2012) to cripple all of their protégés over potential rivals while ensuring that the many crimes they commit go unpunished (Lackey, 2012: p. 132). Once more, the president leads overcentralised federalism, and the political hawks, if any, are envious of the president's vast powers (Moro, 2006: p. ix).

Furthermore, privatisation was introduced into the Nigerian economy as a means of preserving the structural power of capitalists, who collectively have a veto over state policies because their failure to invest at sufficient levels can cause serious political issues for the state managers (Block, 1977). When it comes to choosing political leaders, the reality of capitalism supports and empowers the elite over the critical mass of the populace (Odubajo & Alabi, 2014: p. 122). Nigeria, a welfarist state, has failed as a capitalist state as a result of this. According to Ledum (2003), functional democracy is in a precarious state and is being choked by political violence, corruption, and inaction in the face of the government's reprehensible actions. In the name of privatisation, the political elites sold all of Nigeria's assets that had been established by the previous government in order to become structural power capitalists. Nigeria's problems have gotten worse since privatisation (Onyishi, 2018; Ledum, 2003; Albieyi, 2009; Inge, 2012). The elites that purchased Nigerian real estate were neither economists, industrialists, nor true investors. They purchase properties in Nigeria without having any experience in industry, production management, or economics. They destabilise national systems without realigning the structural power they want, effectively killing the Nigerian economy. This is known as "capital strikes as a corporate political strategy."

This has led to the formation of a shadow Nigerian state, which is clearly linked to the "informalization" of authority and the growth of personal wealth accusation networks (among the elites). By highlighting the differences between the Nigerian state's intended and real operations, we can comprehend this relationship (Bach & Gazibo, 2012: p. 33; Kia & Vurasa, 2013). Due to the actions and practices of elites—political elitism—the Nigerian state is now a socially intolerant and demonised entity that is vilified for its weaknesses, overreach, interference with the efficient operation of the market, repressive nature, reliance on foreign power,

and ubiquity in the absence of these factors (Mkandawite, 2001, p. 289; Azaiki, 2015).

The shortcomings of the Nigerian state are now associated with political elitism. It has facilitated underdevelopment, the rise of petty capitalism, strategically driven and structural conflicts, instability, corruption, and a slick political legacy (Kia & Vurasa, 2013). Nigerian political elites have criminalised Nigerian politics, deinstitutionalised the country, and informalized authority. Recent studies say that Nigeria has gone from being a weak state to a failed state because of signs of a failed state, like widespread violence, growing insurgencies, and the government's inability to protect its people (Rotberg & Campbell, 2021; Kinnan, 2021).

Who actually controls Nigeria is the point of debate here. A new course for political life is required, one that differs from the current display of political shenanigans, which include wars, bloodshed, various forms of assault and hooliganism, kidnapping, and the destruction of important political structures and policies. The disintegration of Nigeria's political system and governance has been facilitated by political elites (Onyishi, 2018: p. 147). We must establish a society free from political hostility and modern-day packaged violence; bad leadership leads to bad legislation.

Let's construct Nigeria, our nation-state. Nigeria is the only nation, state, or community that we have, and we may have a variety of reasons for our decisions. Furthermore, Nigeria's failure is significant since the stability of the country has a direct impact on Africa's peace and development. More importantly, a stronger Nigeria is necessary to stop chaos and militancy from spreading over the world. The security of the United States and Europe is ultimately impacted by Nigeria's shortcomings (Kinnan, 2021). The strength of the state depends on its leaders. The elites in Nigeria will continue to be just as awful as the weak ideals that emanate from them if they do not construct, negotiate, and advance the nation-state on a solid and unquestionable foundation. Their corruption to overthrow the nation-state makes them as weak as the corruption itself. The quality of a country's philosophy determines its level of civilisation, and Nigeria can have no higher good than to possess true philosophy, which is a true civilisation. What we currently have in Nigerian public life does not yet reflect this.

Conclusion

Then the ambidextrous literature for elites is evident. In reformist transitions, there would be a great continuity in their composition; in revolutionary ones, the former elites would be ousted, killed, imprisoned, or forced into exile, and new elites would arise from the conflict itself. Needless to say, in actuality, the contrast between the two is not that stark but still considerable. In the former, elites circulate, whereas in the latter, they jump. We have emphasised how elites in the Nigerian state use contestation and controversy. We also talked about how they affected governance, political processes, and decision-making when creating the public institutions that provide development. Elites in Nigerian politics must rethink their positions and create a genuine philosophy that will support local political processes in order to determine Nigeria's own course. Therefore, as this study suggests, it is imperative to reorient Nigerian elites because their roles in the nation are degrading the country's standard of living. Furthermore, they have turned the state into a failure. Since sovereignty belongs to the people, it is necessary to revive this nation-state, particularly by limiting the actions of these elites.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the Path Ahead The following actions should be taken in order to lessen the detrimental effects of political elites on governance and to optimise their potential for the advancement of the country: (1). Strengthening Institutional Frameworks:

Independent institutions, like the judiciary, anti-corruption organisations, and electoral bodies, need to be given the authority to withstand elite meddling and preserve democratic values.

(2). Improving Public Participation: To guarantee inclusive governance, citizens should actively participate in policymaking through public hearings, consultations, and civic engagement.

(3.) Encouraging Accountability and Transparency: Reducing elite capture and governance malpractice requires the enforcement of stringent anti-corruption laws and the holding of political elites responsible for their deeds.

(4). Promoting Mer By reducing the influence of godfatherism and elevating leadership based on merit rather than elite connections, we can enhance the effectiveness of governance. Nigerian political elites are involved in both government and public policy. Although stability, policy innovation, and international relations can propel national development, their dominance frequently leads to social inequality, corruption, and inconsistent policies. To overcome these obstacles, democratic institutions must be strengthened, accountability must be encouraged, and inclusive governance must be guaranteed. Nigeria can reduce the detrimental effects of its political elites on the country's development while maximising their positive influence by putting these policies into place.

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