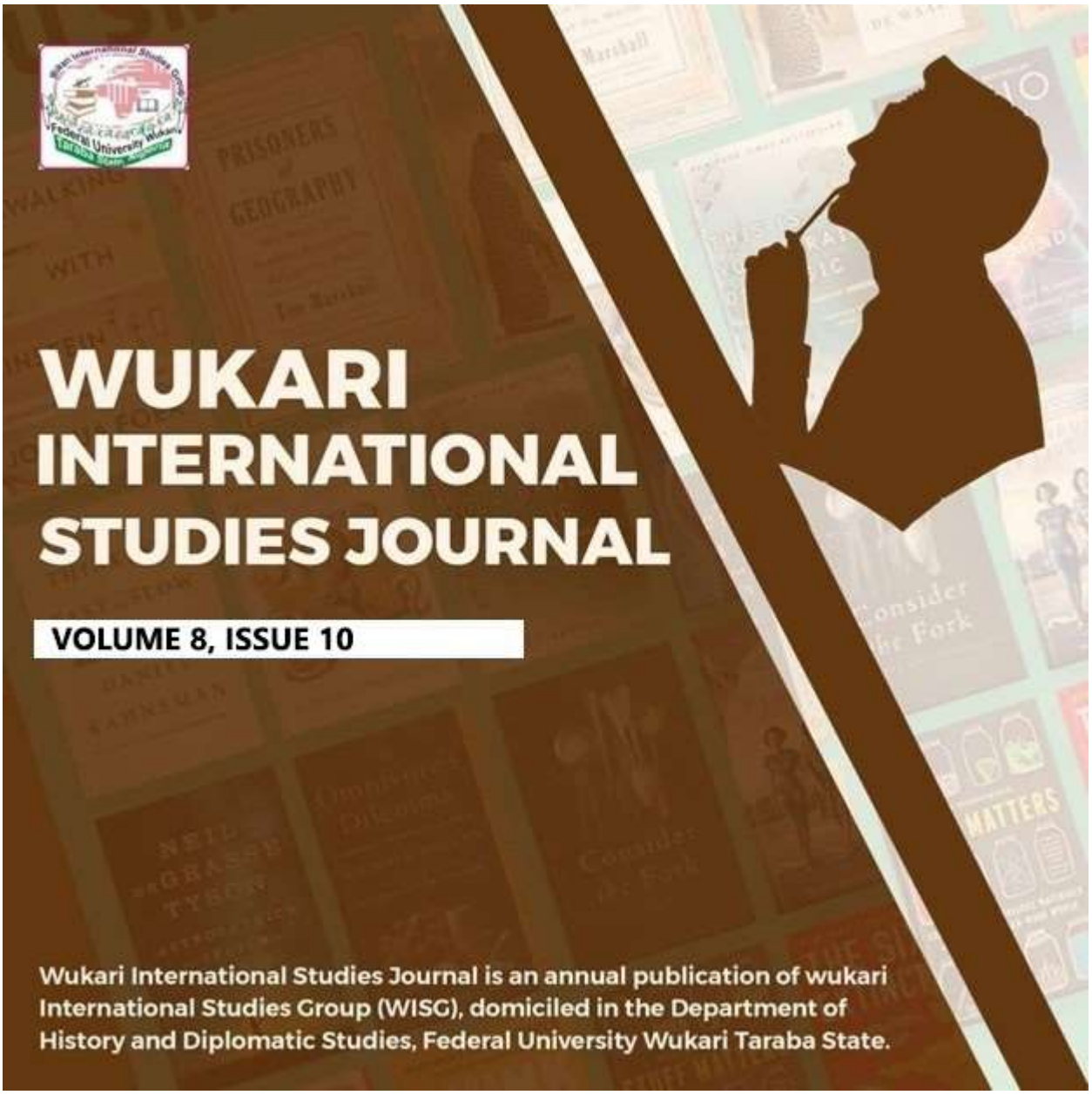
WUKARI INTERNATIONAL STUDIES JOURNAL

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 10, DECEMBER 2024



WUKARI INTERNATIONAL STUDIES JOURNAL

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 10, DECEMBER 2024

Domiciled in the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, Federal University Wukari-Taraba State

ISSN: 2756-4649

Wukari International Studies Journal is an annual publication of Wukari International Studies Group (WISG), domiciled in the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, Federal University Wukari-Taraba State. WISG follows the double-blind peer review process. All manuscripts are reviewed by an editor and members of the Editorial Board or qualified outside reviewers. Decisions will be made as quickly as possible, and the WISG strives to return reviewers' comments to author (s) within 4 weeks for final corrections where necessary. Interested scholars are advised to contact the managing editor via wisjournal@gmail.com or/and 07037694253 for submission of papers for subsequent editions.

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ÒRÌSÀ-OKO: THE SPIRITUAL OINTMENT FOR FARMER'S BREAKTHROUGH IN IGBETI, OYO, NIGERIA

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KEYWORDS
Òrìsà-Oko, festival, farming, shrine and harvest

ABSTRACT
Òrìsà-Oko is a divinity connected to farming in Igbeti area of Oyo State. It is a festival celebrated once a year by farmers so they will not be plunged into primeval darkness of infertility during harvest. By implication, Òrìsà-Oko is a deity of fertility. The priests of the deity, during the festival are carefully functioning as religious leaders and are consciously precept to every rule as everything becomes invalid if one rule is obliterated. During the festival, the priests put up a sterling and stellar performance not only to religionize the process but to humorously entertain thecguests. That is why traders are allowed to sell bear, gin and all manner of local foods and traditional dancers are allowed to entertain those in attendance. Òrìsà-Oko, being the Yoruba deity of harvests, fertility, farmers is very important in the theoratic setting of the people and the deity deserves scholarly attention with a view to investigating its socio-cultural importance and its religious indispensability among farmers in the study area. Despite various studies on the deity, scholars have not discussed how important the deity is, to the farmers in Igbeti Primary and Secondary sources were used to elicit information. Òrìsà-Oko is very important among farmers in Igbeti, so much so that, if bad harvest is experienced, the farmers attribute it to the anger of the deity and the latter is immediately appeased to avoid future occurrence. The tradition of celebrating the deity must not be carpeted to ensure constant food security.

Introduction

Òrìsà-Oko's role in farming is multificated and multi-dimensional. He operates as a farmer and also doubles as a hunter. He is also known for fighting against sorcery. He is associated with bumper harvest. He is a deity infested with honesty, unity and love. He makes good health, energy to work assiduously and abundant productivity available to his horde of followers. The symbolic representation of the deity are the tools used to cultivate farm produce and this include hoe and cutlass. During Òrìsà-Oko festival, these tools are abundantly seen in the shrine. Opa Òrìsà-Oko is used by women during festival to ask for bumper harvest and a successful farming voyage. A woman who believes and have so much trust in this divinity prays in his name before she goes out to sell her food items in the market, the hunter who prepares for hunting expenditure uses his name to pray so he would have a successful hunting. In Igbeti community, the belief is that Òrìsà-Oko is not behind the man who fails in farming hence the fellow is advised to sacrifice to the deity in order to meet up with "expectation". It is on this note that, the researcher has taken up the responsibility of researching on the religious importance of the deity on the farmers with a view to unraveling the socio-cultural benefits attached to the belief in the deity.

Brief History of Igbeti

Igbeti is a fairly populated town, located in Oyo State, Nigeria, with the region font code of Africa/middle east. It is located at an elevation of 456 meters above sea level and its population amounts to 24,690. It coordinates 8^{o} $43O^{1}$N and $4^{o}7$ 60^{1}E in DMS 4.13333 (in decimal degrees). Its UTM position is FK26 and its Joint Operation Graphic reference is NC3175. Current local Eme (Africa/Lagos UTE/GMTH) The Standard time zone for Igbeti is UTC/GMTH in 2016 DST on-and-ends on.

The first settler around this area was Alaafin Sango Olufiran Ajaka and his followers. Sango, son of Oranmiyan settled on Iyamapo hill with his supporters, after the death of their father, when the Oyomesi (kingmaker) did not select him to the throne. Instead the Oyomesi selected his brother Dada Ajuwon Ajaka Iji. He spent about seven years on the hill. His palace is still there on the hill before he was recalled to the throne by these Oyomesi when they deposed his brother, Ajaka Iji for his wickedness.

Alaafin Sango ruled Oyo town with iron hand and subdued Oyo enemies for about fourteen years. After his sudden death, his followers made him Orisa (a semi-god) and his wife called Oya. Oyo Yoruba accepted him as Orisa and he had many followers. Few years after his death the Iji families came from Oyo to settle down. They were brave hunters and worshippers of hills that protected their mentor. Later more famous hunters, prince, princesses and other traditionalists migrated to join the early dwellers. These numerous separate settlements dated the expanse of the rich valley of the sixteen hills.

Ogunbiyi (2006) points out that record showed that when Abiodun Adegolu (1779 – 1789) was Alaafin and Gaa was his Basoorun, the advancement of Uthamn Fodio Jihadists towards Yoruba land was eminent. This forced Alaafin Abiodun to invite many Yoruba leaders, Oba, chiefs and others to Oyo for a crucial meeting. At the meeting, he advised all Yoruba to get set and fight the Jihadist. He encouraged amalgamation of small settlements and for big towns to absorb small settlements. This led to amalgamate of various settlements under a strong bond of oath (ìmùlè) to forge a common front against invaders at Ilé ìmùlè of ilè Ìgbétì in 1807 (p. 2).

Ogunbiyi (2006) posits further that, prior to the arrival of the Jihadists, Alaafin Olukuewu (1819-1935), the 35^{th} Alaafin appointed Okose (the leader of amalgamated leaders) as Baale in 1820. When he died in 1925, his brother Aladekan ruled the settlement between 1925-1937. Both of them were prince from Orile Igbon dynasty.

The author explains that before the Jihadists came, our people moved and settled on Iyamapo hill (evidences are above, till date). They fortified the hill with thick mud fence, moved rock of various grades to the top of the hill and united to fight enemies. These people fought courageously and physical methodical and they won all the wars that attacked them from the Fulani Jihadist. Do not forget that this Jihadist war destroyed Oyo-Ile in 1833. They killed Alaafin Olukuewu, Alaafin Atiba, then moved one capital to the present site. He appointed Oluyole of Ibadan his Basorun and Karumi his Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland.

The Jihadist army was finally rooted at Osogbo axis at Ijabe in 1840 by Ibadan army combined. During this period, the Onigbeti was

Fabiyi (1840-1840). He fought vigorously to unite Igbeti in order to fight foreign invaders.

The Yoruba wars started around 1840. The attackers called Aganiyan (slave raiders) came to Igbeti in waves but Igbetians conquered them. The bravery and valours of Igbetians and the well organized military tactical approach made Igbeti people unconquerable. According to history, their doggedness was second to none. It must be noted here that there are several factors responsible for this strong army organization. First, they comported themselves in the face of dispute and rancor among themselves. Second, they had classified way of resolving issues among themselves, this already had defeated division and separation. Third, they thought that the traditional Igbeti belonged to everyone hence her failure was considered to be the individual failure, and that no matter the weakness of an individual in the war front, he must be encouraged to retrieve confidence and patriotism. They also obeyed strictly the command of their leader, there was no trace of insubordination. The cooperation they were able to maintain sustained the mighty army. They were fearless and believed that dying in the cause of Igbeti was a best virtue that they could ever imagine. This uncovering spirit of fight to the end brought accompany AGBATI, now coined IGBETI. Hence the Igebtians will always say "Ilu omo mopo iji, omo oloye moyin di agabti fun ota". The wars destroyed towns and cities in Yoruba but Igbeti remained intact. It is believed till this present moment that no person or group can challenge Igbeti and win. The spirit of oneness which prevented foreign invaders from capturing Igbeti is still being preached.

When the war ended, the warrior leader called Balogun or Akedes got nothing to do than hunting. During this period, some displaced warriors joined them. This brought confusion and unethical behaviours. They killed one on their Oba called Yerinsa (1891-1899) and drove away Oba Siyanbole I (1900 – 1910) to Igboho.

Alaafin Siyanbola Ladigbolu I (1911-1944) settled the fight and Siyanbola, Oba Igbeti returned back to his throne not Iyamapo hill but at the hill valley at a place called Oke-Ago. Onigbeti that ruled since were Okunrola Afasegbejo I (1918-1926) and Alawoki Folarin (1926-1944) during the reign of Alaafin Ladigbolu I, then Lawani Abiola Siyanbola II (1944-1964). Oba Oyewumi Folarin II (1965-1972) during the reign of Alaafin Gbadegesin Ladigbolu II (1954-1969). Oba Rabiu Abioye Siyanbola III (1970-2003) and HRH Oba Emmanuel Oyekan Oyebisi Afasegbejo III (2004 till date) during the reign of Alaafin Lamidi Adeyemi.

The Growth of Igbeti and the Challenges

Ogunbiyi (2006) avers that Igbeti is one of the principal towns ruled by Alaafin of Oyo since its inception. Alaafin of Oyo was all in all. Alaafin ruled and appointed Oba over the towns. He collected tribute and taxes when due. (p. 6).

He explains that Igbeti Imule ruled the town from ambulation period to 1930. During the era, Igbeti and Ogbomoso shared boundary together around Ikoyi. He was resettled there around 1907 by Alaafin of Oyo from Ebu Dada at Ilorin. Igbeti hunters would carry tribute and escorted visitors (Residents district officers) to the border where Ogbomoso hunters would take over and led them to Oyo.

Egbe Ibile under the leadership of Pa Oderinde (Baba Ago) Aremu Iti took over between 1930-1940. During this period, development started in Igbeti by digging wells, built dispensary and courts. The Missionary, Oris started in primary school. Igbeti continued to collect taxes from the villages under them such as Dogo, Odunfa, Igbori, Olokoto, Alasapa, Apatalaye to Gbemi river with tax collectors from Oyo. Oba Awoki Folarin attempted to have boundary demarcation between his town and Ikoyi but *Alaafin* stepped in. this eventually led to Ikoyi Omu episode.

Ogunbiy(2006) explains that egbe Omo *Ìgbéti* Toro took over 1940-1960 under the leadership of Pa Ajibowu Akanbi Iko. Those people that followed the tax collectors from *Ìgbéti* to all villages up to Gnemi boundary with Ogbomosho were late Pa Odesina, Abraham Oladipupo ete. In 1984 *Ìgbétì* and Ogbomosho that shared boundary with each other through communal effort constructed the road to their border at Ghemi steam when Ogbomosho constructed theirs from Ogbomoso to river Gbemi. Ikoyi was no where to be found then.(p.4)

Around this era, Oyo Southern District Council was created with *Ìgbéti* and Ikoyi. Under the same council in 1955 Irepo Council was carved out of the Southern District Council. There and them the problem of boundary started. Various commissions and inquiries came up without any concrete result up till date.

From 1960 to date Egbe Omo *Ìgbéti* loro took over the mantle. Many development started in the town from 1960 by expanding *Ìgbétì* market, built market stalls, built more schools at various places at Olokito, etc. Dispensaries were scartadly located in these areas. Taxes were collected from these villages to Irepo District Council – Southern District that collected taxes from the area zoned to *Ìgbẹ́tì* were refunded to Irepo District Council from Dogo.

When it was ripe, *Ìgbéti* people demanded for a separate Local Government which was, granted on December 4, 1996 by the Abacha Regime. Since then more developments have come into the area.

Some challenges that faced *Ìgbéti* the capital of Olorunsogo Local Government area:

1. Boundary dispute between *Ìgbéti* and Ikoyi. There are many write-up on this with series of enquiries.

2. Lack of higher institution in the area to cater or teeming population of their sons and daughters.

3. Teaching hospital for *Ìgbéti* and environs is essential.

4. Development of industries through the use of marble deposit which is found in the area.

5. Making use of tourist attraction potentials in the area to provide jobs for their youth and improve the economy of the state.

6. The population census recently released did not justify the earlier population census of *Ìgbéti* according to Ogunbiyi.(p.5)

In the year 2014, Taiwo Abiodun of *The Nation* Newspaper also conducted a research on *Ìgbéti* in the article titled *Ìgbéti* : Rich but poor, he highlights the potentials in the marble freely given the people by God. He laments the neglect of this huge asset which could have boosted the internal generated revenue of both the State and the Federal Government.(p.4)

According to this article, the *Ìgbéti* community is mountainous and rocks surrounding the town. Taiwo quotes one Adebayo Rasaq, a cell phone engineer who used his shop, "we just see marble as ordinary stone, the marble to line the stairs leading into his shop, "we just don't attach much value to it. We pick them like fowls here. This marble you are seeing fell from a truck and I used it here as a step into my shop. We learnt it is of great value when they are taken away from this place but of what use are they for us when nobody uses it here?"

In continuation of the challenges facing the community, Taiwo(2014) explains that the town is peaceful and popular, it does not have pipe borne water. The residents basically rely on well water and a few bore holes dug by individuals. The large presence of marble and stones has made digging of wells near impossible in the town. The only general hospital in the town has been taken over by weeds. There are few secondary though schools. There is no high institution(.p5).

Speaking about the stones and marbles discovered there, Taiwo also quotes Olayanju, the Eleruwa of *Ìgbéti* . Olayanju according to Taiwo both minerals were discovered in 1976 by one Ekiti Chief but he did little with it until the late business man, Chief Ashamu from Oyo town, turned the place around, took over *Ìgbéti* marble and employed hundreds of workers at the site, thus providing employment for the town. Olayanju said, "many people were employed; scholarship were given to students who are indigenes, while many were sponsored on holy pilgrimage to Mecca by Ashamu. But in the end, a misunderstanding ensued between him and government. The community and the state government sued Ashamu over the ownership of the land. In the end, Ashamu left and the business that made the town to be known in the world of marble collapsed.(p.6)

What happened after Ashamu left?, The *Eleruwa* described the exist of the late Ashamų as a disaster to the town. Taiwo states that Eleruwa said, rather with nostalgia "the legal battle over the ownership and control of the precious stones was eventually won in the 80s by the government. The late Ashamu then had a deal with the government and the community under the monarch, Osiyanbola III, as they won the case. Thus, the state government and the community shared the percentage from it.

"But Ashamu later died and his death was a fatal blow to the town as the proceeds from the mineral resources declined. Nobody was sent to Mecca as usual, no scholarships were given to students, while business activities that once

boomed in the ancient town collapsed. And poverty came into the land. The land flowing with milk and honey become empty as government did not consider it any longer but focused on petroleum".(p.6)

Festival Connected to Yam

Adekuroye(2017) avers that there is a particular festival connected to yam at *Ìgbéti*, the name of this festival is *Òrìsà-oko*. Without this festival farmers will not be able to sell their yams. *Òrìsà-oko* festival plays a significant role in providing strength to the weak land". It purifies the land, gives hope to the hopeless and dispirited farmers, unifies the indigenes of the community and reminds them of their heritage. Apart from the role it plays in agriculture, the festival also reminds the indigenes of the community on the need to come home when things are not rosy with them. It provides platform through which questions are asked from the gods of the land and favourable answers are followed with thanksgiving done elaborately as a way of appreciating the gods of the land. The celebration of *Òrìsà-oko* festival before yam could be largely displayed in the market for sale is a testament to the fact that, agriculture in *Ígbéti* community is religionized.

When it is time for the festival, the family where the priest comes from will invite the son's and daughter's of the family to attend the festival. Those who cannot attend the festival must refrain from eating yam until the necessary rituals attached to the festival are carried out. It is a yam festival celebrated every year when it is time to harvest yam. *Ìgbéti* people believe that the festival must be celebrated elaborately in other to have good harvest. Baba Moja(2017) is the priest of *Òrìsà-oko*. Having said it before, there is a particular family in charge of this festival so it is not an event any family can hijack. When it is time to celebrate *Òrìsà-oko* festival, the statue which represents the god will be washed With water and the water used to wash it will be kept and must not be thrown away.

The festival takes place in the eighth month of every year. The water used to bath the statue of the god must be kept in a container, when it is time to harvest yam the water used to wash the statue of the god will be sprinkled on the set of yams ready to be harvested. The sprinkled yams have taken the place of other yams belonging to various farmers of the community. After the ritual the yam will be harvested the following day. This symbolises that the yam has been given an approval by the god to be harvested, it shows also that without *Òrìsà-oko* festival, harvesting of yam in *Ìgbéti* is obviously impossible. We can also say here without equivocation that this process shows the respect *Ígbéti* people still have for African indigenous Religion. In fact one can easily deduce the importance of religion in agriculture among the people of *Ìgbéti* which necessitates this

discourse. Apart from yam which is the target of the festival, other crops can also be harvested alongside e.g. corn, beans, cassava, and so on but the harvesting of other crops do not directly have direct relationship to the festival.

No doubt, the importance of the ritual water can not be swept under the carpet. It has not only helped in providing abundance in harvest the following year, it also protects the crops from being destroyed by the insects. Naturally, insects and monkeys do not come near the farm where the ritual of sprinkling takes place. This must have contributed to the reason why BABA MOJA's house becomes a "holy land" where every farmer in *Ígbéti* pilgrimages. Everybody wants to get the water no matter how little it is to sprinkle their farm. From what we have learned from *Òrìsà-oko* festival, we can vividly argue that water sprinkling is not a monopoly of some foreign religions. When a particular farmland is sprinkled with this water, no thief can steal anything from the farm. The farm becomes a feared zone to the thieves.

Baba Moja(2017) says that Òrìsà-oko festival precedes the consumption of yam, the festival must be celebrated before anybody can eat the yam *Òrìsà-oko* must eat the yam before public consumption. In fact immediately after the festival people come from Lagos, Benin-Republic, Badagry, Akure, Osogbo, Ilorin, and so on so forth to purchase yam. *Òrìsà-oko* is believed to make hard-working people wealthy. Every year, farmers build houses from the proceed of their farming they buy cars and engage in other things that make life livable.Baba Moja maintains that the first set of ten storey buildings in the community were built by prominent farmers. However, any farmer who wants to make it must be hard-working, diligent and must commit him/herself to farming.

It is a taboo for anybody from the family of Baba Moja to eat yam before the festival, there is an exemption to this. Those who are not in the country or those who are in the country who

unwittingly eat yam before the festival will not be punished. But those members of the family who consciously and wittingly eat yam before the festival are susceptible. When any member of the family eats yam before *Òrìsà-oko* festival and the fellow gets ill and decides to confess, he/she will be taken to the shrine of *Òrìsà-oko* where there are two clay pots full of water, a cup of water from one of the clay pots will be given to the person, it is believed that before the death of the day, the fellow will be fully recuperated and bounce back to normal life.

One of the consequences attached to eating yam before *Òrìsà-oko* festival is that the fellow's stomach will grow abnormally, giving impression of pregnancy. Immediately he/she is served with the water kept in the shrine, the stomach will surprisingly deflect. The yam eaten must not necessarily come from *Ìgbéti* , yam remains yam every where in the world and must not be consumed by this particular family before *Òrìsà-*oko festival and this remains till date, it has not gone into extinction. Now that the world is a global village, Baba Moja the *Òrìsà-oko* priest explains that people who could not attend the festival always call to ask when the festival will be held in other to know when to eat yam.

Òrìsà-oko and Sango, according to *Ìgbéti* people are like twins because it is believed that they arrived this world at the same time. They do love each other to the extent that in *Ìgbéti* , the latter is not treated in isolation from the former. In *Ígbéti*, the shrine of *Òrìsà-oko* is always seen beside the shrine of Sàngó, this explains the reason why Sàngó festival is celebrated before *Òrìsà-oko* festival. *Òrìsà-oko* festival is fixed after two days of Sàngó festival and this is solely done by Baba Moja, the priest. Baba Moja must communicate the date to Onígbèti of *Ìgbéti* after which he makes the pronouncement public.

Responding to the question of sustainability of the priesthood, Baba Moja explains the punishment melted to whoever refused to be made priest. He said that the stiff refusal of the person is always followed with failure in every enterprise. Whatever the person does will not produce result until he admits to take up the challenge. The favourite soups of *Òrìsà-oko* are isápá and ikàn. It is a taboo to offer him any other soup apart form these and he does not eat two-day old soup. The sacrifice *Òrìsà-oko* takes is egbo oní àgbàdo and kola-nut. It is to be stated here that any sacrifice to *Òrìsà-oko* invites sacrifice of offering to Sàngó. Once effort is made to appease *Òrìsà-oko*. Sàngó must also be appeased. They are always seen together.

Òrìsà-oko and Sàngó are indivisible and inseparable amities from heaven. This historical connection of the duo brings about this song:

Lórun lóti ṣé ilé ayé kó

Lórun ló ti ṣé ilé ayé kó

Ìtàn Òrìsà-oko àti Sángó

Lónun ló ti ṣé ilé ayé kó

It is from heaven not this world

It is from heaven not this world

The mythology of Òrìsà-oko and Sángó

It is from heaven not this world

Any time the mythology of *Òrìsà-oko* and Sángó is discussed, this song must be sung in other to call the attention of the people who are hearing the myth for the first time to the fact that the creation of the duo is as a result of providence and no mortal can separate them. Here, also, Song serves as a vital purpose. In *Yorùbá* religion, song in ritual makes invocation easier because it is believed that the supersensible world loves praises and whoever needs their favour must praise them down through songs.

Songs enhance emotional and physical participation in the act of worship and often lead to ecstatic experiences. During worship when the singing and dancing penetrate. Wholly into every being of the worshipper, spirit possession may follow and the possessed devotee may give message from the divinity (as a vehicle of communication between us and *Òrìsà*) lighter songs may occur during the ritual. Also certain songs dedicated to the divinities are sung in their honour as occasion

demand. These songs are rendered to show the qualities and nature of a particular divinity. The Characteristics of the divinity are also revealed through songs rendered during worship. The officiating priests never forget the order in which they should be sung.

In *Ìgbéti* , songs have so much importance to religious worship, spirituality and culturally. When I attended *Òrìsà-oko* festival several songs were sung not for merry making but to show appreciation for good harvest, protection of lives and properties and they also sang to the Supreme Deity for making them witness another festival. Songs are indeed another way of involving the supersensible world to the affairs of humanity. It is a way of expressing joy-heartedness and a way of expressing gratitude to the world beyond.

The phenomenona of songs and dance in the religion of the *Yorùbá* is never borrowed from any religion, in fact it has been repeatedly argued that when it comes to Songs and dance during religious worship, foreign religions are believed to have copied Africans. Shinning more light on this, Baba Moja says that: "In *Yorùbá* culture, songs and dance have so much importance to religious worship and spirituality. All *Òrìsà* hold particular importance in dance and songs. And worship in African Traditional Religion takes the form of rites and ceremonies and include offering. Sounding the bell or gong, singing, drumming and dancing as occasion demands. Songs and dance come up under liturgy. Liturgy therefore is an important element of worship in African Traditional Religion. In *Òrìsà* worship, the presence of dance as a way of reenacting spirituality and songs as a way of reverence to the power of Olódùmarè and *Òrìsà*s are essential to the worship of *Òrìsà*s. Each *Òrìsà* is identified with drum ensemble, songs and dance styles. Also, every *Òrìsà* has unique dance, movement that reflects its attributes as we have different drums for each *Òrìsà*. That is, the musical

instruments used for each *Òrìsà* is different. The musical instrument for Sango and Yemoja is Bàtá, ifá is for agogo and other Orisas is dundun.

From the above, it becomes clearer that songs and dance need no introduction to *Yorùbá* religion. Hardly do we see any òrisà that has no song; hardly do we see an ifa priest who does not know how to sing ifá song. I don't think there is one who has ever claimed to deny the essentiality of song and dance in the religious setting of the *Yorùbá* and the purpose the phenomena of song and dance serve will forever remain part and parcel of the religion.

It becomes a difficult enterprise dividing Orisa-*oko* and Sango because of the strongness of their connectivity right from the day of creation. When Sàngó festival is celebrated, *Òrìsà* Oko priest must be present and must go around with Sàngó without which the festival can not hold.By implication, Sàngó festival plays a significant role just as *Òrìsà* Oko plays a key role in farming at lgbéti but *Òrìsà Oko* is the major stake holder. One other aspect that must be added here is that. Wherever Sàngó is worshipped, there is need to present to him some tubers of yam but this same yam must not be presented to *Òrìsà oko* until after his festival. Consequently, it is when *Òrisà oko* is duly given yam that Ogún is entitled to be given yam.

Answering question about the detail of the festival and how it is celebrated chronologically, Baba Moja(2017) explained that at the eve of the festival, *Òrìsà oko* will be washed, dried outside and hung inside the house. When it is time for the festival, sacrifice must be given to Ogùn first and the items given includes, kola-nut, bitter kola. After the sacrifice, corn will be bought to make ègbo and cooked till 2.00am at the midnight, red oil will be added, salt and other items will be made available and some will be displayed outside the house. Small clay pot will be taken to collect some blood from an animal, the food will now be taken to the shrine of the leader of *Òrìsà* o*ko* popularly called ataòkú where the sacrifice will take place. During this period, some women must be preparing pounded yam in the kitchen. From 2.00pm, one big calabash will be presented to the women to provide pounded yam and the two favourite soups of *Òrìsà oko* we earlier mentioned will be taken to the shrine.

This time, the priest must make sure that the calabash touches the floor where the shrine is, children of the family will now come to where the calabash is to touch it several times until it breaks, after the breaking of the calabash, the children will start fetching from the pounded yam and eat. All the pieces of meat in the calabash must also be consumed by the children. Part of the meat used for sacrifice will be shared into four. One part will be given to Sàngò priest, another part will be given to bàtá drummers, those drumming during Òrisà o*ko* festival will be given and the larger part of the meat with a bottle of wine goes to the king, İgbá eyin eran to the women who prepared the food. The neck of the meat belongs to the man who slaughtered the meat.

After the necessary ritual, people in their large number will now dance to the king's palace. At the palace, the king prays to gods for the

opportunity given to witness the new festival, he then gives money to the women present after which the crowd heads to the market where the Sàngó priest is to bless his attendees.

In the seventh day, Baba Moja the priest of *Òrìsà oko* again will cook, receive visitors from far and near, take care of those who purposely come to witness the festival including researchers who have come to write about the festival. In fact they are elated seeing writing and recording the festival as it progresses. They believe that their culture must be sold to the world, they want to see themselves on the television, they are eager to listen to the radio broadcasting the activities of the festival. From the resercher's observation, noting is secretive in the process. At a point the researcher was expecting them to chase him out of the shrine, which never happened. He was tempted to ask the reason why some aspects of the ritual were not taken off his view, the reply was jaw-dropping, "if we drive you out, wont you tell people that we sacrifice human being in the shrine". Everything was opened to the researcher and they were excited that "foreigners" were in their midst, they are not belligerent; they were accommodating, hospitable and friendly. The event comes to its bridge version in the 7th day.

There is, of course an aspect of the ritual that looks irritating, fossil, archaic and old fashioned. For instance the aspect of children eating from the broken calabash is not hygienic and looks barbaric in an age of science and technology. One of the greatest criticisms against African Traditional Religion is its fossility, cumbersome tradition, the rigidity of its ritual, not being ready to bow to change and its locality. There is no dynamics at all. It is still the same process since the creation of the universe. If this continues I am trepidated that, one day, the foreign religions might just succeed in sweeping it off its existence and dump it in the historical lagoon. No doubt, this has been happening, the only area of African Indigenous Religion that cannot bow to the wind of change is magic and medicine. Today, *Egúngún* is no longer feared, people have begun to say that they know the secret behind it. So many things that should not have been deduced in the olden days are beginning to be revealed even to women who should not have smelled the secret. *Yorùbá* magic and medicine is the only one in African Traditional Religion that external forces prostrate to. Presently, remove magic and medicine from the religion of Africa, every other thing collapses. Not that other aspects of the religion are not breathing, they are in the theatre room where surgical operation is to be taken place. Its survival is 50-50. It may succeed or not. Its survival depends largely on the way and manner the people see the religion in this age of civilization and globalization where almost everything is moving towards dynamics. If the religion is treated with great adoration, it will forever be respected, but seeing it in another way round is dangerous, certain aspects of the ritual that need to change must experience change in other to flow alongside with other world religions

In conclusion ,one can boldly say that ,today ,one of the reasons why some practices in African Traditional Religion still gain acceptance is because the larger practices of the religion can be seen in the remote parts .The practice of Orisa-Oko therefore ,is a major testament to this thesis and must not be allowed to go into extinction .Orisa-Oko as a deity still gives farmers in the rural areas some hope and we are hopeful that the belief in it will stabilize and sustain the belief in African Traditional Religion.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF RITUAL IN RELIGIOUSLY PLURALISTIC SOCIETY IN IFE, OSUN, NIGERIA

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KEYWORDS
Socio economic, Religion pluralistic, Traditional sacrifice, traditional religion, Christianity and Islam

ABSTRACT
This paper deals with the socio-economy effect of ritual in religiously pluralistic society among the people of lle-Ife land. The major focus of the research is to bring to the fore the effects of ritual in religiously pluralistic society on the people of le-Ife land especially on their social, religious and economy lives. There have been scanty works on the subject hence the study calls for chronological discourse Primary and secondary sources were used to elicit information Ile-lfe was founded in 500CE by the Yoruba people 'a Kwa-speaking people of south west Nigeria and Benni'" but did not flourish until the early part of the 2nd millennium CE. Ile-Ife was an ancient African city which flourished between 11th and 15th centuries. The people, like other Yoruba speaking people believe in only one God but have gods as the deputies of Olodumare (God). The people are found in southwestern part of Nigeria, in West Africa. Ile-Ife was the capital and principal religious center of the Yoruba. Ile-Ife is a religiously pluralistic society with Christianity, Islam and Traditional Religion existing side by side. It was gathered that religious pluralism in Ile-Ife is on a positive side. Kinship, Marriage, social gathering and so on, are some of the factors responsible for the positive effects from the various religions in Ile-Ife.

Introduction

Religion, no doubt, plays an important role in the development, maintenance and management of the society. It covers virtually every sphere of the life of an individual in the society. By implication, the role of religion in the socioeconomic advancement of the society cannot be over-emphasized. In Nigeria, religion is an important variable influencing economic outcome. Religious beliefs influence thought patterns and promote traits like honesty, integrity and work ethnics which are necessary condiments that boost nations' Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Religion preaches against corruption and increases respect for the rule of law. Economic activities in most cases are driven by people who are controlled by religious beliefs and rituals. The researcher notes that, certain aspects of religion affect the growth of the socioeconomic landscapes of different nations, particularly in Nigeria.

Ile-Ife, a town in Osun State, Nigeria, shares the same diversity with the country itself. Although there are so many religious practices in Ile - Ife but they major on Traditional Religion and carryout ritual day by day to appease the

gods of the land. Christians, Muslims and Traditional

worshippers in Ife land believe that God is one; God is the creator of the whole universe and everything in it. They hold God as a merciful, all powerful, only wise, all knowing and eternal being. Even though some aspects of the religions differ, for instance, in Christianity, there are different dogmatic approaches to religious beliefs and beliefs which are not condoned by other adherents of the same faith.

Islam uncomprising demand for unquestionable, strict obedience and submission to the will of Allah in stringent manner, often leads to unparalleled intolerance towards adherents of other religions. The African traditional religion, which hitherto has been reviewed as very tolerant and accommodating, cannot be exonerated from ex23 hibiting a high level of intolerant attitude.

The effect of ritual is increasing at an alarming rate with its attendant effects on both individuals economic and socio-economic. It is believed that several socioeconomic effects drive people to commit some ritual such as: power, defence, solving household problems and longevity.

The Origin, Geographical Location and Economy of Ife Land

Akinjogbin(1992) posits that Ife is an ancient Yoruba city in South Western Nigeria. The city is located in present day Osun State. Ife is with a population of over 500,000 people which is the highest in Osun State according to population census of 2006. A short introduction exposes Ile-Ife in the UFE dialect by a native speaker.(p.7)

According to Yoruba religion, Olodumare, the Supreme God, ordered Obatala to create the earth, but on his way, he found palm-wine which he drank and became intoxicated. Therefore, the

younger brother of the latter, Oduduwa, took the three items of creation from him, climbed down

from the heavens on a chain and threw a handful of earth on the primordial ocean, then put a cockerel on it so that it would scatter the earth, thus creating the land on which Ile Ife would be built. Oduduwa planted a palm nut in a hole in the newly formed land and from there sprang a great tree with sixteen branches, a symbolic representation of the clans of the early Ife city-state. The usurpation of creation, by Oduduwa, gave rise to the ever-lasting conflict between him and his elder brother, Obatala, which is still re-enacted in the modern era by the cult groups of the two clans during the Itapa New Year festival. On account of his creation of the world. Oduduwa became the ancestor of the first divine king of the Yoruba. Obatala is believed to have created the first Yoruba people from the clay The meaning of the word "Ife" in Yoruba is "expansion': "Ile-Ife" is, therefore, in reference to the myth of origin as The Land of Expansion" (the word, Ile, as pronounced in modern Yoruba language, means house or home, which could make the name of the town mean "The House of Expansion") Oduduwa had sons, daughters, and a grandson, who went on to found their own kingdoms and empires, namely: Ila Orangun. Owu, Ketu, Sabe, Egba, Popo and Oyo. Oranmiyan, Oduduwa's last born, was one of his father's nrincipal ministers and overseers of the nascent Edo Empire after Oduduwa granted the plea of the Edo people for his governance. When Oranmiyan decided to go back to lle Ife, after a period of service and exile in Benin, he left behind a child named Eweka that he had in the interim with an indigenous princess of Benin. The young boy went on to become the first legitimate ruler and Oba of the second Edo dynasty that has ruled Benin from that day. Oranmivan later went on to found the Oyo Empire that stretched at its height from the western banks of the river Niger to the Eastern banks of the river Volta. It would serve as one of the most powerful of Africa's medieval states, prior to its collapse in the 19th century.

Ife has an undulating terrain underlain by metamorphic rocks and characterized by two types of soils, deep clay soils on the upper slopes and sandy soils on the lower parts. Within the tropical savannah climate zone of West Africa, it has average rainfall of 1,000-1,250 mm (39-49 in) usually from March to October and a mean relative humidity of 75% to 100%. Ife is east of the

city of Ibadan and connected to it through the Ife-Ibadan highway; Ife is also 40 km (25 mi) from

Osogbo and has road networks to other cities such as Ede, Ondo and Ilesha. There is the Opa river and reservoir, that serves as a water treatment facility for OAU college.

Ife contains universities that are very well known in Nigeria and internationally such as Obafemi Awolowo University formerly University of Ife and Oduduwa University. It also contains attractions like the Natural History Museum of Nigeria. Ife is home to a regional agricultural center with an area that produces vegetables, grain cocoa, tobacco, and cotton. Ife has a few open markets, such as Oja Titun or Odo-gbe market with about 1,500 shops.

In terms of development, the Ife central area of Ile-Ife is more developed. The areas include

Parakin. Eleyele, Modomo, Damico, and Crown Estate Area. These areas are characterized by modern houses, good road network, constant electricity and security.

1. According to the traditions of the Yoruba religion as further argued by Akinjogbin(1992), Ile-Ife was founded by the order of the supreme god Olodumare by Obatala. It then fell into the hands of his brother Oduduwa which created enemity between the two Oduduwa began to raising children there, and sons and daughters of this Oduduwa become rulers of many other kingdoms in Yoruba Land. The first Ooni of Ife is a descendant of Oduduwa which was the 401 Orisha. The various Oonis of Ife are listed below: Oduduwa
2. Osángangan Obamakin
3. Ogun
4. Obalufon Ogbogbodirin
5. Obalufon Alayemore
6. Oranmiyan
7. Ayetise
8. Lajamisan
9. Lajodoogun
10. Lafogido
11. Odomode Rogbeesin
12. Aworokolokin
13. Ekùn
14. Ajimuda
15. Gboonijio
16. Okanlajojosin
17. Adegbayi
18. Osinkola
19. Ogborun
20. Giesi
21. Luwooo : The only female to become Oòni and king in Ife land but she said to have married to Chief Obàloràn of Ilode bad became the mother of Adekola Tèlú, the founder of Iwo Town.
22. Lumobi
23. Agbedegbede
24. Ojelokunbirin
25. Laguna
26. Larinka
27. Ademilua
28. Omogbogbo
29. Ajila oorun
30. Adejinle
31. Olojo
32. Okiti
33. Lugbade
34. Aribiwoso
35. Odunlade
36. Adagba
37. Ojigidiri
38. Akinmoyero (1770- 1800)
39. Gbanlare (1800-1823)

40. Gbegbaje (1 823-1 835)
41. Wunmonije (1835-1839)
42. Adegunle Adéwálé (1839-1849)
43. Degbinsokun (1849-1878)
44. Oreigba (1 878-1880)
45. Derin Ologbenla: He was a powerful warrior (1880-1894)
46. Adelekan (lubuse): He was the first Ooni to travel outside Ile-Ife to Lagos in 1903 when he was invited by the Governor General to setle the dispute involving Elepe of Epe and other kings. He was nicknamed Eriogun, Akitikori Ebitikimopiri (1894-1910),
47. Adekola (1910-1910)
48. Ademuniyi (Ajagun Lawarikan): He also was reputed to be a powerful monarch (1910-1930)
49. Adesoji Aderemi (1930-1980)
50. Okunade Sijuwade: He is a grandson of Olubode 1, the 46 Ooni of Ife.
51. The present ruler since 2015 is Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi OJAJA II. Ooni of Ife who is also a Nigerian accountant. Ife is home to many worshippers of these deities and where they are routinely celebrated through festivals and day by day ritual and sacrifices. According to transcribed oral traditions, it was believed in the whole 365 days of the year. It was only one day that was excluded for sacrifice in the history of Ile-Ife.(p.11)

Cultural Structure of Ife People

The people of le-Ife are proud of their city's rich history and culture. Yoruba civilization is thought to have originated in Ile-Ife, and the city is still considered the cultural center of the Yoruba people. Visitors to Ife can see many examples of architecture, arts and crafts. The people of Ile-Ife are also known for their hospitality and visitors are always welcomed in the city. Ile-Ife's inhabitants are primarily town dwelling farmers.

Religions Practiced among the People of Ife land

The three main religions practiced among the Ife people are African Traditional Religions, Islam and Christianity. There also exists, though in insignificant numbers, various Eastern religions such as Eckanka.

African Traditional Religion

African Traditional Religion. in their various forms and shapes, are practiced in Ife land. The adherents of ATR cut across a wide spectrum of the society involving the rich, and the poor, the iterate as well as the illiterate persons. The prevalence of Traditional Religions among Nigerians can be gauged not only by the numerous shrines and sacred grooves that liter the cities, town and village, but also by the numerous traditional religious festivals carried out from time to time in the various communities in the country and the Ife people are not exempted. The domineering presence of Christianity and Islam in the nation has not been able to obliterate the African Traditional Religions from being practiced by some people in the country. It is well known fact that even among some professed Christians and Muslims, they revert to them in secret. To the

adherents of African Traditional Religions, their religion permeates all departments of life, there is no formal distinction between the spiritual and the material areas of life. No one actually knows the exact strength of the adherents of African Traditional Religions in Nigeria, due to the fact that Nigerian census does not reckon with religious affiliation of the citizens. Secondly, very few people openly claim to be adherents of African Traditional Religions. This, notwithstanding, the practice of African Traditional Religions in Nigeria is very much prominent among the Ife people.

The African traditional religion of the Ife people could not be correctly called Fetishism or

Paganism, for they were aware of and did acknowledge the existence of the Almighty God, whom they worshipped as Olorun, Eleda Aiye (the Owner of the world above, Maker of the world below). The original objects of worship were the Earth and the spirit of one's ancestors and the Olorun Eleda Aiye, together in this form of prayer with split kola nut and bitter kola nut (orogbo):

O earth, I call thee!

Though who shavest thy head with hoes;

Please call me not hurriedly back to free;

Please consume me not speedily;

O God of heaven, O God of earth

I pray thee uphold my hand;

My ancestors and ancestress

Please lean on earth and succor me

That I may not quickly come to thee.

Thus,after the prayer, kola and bitter kola nuts were cast on the ground. If half or more of the faces turned upwards (a sign of acceptable worship or sacrifice), some water is poured down at the

enshrinement.Ogunsakin(2024) avers that a sacrifice of pigeons, fowls or ducks or any cattle may be made by pouring the blood on the spot and the flesh cooked and eaten. There are other religious customs such as Oro Ile.When the people meet for this worship, they will say, *A nşe Oro ile baba wa'" ("'we are

performing the Established Customs if our nation or ancestor") and, casting down the split kola, proving acceptable worship, they would be singing thus-

Here are we-Kinsfolks all- Performing our Established Customs with no stranger. (Hence, the mode of worship was called " Oro" (Established Customs). Subsequently the ceremonies were performed absolutely without any girl or woman. There were grooves reserved for that purpose called "Igboro", (Igbo Oro-Oro Groves) but on important occasions the Oro play was performed Outside the grove, and no woman, girl, or even a baby (female) must witness the scene. If any of this sex of any rank were to enter the grove at all, or should say or show that she had some knowledge about the making of Oro, the penalty was death. The rule was so strictly observed that to give an illustration, one day whilst an Oro play was being performed, a man carrving his baby of about three months old in his arms came forth to witness the play. The poor child, since it was a female, was snatched from the father and dealt with according to the law. Oro play was used in the public management of the affairs of the government in order to exclude the woman from tampering with the functions,

a. The arrest and execution of burglars, or murderers, or anyone found guilty of any serious

b. crime, or any sorcerers or witches.

c. The offering of state sacrifice in time of drought, war or pestilence, or any other afflictions.

d. The meeting of the general public to settle political dispute or political quarrels or for political discussions and arrangements on matters of grave importance.

A few days before this, the bell ringer would go around the town announcing that the Oro play would be performed and for how many days it would continue. Hearing this, the woman especially would make all necessary preparations for the occasion, for they must be kept closely confined during the whole period. When the day arrived all the gates, doors openings must be barred, and the women, the inmates of the house, must not pass by them. Sometimes, it was prolonged for seven or nine successive days, often for three days, but most times only a day. In any case, women must be confined at home, except when there was conflagration, when the "Asemo Oro" must be withdrawn at once. The sign of the withdrawal of any Asemo Oro was the firing of a gun by the recognized chief of the town. Therefore no sound of gun must be heard during the "Asemo Oro" so that people may not be led to think that the confinement was withdrawn. The Oro worshippers were called "Oloro" (professors of Oro) and their head were called "Abore Oro" (The Chief Priest of Oro).

Oyefeso (2023) says that another religious custom of the Ife people is the worship of "Egungun" (the progenitor). The Yoruba man believes that he can live after death either in this or another world. He believes also in re-incantation. Hence, they worship their progenitor, that he or she may be reborn, in the same family. And when a child was born, the oracle of the god Ifa would be consulted as to which of the spirit of the dead relations was clothed in another body. This is called "Ifiomo mo" (The actof knowing the child). The Egungun

also had its secrets from which the women were excluded.(p.4)

There was also Igbale Egungun (Egungun Secret Hall or Groove) but each "gbale Egungun' allowed "Iya-agan" (Mother in Mysteries) - an old woman - to enter the Secret Hall with the men. The head of the Egungun worshippers was styled Alapini. The Egungun play was also used in the affairs of the government as the Oro, but in a lesser degree. These deified personages were called "Orisa" (fortunate). They are said to be 401 in number. The four days of the Yoruba week took names from the deified personages, viz: Ode Obatala, Ode Elegbara, Ose Ifa and Ose Sango.

At this time the Ife people themselves began to deify their own famous and great men, and to worship the spirits or geniuses of their towns, hills and river. But the foreign gods had more worshippers than the natives ones. It was also at this time that the propitiation of the Esu called

Elegbara was introduced. This has been miscalled the Devil-worship.

Islam

Islam is the other main religion practiced in Ile-lfe. It is regarded by Muslims as the original or natural religion of mankind. However, historically, it started AD 610 with a series of revelations

received by Prophet Muhammad at the age of forty. In the years 632, Prophet Muhammad died, but the religion started by him continued to expand. Between 622 and 722AD, "there was a mighty expansionist movement of the Arabs out of the Arabian Peninsula into the lands of Syria, Iraq Persia, Central Asia and long North African coast and into Spain." It was from North African across the Sahara that the Islamic religion spread to West African territories in Northern Nigeria: Ayowole(2021) argues that Islam was introduced to the region in the second half of the 14th century. It is possible this region might have had contact with Islam before 14th Century. For most parts, the spread of Islam in West Africa was by commerce and other social contact rather than by military conquest. For instance, it was through the Malians that it was introduced to the Ile-Ife people. Thus, they often refer to it as esin male (religion of Mali). By the middle of the fifeenth century, places like Kano Katsina, Kebbi and Bornu had come under Islamic influence with Muslim rulers such as Muhammad Rumfa - the Sultan of Kano, 1463-99 holding Sway.

The launching of Sokoto Jihad in the early years of the century in Hausa land, Usman Dan Fodii did not only resort in reforming for the better practice of Islam where it had previously been planted, but also led to further spreadof Islam to the areas where it had not previously reached. These areas include the northern towns of Yoruba land namely Ilorin, Oyo, Ogbomoso, Ofa and Osbogbo just to mention a few. A remarkable fact about Islam is that its ethos, covering aspects of the believer's life, provides a very strong and common bond of allegiance to Central Authority by people of diverse cultures and languages. In other words, it is the religious bond (lslam) that exists between diverse people that matters and not their ethnic group of culture. This particular religion has also spread across Ife land and the presence of mosque (Muslim Worship Centres) in almost every community.(p.49)

Christianity

Aghalino (2022) posits that Christianity is one of the main religions practiced in the country. It was first introduced to the region now known as Nigeria in the 15th and 16th centuries precisely to Benin and Warri respectively by the Roman Catholics. However, the missionary enterprise started by the Roman Catholic did not succeed due to a combination of factors. Accounting to this, it was until three centuries later that effective planting of Christianity was achieved in Nigeria. The pioneering bodies in this renewed effort at evangelizing Nigeria were the Methodist Church and the Anglican Church (CMS) that arrived in Badagry in September 1842 and December 1842 respectively. In 1850, the Southern Baptist Mission followed. The Presbyterian Church started its evangelistic work in Nigeria in 1846 via Calabar. The Roman Catholic Church which had earlier made an abortive attempt at planting Christianity in Nigeria was reintroduced in the 1860s. Much headway was made at the planting of Christianity in Nigeria in the 19th century. Christianity has since remained a potent religious force exerting both social and political influence in the nation. Christians are dominant in the southern and central region in Nigeria. Nigeria has the largest Christian population compared to any country with Christians in Africa, with more than 70 million persons belonging to the church with various denominations. (p.2)

Interaction of the Three Main Religions among the People

Interaction as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary is the, "reciprocal actions or influence of persons on each other Religious Interaction can be described as the interaction of adherents of the different religious faiths existing together in a religiously heterogeneous society".30 When it comes to Ile Ife, three major religions that cut-cross various quarters of Ile-lfe are Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. The adherents of these religions interact freely without any restriction. So many factors have been able to foster interaction of the religions among the people. Some of these factors are: cosmopolitan nature of the town, education, business in market places, farming, family rites and ceremonies, social gatherings, marriage and so on.

By the word cosmopolitan nature, we mean that lle- Ife, the chief city of Ife, is at the centre of all other towns and villages of Ife land because of this, so many people of different religions meet together daily to exchange goods and services in order to promote the wellbeing of the people for proper transaction and the growth of their businesses, the people have no choice than to interact freely. At this level, religion is put aside and relate as one.

Ogunyemi(2024) stresses that education is another factor that enhances religious interaction among the people. Although,some schools in Ife were formerly mission schools: either owned by the Christians or Muslims, yet parents just enrolled their wards indiscriminatelv. Many of the parents, with the exemption of few who are fanatics, for example, a Muslim Civil engineer in my neighbourhood, even though his wife is a Christian, will never enroll his children in a Christian school. Except these few, others do not really care about the religious affiliation attached, their major concern is sound education and proximity; the closeness of the school to their house. So, their children study together and play together at school, putting aside their religious differences.

Social gatherings as well, help to develop religious interaction. The people most especially on weekends, forget religious differences, put on different attires andOgunye assemble at different occasions across the town. There, they dance, wine and eat together. At this time, they see themselves as one and live as a community.

Above all Ife people are peace loving people. In a family for instance, the father can be adherent of Traditional Religion, the mother a Muslim and some of their children can be Christians. The variation in their religious principles have some effects on their communal coexistence.

Social effect of Ritual in Religion pluralism on the people of Ile Ife

Ayodele (2014) claims that social practices of rituals are habitual activities that structure the lives of religiously pluralistic society and Ile-Ife is not divorced of this fact. Ile-Ife. It is significant because it reaffirms the identity of those who practice it, a group or society and whether performed in public or private are closely linked to important events. Social ritual practices of Ile-Ife people may help to mark the passing of the seasons, events in the agricultural calendar or the stages of person's lives. It is closely linked to a community's world view and perception of its own history and memory. It varies from small, gathering to large- scale social celebration and commorations. Each of the sub-Domains is vast but there are also great ritual and festive events that often take place at special time and remind a community of aspects of its worldview and history. In some cases, access to ritual may be restricted to certain members of the community initiation rules and burial ceremonies are two such examples of some festive events like ORO, OLOJO are key parts of publis life and are open to all members of Ile Ife society. Yam Festival "ODUN 1JESU, Egungun festival and other events are to mark the new year, beginning of spring and end of the harvest are inclusive occasions common all over in Ile-Ife. (p.25)

However, the social effect of ritual and religious pluralism on the people of Ile-Ife may serve as special occasion on which people return home to celebrate with their family and community, reaffirming their identity and link.

Shalihin(2022) states that ramadan is a religious ritual yet has significant social and economic impact. It follows a different pattern for office hours and is recognized by less productivity" and more social gathering on "Iftar'" and 'suhoor meals. Productivity decreases from 35% to 50% due to shorten working hours, and inability to focus with no access to food or beverage till: sunset and fewer hours of sleep. It is, as all religious festivities around the world such Christmas, highly

commercialized; hence, it is a golden opportunity for marketing the products (p.1).

Ironically, Ramandan is all about food! Food retailers stock up products at least a month ahead in preparation of excess demand. Supermarkets and hypermarkets extend hours to midnight and tend to have Ramadan specific promotions and offers. It is no coincidence that advertisement on food and beverages are massively demanding during the month of Ramadan. Despite the fact that Ramadan is a fasting month, food consumption during the time ofIftar'' to "Suhoor' " exceed normal consumption patterns. Not only do food bills increase by 50-100% during Ramadan, it is reported that 83% of families change their consumption habits during Ramadan. It is estimated that food consumption in Ramadan accounts for 159% of annual expenditure on food.

Amongst the highest consumed goods in Ramadan are, nuts and dairy products. Consumption of bread, chicken and dried fruits increase by 639%, 66.5% and 259% respectively during Ramadan, as compared to other months of the year. Last year, Egypt consumed a total of nine million dried fruits which accounts for 35% of annual trade only during the Holy Month. Dairy products like Yogurt and labna, come among the highest sales. Dairy companies usually prepare for Ramadan with different offers and especial products only for this month. Muslims eat dairy products after their Suhoor for better digest and to avoid feeling thirsty the next day.

It is unfortunate that people tend to exaggerate their food consumption levels during Ramadan. In this respect, it is reported by "Global Advisory and Accounting NETW" that 60% of food goes to waste in Egypt during Ramadan which completely contradicts with Ramadan's ethics and morals.

Retail and hospitality business also experience a sharp increase in sales. In countries like UAE and Egypt, majority or restaurants and cafes remain open extended late hours to midnight for

Suhoor. Traditional, people go out especially after Iftar to socialize, eat out and enjoy the Suhoor with friends and Family, For instance, UAE, it was reported that 46% prefer to have Iftar out at least onece a week, 26% order delivery especially at the second half of the Holy Month, and 78% planned to have Suhoor in cafes.

Business people cooperating with the Middle East would see Ramadan as a time of caution and less productivity but also as a time of opportunity, especially for food, retail and hospitality related industries. Like in all business, how you use the opportunity is what matters! Longer prescribed ramandan fasting has a robust negative effect on output growth in Ile Ife. This was only observe in Muslim area in Ile Ife. however as was another finding that ramadan makes people happier. 'Put simply, it makes them happier inspite of making them relatively poorer.

Social practices shape everyday life and are familiar to all members of the community, even if not everybody participates in them. Distinctive social practices that are especially relevant to a community and help reinforce a sense of identity and continuity with the past are given priority in the convention. For example, in many communities greeting ceremonies are informal while in the others they are more elaborate and ritualistic, acting as a maker of identity for the society. Similarly, practices of giving and receiving gifts may range; from casual events to formal arrangements with significant political, economic or social meanings.

Social practices, rituals and festive events involve a dazzling variety of forms: worship rites of passage: birth, wedding and funeral rituals; oaths of allegiance; traditional legal systems: traditional games and sports; kinship and ritual kinship ceremonies; settlement patterns; culinary traditions: seasonal ceremonies; practices specific to men or women only; hunting, and gathering practices and many more. They also include a wide variety of expressions and physical elements: Special gestures and words, recitations, songs or dances, special clothing, processions, animal sacrifice, special food.

Sunday services usually involves a lot of activities such as singing of hymns, reading of scripture verses and possibly a psalm, churches have usually Holy Communion either every Sunday or several Sundays, with this, Sunday service has contributed in one way and other to the effects of economy in Ile-Ife in such a way that many traders will not be able to participates in their various day's job in order to give respect and to serve their God and it usually reduces their profits or cost of demand in every week.

Economic Effect of Ritual in Religion pluralism on the people of Ile Ife

Religious researchers in Africa argue that religion reduces corruption and increases respect for rule of law in ways that boost overall economic prosperity. Ile-Ife is a practical example of this.

The argument that religion is an independent variable that influences economic outcome should be viewed from two distinct perspectives. Apart from those positive aspects mentioned above and, in some pages, there are other aspects of religion pluralism on the people especially in Ile Ife. For example, Islamic insurgency has negatively effect on some states in Northern Nigeria.

Security challenges in those states have inevitably led to the economic marginalization of the region. These challenges have negatively effect on both the private and public sectors of the economy as many business owners and traders have to relocate their businesses from the region.

The devastating effects of the Islamic sect, *Boko Haram" on the economy of Northern Nigeria, are enormous in the states like Borno, Yobe, Kano, Adamawa, Plateau, Kaduna, Kogi and Bauchi. The devastating socio-economic effects of the sect's serial killings and bombings have virtually destroyed economic activities.

The attacks on Kano have been very devastating because the city has always been the commercial centre of the Western Sudan for the past 500 years. The city had been the economic base of the North even before neibouring countries like Niger Republic, Chad and Northern Cameroon before the evolution of the Nigerian nation, investors from Ile Ife who have been doing business in the city for ages are said to be relocating their businesses, some of the indigenes of Ile Ife who travelled to buy and sell were killed and some of them stopped going due to the unending security challenges in the city.

Most importantly, Heritage Day provides an opportunity for Africans to celebrate their cultural heritage and diversity of beliefs and traditions. This also similar to the people of Ile-Ife. Though, I have mentioned some benefits and effects of ritual in Ile-Ife, still, there are some challenges that face ritual practices among Ile-Ife people.

1. **Ritual Killing or Human Sacrifice**

   Ritual killings or multiple killings are committed for the purpose of taking human body parts which are used to prepare charms and other sacrifice and rituals. These charms are believed to have supernatural powers, still yet it has effects on the people because people are running out day by day or stopped watching traditional events in other not to be victims of ritual events.

2. **The challenge of Islam and Christianity**

   Traditional African religions in le-ife have faced persecution from Christians and Muslims. Supporters of these religions have been forcefully converted to Islam and Christianity, demonized and marginalized. The atrocities include killing, waging war, destroying of sacred places and other atrocities.

In conclusion, apart from the few challenges pointed out and others that the researcher has not been able to highlight, the adherents of the three religions have been able to live peacefully among themselves over the years. During Ramadan, the adherents of the other two religions celebrate with Muslims and vice versa. The role of religious pluralism In Ile -Ife is so strong so much so that, hardly will a politician dares contest any election without rooting for the support of the adherents of the three major religions and because of this bond,the socio-economic impact of rituals most especially during festivals cannot be carpeted.

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ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNAL CONFLICTS IN BENUE STATE

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KEYWORDS
Communal Conflict, Inclusive Governance, Economic Hardship, Youth Involvement, Resource Scarcity

ABSTRACT
This study examines the relationship between economic hardship and youth involvement in communal conflicts in Benue State, Nigeria. Frustration-Aggression Theory serves as the theoretical framework, suggesting that economic deprivation and unmet expectations create frustration, which may manifest as aggression, particularly among youth. This theory is predicated upon how economic hardships push young individuals into violent conflicts when they are unable to fulfil basic needs or achieve their goals through conventional means, such as employment or education. The study employs a qualitative method. Secondary data from policy documents, media reports, and academic literature were analyzed. Firstly, the findings revealed that high levels of unemployment and poverty among youth in Benue State contribute significantly to their involvement in communal conflicts, as they perceive violence as a viable means to gain material rewards or assert identity. Secondly, there is a strong correlation between the lack of inclusive governance and the intensification of ethnic tensions, with marginalized groups, particularly the Idoma and Igede, feeling excluded from political processes, further fueling conflicts. These findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive interventions in youth employment, governance, and conflict resolution to break the cycle of violence in Benue State. This study calls for targeted policies that address both the socio-economic drivers and governance failures contributing to youth involvement in communal conflicts.

Introduction

Economic hardship is a pervasive global issue, with youth often bearing the brunt of its consequences. In many regions, economic challenges have been linked to the increased involvement of young people in communal conflicts (Smith & Brown, 2023). Economic downturns have historically correlated with social unrest. The 2008 financial crisis, for instance, led to increased unemployment rates among youth, resulting in protests and, in some cases, escalated to violent confrontations (ILO, 2023). The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that in 2023, global youth unemployment reached 13.6%, nearly three times higher than the adult rate, underscoring the vulnerability of young people during economic hardships. This vulnerability often translates into frustration and disenchantment, making the youth susceptible to involvement in conflicts as a means of expressing grievances or seeking economic gain (Nguyen et al., 2023).

In Africa, the situation is exacerbated by rapid population growth and insufficient economic development. This phenomenon is particularly evident when a significant youth population faces limited employment opportunities and economic instability (Okafor et al., 2022). The African Development Bank (AfDB) noted that in 2022, over 60% of Africa's unemployed were the youth, with the majority residing in rural areas (Mwangi & Toure, 2023). This demographic pressure, coupled with limited access to quality education and vocational training, has resulted in a skills mismatch, further hindering employment prospects (Akinyemi, 2023). Consequently, many young Africans find themselves in precarious economic situations, increasing the likelihood of their involvement in communal conflicts as an alternative means of livelihood or expression of discontent (Obiora, 2024).

Nigeria, as Africa's most populous nation, mirrors these continental challenges. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported a youth unemployment rate of 42.5% in 2023, reflecting a significant portion of the population facing economic hardship (NBS, 2023). These challenges are pronounced, leading to a concerning rise in youth participation in communal conflicts (Adewumi & Eze, 2024). This economic disenfranchisement has been linked to increased crime rates and participation in communal conflicts as disenfranchised youth seek alternative means of income or succumb to the influence of opportunistic leaders who exploit their vulnerabilities (Eke & Olamide, 2023). The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has recognized youth unemployment as a critical factor contributing to regional insecurity, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies to address this issue (Ogundele et al., 2024).

Benue State, located in Nigeria's Middle Belt, has been a hotspot for communal conflicts. The State's economy is predominantly agrarian, with a significant portion of the population engaged in farming (Okoh, 2024). However, climate change and environmental degradation have led to reduced agricultural yields, exacerbating economic hardships for the youth. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported in 2024 that climate change has reduced the availability of natural resources in Nigeria, aggravating clashes between communities in Benue State and displacing approximately half a million people (UNHCR, 2024).

The rising rate of youth unemployment in Benue State is a significant concern. A study published in 2023 highlighted that the State occupies the 21st position out of Nigeria's 36 states, with a poverty rate of 32.9% (IJSSHM, 2023). The study attributes youth unemployment to factors such as a growing urban labour force, outdated educational curricula, and limited access to vocational training. This economic deprivation leads to frustration and helplessness among the youth, luring many into violent crimes and communal conflicts as a means of survival (Abah & Orji, 2023). The involvement of youth in communal conflicts in Benue State has had devastating effects on the community. Children, in particular, have been victims of violence, with many forced into displacement. Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps have been established to house these displaced children, highlighting the severe humanitarian impact of these conflicts (Adejoh, 2024). The combination of high youth unemployment, climate-induced resource scarcity, and inadequate educational opportunities has led to increased participation of youth in communal conflicts.

Despite various interventions, a critical gap remains in understanding the interplay between economic hardship and youth participation in these conflicts. The lack of targeted programs addressing the root causes, such as youth unemployment and resource management,

perpetuates instability. This issue impacts multiple stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations working toward peacebuilding. Addressing this problem is crucial for fostering sustainable development and preventing further destabilization in Benue State. This study seeks to provide evidence-based insights to inform policies and programmes aimed at breaking the cycle of economic hardship and youth involvement in communal conflicts.

Terminological and Theoretical Perspectives

Economic Hardship: Economic hardship refers to the severe financial and resource challenges faced by individuals or communities, including unemployment, poverty, and lack of access to basic needs, which create conditions of vulnerability and social instability (United Nations, 2023).

Youth Involvement: The concept of youth involvement highlights the participation of young people in communal conflict, whether as active combatants, instigators, or unintended victims, influenced by socio-economic and environmental pressures (World Bank, 2023).

Communal Conflicts: Communal conflicts are disputes or violent clashes between groups within a community, often arising from competition over limited resources, ethnic or cultural tensions, or socio-political grievances (Buhaug & Urdal, 2023).

Resource Scarcity refers to the insufficient availability of essential resources such as land, water, and food in Benue State. This scarcity is exacerbated by climate change and economic challenges, which fuel tensions and conflicts (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2024).

Peacebuilding Interventions: The concept of peacebuilding intervention encompasses strategies, programs, and policies aimed at resolving conflicts, fostering economic empowerment, and promoting sustainable development to address the underlying causes of youth involvement in communal violence (African Union, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Frustration-Aggression Theory. The Frustration-Aggression Theory, proposed by John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O.H. Mowrer, and Robert Sears in 1939, suggests that aggression is the result of blocking or frustrating a person's efforts to achieve a goal. According to this theory, when individuals or groups experience frustration due to unmet needs or economic hardships, they may resort to aggressive behaviour, including violence, as a means of coping or retaliating. In the context of communal conflicts in Benue State, youth facing economic hardship and a lack of opportunities may experience frustration, which could lead them to engage in violent conflicts as an outlet for their frustrations. The theory helps explain how economic deprivation and social marginalization may drive young people to participate in communal violence as a form of aggression against perceived injustices or inequities.

Relationship Between Economic Hardship and Youth Involvement in Communal Conflicts in Nigeria

Economic hardship has been identified as a significant factor contributing to youth involvement in communal conflicts in Nigeria. According to Adebayo (2021), economic deprivation among Nigerian youth, including high unemployment and limited access to opportunities, creates frustration and vulnerability, making them more likely to be recruited into violent communal conflicts. Adebayo critiques government policies as inadequate in addressing youth empowerment, suggesting that the lack of sustained economic programs exacerbates youth restiveness. Similarly, Okafor and Udeh (2020) argue that poverty and social inequality play critical roles in escalating communal violence, as impoverished youth often perceive violence as a viable means to address grievances or gain economic advantage. Their study highlights that policy interventions focusing on poverty alleviation are often reactive and lack long-term sustainability.

According to Bello (2019), the marginalization of youth from decision-making processes in communities further deepens their economic challenges, leading to resentment and their eventual involvement in conflicts. Bello emphasizes the need for inclusive governance to mitigate the appeal of communal violence. In

contrast, Ibrahim and Musa (2022) contend that youth participation in communal conflicts is often manipulated by political elites who exploit their economic desperation. They critique the role of politicians in fostering divisions for personal gain, which perpetuates cycles of violence.

Abdullahi et al. (2021) explore the role of education in addressing youth involvement in communal conflicts, arguing that limited access to quality education and skills acquisition programs contributes to economic hardship. They recommend educational reforms targeting rural areas where communal conflicts are prevalent. On the other hand, Chukwuma (2020) highlights that even educated youth engage in conflicts due to the lack of corresponding job opportunities, pointing to a mismatch between educational output and labour market demands. He critiques the government's inability to create an enabling environment for job creation as a key failure.

According to Yusuf and Adewale (2021), the proliferation of small arms in economically disadvantaged communities exacerbates the involvement of youth in violent conflicts. They argue that economic hardship not only increases the likelihood of violence but also sustains it by fostering an illicit economy tied to communal strife. Similarly, Eze and Nnamdi (2020) examine the role of cultural and religious differences, noting that economic grievances often catalyze communal conflicts fueled by pre-existing ethnic or religious tensions.

Lawal (2019) critiques international development aid targeted at reducing youth unemployment, noting that such efforts are often poorly implemented and lack alignment with local realities. His analysis highlights the inefficiency of foreign interventions that fail to address the structural causes of economic hardship in Nigeria. In a related vein, Adesina (2021) argues that government programs such as N-Power and similar initiatives have been insufficient in addressing the root causes of youth unemployment, as these programs are often short-term and marred by corruption.

Umeh and Okeke (2023) examine the psychological impact of prolonged economic hardship on youth, noting that desperation and frustration often drive them toward aggressive behaviour, including involvement in communal violence. They critique the lack of mental health support and emphasize the need for holistic approaches that combine economic, social, and psychological interventions.

This literature underscores the relationship between economic hardship and youth involvement in communal conflicts, emphasizing the need for comprehensive and sustainable solutions to address poverty, unemployment, and inequality. While efforts have been made to address these issues, critiques of their implementation highlight the persistent gaps in policy effectiveness and inclusivity.

Implications of Economic Hardship and Youth Involvement in Communal Conflicts in Nigeria

The implications of economic hardship and youth involvement in communal conflicts in Nigeria are profound and multifaceted, influencing not only the immediate security landscape but also the long-term socio-economic development of the country. Economic hardship, exacerbated by unemployment, poverty, and limited access to education, has created a fertile ground for youth to be drawn into violent conflicts. The lack of economic opportunities, particularly for young people in rural areas, has led to the increasing involvement of youth in communal clashes, often manipulated by political or ethnic leaders to advance personal agendas (Adedeji, 2021).

Youth involvement in communal conflicts in Nigeria is often a result of frustration with the lack of opportunities. Many young Nigerians, especially in the northern and central regions, are enticed into violent groups or factions due to the promise of material gain or a sense of purpose that they cannot find through conventional means such as education or employment (Oke, 2022). These young people, often disillusioned with the State, find solace in fighting for ethnic or communal causes, as these conflicts offer a sense of belonging and an outlet for their grievances. As noted by Ibrahim (2021), communal violence involving youth not only destabilizes the local security environment but also leads to long-term socio-economic setbacks for affected communities, including disrupted agriculture, loss of human capital, and reduced investment in the region.

Additionally, economic hardship fuels the proliferation of small arms, which, according to Onuoha (2020), amplifies the scale and intensity of communal conflicts. The availability of arms, combined with economic hardship, enables youths to take up arms, exacerbating the

violence. The involvement of youth in these conflicts also results in a loss of life, further deepening the economic challenges of the region by reducing the labour force and undermining community structures.

The long-term implications are also evident in terms of social cohesion. As highlighted by Alabi (2022), economic hardship and youth involvement in conflicts breed distrust and hostility among communities, undermining social capital and making future reconciliation efforts more difficult. Youth radicalization through exposure to violence and the destabilization of families due to loss of life further perpetuates the cycle of violence, with subsequent generations inheriting these grievances and continuing the cycle of conflicts.

The implications of economic hardship and youth involvement in communal conflicts in Nigeria are far-reaching, touching on issues of security, economic development, and social cohesion. Without addressing the root causes of economic hardship, particularly for youth, the cycle of violence is likely to persist, further destabilizing Nigeria's already fragile security environment.

Historical Overview of Communal Conflicts in Benue State

The communal conflicts in Benue State are intricately linked to long-standing disputes over land, resources, and ethnic tensions, which have shaped the socio-economic and cultural landscape of the region. Known as Nigeria's "Food Basket," the State has long been a focal point of competition between sedentary farming communities and nomadic pastoralists. Adebayo & Okonkwo (2022) trace the origins of these conflicts to the colonial period, where British land policies disrupted traditional systems of land use, favouring sedentary farming practices over nomadic herding. This shift has had lasting effects, as population growth and climate change have intensified the competition for dwindling resources, aggravating the conflicts.

Ibrahim (2021) focuses on the conflicts between Tiv farmers and Fulani herders, attributing the violence to disputes over land for grazing and farming. While the economic factors underpinning these disputes are significant, Ibrahim also points to the ethnic and cultural divisions that fuel the conflicts. Grievances are often passed down from one generation to the next, creating a cycle of animosity. However, Ibrahim's analysis misses the crucial role of governance failures in addressing and mitigating these tensions. Government policies, as Musa & Adewale (2023) argue, have historically favoured one group over another, which has deepened divisions and hampered efforts to find neutral, effective conflict resolution mechanisms. The absence of such mechanisms has allowed conflicts to escalate unchecked.

The proliferation of small arms, as identified by Onuoha and Chukwuma (2020), has further fueled the violence, transforming what might have been local disputes into protracted, violent conflicts. Economic hardship and political manipulation have facilitated the arms trade, empowering communities to sustain these violent clashes. However, their analysis fails to address the broader geopolitical factors, such as the involvement of regional armed groups, which complicate the situation and extend the conflicts beyond local boundaries.

Eze & Nwachukwu (2021) highlight the impact of climate change, which has led to reduced rainfall and desertification in northern Nigeria, pushing Fulani herders southward into the fertile lands of Benue. This migration has further intensified tensions between farming communities and herders, both of whom struggle to access limited resources. The failure of governance to address environmental challenges proactively has compounded the issue, as Eze and Nwachukwu critique the lack of policies to manage the crisis.

The socio-political factors at play, as discussed by Umeh & Okeke (2022), are also central to the persistence of communal conflicts. They argue that the marginalization of local communities in decision-making processes fosters resentment and alienation, which makes dialogue and reconciliation difficult. Without inclusive governance structures, these tensions will continue to hinder efforts to resolve the conflicts.

The overview of communal conflicts in Benue State reveals a complex interplay of factors, including resource scarcity, ethnic tensions, governance failures, and environmental challenges. The persistence of these conflicts points to the need for comprehensive and inclusive solutions that address the region's unique socio-economic, cultural, and political dynamics. Effective conflict resolution must involve both local and national stakeholders,

with a focus on equitable resource distribution, proactive environmental management, and inclusive governance to address the root causes of the conflicts.

Effects of Economic Hardship and Youth Involvement in Communal Conflicts in Benue State

Economic hardship is a significant factor influencing youth involvement in communal conflicts in Benue State, Nigeria, where poverty and unemployment create fertile ground for violence. According to Adamu & Okonkwo (2021), widespread poverty in rural Benue has left many youths vulnerable to recruitment by conflict actors, particularly in agrarian disputes. They argue that economic deprivation exacerbates grievances over land resources, a key trigger for conflicts in the region. However, their study overlooks the role of cultural factors, which can intensify such disputes. Similarly, Eze & Nwachukwu (2022) identify unemployment as a driver of youth restiveness, noting that idle youths often see communal conflicts as opportunities for economic gain through looting or as a form of rebellion against perceived injustice. They critique government intervention programs for being poorly targeted and failing to address the root causes of unemployment.

According to Ibrahim (2020), communal conflicts in Benue State are largely rooted in struggles over farmland and grazing rights, with economic hardship increasing the likelihood of violence. His analysis highlights the intersection of economic and environmental factors but fails to adequately consider the role of political actors in perpetuating these conflicts. Musa and Okafor (2021) argue that political elites exploit economic hardship to manipulate unemployed youth into violent conflicts for political gain. They emphasize that the cyclical nature of poverty and violence in Benue is reinforced by weak governance and corruption, which undermine development efforts.

Onuoha (2021) links youth involvement in communal conflicts to a lack of access to quality education and vocational training, which limits their economic prospects. He critiques educational policies in Benue State as insufficiently responsive to the needs of rural communities. Conversely, Ojo & Adeyemi (2020) argue that even educated youths participate in conflicts due to limited job opportunities, underscoring the disconnect between educational systems and the labour market. They recommend tailored interventions that combine education with skills training and job creation in conflict-prone areas.

According to Yusuf & Ibrahim (2022), the proliferation of small arms in Benue State has intensified the impact of economic hardship on communal conflicts. They argue that arms availability increases the likelihood of violent clashes, as economically disadvantaged youths are often willing participants in armed disputes. However, their study does not explore the broader socio-economic impacts of arms proliferation, such as its effect on community resilience and development.

Lawal (2021) critiques agricultural policies in Benue State, noting that poor support for farmers exacerbates economic hardship and fuels resource-based conflicts. His study highlights the failure of successive governments to address the underlying economic drivers of youth restiveness. Similarly, Chukwu (2020) argues that the marginalization of local communities in decision-making processes intensifies youth grievances, as they feel excluded from economic opportunities and governance structures. He critiques the lack of inclusive policies as a major gap in conflict resolution efforts.

According to Umeh & Okeke (2022), the psychological effects of prolonged economic hardship on youth in Benue contribute to their involvement in communal violence. They highlight that frustration, hopelessness, and anger often push youths toward aggressive behaviours, including participation in violent conflicts. They recommend integrating mental health support with economic empowerment programmes to address these underlying issues comprehensively.

The literature demonstrates that economic hardship is a central factor driving youth involvement in communal conflicts in Benue State, compounded by unemployment, weak governance, and limited access to education. While interventions exist, critiques highlight the inadequacy of current policies and the need for comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable solutions to address the multifaceted drivers of conflicts.

Challenges in Curbing Economic Hardship and Youth Involvement in Communal Conflicts in Benue State

The challenges of economic hardship and youth involvement in communal conflicts in Benue State are significant and complex, with far-reaching implications for the State's security, socio-economic development, and social cohesion. Economic hardship, marked by high levels of unemployment, poverty, and limited access to basic social services, has contributed to the increasing involvement of youth in communal conflicts, particularly in the context of clashes between farming communities and nomadic herders.

Benue State, known for its fertile agricultural land, has witnessed persistent communal clashes, largely fueled by economic hardship (Musa & Adewale, 2023). These conflicts often revolve around access to land and water resources, with youth from both farming and pastoral communities drawn into violent confrontations due to the lack of alternative opportunities. The growing sense of economic frustration, especially among young people in rural areas, makes them more vulnerable to manipulation by political elites or community leaders who promise them material rewards in exchange for their involvement in conflicts (Ibrahim, 2021). This situation is exacerbated by the lack of adequate education and job opportunities for youth, leading to a disillusioned and disempowered generation that turns to violence as a means of survival and self-expression.

Furthermore, the proliferation of small arms in the region, as noted by Onuoha and Chukwuma (2020), has made it easier for youth to engage in violent conflicts. The widespread availability of weapons, coupled with economic hardship, has intensified the scale of communal violence, making it more destructive and prolonged. Young people, lacking both the means and the will to seek peaceful alternatives, resort to violence as a way to assert their power and defend their perceived interests.

The State's inability to provide adequate governance and conflict resolution mechanisms also contributes to the challenges. The failure of local and State governments to address the underlying causes of conflicts, such as land tenure systems and resource allocation, has allowed tensions to escalate unchecked (Eze & Nwachukwu, 2021). In addition, the lack of effective peacebuilding and reconciliation programs has perpetuated cycles of violence, with youth continuing to engage in conflicts as a form of resistance to marginalization.

Benue's socio-political dynamics also exacerbate the challenges. Umeh and Okeke (2022) argue that the marginalization of certain communities, particularly the Tiv people, has deepened ethnic divides, making it more difficult to address the root causes of the conflicts. Youth from marginalized communities are more likely to become radicalized, joining violent groups to express their grievances and seek social justice.

Economic hardship and youth involvement in communal conflicts in Benue State present significant challenges to the region's stability and development. These issues require tackling not only the economic disparities that fuel frustration among young people but also strengthening governance, promoting dialogue, and implementing conflict resolution mechanisms to break the cycle of violence. Without comprehensive intervention, the challenges will continue to undermine peace and prosperity in the State.

Conclusion

The study revealed that youth unemployment and economic hardship are significant drivers of involvement in communal conflicts. As unemployment rates remain high, particularly in rural areas, many young people turn to violent groups for a sense of purpose and economic survival. Providing skills training and creating job opportunities, particularly in agriculture and local industries, could reduce their susceptibility to conflict recruitment.

The lack of inclusive governance contributes to youth radicalization. Marginalized communities, particularly the Tiv, often feel excluded from political decision-making, which exacerbates ethnic tensions. Inclusive political processes and active youth participation in governance could foster unity and reduce ethnic divisions.

Education plays a crucial role in mitigating conflicts. Expanding access to quality education can offer youth alternatives to violence by equipping them with the skills needed for productive roles in society. Educated youth are more likely to engage in non-violent forms of

activism and contribute to economic development.

The study revealed that the proliferation of small arms significantly escalates the intensity of conflicts. Tightening security, implementing disarmament initiatives, and curbing illegal arms trade are essential to reducing violence, creating a safer environment for youth, and promoting peacebuilding efforts across communities.

Recommendations and Way Forward

Improving economic hardship and reducing youth involvement in communal conflicts in Benue State requires a comprehensive approach that targets the underlying causes of both economic deprivation and social instability. Addressing these challenges necessitates interventions in economic empowerment, governance, and education to promote sustainable peace and stability.

A critical first step is to enhance youth employment opportunities, especially in rural areas where unemployment rates are highest. According to Adamu & Ganiyu (2021), high unemployment and poverty often push youth into violent conflicts as they seek avenues to express frustration. Providing skills development programs, including vocational training in agriculture, construction, and technology, can create viable career pathways, offering youth alternatives to violent engagement. As Nwachukwu (2022) emphasizes, supporting local industries and entrepreneurship can foster job creation and economic independence for young people, reducing their vulnerability to recruitment by conflict groups.

Equally important is the promotion of inclusive governance. According to Olayemi and Olusola (2020), exclusion from political processes can fuel resentment and deepen ethnic divisions. Ensuring that all ethnic groups, particularly marginalized ones, are actively involved in political decision-making can reduce perceptions of injustice. This participation fosters unity and promotes collective responsibility for the region's progress. Moreover, offering platforms for youth participation in decision-making can provide a sense of ownership and empowerment, thus reducing the likelihood of their involvement in conflicts. Ajayi and Akinwumi (2021) advocate for the inclusion of young people in peacebuilding initiatives as a preventive strategy against violent extremism and inter-ethnic violence.

Access to quality education is another critical measure in addressing the root causes of economic hardship and involvement in youth conflicts. According to Durojaiye (2021), education is a key factor in breaking the cycle of poverty and violence. Expanding access to both primary and secondary education and providing scholarships for higher education equip youth with the necessary skills for active participation in the economy. Moreover, as Fagbemi and Olumide (2020) note, improved education increases youths' capacity to engage in non-violent forms of social and economic activism, offering them alternatives to conflict participation.

Addressing the issue of small arms proliferation is also necessary to reduce violence in the region. According to Idowu and Bello (2022), the widespread availability of firearms contributes to the severity and longevity of communal conflicts. Tightening security measures, implementing disarmament programs, and curbing the illegal arms trade can mitigate the escalation of conflicts and create a safer environment for youth. Such measures would limit the capacity for sustained violence and allow communities to rebuild and engage in peaceful coexistence.

Inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation initiatives are essential for long-term peace. As Alhaji & Abdul (2021) argue, fostering dialogue between the Tiv and Fulani communities, as well as other ethnic groups, is crucial for mitigating ethnic tensions and promoting peaceful coexistence. Programs that prioritize trust-building, joint community development projects, and conflict resolution can facilitate healing and reconciliation, ultimately reducing the likelihood of future violence.

Tackling economic hardship and youth involvement in communal conflicts in Benue State requires a multifaceted approach that combines economic development, inclusive governance, education, arms control, and peacebuilding initiatives. By addressing these interconnected issues, the State can create a more stable and prosperous environment, fostering a future where youth are active participants in peaceful development.

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RISKS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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KEYWORDS
Climate Change, Security, Human Security, National Security, Nigeria

ABSTRACT
In this paper the issues of climate change and human security are examined in relation to Nigeria particularly in terms of the consequences of the former on the latter. The paper aims at examining the perceptions and risks of climate change in Nigeria, the variables of human security in the country, and the nature of the links between risks of climate change and variables of human security in Nigeria. The paper is based on secondary data using simple descriptive and content analysis. It argues that climate change presents a serious threat to the human security of the Nigerian communities. It poses a considerable threat to the country, its ecosystems and many of its species. This research is unique and different from previous related studies because basic dimensions or realms of human security, such as economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security are aggregated, specifically as they relate to Nigeria. It further argues that all dimensions of human security in Nigeria are susceptible to the risks of climate change. To this end, the paper concludes and suggests additional proactive measures of mitigating the scourge of climate change and enhancing human security in the country.

Introduction

Climate change has been viewed as an issue that has received significant international attention over the past years (Barimah, *et al*. 2015; Schwebel, 2018; Dannenberg, *et al*, 2019; von Uexkull and Buhaug, 2021; Arnall, 2023; Vogler, 2024). Therefore, climate change can be described as a protracted and recurrent geopolitical issue capable of not only leading to geopolitical tensions and conflicts but also impacting national security and food security of a polity. For instance, climate change presents a serious threat to sustainable development and certainly impedes its efforts to reduce pervasive poverty, create jobs, enhance access to sustainable energy and improve the well-being of its citizens (Mshelia, 2013). These threats and attendant impacts, as argued in this paper, are capable of further undermining the ability of government and society to respond adequately to disasters, leading to lower economic opportunities and thereby heightening the risk of conflicts that ultimately threaten national security.

Amazingly, there has been very little direct attention to this area of research. While there has been some discussion on the relationship between climate change and conflict (Gleick 1994; Barnett, 2008), and on the relationship between biodiversity conservation and violence (Matthew, 2002; Matthew *et al*. 2002; Matthew, 2004), there has been little emphasis on the broader implications of climate change for human security, including how enhanced human

security can potentially mitigate climate change. Climate change is particularly complex and it affects many aspects of international politics, economics, migration, human rights, development, trade, health and environmental systems and can act as a stressor making situations of instability, conflict, and humanitarian crises more likely and severe. However, it is important to note exactly how climate change will influence human security. There is still uncertainty about the exact magnitude, rate and geographical impact of climate change.

Across the world, the prospects for human security are deeply affected by local and global processes of climate change. The objective of this paper is to examine this complex relationship at different scales, across different issues, and in different places in Nigeria. The general argument of this paper is that climate change poses new and, in some cases, unprecedented threats to human security in Nigeria. In the country, little research has been conducted concerning the perceptions of effects of climate change on human security generally. Many people might not have heard about climate change and its impact. The proportion of people who might have heard about climate change and its impact on people may be significantly higher in the rural areas.

Generally, the concept of security refers to freedom from the risk of loss or damage to a thing that is important to survival and well-being. There are several explanations as to why the relationship between global environmental change and human security has been overlooked or underestimated, and we focus here on two. The first is that global environmental change has been largely framed as an issue of science, with a focus on understanding the large-scale processes of the earth system, and not its outcomes on peoples' needs, rights, and values (O'Brien and Leichenko 2000; O'Brien 2006). The second explanation is that there has been a tendency to downplay issues of development, equity, ethics, power relations, and social justice in global change research, prioritizing instead a general, aggregated notion of welfare.

The foregoing notwithstanding, not much intellectual resources have been deployed in examining the climate change crisis as a threat to human security in the country. In recent years too, there is seemingly a palpable silence literally and practically on the issue of climate change and its devastating effects on human security in Nigeria. Specifically, the conceptual thrust of this paper is premised on the exploration and aggregation of basic dimensions or realms of human security, such as economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security in relation to climate change in Nigeria. To further distinguish it from past studies, the susceptibility of all dimensions of human security in Nigeria to the risks of climate change is interrogated. This paper is, therefore, interested in knowing how the foundations and dimensions of broadly defined human security are threatened by climate change. This is because climate change is believed to be undermining the pillars of prosperity in a society, including water security, energy security, food security, personal security and political security. The main objective of this paper, therefore, is to increase awareness and action to adapt to climate change. To ensure a systematic approach to discussing these issues, they are discussed under various headings. The conceptual clarifications of climate change and human security are discussed in the next section. In the subsequent sections the paper reviews the relevant literature and theories, results and discussion of findings, and lastly conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Clarification

Understanding Climate Change

Climate is generally defined as the average state of the atmosphere for a given time scale (hour, day, month, season, year, decade and so forth) and generally for a specified geographical region (Houghton, 2002). Climate, in a narrow sense, is usually defined as the average weather, or more rigorously, as the statistical description in terms of the mean and variability of relevant quantities over a period of time ranging from months to thousands or millions of years. The classical period for averaging these variables is 30 years, as defined by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The relevant quantities are most often surface variables such as temperature, precipitation and wind. Climate in a wider sense is the state, including a statistical description, of the climate system.

Climate change is defined as the change in climate attributed directly or indirectly to human activity which, in addition to natural climate variability, is observed over comparable time periods (Houghton, 2002). If human activities are

associated with climate change, it follows that its likelihood resultant effects human security, as posited in this paper, cannot be overemphasized. But the definition adopted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) focuses only on the human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and excludes other human activity effects such as changes in the land surface. According to NOAA National Weather Service (2007), climate change is a long-term shift in the statistics of the weather (including its averages). For example, it could show up as a change in climate normals (expected average values for temperature and precipitation) for a given place and time of year, from one decade to the next.

A change of climate is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere, and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods. Climate change is also described as the regional or global-scale changes in historical climate patterns arising from natural and/or man-made causes and resulting in both intermittent but increasingly frequent, extreme impacts (e.g. large storms and heat waves) and slow on-set, pervasive, cumulative effects (e.g. extinction of life forms and sea level rise); and climate change involves the interactions of many systems, such as the atmosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere, as well as the human systems (Simon, 2007). Above all, the climate change phenomenon can easily be understood as a by-product of globalization (Sanusi, 2013). Accordingly, it is widely perceived as an amorphous and all-embracing concept, with increasing impacts on human activities with full forces that span across national boundaries.

On the Concept of Human Security

The concept of human security evolved as a result of the changes in security environment after the end of the Cold War, and the concept has attracted much attention. The term 'human security' was invented or at least broadly popularized in the international community by the UN Development Programme in its 1994 Human Development Report intended as an agenda-package for the following year. The organization gave the definition of human security as, the security of people through development not arms; through cooperation not confrontation; and through peace not war. Also, human security can be said to have two main aspects. It means first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. Besides, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of daily life, whether in homes, in jobs or in communities (UNDP, 1994). These perspectives on human security further explain the importance of studying and preventing threats to every dimension of human security.

Human security is viewed as the protection of the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and fulfillment; the security of individuals, their livelihoods, and human rights including economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security (Ogata and Cels, 2003). The concept of human security actually refers to almost all security aspects, including threats and risks. As recognized by Kofi Annan (cited by Fuentes and Aravena, 2005), human security is far more than just an absence of violent conflict. It is also a matter of human rights, of good governance, of access to education and to health care and of ensuring that all people have opportunities and choices to fulfil their potential in life. Every step taken in this direction, he has affirmed, is also a step towards reducing poverty, towards achieving economic growth and towards preventing conflict. He has pointed to freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment as being the interrelated building blocks of human security and, therefore, of national security.

Human security represents an effort to re-conceptualise security in a fundamental manner. It is primarily an analytical tool which focuses on ensuring security for the individual, not the state (Richard and Deepayan, 2006). Human security refers to an emerging paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities whose proponents challenge the traditional notion of national security by arguing that the proper referent for security should be the individual rather than the state (Matlary, 2008). By this is meant that human security holds that a people-centered view of security is necessary for national, regional and global stability. The term can be understood to encompass the concepts of conflict prevention, crisis management and civil-military coordination, and further draws on the responsibility to protect, effective multilateralism, and human development'.

The Commission on Human Security (CHS), in one of its past final reports *Human Security Now* (2003), defines human security as a process of protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security also indicates the protection fundamental freedoms, that is, freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It connotes the continuous use of processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity (CHS, 2003). This further gives people a hope of well-being and sense of security.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Impact of Climate Change on Human Security

O'Brien (2007) warns that in our globalizing world, human security in one place or for one group is increasingly linked to the actions and outcomes of others. From a social perspective, climate change mitigation and adaptation may potentially create new inequities, vulnerabilities and insecurities. It is in view of this, therefore, that climate change is regarded as one of the greatest opportunities in history for addressing inequities and enhancing human security, and as an extraordinary opportunity for responding to and creating social change. As a macro-driver of many kinds of environmental changes such as coastal erosion, declining precipitation and soil moisture, increased storm intensity, and species migration, climate change poses risks to human security (McCarthy *et al*. 2001). According to Sanusi (2013), climate change is caused by human activities and the emission of greenhouse effects; and the impact transcend national border. In this case, the human or natural actions in one society or country could have a catastrophic effect on another country. Similarly, Oladipo (2009) contends that climate change has had a profound effect on economic, socio, culture, political, technological and even biological nature of man and plants in the global village. This explains climate change as a universal phenomenon with a multiplier environmental impact.

There is every reason to believe that as the 21st century unfolds, the security story will be bound together by climate change, and it has become a security issue because if it is not addressed, people will die and states will fail (Vogel, 2007). This underscores the importance of studies on the issue of climate change and how to mitigate it in the contemporary period. It has, however, been argued that climate change, its mitigation and adaptation may potentially also create new inequities, vulnerabilities and insecurities (O'Brien, 2007). However, climate change is not just a political and economic issue. Above all, it is a human issue, where the livelihoods of numerous communities are threatened and their security is at stake. Wisner *et al*. (2007) have developed an analytical model in which the interactions between climate change and human security issues are outlined. Human security is threatened and conflicts arise where climate change impacts on food, health and water availability. It has been reported by WHO (2014) that climate change could be projected to have substantial adverse effects on human health that will be distributed unequally within and between populations. It is, however, stated as a rule that, wealthier countries and individuals will be better able to adapt to the impacts of climate change (Podesta & Odgen, 2008). The way climate change can and does undermine human security varies across the world because entitlements to natural resources and services vary across space, and the social determinants of adaptive capacity are similarly varied. For instance, Barnett and Adger (2007) contend that the vulnerability (potential for loss) of people to climate change depends on the extent to which they are dependent on natural resources and ecosystem services, the extent to which the resources and services they rely on are sensitive to climate change, and their capacity to adapt to changes in these resources and services. In other words, the more people are dependent on climate sensitive forms of natural capital, and the less they rely on economic or social forms of capital, the more at risk they are from climate change.

Barnett and Adger (2007) have argued that climate change undermines human security in the present century, and will increasingly do so in the future. It does this by reducing people's access to natural resources that are important to sustain their livelihoods. In addition to this, climate change has the likelihood to undermine the capacity of states to provide the opportunities and services that help people to sustain their livelihoods, and which help to

maintain and build peace. In certain circumstances, these direct and indirect impacts of climate change on human security and the state may in turn increase the risk of violent conflict.

Although it has been widely argued that climate change affects everyone regardless of race, caste, ethnicity, sex and level of income, its impacts are contended to be more heavily felt by poor nations and communities, and climate change magnifies existing inequalities. The contention is that, in the large number of weak and crisis-prone nation states, climate change will most likely increase chronic instability. Nigeria is not an exception in this case. Consequently, the case of climate change and human security in Nigeria can be discussed within this argument. According to Nigerian Environmental Study Team (2006), Nigeria is vulnerable to the impact of climate change due to a long coastline; she is prone to sea level rise, which caused flood in coast cities; and contaminate fresh water aquifers, due to increasing storm potential. There are also incidents of increased in drought and desertification in Nigeria, as a result of global warming. The changes in rain pattern are threats to food production in some places like Benue, Niger, Ondo and Osun State of Nigeria. Food production capacity has fallen drastically, since the country agriculture is mostly rain-fed. For instance, the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (2007) identified Nigeria as a climate change "hot spot" likely to see major shifts in weather patterns in the 21st century. This is also corroborated by Sanusi (2013), in that climate change is a threat to Nigeria's economic development potentials, human capacity, environment and national development in particular. In this case, it can be argued that all the six geo-political zones in the country have experienced the negative impacts of climate change in different ways, largely because of the geographical location along the Equator.

The Essence of Human Security

As argued by the Commission on Human Security (CHS, 2003), the need for a new paradigm of security is associated with two sets of dynamics. First, human security is needed in response to the complexity and the interrelatedness of both old and new security threats – from chronic and persistent poverty to ethnic violence, human trafficking, climate change, health pandemics, international terrorism, and sudden economic and financial downturns. Such threats tend to acquire transnational dimensions and move beyond traditional notions of security that focus on external military aggressions alone. Second, human security is required as a comprehensive approach that utilizes the wide range of new opportunities to tackle such threats in an integrated manner. Human security threats cannot be tackled through conventional mechanisms alone. Instead, they require a new consensus that acknowledges the linkages and the interdependencies between development, human rights and national security.

Human security brings together the 'human elements' of security, rights and development. As such, it is an inter-disciplinary concept that displays features such as people-centered, multi-sectoral, comprehensive, context-specific, and prevention-oriented. As a people-centered concept, human security places the individual at the 'centre of analysis.' Consequently, it considers a broad range of conditions which threaten survival, livelihood and dignity, and identifies the threshold below which human life is intolerably threatened. Human security is also based on a multi-sectoral understanding of insecurities. Therefore, human security entails a broadened understanding of threats and includes causes of insecurity relating for instance to economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security.

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Anthropogenic Global Warming

Although there are many theories of climate change, anthropogenic global warming (AGW) has been treated as the only credible theory. Other theories of climate change have also enjoyed substantial credibility. This theory of climate change contends that human emissions of greenhouse gases, principally carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, and nitrous oxide, are causing a catastrophic rise in global temperatures. The mechanism whereby this happens is called the enhanced greenhouse effect. This theory is called "anthropogenic global warming," or AGW for short (Gore, 2006). Bast (2010) argues that a major reason for the ascendance of the AGW theory was its endorsement by an agency of the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC's stated mission is not to discover what accounts for climate change, but to assess the risk of human-induced climate change.

AGW theory explains that energy from the sun travels through space and reaches Earth. Earth's atmosphere is mostly transparent to the incoming sunlight, allowing it to reach the planet's surface where some of it is absorbed and some is reflected back as heat out into the atmosphere. Certain gases in the atmosphere, called "greenhouse gases," absorb the outgoing reflected or internal thermal radiation, resulting in Earth's atmosphere becoming warmer than it otherwise might be. Proponents of the AGW theory believe man-made CO2 is responsible for floods, droughts, severe weather, crop failures, species extinctions, spread of diseases, ocean coral bleaching, famines, and literally hundreds of other catastrophes. Accordingly, all these disasters will become more frequent and more severe as temperatures continue to rise. Above all, nothing less than large and rapid reductions in human emissions will save the planet from these catastrophic events.

This paper adopts this theory to explain the causes of climate change. This becomes imperative in order to understand and appreciate its effects on various dimensions of human security. It further justifies the use of causal-effect theory in explaining socio-political phenomenon. The theory is uniquely used in this paper to explain both the causes and effects of climate change in relation to basic realms of human security, as distinguished from previous related works.

Securitization Theory

The main argument of securitization theory is that it is by labelling something a security issue that it becomes one (Wæver, 2004). By stating that a particular referent object is threatened in its existence, a securitizing actor claims a right to extraordinary measures to ensure the referent object's survival. The issue is then moved out of the sphere of normal politics into the realm of emergency politics, where it can be dealt with swiftly and without the normal (democratic) rules and regulations of policy-making. The securitization proponents argue that to prevent 'everything' from becoming a security issue, a successful securitization consists of and requires three steps, which are identification of existential threats; emergency action; and effects on inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules (Buzan, *et al*. 1998). To present an issue as an existential threat is to say that if a perceived problem is not tackled, everything else may be affected and may therefore become difficult to deal with in the nearest future. This theory is, therefore, adopted by this paper with a view to justifying the securitization of various dimensions or realms of human security examined. The use of the theory in this paper explains and justifies each of the basic dimensions of human security as susceptible to security threats from the condition of climate change, which distinguished its use from previous related works.

Methodology

This paper assessed the issues of climate change and human security in relation to Nigeria. This is simply because the two concepts have contemporarily become subjects of great interest all over the world, and developing countries are becoming more inclined in responding to climate change and enhancing human security generally. To tackle this issue, the following research questions were generated: What are the perceptions and risks of climate change in Nigeria? What are the dimensions or variables of human security in Nigeria? What is the nature of the relationship between risks of climate change and dmsions of human security in Nigeria? The paper was based on secondary data as it undertook a detailed review of existing literature on climate change and human security. This included different websites, local and international organizations' reports, project reports, journals, and research papers. The data were specifically obtained from various authors' research works and National Human Development Report. Data collected were presented by using simple descriptive and content analysis.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Risks and Perceptions of Climate Change

Climate change is one of the greatest global challenges of the 21st century whose threat is not only global but also multi-dimensional, irresistible, unpredictable and transcends national border (Sanusi, 2013). The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Third Assessment Report noted that the Earth average surface temperature increased by 0.6 + 0.2 centigrade in the 20th century (Haruna, 2005), and this trend is expected to continue with an increase of 1.4 to 5.8 by 2100. According to an EU document, unmitigated climate change beyond 2°C will lead to unprecedented security scenarios as it is likely to trigger a number of tipping points that would lead to further

accelerated, irreversible and largely unpredictable climate changes (Human Security Network, 2007). Even under the best-case scenario (with an average global temperature increase of 1.3°C by 2040), human security implications may include: heightened internal and cross-border tensions caused by large-scale migrations; conflict sparked by resource scarcity, particularly in the weak and failing states of Africa; increased disease proliferation, which will have economic consequences; and some geopolitical reordering as nations adjust to shifts in resources and prevalence of disease. It is also contended that in the case of severe climate change, corresponding to an average increase in global temperature of 2.6°C by 2040, massive nonlinear events in the global environment give rise to massive nonlinear societal events. The conclusion is that internal cohesion of nations will be under great stress, both as a result of a dramatic rise in migration and changes in agricultural patterns and water availability.

Nigeria has not been immune from global warming. It is in view of this that Ogbuagu (2002) stated that there exists a linkage between climate change condition and human security, specifically human health in Nigeria, to the extent that certain respiratory diseases such as malaria thrive best when weather is very hot in Nigeria. In the Northern State of Nigeria, the cerebral spinal meningitis diseases are rampant as a result of hot climate attributed to the global warming. Likewise in the south west and south-east, flooding has produced water borne diseases in cities like Oyo, Ogun, Cross River, Osun, and Enugu State in Nigeria. The First Nigerian National Communication under the UNFCCC (2003) estimates that the nation's southern coastline is susceptible to sea level rise of between 0.5 and 1.0 meter by the end of the century. In this case, if the sea level should rise up to one meter, it is most likely that between 45 and 50 million people will be affected and/or relocated. The coastal region is home to most of Nigeria's industry, thus making the economy even more vulnerable. A study commissioned by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in 2009, estimated that in the absence of adaptation measures between 2 and 11% of Nigeria's GDP could be lost by 2020. This was largely because, with sea level rise, onshore oil fields could become submerged resulting in higher production costs, reduced investment and deference or outright loss of production. From the view of the country's agricultural and socio-economic conditions in the last three years, it can be concluded that this prediction has become a reality. As stated by Sanusi (2013), some regions have been affected, particularly the southern coastal region and the far north. Accordingly, some sectors of Nigeria's economy have been affected. Similarly, a preliminary Integrated Assessment mode of 2008, predicted that CC have resulted in a loss of GDP of between 6% and 10% and it could increase by 30% by the year 2050. This worth an estimate of N15 trillion and N69 trillion comes year 2050. Although the period seems to be a bit far ahead, there is need for proactive and preemptive measures to start mitigating the effects of climate change, and this further justifies the imperativeness of this paper.

Part of the findings of this paper indicates that majority of Nigerian women (61.9%) perceive climate change as a threat to their individual security against men (59.5%) who also express the same perception. While the rural areas of the country could be affected most by the climate change phenomenon as indicated by 65.2%, the urban environments could experience the lesser threat as shown by 56.0%. Generally, the finding shows that climate change is a threat to the whole country irrespective of its geo-political zones as represented by above average of 60.6%. This is simply an indication that the issue of climate change is not absolutely strange in Nigeria, and there is substantial awareness among the populace as regards its threats.

The basic dimensions or realms of human security are aggregated, specifically as they relate to Nigeria. It has been argued in the literature that climate change affects all areas of human security (economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security). For instance, Ogbuagu (2002) and WHO (2014) have linked climate change with health security in their different studies; Haruna (2005) also established a relationship between climate change and environmental security; Barnett and Adger (2007) as well as Oladipo (2009) discussed a nexus between climate change and political security; the association between climate change and economic security was analysed by Oladipo (2009) and Sanusi (2013); while Vogel (2007) created a link between climate change and personal security, Wisner et al. (2007) dwell on the issues of climate change and community security.

Summary of Findings

Climate change is expected to have serious environmental, economic, and social impacts on Nigeria in particular, where rural farmers whose livelihoods depend on the use of natural resources are likely to bear the brunt of its adverse impacts. The country is also confronted by issues like poverty, environmental degradation, natural resources depletion, shrinking water resources; gas flaring, and desertification. Climatic change in this fragile ecosystem and nature-based livelihood system of the rural communities may further threaten the livelihood of the local people in the country. The findings revealed that climate change has started to manifest in Nigeria with results that are multifaceted and will be dramatic unless immediate mitigating actions are taken. Climatic change is most likely to result in a variety of direct problems, including increased frequency of extreme weather events, flooding, storms, drought, desertification, increases in sea temperatures, heat and cold waves, the melting of glaciers and permafrost in the country if appropriate and proactive steps are not taken. All these may also have some devastating effects on socio-economic and geopolitical structure of Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that climate change is one of the greatest and most complex challenges not only the international community but also what developing countries, including Nigeria have to deal with today and in the years to come. The contemporary trend is that governments globally are increasingly treating climate change as a security threat, and Nigerian government should not be an exception. Conceptually, climate change is becoming a serious collective security challenge to all countries. This paper, therefore, becomes important as a guide for the public, politicians, climate experts and perhaps security actors. Theoretically, the extent and scale of Nigeria's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change will be underscored and determined by the government's response measures and the societies' ability to increase their resilience to disasters. Where the government cannot cope adequately, this will have economic consequences and heightens the risk of conflicts, ultimately threatening national security. This paper is not an end in itself, but a means to better mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as a mechanism to enhance human security.

Recommendations

There is need for more education and awareness among the Nigerian populace as this will enable them to appreciate that climate change is a public economic, food, health, community, personal, environmental, and political issue. A high level of awareness on the relationships between climate change and human security may help to increase the success of any preventive programme on climate change.

The Nigerian government should invest in the new technology devices, and cooperate with the international organizations on climate change measures by showing a sincere interest in the climate change project initiated by international agencies. This is because a part of the solution to climate change crisis lies in being proactive by developing appropriate technologies to reduce the scourge of climate change on the country now and in the future.

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PORT SECURITY COMPLIANCE: SAFEGUARDING NIGERIA'S CRITICAL MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE

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KEYWORDS
Port security, maritime infrastructure, compliance, maritime security, critical infrastructure

ABSTRACT
This paper explores the significance of port security as a crucial factor for Nigeria's national and economic stability. Given Nigeria's strategic maritime position along the Gulf of Guinea and the vital role its ports play in facilitating trade and the oil and gas sector, securing these facilities is essential for safeguarding economic interests and national security. The discussion delves into the multifaceted threats and challenges facing Nigeria's port security, including piracy, smuggling, infrastructural limitations, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and corruption. Nigeria's existing legal and regulatory framework, which aligns with international standards like the ISPS Code, sets the foundation for port security but faces gaps in implementation and enforcement. Through the lens of systems theory, the article analyzes how interconnected elements—such as infrastructure, stakeholder collaboration, technology, and regulatory measures—are integral to achieving robust port security. Recommendations for strengthening Nigeria's port security are provided, including enhancing inter-agency collaboration, investing in modern infrastructure, combating corruption, adopting advanced technology, and improving legal frameworks. By addressing these areas, Nigeria can fortify its maritime security, foster economic resilience, and maintain its position as a regional maritime hub.

Introduction

Maritime security is critical for sustainable growth of global commerce conducted along ocean passages or naval domains. About 90% of goods supporting the global economy are transported through the oceans. The ocean contains numerous resources that support the livelihood of present and future generations (Randrianantenaina, 2013). Port security is essential to any nation's overall security strategy, as ports serve as critical gateways for international trade and commerce. For Nigeria, which boasts one of the largest maritime industries in West Africa, port security is vital for national defense and safeguarding its economic interests. As the country continues to expand its role as a major hub for oil exports, imports, and regional trade, ensuring the security of its maritime infrastructure has become a top priority. Effective port security compliance is critical to protect Nigeria's ports from a range of threats, including piracy, terrorism, smuggling, and cyberattacks.

Several terrorist attacks and piracy have plagued the world ocean in recent history; notable among them include attacks on the USS Cole in 2000 and the M/V Limburg in 2002, executed through the use of explosive-laden

speedboats, attack at U.S controlled oil facilities at Basra by Iraqi insurgents resulting in deaths of three American servicemen in 2004, and in addition piracy around Southeast Asia waters by Jemaah Islamiah & Abu Sayyaf terrorist groups (Raymond & Morriën, 2008). The catastrophic events of 11th September 2001, when a sequence of synchronized terrorist attacks was made on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in the United States of America by the extremist Islamic group called Al-Qaeda became a watershed in global approach to maritime security policies formulation and administration. Specifically, more integrative and stringent security policies were introduced to prevent and suppress terror and other criminal acts around maritime infrastructure (seaports, terminals, jetties, etc.), territorial waters, and high seas.

Nigeria possesses extensive maritime endowments, including over 853 nautical miles of coastline and a network of ports and inland waterways that provide vital access to international shipping (Atakpa, 2023). The African Atlantic Countries include Nigeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Cameroon. Given the strategic position of Nigerian ports, any breach in security can have significant consequences, not just for Nigeria but for the broader global maritime industry. The country's ports are integral to its oil and gas exports, which form the backbone of its economy. In this context, ensuring the protection of these assets against evolving threats is crucial for economic stability. Port security compliance involves adhering to both international standards and local regulations designed to mitigate risks and enhance the resilience of the country's ports.

However, despite the tremendous wealth generation enabled by maritime assets, Nigeria's coastal waters and adjoining Gulf of Guinea (GoG) now face intensifying threats from piracy, hijacking, kidnapping, and oil theft which incur major economic losses alongside reputational damage (Ogbonnaya & Igwe, 2019). Therefore, maintaining port security in Nigeria presents unique challenges. The nation's extensive coastline, coupled with its geographical location, makes it vulnerable to a range of maritime crimes. To address these vulnerabilities, Nigeria must not only strengthen its security protocols but also ensure that all stakeholders, from government agencies to private sector operators, work in tandem to safeguard the country's maritime infrastructure. This paper will explore the key issues surrounding port security compliance in Nigeria and outline the necessary steps to protect its critical maritime assets.

Conceptual Clarification

Port Security

Port security refers to the protective measures, regulations, and protocols put in place to safeguard maritime infrastructure, cargo, vessels, and personnel from security threats. These threats can range from physical attacks, such as piracy or terrorism, to illegal activities like smuggling, human trafficking, and cyberattacks on port systems. Ports are nodal points for every intermodal logistical supply chain (Robinson 2002), and therefore are crucial elements in securing the maritime transport system and the supply chains, as indicated also by several policies and measures undertaken by international and regional organizations and countries. Ports are vital nodes in the global supply chain, handling the movement of goods and resources that are critical for economic stability. Ensuring their security is crucial to maintaining uninterrupted trade flows, national defense, and the safety of maritime stakeholders.

As defined by Ng and Gujar (2008), port security includes all security and counter-terrorism activities that fall within the port's domain, including the protection of port facilities and the coordination of security activities when ship and port interact Ng and Gujar (2008). The scope of port security extends beyond the physical protection of infrastructure. It also encompasses the regulation of access to ports, the security of vessels docked or anchored nearby, the monitoring of cargo and personnel movement, and the use of technology to detect and respond to threats. Compliance with international frameworks, such as the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, is critical to achieving global port security standards. The ISPS Code, developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) (IMO, 2002a), sets guidelines for governments, port authorities, and shipping companies to collaborate on maintaining port security by implementing risk assessments and preventive measures.

Port security is an aspect of maritime security that is very essential in facilitating safe and secure maritime transport. Port security

measures are employed to safeguard seaports from terrorism and other criminal activities (Marine Insight, 2010) and should be structured to provide effective and efficient landside operations, patrols of the harbors, anchorages, and waterways of ports (U.S Department of Transportation, 2017). In today's interconnected world, ports have also become targets for cyber threats, which can disrupt digital systems that control shipping, logistics, and port operations. As ports continue to modernize and integrate more digital solutions, cybersecurity has become an integral aspect of port security. Moreover, with ports playing a pivotal role in the economy, their security is not only a national issue but also a global concern. The concept of port security, therefore, hinges on coordinated efforts between national agencies, international organizations, and private sector actors to protect maritime assets and ensure the safety and efficiency of global trade.

Safeguarding

According to Abubakar (2019), safeguarding refers to the proactive measures and processes put in place to protect valuable assets, people, and systems from harm, loss, or exploitation. In a broader sense, safeguarding involves creating a secure environment where risks are minimized, and vulnerabilities are addressed before they can be exploited (Abubakar, 2019). It encompasses physical protection, regulatory frameworks, risk management strategies, and the implementation of policies aimed at ensuring safety and resilience.

At its core, safeguarding is about prevention and preparedness. This includes identifying potential threats and vulnerabilities, assessing the risks they pose, and establishing safeguards to mitigate or eliminate these risks. Whether applied to infrastructure, data, or individuals, safeguarding efforts typically involve monitoring, surveillance, access control, and contingency planning to ensure a prompt response in the event of a threat (Ayotebi, 2022). The goal is not only to prevent harm but to enable systems, organizations, and individuals to operate safely and securely without fear of disruption.

In the context of critical infrastructure, such as ports, safeguarding becomes even more critical due to the potential for large-scale economic and social consequences if security measures fail. Safeguarding maritime infrastructure, for example, involves securing port facilities, cargo, personnel, and data from threats like piracy, terrorism, theft, and cyberattacks. It also requires compliance with national and international standards to ensure consistent protection across all levels of the supply chain (Ayotebi, 2022). Effective safeguarding measures also hinge on collaboration. In complex environments like ports, where multiple stakeholders are involved from government agencies and private operators to international shipping companies coordinated efforts are essential. This cooperation ensures that risks are anticipated and mitigated comprehensively, ultimately fostering a culture of resilience and protection across the entire system.

Maritime Infrastructure

Maritime infrastructure refers to the physical and organizational structures that support the operations and services related to maritime activities, including the transportation of goods and people by sea. This infrastructure plays a critical role in global trade, economic development, and the connectivity of nations. It includes key assets such as seaports, shipping lanes, docks, terminals, shipyards, navigation aids, and the vessels themselves. Additionally, it involves the systems, logistics, and technologies that facilitate the smooth and efficient movement of maritime commerce.

The European Union, for instance, defines a critical infrastructure as "an asset, system, or part thereof […], which is essential for the maintenance of vital societal functions, health, safety, security, economic or well-being of people, and the disruption or destruction of which would have a significant impact […], as result of the failure to maintain those functions" (Kristof, 2018).

Seaports, as a core component of maritime infrastructure, act as the entry and exit points for goods transported by sea, serving as hubs for importing and exporting goods, refueling, maintenance, and trade-related services. These ports are often interconnected with other forms of transportation, such as railways, highways, and airports, forming part of a larger global logistics chain. This interconnectedness makes maritime infrastructure a critical backbone of international commerce, with significant economic implications for countries that rely heavily on sea trade. The five types of maritime infrastructure are often included in the discussion. First, shipping: Often considered as

part of the transport sector, this infrastructure includes port facilities, the installations used for transport, such as LNG terminals, but also the more invisible shipping lanes, traffic separation schemes, lighthouses, and navigational zones required for maritime safety Kimberley (Peters, 2019). Also ships, their construction and maintenance can be included in this type. Second, energy: This comprises of fixed installations at sea, such as oil and gas platforms, windfarms and (planned) energy islands. It also includes the infrastructures through which energy flows to the land, such as underwater pipelines and electricity cables and their connecting points on shore. Since many energy resources, in particular fossil fuels are transported by ships there is a direct connection to the transport sector. Third, communication, that is the optic fibre cables laid on the ocean floor through which digital data flows and on which the internet is based, as well as the landing stations through which they connect to their terrestrial counterparts. Up to 90 percent of transcontinental data is transiting through cables, and countries without terrestrial connections, such as islands, are fully dependent on them (Christian, B. et al., 2022). Fourth, fishing can be seen as part of a 'food supply sector'. Here ports for fishing, fishing vessels, and aquaculture farms come into focus, as well as the management of fishery zones. Fishing can be a substantial industry in coastal regions or for small island states, often crucial in food security, and can hence likewise be seen as critical for societies. Fifth, marine biodiversity: Biodiversity, ecosystems, and 'nature' are not necessarily considered to be part of a separate sector in critical infrastructure protection strategies (USAID, 2016). (Ashley, 2012), Given that for many countries marine ecosystems are vital for the economy and the population (Connor, 2018), marine biodiversity can be included in an encompassing outline of critical maritime infrastructure. This dimension is moreover gaining in importance, given the heightened awareness of the importance of coastal areas and the seabed as a carbon sink and its potential for carbon storage, which are vital in climate change mitigation and the reduction of carbon emissions (Martin S. et al., 2020). If and how these five types of infrastructures are included in definitions of maritime infrastructure or potentially others (David, 2023), highly differ across countries and regions. In particular, in early debates on critical infrastructure protection, the focus has been on maritime transport and energy, especially ports. The two latter types, fishing and marine biodiversity, are less regularly included in the debate and many industrial states will consider these as marginal and prefer treating them with different policies.

Beyond the physical structures, maritime infrastructure also includes the digital and regulatory frameworks that ensure the safe and efficient functioning of maritime activities. The use of advanced technologies such as GPS navigation, port management software, automated cranes, and cybersecurity systems has become integral to modern maritime infrastructure. These technologies help enhance the efficiency of port operations and provide better safety and security measures to protect against threats like piracy, smuggling, and cyberattacks. The integrity of maritime infrastructure is vital to the functioning of the global economy, particularly for nations like Nigeria, where a significant portion of economic activity depends on maritime trade. This infrastructure is not only essential for trade but also for national security, as it helps protect a country's maritime borders and resources. As global trade continues to expand, the need to invest in and safeguard maritime infrastructure from physical and digital threats becomes more critical for ensuring the stability and growth of economies reliant on sea-based activities.

Theoretical Framework

Systems Theory

systems theory was developed in the 1950s against the backdrop of a need to have a set of systematical theoretical constructs to discuss the empirical world (Boulding, 1956; von Bertalanffy, 1951). "General systems theory is the skeleton of science in the sense that it aims to provide a framework or structure of systems on which to hang the flesh and blood of particular disciplines and particular subject matters in an orderly and coherent corpus of knowledge" (Boulding, 1956:208). Systems theory aims to explicate dynamic relationships and interdependence between components of the system and the organization–environment relationships. A system is established based on the structure and patterns of the relationships emerging from interactions among components. As a result of these emergent patterns and relationships, each system is different from another. In other words, unlike biological systems, components of social organizations have their wills and intended purposes (Boulding, 1956:315).

According to systems theory, components of each system are structured in a hierarchical ordering, and components are interdependent with one another in the system to the extent that one component cannot function without the support of other components. Components of a system can be tightly coupled, where the components are closely interdependent, or loosely coupled, where the smaller subsets of tightly connected components are loosely connected to one another. At the organizational level, the organizations and other organizations in the environment are also interdependent on one another. Underlying this interdependence are the permeable boundaries, both within and among organizations. Invariably, social organizations have to maintain permeable boundaries of a certain degree in order to receive materials or export products to survive.

Systems theory provides a valuable lens for understanding port security and maritime infrastructure by highlighting the interconnected nature of various components and the dynamic interactions within a complex system (Von Bertalanffy, 1951). In the context of port security, systems theory emphasizes that a port is not an isolated entity; rather, it is part of a broader network comprising interrelated subsystems such as physical infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, technology, human resources, and environmental conditions. Each of these subsystems influences, and is influenced by, the others, making port security a multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive approach.

Ports function as complex systems where various subsystems such as cargo handling, customs inspections, logistics, and surveillance work together to ensure the smooth operation and safety of maritime activities (Von Bertalanffy, 1951). For instance, when cargo arrives, it passes through multiple stages, including unloading, customs clearance, and transportation. Any security issue at one stage can disrupt the entire process. A breach in customs inspection, for example, can allow illegal goods to enter, threatening not only port security but also national safety. Systems theory underscores the importance of maintaining seamless coordination across all components of the port system to prevent disruptions and minimize vulnerabilities.

Moreover, systems theory emphasizes the interdependencies between stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector operators, international shipping companies, and regulatory bodies. Effective port security requires the collaboration of these stakeholders to manage risks and respond to threats in a coordinated manner (Boulding 1956). A failure by one stakeholder, such as weak cybersecurity measures by a shipping company, can impact the entire system's security. The theory thus supports the need for integrated security policies and information-sharing protocols that ensure all parties are aligned in safeguarding the port.

In applying systems theory to port security, a holistic risk management approach is crucial. Instead of addressing individual threats in isolation, systems theory encourages consideration of how different risks interact within the system. For example, a rise in cyber threats could indirectly impact physical security if port management systems are compromised. By viewing the port as a system with interconnected components, security planners can develop strategies that account for multiple risks, thereby reinforcing the entire system's strength rather than just isolated parts.

Overview of the Importance of Port Security for National and Economic Security

Port security is crucial for both national and economic security, as ports serve as critical gateways for the movement of goods, people, and resources. Ports facilitate the import and export of essential commodities, including food, energy supplies, industrial products, and raw materials that sustain the economy. Ensuring the security of these vital nodes helps protect national interests by preventing disruptions to the supply chain, which could have serious economic consequences. Furthermore, as ports are often the first point of entry into a country, robust port security measures are essential for preventing the smuggling of illegal goods, weapons, and even potential threats to national security, such as terrorism. The maritime sector of Nigeria's economy holds great potential for the growth of the country's economic development (Lloyd, Onyeabor, Nwafor, Alozie, Nwafor, Mahakweabba & Adibe, 2020). The sector boasts of numerous resources which cover both aquatic and marine spaces, including oceans, seas, coasts, lakes, rivers and underground waters. It is on this basis that the maritime sector is being repositioned by the Federal Government of Nigeria to take a lead as

one of the viable alternate sources of revenue for growing the economy (Salau & Falaju, 2018). Considering the enormous budgetary and legal provisions made over the years to secure and sustain the oil sector, for the potentials of the Nigerian maritime resources to be fully harnessed, there is also the need for the maritime sector to be secured and sustained. Abubakar (2019) noted that the hallmarks of a blue economy would not only establish pathways for the diversification of the Nigerian economy, as widely anticipated, but could, as well, help in addressing many socio-economic challenges in the country. Abubakar stated that achieving these, however, is contingent upon the establishment of and a commitment to a comprehensive legal and institutional framework, as well as the use of important enablers for sustainability like ecosystem-based management, Marine Spatial Planning, and innovative financing mechanisms. It is in line with said point that the Federal Ministry of Transport and the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) have been given the responsibility to coordinate and administer the maritime sector of the economy to ensure maximal benefits (Anozie, Umahi, Onuoha, Nwafor & Alozie, 2019).

Over the years, the maritime industry has been a harbinger of fortunes and an enabler of capacities for development and growth. The little beginnings of the maritime industry in the hands of the imperial and exploitative colonial administration have turned out to become a veritable source of massive revenue, industrial growth, manpower development, and the door for Nigeria to benefit from global trade and bilateral relationships (Jamoh, 2022). During the post-independence era, that is, to say, when Nigeria operated the regional system of government, agriculture was the main source of foreign earnings for the Country. Agricultural produce such as cocoa, groundnut, and palm oil were exported through maritime transportation. This implies that both oil and agriculture, being the major sectors of the Nigerian economy, could not have thrived without the maritime sector. The Nigerian maritime sector therefore should create a link between maritime transportation and economic development as the source provider of logistics (Lloyd, et al, 2020). Nigeria's total annual freight cost which is estimated at between $5 billion and $6 billion annually, places shipping at the heart of the Country's economic growth (Atoyebi, 2022). Economically, ports are significant drivers of growth, generating revenue through trade, taxes, and employment. In countries with large maritime industries, such as Nigeria, ports play a pivotal role in supporting industries like oil and gas, manufacturing, and agriculture. A breach in port security, such as a major theft or act of terrorism, can cause considerable financial losses, disrupt trade, and diminish investor confidence. Additionally, non-compliance with international port security standards can lead to sanctions, higher insurance premiums, and loss of trade opportunities, as international shipping companies may avoid ports perceived as unsafe or unreliable.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the value of international maritime trade is expected to increase by around 3.4% after a five-year period which will end in 2024. This growth will primarily be driven by especially rapid growth rates in containerized and dry bulk cargoes. Their compound annual growth rates over this same five-year period have been projected to be around 4.5% and 3.9% respectively. As might be expected of such a powerful and thriving industry, the maritime industry is a key driver of economic growth. Seaports and activities that take place within them add significant economic value to the countries in which they are located. These activities include the operation of maritime transport agencies, maritime and coastal water transport, storage of goods in seaports, and several other activities that support maritime transport. Some ships might even have to pay rent which is charged for the use of the ports as part of transit shipping routes; this rent also comprises part of the economic gain brought about by the maritime industry. The maritime domain, therefore, remains the dominant medium for global shipping and commerce and it holds the key for unlocking the streams of opportunities in the industry in such areas as renewable energy, fisheries, maritime transport, waste management, tourism, and marine biodiversity (Amechi in NIMASA, 2019). The nation's maritime industry employs thousands of Nigerians formally and informally. The industry is adjudged as next to oil in terms of revenue generation for the economy. Its annual revenue as of last year (2021) totaled N4trillion with the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) leading the way with N2.3trillion (Ugwoke, 2022). Maritime experts believe that if the potential of the sector is harnessed, the industry could generate as much as N7 trillion for the national economy annually.

Nationally, port security is directly linked to the safety of maritime borders and the protection of a country's territorial waters. Ports are often targeted for illicit activities, including human trafficking, drug smuggling, and illegal fishing. Without proper security measures, these activities can undermine national law enforcement efforts and compromise public safety. Moreover, the strategic location of many ports means they could also be targets for geopolitical conflicts or terrorist attacks. Thus, securing port infrastructure not only protects economic interests but also strengthens a nation's ability to defend its borders and maintain sovereignty. The main transportation mode of most of the imports and exports across the world is through the sea and therefore maritime security is vital to all states. The security of the littorals is as important as any other dimension of national security and raises several issues and challenges for states. According to Payi (2015), maritime export plays a crucial role in Nigeria's economic development. Costs of insecurity in Nigeria could be in terms of direct loss of income from weakened hydrocarbon exports and fisheries.

Maritime insecurity negatively affects the cost of trade. As regions are increasingly threatened by piracy, trading channels are altered, protection premiums multiply, cargo shippers use alternative ports to pick up and deliver their goods (Bowden et al, 2010). The cost of piracy, which in 2020 was pegged at over $1.1b (Sackey, Lomotey, Sackey, Lee, Teye, Quarcoo & Bansah, 2022), is so enormous that such money could have been put into several other developmental uses. To confirm the significance of imports and the effect it may have on Nigeria, the Senior Special Assistant to President Goodluck Jonathan on Maritime Services Olugbenga Oyewole was quoted in the online Daily Independent Newspaper of February 2013, as saying that, 'should Nigeria be rated number one insecure nation in the world again, it won't be too long when they will take up the insurance again and Nigerians will pay more'. Nigerians pay not less than $15 million daily for goods that come into the country, which will ultimately impact market prices because of some obnoxious tag that our waters are not safe (Obi, 2013). This is one big negative impact of maritime security on the economy of the nation and calls for viable measures towards reversal.

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) established the Deep Blue Project (DBP) for maritime security to combat piracy problems in the GoG region. Its operation focuses on the Nigerian anchorages forming part of the DBP jurisdiction. The setup also coordinates inter-agency information sharing between GoG nations regarding maritime security threats and concerns. The takeoff of the project has resulted in successes in the reduction of piracy and armed robbery in Nigerian waters. A look at the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) trend analysis for 2021 suggests a shift of illegal activities from the Nigerian waters since the inception of the Deep Blue project.

In an increasingly globalized world, the significance of port security extends beyond individual countries. The interconnected nature of global trade means that a disruption in one major port can have a ripple effect across international supply chains, leading to shortages, price hikes, and delays worldwide. Therefore, ensuring robust port security is not only a matter of national importance but also a global priority, as it contributes to the stability and efficiency of international commerce.

Nigeria's Maritime Landscape

Nigeria's maritime landscape is a vital component of the country's economy, serving as the main conduit for international trade and economic activities. Nigeria, located on latitude 9.0820° N and longitude 8.6753° E, is a country in West Africa along the Atlantic Ocean's Gulf of Guinea. Located at the extreme inner corner of the Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa, the country occupies an area of 923,768 sq. km (356,669 sq mi), extending 1,127 km (700 mi) E-W and 1,046 km (650 mi) N-S (Folami, 2017). Its land borders are with Benin to the west, Cameroon and Chad to the east, and Niger to the north. With a population of about 216 million people, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, and the 6th in the world (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in Olatunji & Adejoro, 2022). It has a maritime area of 46,500 km^2 and an exclusive economic zone of 210,900 km^2 (Folami, 2017). Nigeria is advantageously placed to benefit maximally from maritime trade along the coast of West Africa and within the Gulf of Guinea region (Lloyd, Onyeabor, Nwafor, Alozie, Nwafor, Mahakweabba & Adibe, 2020; Ateme, 2020). As shown in Fig. 1, the coastal states in Nigeria are Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-Rivers, Delta, Edo, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Rivers. The Niger Delta comprises nine states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and

River States (Ringim, Muhammad & Lyakurwa, 2016).



Fig. 1: (a) Position of Nigeria in Africa, (b) Map of Nigeria showing coastal area of the Niger Delta, (c) Niger Delta States

Such a geographically strategic position promises a myriad of economic benefits to the states and the country in particular, with the Niger Delta states being blessed with an abundance of natural resources.

The maritime industry in Nigeria is particularly crucial for the country's oil and gas sector, which accounts for a significant portion of the national revenue. The country is one of the largest crude oil producers in Africa, and its ports play an essential role in the export of oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG). The Nigerian ports not only facilitate the export of these energy resources but also handle the importation of refined petroleum products, machinery, and industrial equipment, which are critical for sustaining oil and gas operations. This reliance on maritime trade underscores the need for robust port infrastructure and effective security measures to protect the industry from disruptions (Badejo 2014).

Apart from oil and gas, Nigeria's maritime landscape also supports a diverse range of other economic activities. The country is a major exporter of agricultural products such as cocoa, sesame seeds, and cashew nuts, which are shipped through its ports. Additionally, the importation of consumer goods, industrial raw materials, and vehicles further highlights the importance of efficient port operations for the country's economy (Ringim, Muhammad & Lyakurwa, 2016). The ports are also integral to Nigeria's inland transportation network, connecting to major highways and railways that facilitate the distribution of goods across the nation, contributing to economic development and regional trade.

However, Nigeria's maritime landscape faces several challenges, including piracy, smuggling, illegal bunkering, and infrastructural deficits. The Gulf of Guinea has been notorious for maritime piracy, posing a significant threat to commercial shipping and oil exploration activities (Badejo 2014). Furthermore, many of the country's ports have struggled with outdated infrastructure, congestion, and inefficiencies that hinder smooth operations. Efforts to modernize port facilities and improve security have been ongoing, with initiatives such as the Deep Blue Project, which aims to combat maritime crime and enhance surveillance in Nigerian waters.

Overall, Nigeria's maritime landscape is a critical driver of the economy, with the potential to significantly boost national development if challenges can be effectively addressed. The country's strategic location, coupled with its vast natural resources, presents opportunities for Nigeria to become a leading maritime hub in Africa, provided that investments in port infrastructure, security, and regulatory reforms are sustained.

Legal and Regulatory Framework for Port Security in Nigeria

The legal and regulatory framework for port security in Nigeria is established to ensure the safety and security of the country's maritime infrastructure, in line with international standards and national legislation. The framework encompasses a range of laws, regulations, and policies aimed at addressing security challenges in the maritime sector, safeguarding ports against threats such as piracy, smuggling, and terrorism, and ensuring compliance with global maritime security protocols. It involves various government agencies, legal instruments, and international conventions that collectively contribute to enhancing port security. The sea is a crucial medium through which human trade and commerce is conducted; it is also a means of voyage, a valuable source for mineral extraction and power generation and an essential source of the blue economy (Arif, A. 2017). It is of vital importance for Nigeria, as a coastal state located strategically on the west coast of Africa in the Gulf of Guinea, to have an effective maritime legal regime for the regulation and protection of sea activities. The legal framework for maritime protection in Nigeria includes the Constitution (1999 Constitution of the FRN), statutes and government regulations, case law, which provides binding judicial precedents, and international maritime conventions.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) (the 'Constitution') vests ownership of minerals, mineral oils, and natural gas in the government of the federation. This extends beyond resources located in the land territory to those located in the territorial sea, including the Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria (Ibid, s 44 (3). The Constitution also charges the state to improve and protect the air, land, water, forest and wildlife of Nigeria (Ibid, s 20). By this provision, it tasks the Nigerian government to make the environment safe and further prosecute any persons who pollute the environment through its activities, especially the oil and gas companies (Samuel C. D. et al., 2019). The Constitution confers jurisdiction on the Federal High Court to the exclusion of any other court in civil causes and matters relating to any admiralty jurisdiction, including shipping and navigation on the River Niger or River Benue and their affluents; on such other inland waterway as may be designated by any enactment to be an international waterway; all federal ports (including the constitution and powers of the ports authorities for Federal ports); and carriage by sea (The Constitution).

The Merchant Shipping Act 2007 generally regulates merchant shipping issues and other labour-related matters (Samuel C. D. et al., 2019). The Act established an Agency for Maritime Safety Administration, responsible for maritime safety, administration and security (Merchant Shipping Act, 2007 s 2). All ships operating commercially in or from the waters of Nigeria are required to obtain a certificate of license under the Act (Ibid s 5 (1)). The Minister **(**The 'Minister' Act**)** may by notice exempt generally or specifically from registration under this Act, a licensed Nigeria ship or a class of Nigerian ship when operating outside the waters of Nigeria (The Merchant Shipping Act, 2007 s 5 (2).

The Merchant Shipping Act is the principal legislation governing collision, including liabilities in collision cases in Nigeria (The Merchant Shipping Act, 2007, ss 338–344). Section 340 of the Act provides for rules as to the division of loss as follows:

1. Where, by the fault of two or more ships, damage or loss is caused to one or more of them, or to their cargo or freight, or to any property on board, the liability to make good the damage or loss shall be in proportion to the degree in which each ship was at fault

    a. if, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, it is not possible to establish different degrees of fault, the liability shall be apportioned equally;

b. nothing in this section shall operate so as to render any ship liable for any loss or damage to which her fault has not contributed; and

c. nothing in this section shall affect the liability of any person under a contract of carriage, or any contract, or shall be construed as imposing any liability upon any person from which he is exempted by any contract or by any provision of law, or as affecting the right of any person to limit his liability in the manner provided by law.

2. This section shall apply to Nigerian Government ships as it applies in the case of other ships.'

The Merchant Shipping Act further provides for limitation of actions in Nigeria for maritime claims or lien against a ship or its owners in respect of any damage or loss. Proceedings in respect of such damage or loss are to be commenced within two years from the date when the damage or loss or injury was caused or the salvage services were rendered (The Merchant Shipping Act, 2007 s 5).

At the core of Nigeria's port security framework is the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, an international standard developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to enhance maritime security worldwide. Nigeria adopted the ISPS Code in 2004, making it mandatory for all port facilities to implement security measures such as access control, surveillance, risk assessments, and emergency response protocols. The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) is the designated authority responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the ISPS Code in the country. NIMASA works in conjunction with port operators, the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), and other security agencies to ensure compliance with the ISPS Code across all port facilities. The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) Act 2007 provides for the promotion of maritime safety and security, protection in the marine environment, shipping registration and commercial shipping, maritime labour, the establishment of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency and related matters. Its objective is to develop indigenous commercial shipping in international and shipping trade (The Merchant Shipping Act, 2007).

The NIMASA Act applies to all ships, whether small ships or crafts that are registered in Nigeria, and to all other ships flying a foreign flag in the Exclusive Economic Zone, territorial and inland seas, inland waterways and the ports of the country (The Merchant Shipping Act, 2007). The NIMASA is given the right under the Act to make regulations with approval of the Minister with regards to dumping of ship or generated waste into the Nigerian waters (The Merchant Shipping Act, 2007).

Section 22 of the Act provides for the functions and duties of the NIMASA. These functions and duties include: administering the registration and licensing of ships; regulating and administering the certification of seafarers; pursuing the development of shipping and regulatory matters relating to merchant shipping and seafarers; establishing maritime training and safety standards; regulating the safety of shipping as regards to the construction of ships and navigation; providing directions and ensuring compliance with vessel security measures; providing search and rescue services; carrying out air and coastal surveillance; controlling and preventing marine pollution; providing the direction on qualification, certification, employment and welfare of maritime labour; establishing the procedure for the implementation of conventions – the International Maritime Organisation, the International Maritime Labour Organisation and other international conventions to which Nigeria is a party on maritime safety and security, maritime labour, commercial shipping and for the implementation of codes, resolutions and circulars arising there from among others.

Nigeria's legal and regulatory framework also aligns with international maritime conventions, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Suppression of Unlawful Acts (SUA) Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation Convention (Hodgkinson, 2013). These conventions provide guidelines for the protection of maritime domains, the

prosecution of maritime crimes, and the promotion of safe and secure shipping practices (Hodgkinson, 2013). By adhering to these conventions, Nigeria enhances its maritime security efforts and ensures that its legal framework aligns with international standards, facilitating cooperation with other nations in combating maritime threats.

Despite these regulations, challenges persist in the implementation and enforcement of port security measures due to issues such as inadequate infrastructure, corruption, and limited resources. Continuous efforts are needed to strengthen the legal and regulatory framework, improve coordination among security agencies, and ensure compliance with security protocols across all levels of port operations.

Port Security Threats and Challenges

Port security in Nigeria faces a range of threats and challenges that undermine the safety and efficiency of its maritime infrastructure. These threats not only pose risks to the economic stability and national security of the country but also affect global maritime trade, given Nigeria's strategic position along key shipping routes. Addressing these security concerns is crucial to ensuring the smooth operation of ports and protecting the country's vital maritime interests. The challenges range from criminal activities such as piracy and smuggling to infrastructure limitations and regulatory issues.

Piracy and Armed Robbery, are among the most significant threats to port security in Nigeria, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea. The region has gained notoriety as a global hotspot for maritime piracy, where criminals often target commercial vessels, oil tankers, and offshore installations. For instance, in Nigeria, the Bonga Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel has a total production capacity of 225,000 barrels of oil per day and 150 standard cubic feet of gas export per day. Since production began in 2005, Bonga alone had produced over 880 million barrels of oil. The attack in 2008 by militants on this deep sea installation which lies 120 kilometres off the coast of the country, almost grounded oil business in Nigeria, as it cut the country's oil output by a tenth and raised fears of a new campaign against deepwater installations (Tattersall, 2008). Attacks can involve hijacking ships, kidnapping crew members for ransom, and stealing cargo, especially crude oil. Piracy remains one of the most frequent threats observed in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea, although measures are in place to reduce it (Liwång, 2017).

Smuggling and Trafficking, including illegal trade in drugs, arms, and human trafficking, also present substantial risks to port security. Criminal networks exploit gaps in port security measures, such as inadequate cargo inspection and corruption, to move contraband through Nigeria's ports. According to International Maritime Bureau (IMB) (2022), the smuggling and trafficking-prone areas in Nigeria are Lagos/Apapa, Bayelsa, Brass, Bonny Island and Port Harcourt. IMB further reported that robbers and traffickers are often well-armed armed, violent and have attacked and hijacked/robbed ships, kidnapped crews along/far from the coast, rivers, anchorages, ports, and surrounding waters. Incidents have also been reported up to about 212nm from the coast. This illegal activity not only threatens public safety and law enforcement but also affects the integrity of trade and customs regulations. Some of them are listed as indirect and grouped under transnational organized crime and include: Money laundering, illegal deals in arms and drugs, trafficking, Illegal oil bunkering crude oil theft, human trafficking, smuggling, maritime pollution, IUU fishing, illegal dumping of toxic waste, maritime terrorism, hostage-taking and vandalism of offshore infrastructure (The Yaounde Code of Conduct, 2013).

Infrastructure Limitations, present another significant challenge. Many of Nigeria's ports suffer from outdated infrastructure, inadequate surveillance systems, and insufficient fencing and lighting, which can hinder effective security management (IMB, 2022). Congestion at port facilities, partly due to limited space and aging equipment, can also make it difficult to monitor cargo and vessel movements accurately. These limitations affect the capacity to implement comprehensive security measures, allowing criminal activities to go undetected or security incidents to escalate rapidly.

Cybersecurity Threats are becoming increasingly relevant as ports adopt digital technologies to improve operations. The use of automated systems for cargo handling, navigation, and port management introduces new vulnerabilities that cybercriminals can exploit. Cyberattacks on port infrastructure can

disrupt operations, cause data breaches, and potentially compromise safety systems (Jamoh 2022). Given the growing reliance on technology in port operations, addressing cybersecurity threats is essential to maintaining the integrity and resilience of Nigeria's maritime infrastructure.

Corruption and Regulatory Challenges, further complicate port security efforts. Corruption within customs, immigration, and port authorities can facilitate illegal activities, such as smuggling and unauthorized access to secure areas Jamoh (2022). Regulatory gaps, inconsistencies in the enforcement of security standards, and a lack of coordination among different security agencies can create vulnerabilities that criminals exploit. Strengthening the regulatory framework, improving transparency, and enhancing inter-agency cooperation are necessary steps to address these challenges (Sanni, 2022).

Together, these threats and challenges highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to port security in Nigeria, combining enhanced physical security measures, improved regulatory enforcement, investment in infrastructure, and the adoption of modern technologies. Addressing these issues is critical not only for safeguarding Nigeria's maritime interests but also for ensuring the country's continued participation in the global maritime trade network.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Port security is a critical component of Nigeria's national and economic security, as the country's ports serve as essential gateways for international trade, oil exports, and regional commerce. Ensuring the safety of these vital maritime assets is paramount for protecting the economy, maintaining stable trade operations, and safeguarding national borders. While Nigeria has made significant strides in developing a legal and regulatory framework for port security, numerous threats and challenges persist, including piracy, smuggling, outdated infrastructure, cybersecurity risks, and corruption. These issues not only pose risks to the country's maritime industry but also affect its reputation in global trade and compliance with international security standards.

Addressing these challenges requires a holistic and coordinated approach that involves all stakeholders, including government agencies, port operators, and the private sector. There is a pressing need to enhance security measures, upgrade port infrastructure, and implement stringent regulatory enforcement to effectively combat the evolving threats. Additionally, leveraging technology and international partnerships can help to reinforce port security, reduce vulnerabilities, and build resilience within Nigeria's maritime landscape. Without a concerted effort to address these concerns, the country's ports may continue to face security challenges that could disrupt trade, endanger lives, and weaken the national economy. The following are specific recommendations.

Enhance Inter-Agency Collaboration and Training: Strengthening collaboration among the various security agencies, including NIMASA, the Nigerian Ports Authority, the Navy, Customs, and the Marine Police, is essential to improving port security. Regular joint training exercises, intelligence sharing, and coordinated response protocols should be implemented to ensure a unified approach to security threats. Enhanced cooperation with international partners can also support capacity-building efforts and provide access to best practices in maritime security.

Invest in Modernizing Port Infrastructure: Upgrading port facilities is crucial to addressing infrastructural limitations that hinder effective security management. Investments should focus on modernizing cargo inspection systems, surveillance technologies, fencing, and access controls to meet international standards. Developing automated and digital systems for port operations can also help reduce congestion and increase monitoring capabilities, but must be accompanied by robust cybersecurity measures.

Strengthen Anti-Corruption Measures: Corruption within the maritime sector undermines security efforts and facilitates illegal activities. Establishing stringent anti-corruption protocols, conducting regular audits, and holding officials accountable can help reduce corrupt practices. A transparent system for reporting and investigating incidents of corruption should also be put in place to restore confidence in port security processes.

Adopt Advanced Technology for Cybersecurity and Surveillance: Given the increasing reliance on digital systems, adopting advanced cybersecurity practices is vital. Ports should implement comprehensive cyber defense strategies, including regular vulnerability

assessments, data encryption, and real-time monitoring of networks. Additionally, the use of drones, artificial intelligence, and automated identification systems (AIS) for surveillance can enhance the detection and prevention of security threats.

Improve Legal and Regulatory Frameworks: There is a need to continuously review and update the legal and regulatory frameworks governing port security to address emerging threats and incorporate new international standards. Strengthening penalties for maritime crimes, streamlining the enforcement of security regulations, and closing regulatory gaps can improve compliance and deter criminal activities.

Promote Community Engagement and Awareness Programs: Local communities around port areas can play a role in enhancing security through information sharing and reporting suspicious activities. Community engagement initiatives and awareness programs should be developed to educate stakeholders about the importance of port security and encourage their participation in securing maritime infrastructure.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can enhance the security of its ports, protect critical economic interests, and establish a safer and more resilient maritime environment.

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A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE ON TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND CULTURAL PRACTICES OF THE KALAOKO PEOPLE

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KEYWORDS
Tradition, Institution, Culture, Kala Oko

ABSTRACT
This study explores the history of traditional institutions and cultural practices in Kala Oko, a community in the Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The Study adopted historical and descriptive research methods and obtained data from primary and secondary sources. As a qualitative research, analysis was done thematically. Data collection involved interviews and field visits, capturing firsthand accounts from community members. The study findings reveal the resilience of Kala Oko's traditional institutions and their significant role in fostering cultural heritage and social cohesion. Despite challenges such as limited funding, high transportation costs, and time constraints, the research highlights strategies for preserving and revitalizing these institutions in the face of modern pressures. This work contributes to academic scholarship and community efforts to maintain Kala Oko's unique cultural identity.

Introduction

The traditional institution of Kala Oko, located in the Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria, represents a cornerstone of the community's cultural and historical identity. This village, like many others in southeastern Nigeria, is deeply rooted in customs and traditions that have been passed down through generations. The traditional institutions in KalaOko encompass various social structures, including chieftaincy titles, age-grade systems, and cultural festivals, all of which play crucial roles in maintaining social cohesion and order.

Traditional institutions in Kala Oko have their origins in pre-colonial times when they were the primary systems of governance and social organization. Chiefs and elders, often selected based on lineage, wisdom, and merit, played vital roles in leadership and conflict resolution. These leaders were entrusted with maintaining law and order, managing communal lands, and

overseeing rituals and ceremonies that reinforced community bonds.[1]

The British implemented an indirect rule policy, which aimed to govern through existing traditional structures. This policy led to the formalization and alteration of chieftaincy titles and the introduction of Western administrative systems. The traditional leaders were incorporated into the colonial administration, often causing a shift in their roles and authority. This period also saw conflicts between indigenous practices and colonial laws, leading to a dynamic interplay of adaptation and resistance.[2]

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, there was a resurgence of interest in traditional institutions as symbols of cultural identity and continuity. In Niger Delta, traditional festivals such as the New Yam Festival and various masquerade ceremonies regained prominence. These events are not only celebrations of cultural heritage but also serve as mechanisms for passing down historical knowledge and values to younger generations[3]

The traditional institution of Kala Oko has continued to evolve in response to modern challenges. Migration, and the influence of global culture have all posed threats to the survival of these institutions. However, the community has demonstrated resilience through various strategies, including the documentation of oral histories, the revitalization of traditional practices, and the active engagement of youth in cultural activities. These efforts are crucial in preserving the community's unique heritage and ensuring its continuity.

In recent times, the traditional institutions in Kala Oko continue to play a significant role in the community. They are integral to the social structure, providing a sense of identity and belonging. The chieftaincy titles and age-grade systems still function as mechanisms for governance and social organization, while cultural festivals reinforce community bonds and cultural pride.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive historical account of the traditional institution in Kala Oko, exploring its origins, transformations, and contemporary relevance. By examining historical records, oral traditions, and current practices, the research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how traditional institutions have shaped and continue to influence the socio-cultural landscape of KalaOko. The study will also highlight the challenges faced by these institutions and propose strategies for their preservation in the modern era.

Understanding the history and evolution of traditional institutions in Kala Oko is essential for appreciating their role in the community's past, present, and future. This research will not only document these institutions but also offer insights into their resilience and adaptability in the face of changing social and political landscapes.[4]

The traditional institutions of Kala Oko, a village in the Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria, have long been central to the community's social, political, and cultural life. These institutions, encompassing chieftaincy titles, age-grade systems, and cultural festivals, have historically provided a framework for governance, social organization, and cultural continuity. However, over the past several decades, these institutions have faced numerous challenges that threaten their survival and relevance.

With the advent of colonial rule, traditional institutions in KalaOko experienced significant transformations. The British indirect rule policy disrupted indigenous governance systems, leading to the redefinition of chieftaincy roles and the imposition of Western administrative structures. Despite these disruptions, traditional institutions adapted and continued to play a vital role in the community. However, post-independence developments and modern challenges have further complicated their position.

[1]Abi Alabo Derefaka, 'Cultural Heritage in the Niger Delta', *Journal of African Studies,* vol. **12,** no. 4, 2018,pp. 45-60

[2] Lord Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1922), 25-30.

[3] A. E. Afigbo, *The Igbo and Their Neighbors* (Ibadan: University Press, 1981), 134-140.

[4] A. E. Afigbo, *The Igbo and Their Neighbors* (Ibadan: University Press, 1981), 212-218.

In recent years, unlike other communities in Nigeria, Kala Oko's urbanization, migration, and the pervasive influence of global culture have increasingly marginalized traditional institutions. Younger generations are often disconnected from their cultural heritage, leading to a decline in the participation in and transmission of traditional practices. Additionally, the legal and political frameworks in contemporary Nigeria sometimes conflict with traditional governance systems, further eroding their authority and functionality.

The preservation and revitalization of traditional institutions in Kala Oko are crucial for maintaining the community's cultural heritage and social cohesion. Yet, there is a lack of comprehensive historical documentation and analysis of these institutions' evolution and current status. This gap in knowledge hinders efforts to address the challenges they face and to develop strategies for their sustainable preservation.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate the history of traditional institutions in Kala Oko, uncovering their origins, transformations, and contemporary relevance. The study will explore how these institutions have adapted to external influences and modern challenges, and assess their current role in the community. By providing a detailed historical account and analysis, the research seeks to contribute to the understanding and preservation of Kala Oko's traditional institutions, ensuring their continued relevance in the modern era and it fills a gap in existing literature. The aim of the study is to document the role of traditional institutions in kala oko.

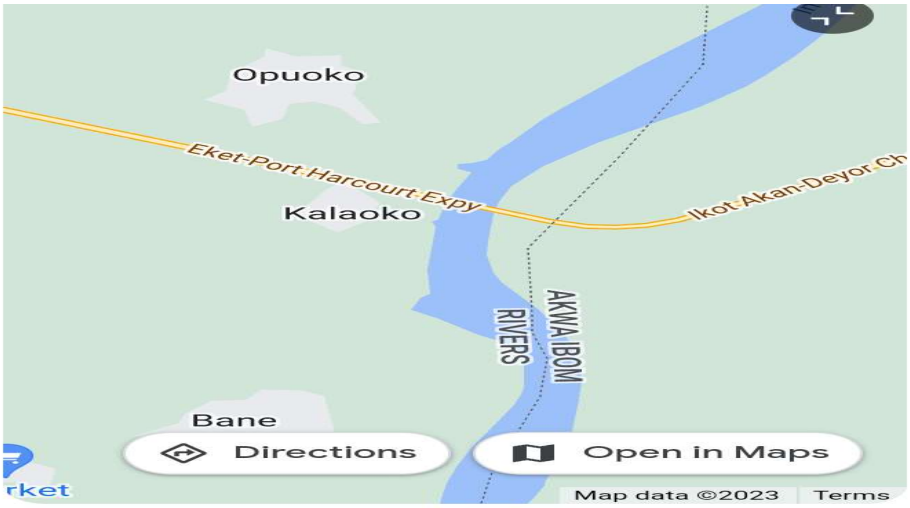


Fig 1. Map showing Kalaoko & Opuoko

Source: map.google.com (google map)

The founder of kalaoko was from Tai and his name was Wiileba it was recorded that he ran away from his original home land and came to his present place of settlement called Kalaoko. Although the reason for is migration is not known, but Kalaoko tradition observed that, he left his original community to settle in this place called Kalaoko as a result of an un known event when he came to the place he saw that the place was good and fertile. Although the event that made him to run from his original community was not really stated but it was believed that something actually happened. Then he started looking for a place to settle down, and when he got to a place where he saw a river he settled there the place was called Maa`ke`tur he settled there and build a temporary shelter over his head where he could reside for the meantime. Then he sent a message to his brother that he has found a place very fertile and full of water, when his brother heard about this he embarked on a journey to this fertile land and he settled

there. Wiileba and his brother started clearing some bushes into the dry land, one said to another indeed the land is fertile. They decided to split up and one of them later left the place and went to clear another Bush. One went to Opuoko while the other choose to settle in Kalaoko. Gbeneobia who was the brother of Wiileba settled in Opuoko and had children he settled there and saw that the land was also fertile and told his brother that he has found another place that is as fertile as the first one and they spent some years too and had families and the community came to become a large community. when one of the brothers had a son called Itekar and the son became the first ruler of the community and history continued but the particular year that the community came to settlement was not really mentioned, when the community was now a little bit big they now started dividing the community into clans and then each of the clans was ruled by someone, in the process of the rulership and then one of the ruler got married to an Igbo woman from there the igbos started coming in. when Itekar died a man called Deekia became the ruler but the year he died was not mentioned when the rulership was handed over to Deekia they gave him the part that he was to rule and then a man called Fo`o`r also lead some parts, during the time of Fo`o`r, the people saw that it was awful and his brother that was now ruling them which were the igbos and since the igbos want to become domineering, the people resisted that they will not accept instead they will choose someone to rule them and then in the process of choosing they chose the man called Benson to rule them. Benson was not actually at home when they chose him, they sent a message to him where he was that they chose him to rule over them, so he should come back to the community to take his position that they have given to him but when the message got to Benson he refused and said no that he will not rule and at a process he gave them a condition that if he should rule, they will abide by the conditions and the people accepted and he came back to rule them on the process of rulership the war between Nigeria and biafra started and when the people could no longer stay in the community again he ran away being the igbos. The igbos that was in Kalaoko community then run to their place when some of the igbos that was ruling in Kalaoko communities refused to go because of the leadership, again they decided to cause confusion between the people and the new leader Benson, the knowledge and education on his head in order for the people to remove the leadership from his hand they had to lay an allegation on him, the allegation that the Igbo man laid on Benson was that he told them to hit a town crier that no woman of the Kalaoko should take the Igbo men that they were infected with a deadly disease when he laid the allegation and it was found that it was a hate speech and false allegation, they arrested him and beat him to stupor and Fo`o`r, died in 1964 and it was in 1964 that Benson became the ruler.

It was believed that Kalaoko and Opuoko have some ditties one of them is yor`mui and why they named it that way was because it was from the river, they said the deity is was not really a being but like a Stone, (Angie Stone) according to history it later moved to the center of the community when the ruler saw it like that, he was afraid and said no that the deity can take the position from him, that it should be moved to the river where it belongs, or moved to the back of the community so that the community will be in the front, and that the deity sometimes possesses people and speaks to the community, and the rulership continued for one person to the other. There's something called yaa traditionally and it is a situation where a male in a particular family will go into a shrine and stay for 14 days without seeing his people and then after the 14 days he comes out, and people celebrates him. a stick is being given to him for the period of that 14 days when the 14 days is over, a bell is being tied at his waist and he runs around the whole community with others following clapping and singing with him this is a tradition that goes on annually and the yaa depends on the family you belong to and also determines what you will buy. Also for the female we have what we called Co`o`, a female will stay in doors for some period of time and when she finally comes out a huge box of wrapper will be bought for her and in the period while she is in doors, there is a special food prepared for her, and palm kernel oil is used rubbed all over her body, when the day comes for her to come out she goes from family to family to fetch water, fetch firewood go on errands and then anything the family member has to give to her as gift will be given to her. And also a woman that gives birth to the first child, it is a tradition that she won't be seen outside or doing any domestic work but will be eating some traditional dishes and for the period of three months she will stay indoors and also a side of her teeth would be broken by the family member on her first pregnancy and there is something called doo is being rubbed all over her body in the period of pregnancy also she is being

promised gift during this. Like plantain money rapper and some other things[5]

It is believed that in the pre-colonial era the Ibani (present day Bonny & Opobo) took their name from Kala-Beni (Ibeni) corrupted to Ibani. The founding ancestors of the original name) came from the central delta Ebe of Koloku ma, specifically the Isedani lineage of Kolokuma.

The traditions say that they left Kolokuma because of civil conflict. Although the exact time of the conflict is unknown, they came out of Kolokuma between 12th and 15th century (AD.

The leaders of the migration were Opuamakuba, his brother Kala-Beni (Alagbariye or Alagba-ari-gha) and Asikunuma alias Other families northwards, they first settled in the now Ndoki territory where they encamped for some time (prince Edimini thopuamakuba was born here). They moved from the Ndoki area, but left behind some of their people, these inter-married gave birth to the Ndoki people founding among others villages such as Okolomakiri, Ayama, Osobie and Oruama or Azuogusettled in the now Ogoni area and encamped at a site where Opuoko town now stands (thus the name Opu-Oko from that Kala Oko was founded).

Kala-Beni being a hunter went hunting one day and came across the site of Bonny Town where he saw many birds. He returned to Opuamakuba that there was good land to settle on further south. Opuamakuba then made the decision to leave the main l(Orupiri) where Opuamakuba died[6].

Both primary and secondary were essential sources of materials for this research, each offering unique benefits. Primary sources provide original insights, while secondary sources provide context, analysis, and a broader understanding of the topic. Recognizing the limitations of single-source reliance, the researcher employs a multi-source approach, crucial for navigating the strengths and weaknesses inherent in historical sources.[7]

Given the scarcity of written records, particularly regarding the pre-colonial history of Kala Oko, this study emphasizes the use of oral history. Oral history involves firsthand accounts and personal recollections from informants who experienced or witnessed historical events, offering insights into culture, social organization, and political relations. These oral traditions complement archival materials and written documents, enriching the historical narrative.

Historical Analysis on traditional institutions in Kala Oko

Social Institutions

Social institutions are established patterns of behavior, norms, and organized structures that shape human interactions and relationships within a society. These institutions provide a foundation for social organization, cohesion, and continuity, helping to maintain order and stability across generations. By setting expectations and guidelines for behavior, social institutions ensure that individuals can relate to one another and contribute to the larger social fabric. They are fundamental to the functioning of any society, as they support a shared way of life, common values, and community identity.

In this discussion, I will focus on two key social institutions: family and marriage. Both are central to human relationships, influencing individuals' roles and responsibilities, shaping identity, and fostering social support networks within communities. Family and marriage play unique roles in preserving cultural values and promoting social cohesion.

Family:

In the traditional culture of Kala Oko, polygamy was an accepted practice, allowing a man to marry multiple wives, including marrying a mother and her daughter. This custom was not only socially accepted but was also seen as a status symbol among men. Additionally, having concubines was permitted, though with certain cultural guidelines. One specific tradition allowed a man to take on a concubine if she was the first daughter of a family. This arrangement often took place if the first daughter, who traditionally would not marry outside her family, found favor with a married man. In such cases,

[5] Oral interview with Chief Robert Nwibe, Kala Oko, 1 August 2024.

[6] bonnyhistoricalsociety.com/about-bonny-kingdom/

[7] https://www.econtentpro.com

the relationship could be maintained, but she would remain a concubine rather than a full wife.

Within the family structure, the first son held a significant role, serving as the assistant head of the family. As such, he inherited his father's property and managed it, taking charge of assets that were deemed indivisible. If there were other sons, the remaining properties were divided among them, with the first son retaining primary control over the major assets.

The first daughter also held a unique role. She symbolized her mother in the family hierarchy, remaining at home even when other daughters married out. Upon her mother's death, the first daughter inherited her mother's belongings, maintaining continuity of the maternal lineage within the household. However, in families with no daughters, these maternal assets would pass to the youngest son. In cases where a man had two wives, the firstborn son from the first wife would traditionally hold precedence. However, if the son of the second wife completed certain cultural rites before the son of the first wife, he could claim the position of first son, becoming culturally recognized as such.

This historical account illustrates the deep-rooted customs of marriage and inheritance in Kala Oko, emphasizing the unique roles and responsibilities designated to family members within the traditional structur**e.**

Marriage:

In Kala Oko, polygamy is an accepted and respected tradition, allowing men to have multiple wives. This practice aligns with the community's values and economic structure, as larger families were historically seen as beneficial, especially in a society reliant on farming and fishing for survival. Having multiple wives and children provided a broader workforce to help with labor-intensive tasks, which was essential for supporting the family's needs and achieving prosperity.

Additionally, it is common in Kala Oko for parents to play an active role in choosing a wife for their son. Marriages are often arranged by the family, sometimes even before the son expresses personal interest in marriage. Parents may choose a wife for their son for several reasons: because he has shown interest in the girl, to strengthen bonds with her family, or even to honor a family that has done them a favor in the past. When a wife is chosen for a son by his parents, she is recognized as his first wife, regardless of whether he later marries another woman whom he personally loves. In such cases, the woman chosen by his family holds the status of first wife, while any subsequent wife is considered second in the hierarchy.

However, there are strict taboos in Kala Oko as well, one of the most significant being the community's view on twins. Twins are considered an abomination, a belief that has been deeply embedded in the cultural and spiritual fabric of the community. The birth of twins is seen as bringing misfortune or disrupting harmony within the family and society at large. This belief in Kala Oko has historically influenced practices and norms, reflecting the community's understanding of purity, order, and the cultural values that have been passed down through generations.

In my community, marriage as a traditional institution carries unique beliefs and customs, particularly surrounding the role of the first daughter in a family. It is believed that the first daughter, known as Bià-be, should not marry because she is expected to assume the role of the mother figure if the actual mother of the home is deceased. This tradition holds that the Bià-be becomes responsible for all the traditional duties of a mother, upholding the family's legacy and ensuring continuity. Regardless of whether a family has only daughters or a mix of sons and daughters, the first daughter is expected to remain unmarried to maintain the cultural legacy associated with the mother's role. However, the Bià-be has the right to bear children, often through relationships with a concubine, but it is considered a taboo for her to marry legally. She may also marry another woman to serve as a representative if she chooses not to bear children herself, ensuring that the family has continuity within the household.

Additionally, our community's customs allow for polygamy, where men may marry multiple wives and maintain peaceful households. Daughters are generally given in marriage between the ages of 19 and 25, often resulting in early marriages in traditional times. Marriages in this community were not always initiated by the couple themselves; families could arrange marriages for their sons, whether because the son liked the girl, the family wished to connect with her family, or as a gesture of goodwill toward her family due to past favors. When a family marries a girl on behalf of their son, she

becomes his first wife, even if he later marries another woman he loves, who would then be considered his second wife.

Since the people of Kala Oko were predominantly farmers and fishermen, having multiple wives and children was also seen as a means of survival and prosperity. Large families provided a strong workforce to support agricultural and fishing activities, contributing to the family's livelihood. Early marriage and childbirth ensured that women typically completed childbearing by age 40, as children were highly valued in traditional society. Not having children was viewed as a misfortune, often leading to the belief that a family was under some form of curse.

The traditional family and marriage systems in Kala Oko began to evolve significantly with the advent of Western civilization and Christianity, introduced primarily through British colonial influence. This change marked a shift in both economic practices and social values.

Historically, the people of Kala Oko depended on agrarian and fishing practices for survival, with cultural skills like farming, fishing, and craftwork defining their way of life. However, colonial influence brought with it the introduction of Western-style education and white-collar employment, leading people to shift away from traditional subsistence activities. As Western ideals became more prominent, men and women in Kala Oko began to seek employment outside the community, which introduced new family structures and influenced how marriage was approached.

Christianity also played a role in altering the cultural norms surrounding marriage and family. The practice of polygamy, once an esteemed tradition, was increasingly challenged by Christian doctrines that favored monogamy. Many in the community, especially converts to Christianity, began to adopt the idea of single-spouse families, reducing the prevalence of polygamy. This shift created a new social dynamic in Kala Oko, where traditional values sometimes clashed with emerging Christian ideals.

Furthermore, Western influence affected the institution of marriage by encouraging personal choice in marriage rather than family-arranged unions. As individuals gained more autonomy, arranged marriages became less common, and romantic love started to play a larger role in marriage decisions. This shift marked a departure from the tradition of marrying primarily for social or economic alliances between families.

The introduction of Christianity also impacted beliefs surrounding childbirth and family structure. The cultural taboo against twins, which had long been seen as a misfortune in Kala Oko, began to diminish as Western and Christian perspectives encouraged a more accepting view. Families that previously adhered strictly to the community's views on "purity" and order began to re-evaluate these beliefs.[8]

Today, family and marriage in Kala Oko reflect a blend of traditional and Western influences. While some families still honor the roles of the first son, the Bià-be, and polygamous unions, the cultural landscape is increasingly diverse. Families are now smaller, with many opting for single-spouse marriages and fewer children, aligning more closely with modern economic realities and personal aspirations.

The historical evolution of marriage and family institutions in Kala Oko demonstrates the resilience of traditional values alongside the adaptability to new cultural ideas. As Kala Oko continues to develop, its social institutions reflect an ongoing fusion of the old and the new, preserving unique elements of its heritage while embracing the practical changes brought by Westernization and modernity.

Historical Discourse on Cultural Practices in Kala-oko

According to history, the people of Kala Oko revere a deity called Yór-moè, believed to be the guardian spirit that keeps the community united in peace and protects them from neighboring threats. Yór-moè is regarded as the god of the land, and the people regularly offer libations and sacrifices to honor this deity.

Tradition holds that Yór-moè has been a powerful source of protection for the community, especially given its proximity to a river that flows from the Atlantic Ocean. Despite the dangers posed by the sea, people from Kala

[8] Oral interview with Mrs. Nwiyee NwiiBari, Kala Oko, 10 November 2024.

Oko are rarely lost to the waters. Historical accounts, including stories passed down from my grandfather, reveal that when there is trouble on the sea, a large fish, believed to be sent by Yó-moè, always comes to their aid.

One memorable story from my grandfather's experience recounts a time when he and his fellow fishermen were caught in a storm. Their boat began to leak, and they struggled to stay afloat as the vast river stretched endlessly around them. While desperately trying to save themselves, they suddenly felt the boat settle on a surface, as if it had grounded on sand. They disembarked onto this mysterious platform, which provided them the stability needed to patch the boat. As they prepared to leave, a paddle accidentally slipped from their grip and fell into the river. To their astonishment, they discovered that the surface they had been standing on was actually a giant fish. This fish, they believed, had been sent by Yó-moè to protect them, allowing them to safely repair the boat and return home.

In Kala Oko, no traditional practices or games are conducted without first paying homage to Yó-moè. The community believes that honoring this deity is essential to ensure peace, protection, and continuity of their way of life. These institutions are as follows;

1. New Yam Festival (Zia Aàbe)

The Zia Aabe, or New Yam Festival, is a cultural celebration marking the beginning of the yam harvest season. Observed annually between August and October, it involves several traditional activities that express gratitude to the gods and ancestors for a bountiful harvest. Key activities include:

- Blessing and Tasting of the New Yam: The festival begins with a ceremony where the oldest person or the chief priest blesses the new yams. This act shows respect for the gods and ancestors. The leader or elder tastes the yam first, signifying the community's acceptance of the harvest.

- Offerings and Sacrifices: Deities and ancestors are honored with offerings such as yams, kola nuts, or livestock in gratitude for protection and favorable conditions.

- Masquerade Dances: Masked performers representing ancestral spirits entertain the community through elaborate costumes, drumming, and dances.

- Traditional Music and Dance: Cultural music fills the air, and community members engage in traditional dances wearing colorful attire.

- Wrestling Competitions: Young men participate in traditional wrestling matches to showcase strength and foster unity.

- Feasting: Various yam dishes, including pounded yam and yam porridge, are shared among families and friends to celebrate abundance.

- Prayers and Thanksgiving: Community leaders lead prayers and rituals, seeking continued blessings and prosperity for the future.

The festival underscores the community's connection to land, tradition, and spirituality.

2. Masquerades (Nwi Nu Waaro)

The Nwi Nu Waaro masquerade festival is held biannually, typically close to festive periods. Before the event, libations and consultations are made to the gods. On the day of the celebration:

- The masquerades parade the community, chasing women and children indoors.

- Only pregnant women and nursing mothers are spared from being flogged.

- Men and young boys are free to move about, but women's activities outside are expected to cease by evening, reflecting traditional roles.

Community Gatherings (Aa' Tor Zia)

Kala Oko and neighboring communities, such as Opu Oko, hold communal gatherings to cook, pray, and celebrate with yams as the central dish. Sub-activities include wrestling matches, cultural dances, and other communal events that strengthen ties between communities.

Night Cult (Zim E' Dee)

The Zim E' Dee operates in secrecy, coming out only at night. It is believed that seeing them would result in death. Membership is by invitation only, as members are chosen and enticed by the cult. Their activities are shrouded in mystery, with the only evidence of their presence being the sound of a bullroarer.

Masquerade Dance/Patrol (Nwiyor-maa-bana)

This specific masquerade practice is believed to have aquatic origins and is associated with family protection. Membership is restricted and believed to be divinely chosen by the gods. Unlike other masquerades, this group does not flog people; they perform dances and patrols, showcasing their unique practices.

Rites of Passage

Rites of passage in Kala Oko are divided into two categories: male (Yáá) and female (Kòò).

Male Rite of Passage (Yáá)

- Reserved for the first male child, the rite involves a three-month isolation period during which initiates abstain from any contact with the opposite sex.
- Rituals and incantations are performed, and initiates carry a native chicken tied with palm fronds while patrolling the community.
- Upon completion, they are recognized as adults, eligible to represent their families and partake in cultural and spiritual practices.

Female Rite of Passage (Kòò):

- This rite is specific to first daughters, who undergo a similar three-month isolation in a specially prepared location.
- Covered in camwood and subjected to rituals, they emerge as female adults capable of defending their family and assuming traditional responsibilities.

Other Practices

Some other traditional practices, such as **Bumgo**, **Kukuma**, and **I-cu-ni**, are less understood due to the secrecy surrounding their activities. Known publicly for drumming and enchantments, these practices have largely faded with the advent of Christianity, as many practitioners have passed away, leaving little documentation of their customs.

These practices highlight the rich cultural heritage and spiritual traditions of Kala Oko, emphasizing communal unity, reverence for ancestors, and the preservation of cultural identity.

Traditional Governance

The history of traditional institutions in Kalaoko is a fascinating exploration of the dynamics of cultural governance, spiritual leadership, and the shifts in power structures influenced by historical events. This narrative, deeply rooted in the customs and beliefs of the people, underscores the centrality of tradition in maintaining social cohesion and the disruptions caused by external influences.

Kalaoko's traditional institutions trace their origins to the co-founding tribes, the Nwi-laba and the Gah-buu. Each played a distinct yet interconnected role in the governance and spiritual life of the community. The Nwi-laba family, recognized as the kingmakers and spiritual heads, wielded significant influence through their position as the intermediary between the people and the deity of the land, Yor moè. This role often led to their being mistaken as the sole founders of the community. However, the Gah buu tribe was the original ruling authority, with their leadership believed to be divinely backed by Yor moè.

The governance of Kalaoko was intricately tied to its spiritual framework. Leadership legitimacy required strict adherence to traditional protocols, many of which were underpinned by rituals and sacred rites. The Nwi-laba family, as the mouthpiece of the gods, played a crucial role in ensuring that rulers acted in accordance with divine will. This symbiotic relationship between the Nwi-laba and the Gah buu families reinforced a system of checks and balances rooted in tradition.

The process of selecting a king in Kalaoko was highly ceremonial and steeped in secrecy. First, the family designated to produce the king had to undergo extensive traditional preparations, which included participating in rituals and fulfilling spiritual obligations. These preparations ensured their readiness to shoulder the responsibilities of leadership. Next came libations, inquiries, and sacrifices to secure the deity's favor. A week-long display of cultural heritage followed, during which the community celebrated the incoming king. Central to this process was the communication of divine approval through the Nwi-laba family, whose role was pivotal in legitimizing the new ruler.

Despite the strength of this system, internal and external pressures began to challenge its stability. Intermarriages with individuals outside the traditional lineages introduced complexities, leading to disputes over succession. Meanwhile, the prelude to the Nigerian Civil War saw increased tension with the Igbo, who sought to assert influence in the region. These external pressures began to erode Kalaoko's traditional governance structures, setting the stage for significant changes.

A major turning point came in 1962 with the coronation of Benson Nwiyor. Unlike his predecessors, he did not follow the traditional process. Instead, his wealth and urban connections in Bori made him a pragmatic choice for leadership. His coronation marked the beginning of a departure from spiritual legitimacy to a more politically motivated approach. While his selection brought temporary hope of stability, his reign was fraught with challenges, especially during the Nigerian Civil War, which disrupted the entire region.

The war, which reached Kalaoko between 1968 and 1969, profoundly impacted the community's governance. The Nwi-laba family's role diminished, and traditional rites were sidelined in favor of immediate survival needs. Benson Nwiyor, who had been weakened by both the war and the opposition from traditionalists, eventually adopted a succession plan that deviated further from tradition. Rather than allowing the traditional processes to determine the next ruler, he handpicked his son as his successor, solidifying a shift in power dynamics.

This act set a precedent that altered the course of Kalaoko's traditional institutions. Leadership transitioned from the spiritually sanctioned framework to a more pragmatic system, driven by considerations of power, strength, and external influence. Today, the current ruler's position reflects this evolution. While the ruler no longer adheres strictly to the spiritual and traditional practices of old, the legacy of Kalaoko's traditional governance remains a vital part of its identity.

The history of traditional institutions in Kalaoko reveals a rich tapestry of cultural resilience and adaptability. It highlights how deeply rooted customs and beliefs shaped the community's governance, even as external influences and internal challenges necessitated change. The story of Kalaoko stands as a testament to the enduring significance of traditional systems, offering valuable insights into the interplay between culture, spirituality, and governance.

Traditional Kingship Practices

According to history, the community of Kalaoko was founded by two distinct tribes: the Nwi-laba family and the Gah buu. While the Nwi-laba family has often been regarded as the community's founders due to their role as kingmakers and spiritual heads, they were not the sole founders. The Gah buu tribe originally held the position of traditional rulers, deriving their authority from the land's deity, Yor moè.

The governance system in Kalaoko was intrinsically tied to spirituality. The Nwi-laba family served as the mouthpiece of the gods, mediating between the deity and the rulers. This dual governance structure ensured that the rulers' authority was both spiritually sanctioned and communally accepted.

The collaboration between the Nwi-laba and Gah-buu tribes was fundamental to maintaining order and stability in the community. The Nwi-laba family, by virtue of their spiritual role, held the power to interpret divine messages and guide the actions of the rulers. Their position as the link to Yor-moè imbued them with immense influence, enabling them to shape the policies and decisions of the Gah-buu rulers.

This partnership reflected a profound balance between spiritual authority and political power. While the Gah-buu tribe was responsible for implementing leadership and governance, their

actions were legitimized by the spiritual endorsement provided by the Nwi-laba family. This interplay ensured that decisions were aligned with both divine will and communal welfare.

However, this harmony was not without its complexities. The reliance on divine intervention and the intermediary role of the Nwi-laba family created a system where the legitimacy of rulers could be questioned if the gods' approval was not evident. This dependence on spirituality as the foundation of governance also meant that any disruption to the spiritual order could destabilize the entire system.

Over time, this dual governance structure became a defining characteristic of Kalaoko's identity. It underscored the community's deep connection to its traditions and its recognition of the importance of spiritual guidance in leadership. Despite challenges and external influences, the foundational roles of the Nwi-laba and Gah-buu tribes in establishing this system remain a vital part of Kalaoko's historical narrative.

The process of selecting a ruler in Kalaoko was deeply ritualistic and spiritual. Key elements of this traditional system included:

1. Preparation of the Royal Family: The family designated to produce the king had to be traditionally prepared. This involved adhering to all traditional practices, ensuring their readiness to take on leadership.

2. Rituals and Sacrifices: Series of libations, inquiries, and sacrifices were performed. These rituals served to invoke the guidance and approval of *Your moè*.

3. Traditional Displays: A week-long period of cultural displays was integral to the coronation process, showcasing the richness of Kalaoko's heritage.

4. Secret Practices: Certain rites, known only to specific families, were performed in secrecy to maintain the sanctity of the process.

Only after completing these steps would the deity communicate through the *Nwi-laba* family, granting approval for the coronation.

Challenges and Disruptions

The traditional system began facing challenges due to intermarriages outside the royal lineage, leading to succession disputes. Additionally, the arrival of external influences, particularly the Igbo, before the Nigerian Civil War disrupted Kalaoko's governance structure.

In 1962, a significant deviation occurred when Benson Nwiyor was crowned king without undergoing the traditional process. His selection was based on his perceived ability to protect the community, given his wealth and influence in Bori, a then-thriving city. However, his rule faced challenges, including opposition from traditionalists and disruptions during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970).

Impact of the Nigerian Civil War

The Nigerian Civil War significantly affected Kalaoko. The Igbo military's activities intensified the community's struggles, with the conflict reaching Kalaoko between 1968 and 1969. During this period, the traditional governance system further eroded. Benson Nwiyor's authority was undermined, and his reign marked a shift from traditional practices to a more pragmatic approach to leadership.

The Impacts of Traditional Institutions on Kalaoko

Impact of Social Institutions

Social institutions in Kala Oko—including marriage, cultural practices, chieftaincy, and governance—have significantly shaped the community's structure, identity, and development. These institutions, deeply rooted in Afrocentric values, emphasize communal well-being, interconnectedness, and respect for traditional norms. Below are the key impacts:

Strengthening Social Cohesion

- **Marriage Institutions:** Traditional marriage in Kala Oko has been central to fostering alliances between families, clans, and communities. It solidifies social bonds, ensuring the continuity of kinship networks and the transfer of values across generations.

- **Cultural Practices:** Rituals, festivals, and communal ceremonies unite the people, creating a shared sense of purpose and identity. For instance, initiation rites often mark transitions in life stages, reinforcing communal solidarity.

Preservation of Cultural Identity

Kala Oko's cultural institutions have ensured the survival of indigenous knowledge, language, and heritage. Practices such as storytelling, folklore, and oral traditions serve as vehicles for transmitting history and values.

The Afrocentric focus highlights how these traditions resist external cultural impositions, preserving the uniqueness of Kala Oko's worldview.

Conflict Resolution

Chieftaincy Institution: The traditional leadership system provides governance structures that are accessible, participatory, and adaptive to local needs. Chiefs and elders act as custodians of custom and mediators in disputes, ensuring justice aligns with cultural norms.

- Impact: This traditional governance reduces reliance on external judicial systems, creating a self-sufficient and harmonious community.

Conclusion

This study reveals the evolving nature of Kala Oko's traditional and cultural institutions, shaped by a complex interplay of change and continuity. Modern influences such as Christianity, formal education, urbanization, and globalization have significantly altered practices like polygamy, arranged marriages, rites of passage, and traditional deity worship. Despite these transformations, many foundational elements, such as the communal value system, respect for elders, cultural festivals, and the extended family structure, remain resilient.

These enduring aspects continue to serve as pillars of social cohesion and cultural identity within the community. By analyzing these changes and continuities, the research underscores the importance of preserving and revitalizing Kala Oko's heritage. This effort not only ensures the survival of the community's unique cultural legacy but also provides a framework for balancing tradition with modernity in a rapidly changing world.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Efforts should be made to document and preserve Kala Oko's oral traditions, cultural practices, and rituals through written records, digital archives, and recordings to ensure their longevity.

Community leaders and stakeholders should organize workshops and seminars to educate younger generations on the importance of cultural heritage, fostering appreciation and active participation.

A balance between modernity and tradition should be achieved by integrating contemporary elements into cultural festivals and rituals to attract younger participants while maintaining authenticity. The roles of elders and traditional leaders as custodians of culture should be reinforced through formal recognition and collaboration with local government and non-governmental organizations. Local government authorities should develop policies to protect and promote cultural heritage, such as designating cultural sites as protected areas or providing financial support for festivals and events. Traditional practices and festivals should be leveraged as opportunities for economic development, including cultural tourism and the production and sale of traditional crafts and artifacts. Programs should be developed to address the adverse effects of modernization by reviving near-extinct traditions and encouraging inter-generational storytelling through cultural clubs or societies. Further research should be conducted to explore Kala Oko's traditional institutions, encouraging collaboration between local researchers and academic institutions for deeper insights and effective preservation strategies. Implementing these recommendations will help Kala Oko preserve its rich cultural heritage, adapt to modern challenges, and ensure the continued relevance of its traditions.

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2	Chief Robert Nwibe	M	63	Kala Oko	Chief	2/8/2024
3	Chief M.W. Gbaranee	M	70	Opunko	Chief	30/12/2023
4	Mrs. Baribe Joshua	F	40	Atali	Entrepreneur	
5	Mrs. Nwiyee Nwiibari	F	45	68 Hospital Road, Bori	Entrepreneur	30/12/2023

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ARMED BANDITRY AND THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY OF CENTRAL NIGERIA, 2009-2023

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KEYWORDS
violent conflict, armed banditry, Boko Haram insurgency, lives and property, economy and society, central Nigeria

ABSTRACT
Violent conflict has gradually become one of the defining characteristics of the Nigerian nation, particularly in the recent history of central Nigeria. Banditry in particular and other acts of violence has become a recurring decimal in the central region of the country. This development has occupied contemporary debates among scholars, national security officials, public commentators and observers within and outside the country. It has also formed the subject matter and major focus of this paper. The paper's findings reveal that the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast of Nigeria has had far-reaching demonstration effects and repercussions on other geo-political zones of the country. This has been especially so in the central region of the country as armed banditry, kidnappings, assassinations, and other acts of violence have held sway. The problem of violence in this part of Nigeria has become more worrisome as the national security operatives and chief security officers of the states of the region have uniformly failed to protect and secure the lives and property of families and communities as well as the economy and society. The paper presents the argument that the displacement of population among both the defeated elements of Boko Haram, armed herders, bandits, criminals, armed robbers and free-booters has contributed to this ugly trend of events. Considered through the historical research method, multi-disciplinary approach, and scholarly assumptions of conflict studies and social crisis, the paper also used secondary sources to realise the objectives of its focus.

Introduction

This paper interrogates armed banditry and related acts of violence in the central region of the Nigeria from 2009-2023. With the insurgency on the doorsteps of Nigeria specifically in the Northeast region, it became necessary for the leadership of the federal government, state, national intelligence and security agencies to develop a military or armed organisation for resistance and struggle against the terrorist network. But with the war against the Boko Haram terrorist organisation, large populations were dislocated and displaced. Among these were possibly its former warriors, armed

bandits, and other criminal elements who took advantage of the chaos to unleash their brand of mayhem upon the Nigerian groups down the central region. It is against this backdrop and in the light of this understanding that the paper examines the violent and tragic turn of events in the central region of Nigeria and its impact upon the economy and society of the area.

With the outbreak of hostilities in the Northeast states such as Bauchi, Borno, Adamawa, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states, as well as other adjoining states, leaders both at the federal, state and local levels mapped missions to counter the activities of the insurgent group. Enormous Human and material resources were also expended by the federal government to end the war on terror in the Northeast, while fleeing elements of Boko Haram, armed bandits, armed robbers and criminals have continually escalated the acts of violence across the country.[i] These have also sometimes linked up or joined forces with armed militia groups behind herdsmen's attacks on communities and groups in the central Nigeria area. This is indeed the major part of the subject matter of the paper.

Geography, Economy and Society of Central Nigeria Area

The central region of Nigeria encompasses the Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau areas and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, bordered on the North by Kaduna state and on the East by Plateau and Taraba states. The region's main economic activities have been agriculture especially cash crops production such as yams, cassava, and melon. Production of minerals like salt is also another major economic activity. Nasarawa State in the area produces the largest percentage of the salt that is consumed in the country. The region also has a diverse range of ethnic groups and wide variety of languages that are indigenous to the area. This area also forms part of the Middle Benue Valley which encompasses both sides of the middle course of the River Benue. The area stretches from below Lau, where the River Lamorde joins the Benue, down to Umaisha, where the alluvial plain which marks the Niger-Benue confluence begins. The Middle Benue Valley's geographic area covers mainly the Muri plains and the Lower Benue plains below them downstream on the Benue. The area is located between latitudes 7.0 degrees and 9.30 degrees North and longitudes 9.0 degrees and 11.30 degrees East of Meridian. The area comprises the present-day central Nigerian states of Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Kogi and the Northeast state of Taraba.[ii]

In addition, the two most dominant religions: Christianity and Islam are practiced side by side in the area. It is one of the most religiously pluralistic zones in Nigeria. This religious plurality has manifested oftentimes in worst forms of violent conflicts between Christians and Muslims in the area with devastating effects on the economy and society. The region is also perhaps one of the most prolific agricultural economic areas in the country and hosts large numbers of farmers, fishermen, cattle herders and other livestock users and breeders. The dependence of its population on land, water and environmental resources for agricultural purposes is thus outstanding and is often a source of conflict in the area in such a way that resource-conflict bordering on land, water, territory and cattle routes, grazing lands and citizenship have presented the worst forms of violent conflict in the area. The agricultural prospect of the region is supported by the prevalence of rivers in the area and large expanse of arable land.[iii]

In recent years, conflict in the central area has both escalated and expanded as tensions between farmers and herders have risen. This conflict is multi-faceted and complex. The conflict centers on agricultural households and nomadic cattle-herding groups who come into conflict over land access. As the population in central Nigeria increases, the amount of land used for farming also increases, often into areas that have traditionally served as cattle grazing areas. At the same time, climate change and the Boko Haram insurgency reduce the amount of land suitable for grazing in Northeast Nigeria, forcing herding communities to expand their routes into increasingly southern areas. This competition over land and resources is compounded by religion and ethnicity; herders are mostly members of the minority Fulani ethnic group and are generally Muslim. Farmer-herder conflicts often consist of attacks by one group and subsequent retaliation from the other community. Although attention to this issue has grown including the setting up of Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) camps, up to 2023 there have been largely little response directed towards affected parties and few resources allocated towards reconciliation and prevention of future conflict.

Clarification of Concepts

This paper is bound to apply terms from a wide range of academic disciplines, which may not be familiar in common application. Consequently, the need to bring into focus, their specific and relevant usage for clarification is imperative. There is no attempt here to be exhaustive, neither in the available concepts nor the meanings, but as applicable and relevant for this study. The following terms are conceptualised for better understanding of the key words as used in this study. There are: 'insurgency' and 'armed Banditry.'

Insurgency

Insurgency is an ambiguous concept. The United States Department of Defence defines it as an organised movement that has the aim of overthrowing a constituted government through subversive means and armed conflict.[iv] This definition suggests that insurgent groups employ unlawful means towards achieving an end, which could be political, religious, social or even ideological. The goal of insurgency is to confront and overthrow an existing government for the control of power, resources or for power sharing.[v] The Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria caused population displacement and the escalation of banditry which encroached upon the economy and society of central Nigeria.

Armed Banditry

Armed banditry refers to the practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders or the raiding of animals or cattle from the ranches. Chris Kwaja noted that this development has increasingly become an economically viable means of criminality in many parts of the country including the central Nigerian geo-political zone.[vi] According to Samuel Egwu, banditry is also most commonly associated or accompanied with kidnappings, rape, organised attacks on villages and communities, as well as acts of thuggery, extortion and looting.[vii] Saleh Momale as cited by Egwu has stated that banditry involves cattle rustling which is the stealing of cattle from herders or entire households with the use of arms. This breeds conflicts and social insecurity especially between herders and farmers. The attendant weaknesses in the institutional capacity of the state to address the problems of insecurity, joblessness and acute poverty have compounded these problems.[viii]

The Boko Haram Insurgency's Influence on Armed Banditry in Central Nigeria since 2009

Boko Haram as a terrorist group which began largely in Northeast Nigeria, promotes a version of Islam which makes it "haram", or forbidden, for Muslims to get involved in any form of political or social activity that is linked with western education. These include voting, putting on or wearing shirts and trousers or attending or receiving any form of secular education. The Boko Haram sect loosely translates as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad first appeared in the public domain in 2002, although some widely believe that the terrorist organisation had its origins in 1995 when it was a Muslim youth group called Shabaab. The group believed that Nigeria is a country governed by infidels and so has attempted to create their own Islamic state within the boundaries of Nigeria. The group, after the death of their leader Mohammed Yusuf, turned violent employing the use of suicide bombers, frontal assaults, killings, raiding, and other methods. With these the federal government adopted a repression strategy against the Boko Haram insurgents in the Northeast. The strategy of repression came with the massive mobilisation of security apparatus most especially the military and police which led to the arrest and killing of the then leader of the insurgent group Mohammed Yusuf alongside hundreds of his followers.[ix]

This strategy of repression though looked effective by driving the insurgents to a hide. It did not however quell the insurgents it rather served their opportunity to lie low to re-strategise on their operational methods and tactics. It is on this note Ahmed and Albert posits that the strategy looked effective because it made the members of the sect who escaped the security crackdown to flee. The period between July 2009 and July 2010 witnessed almost zero activities from the sect. This act of silence by the insurgents made the government to evaluate their strategy to be a success for it believed that the sect had been eliminated. This thinking was just a blip that lasted only for a little while as it has rightly been observed by the work of Ahmed and Albert. The insurgents after a year of silence resurrected with greater momentum with more violent tactics in making their presence known. They attacked strategic places: the market squares and places, mosques and churches, as well as schools and other public institutions and

important places. According to Ahmed and Albert:

> *The resurgence in the sects' violent attacks…. played to the illusion that the sect had been destroyed. As it turned out, the one-year lull in the activities of the sect was a well thought out response to the high-handedness of the security forces. The sect put the one-year interlude to good use by totally transforming itself to ubiquitous underground movement devising guerrilla tactics as all along the federal government was congratulating itself on its summarily destruction of Boko Haram.*[x]

But the great and joint operations against Boko Haram in the Northeast has had huge impact and effects upon the massive population dislocations and displacements that has led to the migrations of herding communities, cattle rustlers, armed robbers, bandits, and several other criminals into different geo-political zones of the country including the central area. This has compounded the problems of the already existing conflict relations in the central region of Nigeria. Thus, due to the violent confrontations resulting from Boko Haram attacks, there have been uprisings among the people as extreme suffering has been fostered upon the people of the Northeast zone down to those living in the central region of Nigeria. This has rendered many homeless and to seek refuge in the neighbouring communities including in the central Nigeria area with serious economic and societal destabilisation.

The Expansion of Conflict and Crises in the Central Region of Nigeria

According to Jibo, land issues are the common leading cause of conflict, especially between herders and farmers in the central area of Nigeria. Thus, access to land has been shown to be important to poverty reduction, economic growth and the empowerment of the poor. The struggle over land therefore, becomes a major source of conflict in the area and these land conflicts are so prevalent and more difficult to resolve than other conflict issues. However, with the rise and development of the Boko Haram insurgency, this conflict has attracted the meddling attention of violent groups both within and without the central geo-political region who operate with more sophisticated weapons. These were moved into the central region through Small Arms and Light Weapons' (SALWs) proliferation from the Northeast.[xi]

According to Shettima, while it is difficult to establish a single explanatory variable responsible for the conflict, social and environmental factors has acted in tandem to perpetuate the conflict. Based on his findings, he observed that the decline in the water level of Lake Chad (a major wetland in the semi-arid Sahel corridor) and its other aquatic resources as serious problem with short and long term social, political, economic and security implications for the whole of the West African sub-region. Several categories of persons from the Lake Chad Basin Area have moved and with them some harboring fundamentalist ideologies.[xii] As Olayoku also observes, scholars have identified the source of the conflict as: Climate change, the migration further south, the growth of agro-pastoralism, the expansion of farming on pastures, the invasion of farmlands by cattle, blockage of stock routes and water points, freshwater scarcity, burning of rangelands, cattle theft and rustling, inadequate animal health care and disease control, overgrazing on fallow lands, defecation on streams and roads by cattle, extensive sedentarisation, ineffective coping strategies, ethnic stereotyping, and the breakdown of conflict intervention mechanisms.[xiii]

Therefore, the central Nigeria region with its vast natural resources to support human and animal life became the next destination for those so displaced. With the farmer-herder crisis already in the region, the infiltrators into the conflict necessarily took sides along social, political, ethnic and religious lines. A leading scholar in this field Roger Blench, has also argued that the conflict has been associated with land resource use exacerbated by dwindling resources further North. He observed that land hunger in the semi-arid zones has caused a major migration of farmers southwards, both seasonally and permanently. Many uncultivated areas in river flood-plains are now farmed by migrants, leading to disputes with their traditional 'owners.' Blench contends that the ecological dynamics engendered by climate change tend to drag various land users into conflictive relations in the context of resource scarcity and want. This situation has been made worse by claims and contestations over land ownership or tenure rights.[xiv]

Moreover, large communities of herders in the Northeast have been dispossessed and displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency and were forced to migrate down south towards the central region thereby expanding the conflict within the area. Hence, as farmers take up more of the river-bank for farms, they come into conflict with the other users, especially the herders and fish-folk. The herders have been coming to the river for many years for the grass and tend to consider that they have ownership rights. When they arrive and find their grazing now covered by tomatoes and other products, they become angry. The farmers, often desperate to feed their families in a situation where the old rain-fed systems no longer work, regard the herders as dangerous and intrusive. In such conflict situation, cases of armed banditry, rape, kidnappings, cattle rustling, destruction of lives and property became highly acute.[xv]

Abugu and Onuba have revealed that between the years 2000 and 2015, there have been reported cases of conflicts between the herdsmen and farming communities. They maintain that the media is awash with reported cases of clashes between the herdsmen from the North and the inhabitants of the Plateau, Kogi and Benue in the middle belt region of the country and some parts of the eastern areas. But the nature of the weapons used in these conflicts has aroused suspicion of a terrorist connection with some parties to the conflict.[xvi] Abbass has opined that climate change which puts great pressure on the land has also provoked conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. Bur prior to the advent of the Boko Haram insurgency, these conflicts were resolved without recourse to such weapons of destruction. He observed that the desertification, droughts and climate change in Northern Nigeria have worsened the trends of pastoralists' relationship with farmers giving rise to various criminal actions of those dislocated from the Northeast and appealing to their bestial tendencies. Also, the decrease in the annual rainfall and shortening of the wet season are responsible for the southward movement of herdsmen to the central and southeast zones.[xvii]

These seemingly mass movements from the northern parts and the search for pasture and land have caused widespread conflicts and destruction of human and animal lives as well as farmlands with adverse implications for the national security and the economy and nature of society. In addition, with the expansion of population, the rate of food production would naturally increase and to meet that increasing demand, it is natural for the farmers to encroach into marginal lands that had been the traditional pasture routes for the cattle. This has therefore heightened struggle between livestock and agricultural production which, more often than not, result in the escalation of conflicts, as the vast population with its external or infiltrated elements continue to expand.[xviii]

Hence, as population grows, more land is being cultivated and less is available for pasture; forcing herdsmen to migrate and trample upon crops cultivated by farmers. People tend to move from Northern Nigeria into the middle belt or central region especially in remote from town areas where population is relatively low and where there is availability of vast arable land. But this population has now become mixed with Islamists, militias from the Northern parts fleeing from counter-insurgency operations, armed bandits and armed herders. The consequent rapid growth and ethno-religious and insurgent groups' mix in population has caused the farmers to struggle for farmland which is becoming scarce by the day. With this development, grazing areas that were hitherto abundant are being taken over by scattered small farms, making grazing in these areas difficult. This mix in the population and being armed with the instruments of violence have reacted with aggression causing gross imbalances in livelihood, economy, and the stability of society.[xix]

The varied nature of the conflict in this region has led to the gradual decline of economic and social cohesion, ethnocentric and religious intolerance of community leaders who are themselves sedentary farmers, as well as conflict and clash of cultures both internal and external. In similar view, scholars have identified some of the factors responsible as lack of access to resources, ethnic marginalisation and cleavages, degradation of resources and stunted rainfall which are magnified by farmers, outside infiltrators and herders' struggle for natural resource in the form of water, land and pasture use. These factors lead to intense and continuous competition for economic and natural resources which have resulted to violent conflicts in the central Nigeria area.[xx]

Boko Haram-Influenced Armed Banditry and Other Acts of Violence in the Central Nigeria Region, 2015-2023

It must be stressed that since the advent of the Boko Haram terrorist group's activities, and the resultant federal counter-insurgency operations, the intensity of violent acts have been increased and perpetuated throughout the northern parts of the country including in central Nigeria. Scholars have revealed that the attacks by militia herdsmen in recent years have taken more sophisticated dimensions with the use of new types of weapons and communication devices. The presence of herdsmen in the affected areas creates a climate of fear as they possess sophisticated arms and ammunitions with which they unleash terror on the host communities and other perceived enemies. According to this line of thinking, the dimension of militancy in the conflicts is associated with the advent of the aggressive pastoralists which further led to the emergence and introduction of guns and other sophisticated weapons in the conflicts as well as the use of new communication devices, accompanied with acts of armed banditry.[xxi]

Some scholars are of the view that the current situation leading up to 2023 might be as a result of the activities of Boko Haram insurgency in the North which compound the resolution of the conflict. In this view, Omitola contends in his work that evidence abound of the involvement of the Boko Haram group in various skirmishes involving Fulani herdsmen and their host communities in Jos, Plateau state and other parts of the central Nigeria area, including places such as Taraba State in the Northeast. He states that the consistent denial by the umbrella of the herdsmen: Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), that their members are not responsible for the wanton killings and destruction going on in various areas of conflicts has to be taken seriously. This has given further evidence to suggest that the transhumance Fulani from neighboring countries and their connection and exposure to terrorist ideas and organisations are interested in opening up new fronts of operation for Boko Haram in central Nigeria. Hence the resultant armed banditry in rural communities as well as kidnappings, rape, extortion, cult activities, cattle rustling, looting and other acts of violence.[xxii]

It has been reported that the herdsmen engage in transporting small arms to Nigeria through their cattle. The *Nigerian Defence Magazine* quoting military sources, has claimed that "most of the small arms came to the Boko Haram insurgents through Libya and the Malian rebels on the backs of camels and donkeys desperate to exchange arms for money."[xxiii] These arms further spread to other conflict zones of Islamist and banditry interest such as the central Nigeria area. He further revealed that this has been made possible to a great extent by a combination of both internal and external factors such as Nigeria's porous borders, corruption of immigration officers, inadequate records of immigration and emigration, and the problem of identifying who is a Nigerian, since the country lacks any means of identifying her citizens. He concludes that the current escalation and recurrent attacks on various farming communities in the central zone was as a result of the infiltration of foreign herdsmen and armed bandits from neighboring countries and from the areas hitherto held by Boko Haram in the Northeast. The herdsmen-infiltrators who have been exposed to fundamentalist thinking and terrorist ideas also operated as mercenaries demobilised from various conflicts in the Sahel and have been pushing the front of Boko Haram's operations in the central states of Nigeria through various violent acts which chiefly include banditry.[xxiv]

Membership of Boko Haram has become highly diffused and scattered as the sect's hierarchy may have learnt from previous experiences, especially the massive killings of its members in 2009. The exact numbers of its members are not known, although its followers cut across the 19 northern states of Nigeria, Niger Republic and Sudan.[xxv] Membership cuts across all spectrum of society but a majority of members come from the poorest groups. The Almajiri group is largely a source for the indoctrination of young people into believing the extremists' ideology and fundamentalists like Boko Haram. For many observers, the actual objectives of the Almajiri system has been taken over by dwindling economic and political system; for instead of becoming a breeding ground for Islamic scholars, it has become a veritable avenue for mass orientation of miscreants, thugs, and even vagabonds among whom a large number have been moved to the central states of Nigeria.[xxvi]

Aside the Almajiri, Boko Haram has as members some well-educated, wealthy and influential people such as business men, university lecturers, politicians, well-wishers within and outside Nigeria. Their mobility across Nigeria has been high. Others are drug addicts, vagabonds and generally lawless people. As a matter of fact, Boko Haram's structure,

organisation and hierarchy are difficult to figure out as its members keep scattering, spreading and expanding across the geo-political zones including the central Nigerian region. The sect has not hidden its disdain and distrust of the Nigerian media and Christian and moderate Muslims of central Nigeria as their violent operations in the area have demonstrated. Shortly after its 28th September, 2011 threat to deal with the media reporters and attack the FCT and states of the region, the sect in a display of its maniacal fury, pumped bullets into Isah Zakari, a reporter with Nigerian Television Authority and Bernard Akogwu, a photographer with Channels television. The condemnation that greeted the killings had hardly died down when it bombed the offices of *Thisday, The Moment* and *Daily Sun* newspapers in Abuja and Kaduna on 26th April, 2012. The sect cited reasons ranging from lack of objectivity to blasphemy on the side of the media for the attacks. The sect's members continue to operate in the rural areas of the central region through acts of armed banditry.[xxvii]

In Egwu's study, the Boko Haram-led insurgency in the northeastern part of Nigeria, the frequent ethno-religious combustions in different parts of the country and the activities of ethnic militias, cult groups and rural bandits have made Nigeria the 20th saddest country in which to live, according to the latest ranking by *Forbes Magazine*. Nigeria's global ranking along these dimensions is a consequence of the debilitating state of poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, all of which are compounded by the failure of democratic governance and state inadequacies. It is plausible that deepening poverty in rural and urban areas may have turned people away from the contemporary social order and predisposed them to appeals of extremist groups such as the Boko Haram, who have offered alternate social orders.[xxviii] The extremist groups have gained ground in the northeastern region of the country; the escalation of such sectarian uprisings may have provided an additional fillip to incidences of rural banditry and cattle rustling and other acts of violence in the central region of Nigeria. This is all the more plausible considering the huge economic benefits of the cattle trade which could boost the economic base of insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and others.[xxix]

Scholarly Perspectives for Mitigating Armed Banditry Impact on the Economy and Society of Central Nigeria

Egwu has noted that international collaboration in addressing the problem should be strengthened in the light of the trans-border connections that exist within the milieu of rural banditry. Most important is cooperation with the Lake Chad Basin Authority member countries, as it will help to curtail the sale and transfer of arms from elements of Boko Haram to the bandits. Such cooperation can be implemented most effectively through a multi-stakeholder framework in which the federal government's security agencies, local organisations and associations and community leaders are involved. One pressing area of research for security needs involves properly defining the dynamic connections between rural banditry and violent social conflict. The advantage of such an exercise he stated, is that it will serve as a background resource for both practitioners and policy makers in developing practical and results-oriented policies and programs to address the problem of rural banditry more effectively.[xxx]

Scholars have suggested that the Nigerian government should take concrete steps towards addressing the immediate effects associated with incidents of rural banditry. Some of these effects include the destruction of property, the loss of livelihoods, population displacement, disruption of social processes, and the loss of lives. The government should endeavour to deliver relief materials to those displaced, institute schemes to help victims cope and reclaim their livelihoods and provide trauma counseling that will enable them to return to normal life as quickly as possible. Addressing these effects will provide the stability necessary for concrete developmental programmes to flourish and for economic stability to regain its foothold. In addressing these problems, it is also crucial that the Nigerian government adopts the best practices that have worked in other countries, so as to develop a robust architecture for addressing the problem of violent rural banditry.[xxxi]

Information is a crucial tool in national security and its timely dissemination is critical for the maintenance of law and order; however, Albert has asserted that agencies do not always share relevant information with their national security partners. Sharing and integrating national security information is critical to assessing and responding to current threats to national security such as influenced armed banditry. At the same time, agencies must balance the need to share information with the need to protect it from widespread access.

Security sector reforms should be carried out which target collaboration. Thus, according to the peace and conflict studies scholar, the National Assembly and the administration will need to consider the extent to which agencies' existing structures, processes, and funding sources facilitate inter-agency collaboration and whether changes could enhance collaboration. Therefore, strategic direction is required as the basis for collaboration toward national security goals.[xxxii]

Without having the strategic direction that overarching strategies can provide, agencies may develop their own individual efforts that may not be well-coordinated with that of inter-agency partners, thereby limiting progress in meeting national security goals. Defining organisational roles and responsibilities and mechanisms for coordination, one of the desirable characteristics for strategies that have been identified can help agencies clarify who will lead or participate in which activities, organise their joint activities and individual efforts, facilitate decision making, and address how conflicts would be resolved. Agencies can enhance and sustain their collaborative efforts by establishing compatible policies, procedures, and other means to operate across agency boundaries, among other practices. Joint training and retraining workshops and seminars are needed for the consolidation of this practical effort.[xxxiii]

Therefore, to create an inter-agency platform in security operations, Caslen and Loudon have admonished agencies to break down the cultural barrier, which hinders efforts to build a cohesive and focused whole of the government and a strong leadership to coordinate the integration of various agencies.[xxxiv] Walter Sasser has greatly acknowledged the need for a whole of government approach, that is to say an integration of all elements of information, national power and inter-agency collaboration in an effort to deal with present security challenges which poses itself in an irregular form. According to him there seem to be wide recognition and acknowledgment that each department and agency relies on the other to accomplish varied missions and that there are no independent actors achieving national objectives in isolation.[xxxv]

Conclusion

In its interrogation of armed banditry and the economy and society of central Nigeria, the paper identified a connection or nexus between the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group in the Northeast and its economic and societal effects and repercussions in the central region of Nigeria. This negative development was carried out through armed banditry and other related violent acts. These problems and challenges have persisted in spite of the military operations in the Northeast, and the national security operations of the police and various agencies, traditional institutions and community policing activities of vigilantes in the central Nigeria area. But without the political will on the side of the federal government and commitment on the side of the states and local government areas and the community leadership of the areas, solutions to this major humanitarian and national security crisis will continue to persist and will remain an affront on the moral and collective conscience of many Nigerians. The paper also laid out the foundation and the causes for the analysis of the development and expansion of a crisis situation that has led to the deaths and destruction of many lives and property and the devastation of the economy and society of the central region of Nigeria. It has also been observed that almost all military, police, security, civilian and humanitarian agencies involved in this development are branches of the same tree who share the prospects for peace and security in the region. Thus, the need for inter-agency cooperation and support for each other cannot be over-emphasised.

Notes

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[v] See Jacob N. Shapiro and David A. Siegel, "Underfunding in Terrorist Organisations," in *International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 2,* (2007), pp. 405-429

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[vii] Samuel Egwu, "The Political Economy of Rural Banditry in Contemporary Nigeria," *Rural Banditry and Conflicts in Northern Nigeria Series,* Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development, 2015, pp. 309-313.

[viii] Saleh Momale's work cited in Egwu, "The Political Economy of Rural Banditry in Contemporary Nigeria," pp. 312-313

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[xiii] Philip A. Olayoku, "Trends and Patterns of Cattle Grazing and Rural Violence in Nigeria," in *IFRA-Nigeria Working Paper Series,* (2006-2014), pp. 23-29

[xiv] Roger Blench, *Natural Resource Conflicts in North-central Nigeria: A Handbook and Case Studies,* London: Mandaras publishing, 2004, pp. 106-113

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[xvii] Isa Mohammed Abbass, "No Retreat No Surrender: Conflict for Survival between the Fulani Pastoralists and Farmers in Northern Nigeria," in *European Scientific Journal, Vol. 8, No. 1,* 2012, pp. 331-346

[xviii] Abbass, "No Retreat No Surrender . . ." pp. 341-343.

[xix] Egwu, "The Political Economy of Rural Banditry in Contemporary Nigeria," pp. 313-315

[xx] See Alhassan U. Bello, "Herdsmen and Farmers Conflicts in Northeastern Nigeria: Causes, Repercussions and Resolutions," in *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, Vol. 2, No. 5,* 2013, pp. 129-139

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[xxviii] *Forbes Magazine*, cited in Egwu, "The Political Economy of Rural Banditry in Contemporary Nigeria," pp. 313-315

[xxix] Egwu, "The Political Economy of Rural Banditry. . ." pp. 315-317

[xxx] Egwu, "The Political Economy of Rural Banditry. . ." pp. 315-318

[xxxi] Chris M.A. Kwaja, and Husseini Abdul, "Rural Banditry and Social Conflicts in Plateau State," pp. 326-332.

[xxxii] Isaac O. Albert, "Conflict Analysis and Resolution Measures," Lecture Delivered at Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators, Held at the Nigerian Army College of Education, Ilorin, July 2017, pp. 7-12

[xxxiii] Albert, "Conflict Analysis and Resolution Measures," pp. 12-15

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RELIGION AND ETHNICITY AS STRATAGEMS FOR THE TRIUMPH OF MEDIOCRITY IN NIGERIA: RECONNECTING THE DISCONNECT THROUGH FEDERALISM

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KEYWORDS
Religion, Ethnicity, Mediocrity, Federalism

ABSTRACT
Nigeria as a Nation has been experiencing socio-political convulsion on the basis of religion and ethnicity. The independent and post independent Nigeria is not an exception from this hiccup. This paper investigated religion and ethnicity as stratagems for the triumph of mediocrity in Nigeria thus reconnecting the disconnect through federalism. The research has adopted both descriptive and analytical methods of investigation. As a diverse and heterogeneous nation, the Northerners have consistently asserted their dominance and hegemony over others, as if Northerners are birthed with Nigeria political power. In their ethno-religious exhibition, other religions are subservient, and in their own view, the very least believer in their religion is far better than the greatest in other religion(s). The findings revealed that the aftermath of this promotion of religion and ethnicity in the Nigerian politics is the triumph of mediocrity, incompetent, unpopular and irrational candidates. The paper, therefore, recommends federalism as a means for reconnecting the disconnect between religion and ethnicity in Nigeria.

Introduction

It is obvious that leadership based on religion and ethnicity in Nigeria in this democratic era has successfully dislodged the good ancient and traditional system of merit and credible leadership at the altar of ethnic sentiments, religious persuasion, prejudice, ignorance and parochialism. In 1995, Alhaji Maitama Sule, one of the Nigerian's respected bureaucrats, created a storm among southern intellectuals when he noted that different communities in Nigeria were differently endowed: the Fulani with leadership qualities, the Igbo with Industry and the Yoruba with diplomatic skills. All those submissions point to the fact that the Northerners see leadership and power as their birthright. The regime of President Muhammadu Buhari, a civilian leader undermines the spirit of the Nigerian Federal Character by appointing political leaders and public office holders arbitrarily without a recourse to fair-sharing. His appointments have become lopsided by promoting Hausa/Fulani interest. Specific objectives of this work include:

1. Clarification of terms of religion and ethnicity
2. Juxtaposition of religion and ethnicity
3. Implication of religion and ethnicity

4. Reconnecting the disconnect through federalism

Account of Religion

Religion as a concept is open to various interpretations. Different approaches have been introduced to its study. The etymological meaning of religion is from latin word '*religare'* which means *'to bind', 'to bring together;* to come together, to exist side by side and to fuse people together the rationalists, enlightenment and modern thinkers have shown how irrelevant it is to societal growth and development. Religion is seen as "any system of values, beliefs, norms and related symbols and rituals, arising from attempts by individuals and social groups to effect certain ends, whether in this world of any further world, by means of wholly or partly supernatural". In the same vein, Vernon observes religion as an integral part of culture composed of share beliefs and practices which not only identify or define the supernatural and the sacred and man's relationship thereto, but which also relate them to the known world in such a way that the group is provided with moral definitions as to what is good (in harmony with it approved by the supernatural) and what is bad (contrary to out of harmony with regards supernatural). Looking at religion from another perspective, Obilor cited in Iwuoha explains it as a capacity or a power which enables man to observe the laws of his nature, the natural law and/or the divine law. Ayantayo aptly describes religion "as any system which relates men to ultimate values, whether God or something else and which embodies a creed, a code and a cult[8]. Religion legitimizes, sustains and reflects social order. Religion occupies a distinctive place in the enterprise of world-building. From the observation above, it is pertinent to note that all religions possess one or more of five sources of power: They wield moral authority; shape people's worldviews; have the ear of multitudes of adherents; often possess strong financial and institutional assess and are strong generators of social capital, an asset in community growth and development.

Ethnicity

Okolie & Osayande state that, the term ethnicity does not offer itself to easy definition11. They further state that to fully comprehend this, some related terms like 'ethnic group' and 'ethnicity' needs to be defined. Ethnic group according to Ohen is an informal interest group whose members are distinct from members of other ethnic groups with the larger society because they share kinship, religious and linguistics ties. Similarly, an ethnic group consists of those who are themselves alike by virtue of their common ancestry, languages, culture and who are so regarded by others. Nnoli sees ethnicity as the interactions among members of diverse groups. According to Achebe, ethnicity is "discrimination against a citizen because of his place of birth". In Nigeria, the word 'ethnicity and tribalism' are used interchangeably. While ethnicity is a politically neutral concept and does not pose any danger to democracy or development but rather could positively engender development where interactions and interrelationships are healthy, it is the politicization and manipulation of ethnicity that poses a problem.

Juxtaposition of Religion and Ethnicity

Before and since Nigerian Independence, sixteen leaders who can be traced to same religion and ethnic stock have emerged. Suffice it to name them chronologically and geographically.

S/N	Date	Names	State	Region
1	1st October 1960 – 15th Jan1966	Tafawa Abubakar	Bauchi	North
2	15th January 1966 – 29th July 1966	J. T. U. Aguyi-Ironsi	Abia	South
3	29th July 1966 – July 1975	Yakubu DanYumma Gowon	Plateau	North
4	29th July 1975 – 13th February 1976	Muritala Ramat Mohammed	Kano	North
5	13th February 1976 – October 1979	Olusegun Aremu Obasanjo	Ogun	South
6	1st October 1979 – 31st December 1983	Shehu Aliu Shagari	Sokoto	North
7	31st December 1983 – 27th August 1985	Muhammadu Buhari	Katsina	North
8	27th August 1985 - 26th August 1993	Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida	Niger	North
9	26th August 1993 – 17th Novemeber 1993	Ernest Shonekan	Ogun	South
10	17th November 1993 – June 1998	Sanni Abacha	Kano	North
11	8th June1998 – 29th May 1999	Abdulsalam Abubakar	Niger	North
12	29th May 1999 – 29th May 2007	Olusegun Obasanjo	Ogun	South
13	29th May 2007 – 5th May 2010	Umar Musa Yar'Adua	Katsina	North
14	5th May 2010 – 29th May 2015	Goodluck Ebele Jonathan	Bayelsa	South
15	29th May 2015 – 29th May 2023	Muhammadu Buhari	Katsina	North
16	29th May 2023 – till date	Bola Ahmed Tinubu	Lagos	South

Since independence in 1960 to date, sixteen political leaders have ruled the Nigerian nation of which ten of the sixteen are predominantly Northerners. This had further buttressed the dominance of Northern political hegemony. According to Alamu, in the political arena, there have been a Northern domination and monopoly or political power at the expense of the other regions. In other words, the North has ruled Nigeria for collective period of 45years out of 63 years of post-independence period.

Even in the face of Nigerian federal character and the purported six geo-political zones formula, religions and ethnic cleavage of the Northern hegemony hold sway.

Babarinsa observes that the rest of the country perceived the Hausa-Fulani oligarchy, the powerful ruling clique in Northern Nigeria, as conquerors to be appeased, resisted or barely tolerated. For insurance, the Northern oligarchy had dominated governance in Nigeria for about thirty-six out of forty-six years of Nigerian existence as an independent state.

The issue of dominance is fundamental to them, and they re-echo it as a password. Kukah recently reiterated the statement of Sultan of Sokoto who said that "let the Northern elite who have surrendered the space claim it back immediately". The regime of President Muhammadu Buhari, a civilian leader undermines the spirit of the Nigerian federal character by appointing political leaders and public office holders arbitrarily without a recourse to fair-sharing promoting and advertising religion and ethnicity in the nation's politics admit incompetent, unpopular and irrational leadership that explains away the beauty of diversity in Nigeria, at the altar of ethno-religious expediency. Kukah clearly states that religion and ethnicity as baits (stratagems) for the triumph of mediocrity have therefore ended up reinforcing prejudice and driving Nigerians to their various ethnic, religious and regional laagers where siege mentalities blossom. Winner-takes-all attitude of religion and ethnicity makes Non-Muslim elites in the North to remark that "the northern Muslim elites have not developed a moral basis for adequate power sharing with their Christian co-religionists".

Implications of Religion and Ethnicity on the Nigerian Nation

Alamu buttressed that exploring the interplay of religious and ethnicity in the politics of the Nigerian nation has shown that it has caused more damages to the polity, balkanized true federalism and caused a lot of setbacks to the nation. The politics of ethno-religiousity in Nigeria has already consumed both the wielders and the targets.

To slow that it is unhealthy to employ ethno-religiosity in Nigerian politics, Kukah bemoans that political mobilizes have become arrogant in exploring and exploiting religion to their own advantage, which is a minus to the entire nation. Even bearing in mind the experience that people have had with the Sharia even in the North, religion has become a liability and scapegoat. In essence, Nigeria as a nation has been in open confrontation since her creation and amalgamation by the colonial overloads. The implication has been the tuzzle between the North and the south, as well as between Islam and Christianity. Not only that the supremacy of the North for power, dominance and control led to balkanization of true federalism or regional system of government in our nationhood.

Despite the fact that General Buhari won the 2015 election overwhelmingly, he brought nepotism, tribalism and clannishness into his reign of power. Kukah argues that his government is marked by supremacist and divisive policies that push our country to the brink. He asserts further:

The president has displayed the greatest degree of insensitivity in managing our country's rich diversity. He has subordinated the larger interests of the country to the hegemonic interests of his co-religionists and clansmen and women. The impression created now is that, to hold a key and strategic position in Nigeria today, it is more important to be a Northern Muslim than a Nigerian.

Reconnecting the Disconnect through Federalism

It is pertinent at this juncture to explain federalism before reconnecting the disconnect. No concept is open to a simple definition. However, attempt will be made to present some scholarly positions on federalism. Oronsanya and Imhanlahimin see federalism as a government in which sovereignty is divided between the central and the state or regional government; the two arms are coordinated in

the sense that neither level authority. Put differently, the two levels of government that are federal and state or regional, exist side by side with each possessing certain assigned powers or functions. Frederick defines federalism as a political process by which a number of separate political communities enter into arrangement for working out solutions, adopting joint policies and making decisions on problems. A.V Dicey sees federalism as a political invention which is intended to reconcile national unity and power with the maintenance of the rights of the separate member states. Under federalism, negotiations, interactions, collective, bargaining, compromises and concessions are healthy; Constructive criticisms and public opinions are not seen as hate speeches. Therefore, a true, and competent leader that emerges through federation world learn and listen to the electorates, because would not be subordinates, rather, the leader would be seen as first among equals. But under ethno-religions politics, the masses are subordinates and subservient to the leader they choose through the so-called electoral process.

The ever-with-us enthronement of religion and ethnicity in the Nigerian political system since independence to date has been worrisome, problematic, it has been allowing miscreants, nonchalant, dullards and unpopular for elective posts, they eliminate their political opponents and become murderous. Electoral killings, violence and political thuggery are common ways of politicking in and ethnicity will go into oblivion, and there would be healthy competition and construction and constructive criticisms.

If true federation triumphs in the Nigeria political system, there would be equal and even distribution of political power. The decentralization of power to all six geo-political zones will be made possible.

At this point it is important to note that despite the beauty and pride of place of true federalism, it also has its weaknesses. Some of its shortcomings hang on structural imbalance, political hegemony, military experience and civil unrest (Ovwasa and Idowu). Truly speaking, federalism operates more effectively in a political system where constituent units are structurally balanced. The imbalance in the structure of Nigeria, in the area of ethnic majority of the North structure of Nigeria, in the area of ethnic majority of the North over the Southern group negates the federal principle, and this has led to the monopolization of political power, usurpation of privileges and subordination of one group by the others.

In spite of the weaknesses of federalism, its gain far outweighs its deficiencies. This Federal ideal in Nigeria is desirable path, which will ensure collective bargaining, effective concessions, protection of self-determination, competence, good and robust governance, beauty of diversity, resource control and identity. Above all, the current and deadly use of religion and ethnicity in the Nigerian polity coupled with their terrific implications are the disconnect whicn federalism is set to reconnect.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The work argues that the consequences and implications of politics of religion and ethnicity are regrettably bad, tribalistic, divisive, insensitive, hegemonic, precarious, nepotistic, rudderless with indices of failed state, failed economy, poverty, stunting squalor, insecurity and destitution.

The study has therefore, advocated that true federalism that gives room for devolution of power to the state or region without subordination, acceptance of resource control and restructuring; permission of equitable distribution of power among the six-geo-political zones, and the principle of federal character, which accommodates healthy competition and negotiations that would bring competent and presentable leaders. This, no doubt, would be the only viable alternative for solving all the multi-faceted challenges ever and currently experienced by the people.

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE CREATED BY STATES TO FURTHER INTEREST BUT THEY HAVE NOW ASSUMED AUTHORITY INDEPENDENT OF THE STATES THAT CREATED THEM: *THE ANALYSIS OF PROS AND CONS*

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KEYWORDS
International organizations, state, conflict, management, and national interest

ABSTRACT
International organizations (IOs) are established by sovereign states to promote cooperation, address global challenges, and advance shared interests. However, over time, many IOs have evolved beyond their original mandates, exercising authority independent of their member states. This paper analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of this phenomenon. On the positive side, IOs facilitate global governance by setting norms, resolving disputes, and addressing transnational issues such as climate change, security, and human rights. Their independence allows them to act impartially, free from national interests, fostering long-term stability and cooperation. IOs also provide expertise, technical assistance, and funding to weaker states, promoting development and international peace. Conversely, the increasing autonomy of IOs raises concerns about accountability and democratic legitimacy. States may find themselves bound by decisions that conflict with national interests or policies, leading to tensions between sovereignty and global governance. Bureaucratic inefficiencies, political biases, and unequal power distribution within IOs further complicate their effectiveness. Some critics argue that IOs can be influenced by powerful states or private actors, undermining their neutrality. This paper concludes that while IOs serve as essential mechanisms for international cooperation, their authority must be balanced with accountability and responsiveness to the states that created them. Strengthening oversight, improving transparency, and ensuring equitable participation can help mitigate the downsides of their independence while preserving their role in global governance. Understanding the evolving nature of IOs is crucial for ensuring that they continue to serve the collective interests of the international community.

Introduction

Important actors in the international political arena are international organisations (IOs), which are set up by states to coordinate activities, promote shared goals, and address shared challenges. Historically, states have established these groups to further their own goals while maintaining significant control over their operations. However, new research indicates that many IOs have evolved to exercise authority and autonomy beyond the objectives of their founding nations, raising doubts about their role in managing international disputes.

Discussions on how well IOs manage international disputes have increased in tandem with this growth. Studies such as Abbott and Snidal (1998) and Barnett and Finnemore (2024) demonstrate how IOs gain credibility and authority through their expertise, objectivity, and normative frameworks. Critics counter that these same factors could result in politicisation, inefficiency, and a lack of interest in member state interests (Keohane & Martin, 1995). Despite the fact that IO autonomy has been extensively studied, numerous issues remain regarding the specific factors that affect its ability to effectively handle international conflicts.

First, whereas prior research has extensively examined the procedural and structural constraints of IOs, less attention has been paid to how these constraints interact with external geopolitical factors (Hurd, 2011). Second, the impact of member state power disparities on IOs' decision-making processes has not received adequate attention. Third, the impact of resource availability, including financial and human capital, on the operational capacity of IOs has not been thoroughly examined. Fourth, there hasn't been much empirical study on how disputing parties' perceptions of IOs' legitimacy affect their ability to mediate and resolve disputes. Finally, the growing influence of non-state actors, including multinational corporations and non-governmental organisations, on the conflict management strategies of IOs has not been adequately covered in the literature (Tallberg et al., 2013). This study aims to fill these gaps by examining five important factors that affect how international organisations function in conflict management: non-state actors, perceived legitimacy, power disparities, resource availability, and geopolitical pressures. By addressing these factors, the study seeks to provide a thorough understanding of the complexities and limitations of IOs in contemporary international conflict management.

2.0 Research Questions

This paper will provide answers to this research problem:

Do international organizations assume authority independent of the states that created them?

3.0 Conceptual Clarification

This section clarifies some concepts that are related to the demand of the paper.

3.1 International Organization

International organisations, according to Karns and Mingst (2021, p. 34), are organisations created by treaties or agreements between two or more countries to work on matters of shared interest, such as economic development, peace, security, or humanitarian help. International organisations are official institutional structures established by nations or other entities to promote coordination and collaboration on regional or global challenges, claims Pease (2018, p. 91). According to him, international organisations are treaty-established groups of member nations that work together to accomplish specific goals on a global scale. According to Hurd (2020), these organisations serve as conduits for global collaboration, bringing together governments, non-governmental organisations, and other stakeholders to tackle cross-border issues such as trade, human rights, and climate change. According to this paper, international organisations are multilateral establishments established by formal agreements that allow governments to coordinate on a variety of global challenges and manage common interests.

3.2 The Notion of State

In international relations, the term "state" refers to the state as the main actor in the system, with sovereignty, territorial limits, a permanent population, and a government that can interact with other states. The study of international politics and the relationships between countries are based on this idea

(Ochoga and Shishi, 2024). The main components of the state concept in international relations are listed below. According to the conclusions of this study, a state is deemed sovereign when it has the final say over its internal affairs and is not subject to outside intervention. A fundamental component of the contemporary international order, sovereignty was established by the Peace of Westphalia (1648).

The power of a state to implement its own laws and policies without outside permission is another argument made in this article. Geographical borders are what define states, and international law recognises that these borders are untouchable. The idea that no state should impose its will on another state's borders is one example. A political entity needs to be accepted by other states and international organisations in order to be regarded as a state in the context of international relations. Its sovereignty and diplomatic abilities are validated by this acknowledgement. According to these documents, a state is the only entity with the authority to employ or permit the use of force to uphold law and order within its borders. Statehood and governance depend on this. According to the paper's conclusion, state authority is upheld by national militaries and police forces. According to conventional views of international relations, such as realism, states are the primary actors influencing world politics while pursuing their own national interests. States pursuing their goals through alliances, treaties, or wars.

4.0 Theoretical Framework

The functionalism theory of David Mitrany is applied in this work. The functionalism theory of David Mitrany provides an engaging theoretical framework for comprehending the rationale behind the establishment of international organisations. Functionalism, which has its roots in the desire to advance world peace and stability, contends that the necessity to address particular, real-world issues that cut across national borders is what motivates the creation of international organisations. According to this approach, rather than through broad political unions, states should cooperate through specialised institutions that concentrate on technical and economic matters. According to Mitrany, functional cooperation in fields like communication, transportation, and health could promote interdependence and trust between countries, progressively lowering the risk of conflict (Mitrany, 1943).

According to the notion, states form cooperative habits that can spread to other domains as they work together to address shared issues. A fundamental idea, the "spillover effect" illustrates how accomplishments in one functional area can result in additional integration and the establishment of other international organisations to handle new demands. A practical approach to international affairs is also reflected in functionalism. It places more emphasis on problem-solving effectiveness and efficiency than on ideological or political disagreements. This strategy is demonstrated by the establishment of institutions such as the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), which use cooperation and technological know-how to address particular global issues. Regardless of the political complications of state sovereignty, these organisations represent the functionalist ideal of creating institutions to manage common interests.

Functionalism's detractors contend that it undervalues how national interests and power politics shape international cooperation. They argue that states frequently put their strategic objectives ahead of operational effectiveness, which can impede the formation or efficacy of international organisations. Functionalism offers important insights into the gradual and practical processes that underpin the establishment of international organisations, notwithstanding these criticisms.

In conclusion, Mitrany's functionalism theory is still a useful framework for researching the motivations for the establishment of international organisations. It emphasises how crucial it is to solve real-world problems cooperatively, promote interdependence, and establish institutions that put functioning ahead of politics. The study of international relations and the function of international organisations in global governance are still influenced by this viewpoint. Thus, if international organisations do function independently of the states that established them, this theory aids in explaining how they are established.

5.0 The Evolution of International Organizations

Over time, international organisations have changed dramatically in response to shifts in the political, economic, and social landscape of the world. Their evolution is a reflection of humanity's combined efforts to resolve international conflicts and promote collaboration. Their development through historical periods, significant turning points, and theoretical foundations is traced in this critical examination. Early civilisations devised crude forms of international collaboration, which is where international organisations got their start. The foundation for collective decision-making was established by alliances and treaties between city-states, such as the Delian League in ancient Greece. Likewise, early attempts at global government were demonstrated by religious councils such as the ecumenical councils of the Catholic Church (Buzan & Lawson, 2015). The emergence of formalised international organisations in the 19th century was a watershed. One example of an attempt to keep the peace through diplomacy was the Concert of Europe (1815), which was founded following the Napoleonic Wars. A rising understanding of the necessity of multilateral cooperation is reflected in the emergence of organisations such as the Universal Postal Union (1874) and the International Telecommunication Union (1865) to handle technological and economic issues (Claude, 1964).

Due to the damage caused by two world wars and the need for world stability, international organisations saw a remarkable expansion in the 20th century. The first international political organisation created with the goal of preserving peace was the League of Nations (1920), but its lack of success made clear the necessity for more robust institutions.

A pillar of contemporary international relations, the United Nations was founded in 1945 as a result of World War II. To address certain global concerns, specialised organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) were established. As international collaboration became more complex, regional organisations like the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) also arose (Keohane & Nye, 1977). A unipolar world order emerged with the conclusion of the Cold War, and international organisations had to adjust to new issues like terrorism, environmental disasters, and globalisation. To better control international trade, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was superseded by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1995.

International organisations are criticised in the twenty-first century for their alleged inadequacies and lack of inclusivity. The calls for reform of the United Nations Security Council demonstrate the demand for more representation from emerging states. Global governance is also increasingly influenced by non-state players, such as non-governmental organisations and multinational companies (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004). International organisations' development is a reflection of humanity's persistent attempts to overcome shared difficulties. Even if they have significantly aided in the security and advancement of the world, their future rests on responding to critiques and changing with the times. Gaining knowledge of their development from theoretical and historical viewpoints helps one better understand their function in modern international relations. The purpose of international organisations is the main topic of the next section.

6.0 Why International organizations are created

In order to solve global issues, promote international collaboration, and further shared goals that cut across national borders, international organisations are essential. These organisations were founded for a number of reasons, all of which help to build a more secure, wealthy, and just world. The main justifications for its founding are listed below, along with more details:

(1) Encouraging security and peace

Maintaining world peace and security is one of the main goals of international organisations. The United Nations (UN), which was founded in the wake of World War II, emphasises the need of teamwork in averting future hostilities. By giving countries a forum for discussion, the UN promotes understanding between them and allows for diplomatic dispute resolution. The UN and related organisations aid in reducing violence, safeguarding vulnerable populations, and reconstructing war-torn areas through peacekeeping operations, disarmament programs, and conflict resolution techniques (Barnett & Finnemore, 2024). The crucial role that international organisations play in maintaining world peace is demonstrated by the

fact that UN peacekeepers have played a significant role in stabilising areas such as South Sudan and Mali.

(2) Promoting Development and Economic Cooperation:

International relations is based on economic stability, and institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are leading the charge to promote economic growth and collaboration. For countries dealing with economic difficulties, these organisations offer crucial financial support, technical know-how, and policy recommendations. For example, the World Bank provides funding for major development initiatives like infrastructure upgrades and programs to reduce poverty, while the IMF assists nations in resolving balance-of-payments difficulties. International economic organisations guarantee that economic advancement benefits a wider range of society by facilitating trade agreements and promoting sustainable development in addition to providing financial support (Keohane & Nye, 1977)..

(3) Dealing with International Concerns

Global issues that frequently cut over national boundaries and call for concerted international responses include pandemics, climate change, and human rights abuses. By combining resources, knowledge, and data to fight diseases, organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) are essential in addressing public health emergencies. For instance, the WHO organised global efforts to transmit important health advice and provide vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic (Wendt, 1999). Similar to this, groups like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) emphasise our shared responsibility to protect the earth by fighting environmental deterioration through international accords like the Paris Accord.

(4) Regulation and Standardisation

International organisations create and implement standards across a range of industries to guarantee uniformity and effectiveness in a world that is increasingly interconnected. For example, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) develops and manages international aviation regulations, guaranteeing the dependability and safety of air transport. These uniform rules make it easier to conduct business internationally, lowering risks and promoting international confidence. Finnemore, 2024; Barnett, M. In a similar vein, institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) set rules for international trade, guaranteeing ethical behaviour and settling trade disputes to preserve financial stability.

(5) Making Humanitarian Aid Stronger

Natural disasters, armed wars, and refugee crises are examples of humanitarian crises that need for prompt, concerted international action. In order to provide afflicted communities with life-saving assistance, such as food, medical attention, and shelter, organisations such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are crucial. Their efforts serve as an example of how crucial international cooperation is to reducing human suffering (Barnett & Finnemore, 2024). International humanitarian organisations, for instance, mobilised resources to support millions of displaced people during the Syrian refugee crisis, illustrating the crucial importance of their efforts.

(6) Encouraging Education and Cultural Exchange

Collaboration in education and culture promotes respect and understanding between countries. Global literacy is promoted, scientific research is encouraged, and cultural heritage places are protected by organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). UNESCO helps communities come together by supporting initiatives that celebrate variety and cross-cultural interaction. The common obligation to protect humanity's natural and cultural assets for future generations is highlighted by programs like the World Heritage Sites initiative. It is understandable why Ochoga and Shishi (2024) contend that the creation of multinational organisations is a reflection of the interdependence of the contemporary world and the necessity of teamwork in tackling common issues. These organisations are essential to building a more just, sustainable, and cooperative global society because they do everything from upholding peace and stimulating economic growth to advancing cultural understanding and providing

humanitarian aid. Their efforts highlight the value of cooperation in a world growing more interconnected by fostering international trust while advancing common objectives of peace, prosperity, and sustainability. The reason why states establish international organisations but they function freely is examined in the following section.

6.0 International Organizations: Created by States but Operating Independently

Formal entities created by agreements between governments to handle common issues and goals are known as international organisations (IOs). Despite being established by states, these organisations frequently function rather independently of their original members. Understanding the conflict between IO autonomy and state creation is essential to comprehending their function and role in global governance. This essay examines the establishment and functioning of IOs, emphasising the conflict between organisational independence and governmental authority. Through treaties or agreements that specify the organization's goals, composition, and authorities, states establish international organisations. For instance, in 1945, 51 founding member nations signed the United Nations Charter, creating the United Nations (UN) (United Nations, 2023).

Likewise, the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement gave rise to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (World Trade Organisation, n.d.). These founding agreements, which offer a framework for collaboration and coordination, frequently represent the interests of states as a whole. IOs are set up by states to: address transboundary issues including trade, security, and climate change that call for coordinated action; provide platforms for discussion and conflict resolution; and combine resources and expertise to accomplish shared objectives. Even though they were established by nations, many IOs have enough autonomy to carry out their tasks on their own.

A number of variables help to support this independence: International Organisations' Independence: A Functional and Legal Analysis Despite being unique actors under international law, international organisations (IOs) are bodies established by governments through treaties. Their independence is derived from certain characteristics that set them apart from the states that create them, including legal personhood, functional autonomy, and treaty-based foundations. With the use of instances and court rulings, this section explains why IOs are regarded as independent of states.

(i) Personality in Law

According to international law, international organisations have legal personality, which enables them to take action apart from their member nations. In the 1949 case of Reparations for Injuries Suffered in the Service of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) clearly stated this idea. According to Reparations for Injuries Suffered in the Service of the United Nations (1949), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) confirmed that the United Nations (UN) has an international legal personality apart from its members, enabling it to enter into treaties, hold property, and pursue legal claims on its own. Stated differently, a large number of IOs are endowed with legal personality under international law, which allows them to make contracts, possess property, and act independently (Schermers & Blokker, 2021). The UN's independence is demonstrated by its capacity to engage in negotiations and reach agreements with both member and non-member states. The Treaty on European Union (TEU) grants legal personality to regional organisations such as the European Union (EU), allowing them to enact laws, enforce existing ones, and engage in international legal frameworks (Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union, 2012, Art. 47).

(ii) Treaties of Foundation

Binding international treaties that specify their goals, composition, and methods of operation create international organisations. These agreements guarantee that member governments are unable to directly regulate the organization's daily operations. Such agreements' legal standing is strengthened by the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969), which emphasises that they are governed by international law (United Nations, 1969). The World Health Organisation (WHO) functions in accordance with its Constitution, which outlines its jurisdiction to take action on global health concerns without reference to the instructions of member states. Without requesting unanimous agreement from member nations, this autonomy has allowed the WHO to coordinate global responses and issue guidelines

in response to pandemics like COVID-19.

(iii). Independence in Function

For IOs to successfully carry out their responsibilities, functional independence is necessary. Even if not specifically stated in their founding treaties, IOs are supported in exercising their autonomy in carrying out actions required for their operations by the doctrine of implied powers, which was acknowledged by the ICJ in the Certain Expenses of the United Nations case (1962) (Certain Expenses of the United Nations, 1962). By deciding which member governments should receive financial aid, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) demonstrates its operational independence. Economic evaluations, not political factors, are used to make decisions like loan conditions, guaranteeing efficiency and fairness.

(iv). Neutrality and Non-Intrusion

The fundamental ideas of impartiality and neutrality shield IOs from outside interference. To protect the organization's independence, Article 100 of the UN Charter expressly forbids the Secretary-General and employees from asking for or accepting orders from any country or outside authority (United Nations, 1945). By resolving conflicts between states only on the basis of international law, outside of the influence of individual member states, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is a prime example of this neutrality. The legitimacy of its rulings and the confidence of the global community are strengthened by its impartiality.

(v). Financial Independence

One essential component of an IO's operational autonomy is financial independence. The potential of undue influence by any one-member state is decreased by the fact that many organisations maintain a variety of financing sources, such as assessed contributions, voluntary donations, and other revenue streams. Financial Independence: By raising money through fees, contributions, or other sources, IOs can become less dependent on member states. For instance, user fees and assessments are used to finance the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) operations (ICAO, n.d.). Funding for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comes from both voluntary donations from outside sources and assessed contributions from member states. The IAEA is able to independently monitor non-proliferation agreement compliance and fulfil its mission of promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy because to its broad financing base.

(vi). State Practice and Judicial Precedents

The independence of international organisations has been strengthened by court rulings and consistent state policies. The independence of IOs has been maintained by courts and tribunals, which highlight their ability to act freely within their purview. In matters under its purview, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has continuously maintained that EU law supersedes national laws. This legal framework emphasises the EU's sovereignty by preventing member states from unilaterally undermining its legislative and judicial processes (Case 6/64, Costa v. ENEL, 1964).

(vii) Frameworks for Institutions

IOs frequently have executive agencies that operate apart from its member states, such the European Commission or the UN Secretariat (Barnett & Finnemore, 2024).

(viii) Methods of Making Decisions

Voting procedures used by certain IOs weaken the authority of individual states. For example, both permanent and rotating members participate in the UN Security Council's decision-making process, whereas the International Monetary Fund (IMF) employs a weighted voting method. For multinational organisations to operate successfully in the global arena, their independence is essential. Their position as separate bodies under international law is established by their legal identity, treaty-based frameworks, functional autonomy, neutrality, financial independence, and judicial recognition. Because of their independence, IOs are able to carry out their mandates in an unbiased manner, guaranteeing their efficacy in tackling global issues. Therefore, whether or not there are conflicts between nations and international organisations as a result of independence is discussed in the next section.

7.0 Tensions Between States and International Organizations

Tensions with their member states are frequently brought on by IO independence, especially when organisational decisions go against national interests. These conflicts show up in a number of ways:

a. Sovereignty Concerns: When decisions are legally binding, like in the case of WTO dispute rulings, states may view IOs' independent activities as an infringement on their sovereignty (Ochoga and Shishi, 2024).

b. responsibility Concerns: Since IOs are not directly liable to national governments or citizens, their autonomy raises concerns over responsibility.

c. Resource Dependency: Although IOs strive for financial autonomy, a large number of them rely on states' voluntary contributions, which could give them power over significant contributors. Examples of Cases

   a. (a). United Nations: Without direct oversight by any one of its member states, the UN's peacekeeping operations frequently function autonomously, allocating staff and supplies. Conflicts have occasionally resulted from this operational independence, including complaints about peacekeeping shortcomings (Bellamy & Williams, 2020).

   b. (b). European Union (EU): The conflict between state sovereignty and organisational autonomy is best shown by the EU's supranational institutions, such as the European Court of Justice, which frequently render rulings that supersede national laws (Craig & de Búrca, 2020).
   (c). World Health Organisation (WHO): The WHO's directives and actions during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated its independence in global health governance, but they also raised objections from member nations due to alleged inefficiencies and biases (Gostin et al., 2020).

Independence and State Control in Balance. IOs must strike a balance between their independence and member state backing and legitimacy. Achieving this balance requires the use of mechanisms like stakeholder involvement, transparency initiatives, and oversight committees. The intricacy of global governance is best illustrated by international organisations. Founded by nations to tackle shared problems, they frequently have a great deal of autonomy, which allows them to carry out their mandates efficiently. But there are also conflicts with member states as a result of this independence, especially when it comes to accountability and sovereignty. Improving the legitimacy and efficacy of IOs in the twenty-first century requires an understanding of these processes.

8.0. Discussion of Findings

This section provides answers to the research questions:

Do international organizations assume authority independent of the states that created them?

A careful balance between independence and influence from the states that established them is something that international organisations (IOs) frequently have to manage. IOs should ideally be set up to deal with problems that call for cooperation, taking on the power to operate apart from the interests of individual states. But in reality, strong regimes usually use secret tactics to limit these organisations' autonomy by exerting control over them. The conflict between the theoretical ideal and the actualities of international administration is reflected in this dynamic. With authority drawn from their mandates rather than the power of individual governments, IOs are theoretically envisioned as unbiased organisations created to promote international cooperation. Because they are not influenced by the interests of any one state, they are able to coordinate international activities, manage conflicts, and enforce global rules. For example, rather than favouring one nation over another, the United Nations (UN) and its agencies are set up to serve the interests of all of its members.

However, in reality, strong nations frequently have an outsized amount of influence within IOs, which compromises their independence. For instance, research has demonstrated that in institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the financial contributions and voting strength of dominant governments frequently influence policy choices and priorities (Stone, 2011). To make sure that IOs serve their national objectives, these states may employ strategies like conditional funding, diplomatic pressure, or strategic appointments. This real-world situation deviates from the ideal of fair global governance, casting doubt on these organisations' actual independence.

This viewpoint is different from past research that primarily focused on IOs' function as impartial arbiters in the global system. The technical and apolitical character of IOs was emphasised by traditional theories, such as functionalism-based ones, which proposed that their power came only from their capacity to solve group issues (Mitrany, 1943). More recent studies, however, have turned their attention to the political economy of IOs, demonstrating how member state power imbalances influence their operations and results. According to Barnett and Finnemore (2004), these studies offer a more sophisticated understanding of how strong nations use their resources and clout to keep control over organisations that appear to be independent. The complexity of IOs' position in international politics is shown by this change in viewpoint. Even though they are intended to function autonomously, their need on government support and collaboration invariably leaves them open to outside interference. In the global arena, the interaction between the realities of power relations and the ideals of independence continues to influence how IOs operate and are seen.

9.0 Conclusion

Although international organisations (IOs) are essential to the management of international conflicts, a variety of elements that reflect the complexity of the world political environment influence how effective IOs are. Despite being intended to serve as unbiased mediators that promote communication and conflict resolution, IOs frequently encounter difficulties brought on by the conflicting national interests of member nations. Conflict management procedures are often dominated by power politics, as demonstrated by the ability of strong governments to shape agendas and results to suit their strategic objectives. These dynamics can impede decisive and fair measures, especially when conflicts cross with the interests of powerful governments, as demonstrated by the veto power possessed by permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Furthermore, governments that view outside intervention as a danger to their independence may oppose or refuse to comply with IO interference due to the principle of sovereignty. In intrastate conflicts, where governments may be hesitant to accept mediation, this opposition is particularly noticeable. Further limiting IOs' ability to adequately handle conflicts are resource limitations. Efforts like peacekeeping missions, humanitarian aid, and post-conflict rehabilitation are frequently hampered by a lack of financing, logistical difficulties, and a reliance on member states for resources, making IOs reliant on the financial and political priorities of its donors.

The impartiality and problem-solving ability of IOs were highlighted by previous theories, but current research highlights their intrinsic limitations. Their role in conflict management is complicated by power imbalances, reliance on member states, and the interaction of local and global processes. This change in viewpoints from idealistic to practical emphasises the necessity of a sophisticated comprehension of the difficulties IOs encounter when negotiating the reality of international conflict resolution. In order to improve IO interventions' ability to promote lasting peace, these findings urge a rethinking of tactics that take into consideration the political and institutional limitations that shape them.

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BRITISH AND NIGERIA'S UNDERDEVELOPMENT: REVISIT ANALYSIS

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KEYWORDS
Imperialism, Underdevelopment, Colonialism, Exploitation and Dependency

ABSTRACT
This paper examines the concept of imperialism which has been implicated in the underdevelopment of Nigeria like other African Countries where it had been at work While they had long operated in Nigeria, new Imperialism that relates to colonialism is said to be responsible for generating and perpetuating underdevelopment and dependency in Nigeria. The paper employed narrative and quantitative analytical historical methods, using mostly secondary sources in the study which reveals that indeed imperialism at colonialism using different methods to exploit Hunan and material resources of Nigeria leading to its underdevelopment. The paper in Conclusion maintains that imperialism nay colonialism occasioned the underdevelopment of Nigeria and recommends the Strengthening of the country's productive capacity as to fast track her development.

Introduction

This paper sets out to examine the dynamics of British Imperialism in Nigeria with special attention to the British colonial policy and activities, with the aim of showing how this led to the underdevelopment of the country.

British Imperialism stretches from the inhumanity of the slave trade exploitative trade; to the brutality of colonization and contemporary neo-colonial domination. The central role of imperialism in generating and perpetuating underdevelopment and dependency in Nigeria is the serious concern of this paper.

There have been distortion, falsification, and mystifications both by imperialists and petty bourgeois scholars concerning the nature, causes and remedy of underdevelopment in Nigeria. This paper us my little contribution to understanding the nature of imperialism as well as causes and remedy of underdevelopment in Nigeria.

The paper starts with definition and explanation of the two related concepts; imperialism and underdevelopment, which form the two major themes of this work. The two concepts need elaborate explanations as to help us understand and appreciate Nigeria's predicament as an underdeveloped country.

Next the paper gives an outline of the history of British imperialism in Nigeria and then fully examined the Nigerian colonial economy where it is felt strongly rooted the underdevelopment of Nigeria.

It finally takes a cursory look at the neo-colonialism, which is seriously perpetuating the underdevelopment of Nigeria.

Imperialism

Professor Ake (1981:20) has defined imperialism as the economic control and exploitation of foreign Lands arising from the necessity for counteracting the impediment to the accumulation of capital engendered by the internal contradiction of the domestic capitalist economy".

Imperialist exploitation involves appropriation of the economic surplus of one country by another through enslavement, forced labour, land wages, acquisition of mineral rights, land alienation, and capital export, all for the generation of huge profits for the imperialists. Exploitation therefore is the basis of unequal development fostered by imperialism (Onimode 1982:4).

Elsewhere, another broad definition of imperialism is given as "the outward drive of certain peoples to build empires - both formal colonies and privileged positions in markets, protected sources of materials and extended opportunities for the profitable employment of labour" (Barratt, 1974). This definition might associate imperialism with an unequal economic relationship between states not simply the inequality of large and small, rich and poor trading partners, but the inequality of political and economic dependence of the latter on the former.

Imperialism is therefore a system of relationship in which domination, super domination, exploitation and of course development and underdevelopment play a central part.

Underdevelopment

Underdevelopment is a concept that scholars find difficult to give an outright definition, nevertheless we are not left in the dark as to what the concept is.

To Walter Rodney, underdevelopment makes sense only as a means of comparing levels of development. The concept is very much tied to the fact that human social development has been uneven and from a strictly economic viewpoint (Rodney 1972).

Some human groups grew faster by producing more and becoming wealthier.

In this sense, economic comparison among nations can be made by looking at their per capital income standard of living level of industrialization, level of education etc. as indicators of development and underdevelopment.

Bourgeois writers and scholars have tried to advanced interpretations of the underdevelopment of nations especially African states as being a result of generic backwardness of the race of black Africans, lack of skill to develop and other forms of blanket interpretations which tend to hide the true cause of underdevelopment of these states.

Radical writers and scholar have however been able to study and unearth the true causes and right interpretation to underdevelopment of the so-called backward nations. Rodney identifies underdevelopment as "comprising a particular relationship of exploitation namely the exploitation of one country by another. All the countries named as underdeveloped in the world are exploited by others; and the underdevelopment with which the world is now pre-occurred is a product of capitalist, imperialists and colonialist explo1tation" (Rodney 1972).

The underdeveloped nations of Africa and Asia were developing independently when they were taken over by the capitalist powers and their exploitation started depriving them of their natural resources and labour.

It is typical of underdeveloped economies that they were not allowed to concentrate on those sectors of the economy which in turn will generate growth and raise production to a new level altogether and there are very few ties between one sector and another so that say agriculture and industry could react beneficially on each other.

There was complete disarticulation of their economics.

It is from this view point that Clive Thomas gave what I consider the most radical definition, or explanation of underdevelopment, dependence, and backwardness of the process of production in exploited countries on the one hand as "the lack of an organic link, rooted in an indigenous science and technology between the pattern and growth of domestic resource use, and pattern and growth of domestic demand and, on the other, the divergence between

domestic demand and the needs of the broad mass of the population" (Clive, 1974).

From this it is clear that underdevelopment in African and third world economics is rooted in the absence of an indigenous technology which centers on the process of dynamic divergence between domestic resources and domestic demand, all imbedded in the process of imperialism.

The Dynamics of British Imperialism in Nigeria

Bade Onimode (1982:4) has distinguished four phases of imperialism which fall in line with the history of British imperialistic activities in Nigeria; Britain being one of the pioneers of imperialistic assault against the third world countries.

The changing forms of British imperialism in Nigeria reflect changing strategies adopted by British to resolve the permanent crisis of international capitalism in different epochs. The British Imperialism falls within four phases, which has been identified with respect to their productive forces, property relations and dominant ideologies. The phases are, mercantilist imperialism, free trade imperialism, corporate or monopolistic imperialism and multilateral imperialism.

The British mercantilist imperialism started in Nigeria during the era of slave trade from about 1441 when slaves were on sale in Lisbon. The main commodities of pillage during this era were slaves, pepper and palm oil.

Free trade imperialism took off in Nigeria after the industrial revolution which started in Britain, this was the age of industrial capitalism. The overriding motive was to raise the profitability of mass production through cheaper sources of raw materials and food as well as lucrative market for manufactured goods.

In this bid, Britain required free trade for the greater exploitation of old colonies secured under mercantilist Imperialism and the scramble for new ones. England then "the workshop of the world" was the lender of the new imperialism whose ideology was given international rationalization by Adam Smith's practice on free trade and competition and by David Ricardo's theory of competitive advantage as the basis of for the international division of labour between Britain and the world.

During the era, Britain sought the abolition of the slave trade in Nigeria, which it saw as obstructing more lucrative markets trade in manufacture and primary products.

The legitimate trade was then advocated with great favour and established after the dethronement of Kosoko of Lagos in

1851. This phase also saw the expansion activities of explorers and missionaries who worked to initiate the people of Nigeria into the cult of subservience dating from the formation of the African association in 1788. The phase ended with the formal colonization of Nigeria by Britain in 1860.

Britain then entered the third stage of her imperialist plunder. This is the corporate imperialist stage. This stage witnessed the episode of 1884 Berlin treaty for the partition of Africa among European imperialists which ended with the second major imperialistic war christened the 2nd world war. During this phase, Britain completely consolidated her colonial conquest and domination of Nigeria with Lord Lugard's indirect rule in Northern Nigeria.

Secondly, British finance capital started penetrating into Nigeria under the sponsorship of multinational commercial companies such as the Royal Niger Company (UAC) John Holt and Barclays Bank (now Union Bank). In this phase too, the protectorate of northern and southern Nigeria was formally integrated in 1914.

The fourth and contemporary phase is the multilateral Imperialistic stage, which started since 1946. In this phase, three main features were outstanding. Firstly, colonial planning was introduced in 1946 to withstand worsening capitalist contradictions after World War II.

Secondly, in 1960, flag independence was granted to a British-bred petty-Bourgeoisie to facilitate the neo economic domination under neo-colonialism. Thirdly the invasion of American, French, Japanese, German and other imperialist forces into sectors of Nigerian economy especially petroleum to challenge British hegemony.

The last two phases of the British imperialism saw the era of complete political and economic control of the territory of Nigeria, 1860-1960. It

was during this period that Britain as the only imperialist power in Nigeria effected great damage to the country's economic resources through brutal exploitation. This was the root of Nigeria's underdevelopment. We shall now examine the colonial economy.

The Colonial Economy

Claud Ake (1981:43), has described the colonial economy as characterized by "disarticulation and incoherence". He explains that a coherent economy is ideally a system of forward and backward linkages in production, its regions and sectors will complementary and reciprocity of exchange between them. Nigeria's colonial economy generally lacked these linkages, complementary and reciprocity, which will have engendered development.

British colonial economic policies was such that there was disarticulation in all sectors of the economy. We shall examine the different sectors to see how they were disarticulated as to cause Nigeria's underdevelopment.

Agricultures

Agriculture under colonial capitalism was naturally interested only in the most profitable primary or cash crops commodities. The colonial Government encouraged the production of cash crops like palm oil, cocoa, rubber, and groundnut. Peasant farmers were encouraged by providing them with plants and seed and promise of Government purchase of their produce with additional incentive of bonuses for good agricultural production results. All these was to ensure adequate production primary commodities to feed British industries.

Plantation agriculture by foreign businessmen was discourage by the colonial Government. This was for fear of political unrest, which might result from disruption of pre-colonial land tenure'(Ekundare, 1973:p88).

The prices of the cash crops were miserably low and were subject to fluctuations in the international market. In order to curtail the price fluctuation of the cash crops produce, the colonial Government set up marketing board ostensibly changed with the duty of stabilizing prices. In reality, the marketing board played the fiscal role of appropriating agriculture surplus for the British Government, which was invested outside Nigeria(Onimode650-51).

While cash crop production was encouraged, good production was neglected if not discouraged.

Transport

The colonial transport system amply illustrates the story of disarticulation in all sectors of the colonial economy. The building of railways was dictated by the collection of export commodities(Ake, p.44). The Kano - Apapa or Western railway line was constructed to facilitate the collection of cotton, ground-nut, cocoa and hides and skin for export. Again the Enugu - Port Harcourt or Eastern line was built to serve the palm o1l and kernel collection. Therefore, the railways ran mainly north - south and non ran east-west.

Feeder roads were built only to provide access for the Nigerian producers to railway stations where their goods were cleared. The railways and roads were only functional for gathering and exporting the commodities of the Country. As a result of the pattern of the railways, the ports were built at the terminals of the railways. Ports were not necessarily located where they should yield maximum benefit to the development of the Country. Former established ports like Bonny, Opobo and Calabar were abandoned and neglected.

In the whole, the colonial Government deliberately failed to build a coherent system of communication to connect the different regions of the country as to help in building a coherent economy.

Trade

From its origin to the present, imperialist trade has been motivated by interrelated requirements for cheap foreign sources of raw materials and outlets for mass produced manufactures, both of which strengthen the international value of its currency, and are a source of collective enrichment through the transfer of economic surplus from abroad (Onimode, p.68).

Nigeria served these purposes excellently for Britain. The direction of Nigeria's colonial trade necessitates.

Britain, persistently controlled 50% to 80% of all exports and imports. Private companies of

foreign countries controlled the trade. Such companies as United African Coy.

John Holt, Lever Brothers and a host of others,featured prominently.

Besides companies, individuals participated in the colonial trade. They were mainly Lebanese, Syrians and Indians (Hopkins 1973, p.204).

These foreign traders dominated whole-sale and retail trade in the country. The Levantines and Indians were very frugal unlike Nigerians and soon grew very rich. Most of them invested in the mining industry.

Few Nigerians took part in the trade but were not very successful. The commercial banks refused them loans but rather readily gave loans to the Lebanese, Syrians and Indians.

The terms of trade was dictated by Britain for both import and exports "Throughout the history of colonial trade, exports and imports were continuously protected in the interest of British imperialism through a barrage of total prohibition military requisition, import quota, licensing and tariffs (Onimode, p.68).

Industry

While British colonial Government encouraged Agriculture, it discouraged establishment of industries. Industrialization was either neglected or forbidden. This is not surprising because the structure of colonial system by its very logic was incompatible with industrial development in the colonies.

The British sought to avoid competition of the colonial industries with the metropolitan industries which was supposed to have the colonies as reserve markets.

Beside this, the colonial Government was out to promote the profitable import and protect the shipping interest of those British companies that dominated the international trade of Nigeria.

This failure to provide an industrial component to the Nigerian economy ensured that Nigeria remained in a situation referred to by economists as "enforced Bilateralism"; and dependent on Britain for all manufactured goods.

The indigenous industries were gradually killed by the importation of British manufactured Superior substitutes of the indigenous products. A taste for British manufactures was systematically cultivated in Nigerians thereby deepening the citizens' dependence on foreign goods.

Nigeria was thus reduced to mere producers of primary product and importers of secondary or manufactured goods. It became impossible to accumulate enough capital for industrial development.

After World War II effort was made to encourage the establishment of few small scale industries. Most of the industries established had very small capital outlay of few thousand pounds, employing only 10 to 100 workers. The bigger ones produced merely consumer goods such as cigarette, soap, textiles canned food, beer, magerine and plastics.

Most of the industries were owned by the British imperialist.

By 1960 Nigerians owned only two out of the twenty-two industries establishments Identified (Onimode, p.68).

Besides this, most of the industries are not industries which economists describe as having backward and forward linkages and so cannot facilitate the industrial development of post-colonial Nigeria.

Mining

Mining industry under the colonial administration was dominated by British companies and other imperialists. Few Lebanese and Syrians also invested in the mining Industry (Cook 1964, p.237).

Most Nigerian peasants were attracted to the mines where they provided cheap labour to the companies, Introduction of taxes to be paid in cash forced many peasants to the mines.

Much labour was passed into the mining industry thereby reducing the number of people engaged in food production,

Apart from coal which Government controlled, the other minerals were mined by private imperialist companies. Mineral producing areas were usually designated

"Grown Lands", There were such minerals in Nigeria like tin columbite, coal, petroleum lead and diamond. As from 1910, the royal Niger Company was given 50% of the royalty on all minerals found in its former territories and by 1937 an oil concession on the total land area of Nigeria had been granted to Shell/Petroleum (Onimode, p.54).

Financial System Currency and Banking

In 1912, the West African currency board was established to issue currency for the British West African colonies including Nigeria. Before 1911 currency in Nigeria was supplied by Bank of British West Africa, a company dominated by Alfred Jones (Hopkins 1973, p.207).

The W.A.C.B. after taking over continued to regulate the supply of coins and currency in Nigeria until July 1939, when the newly established central bank of Nigeria became the sole authority for the issue of currency in Nigeria (Ekundare p.314).

It was the practice of the board to make annual distribution from its supplies to the Government of the four countries it serves. The essence of the currency board system was the convertibility of west African coins and notes on demand into sterling balances in London. The Board exchanged token money earned this the Nigerian export trade. The hard currency was invested in the international money market in London.

During the colonial era, there were only few banks in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the relationship between the expatriate banks and the Nigerian public was relatively poor. The banks especially the British West African Bank and the Barclays bank adopted very conservative policies. The never promoted capital accumulation within the colony and as well refused establishment of branches different parts as to mobilize Nigeria citizens to save for investment.

Personnel

For most part, most of the skilled workers employed in the industries were foreigners. The senior positions in the mines, industries and commercial companies were dominated by non-Nigerians. Nigerians were regarded as being incapable of staffing the senior positions even when they are trained.

In the colonial civil administration, foreigners also dominated the senior cadre positions.

Half the salary of these expatriates was repatriated abroad in hard currency. This drained the country's foreign reserve.

Development plans

At the end of the second world war, the Government embarked on ten-year development plans. In 1946, the first plan was drawn. This plan's emphasis was on provision of social services and public utilities. Economic problems were not tackled nor industrial development embarked upon. In 1956 the second plan was drawn and this was mainly geared towards improvement of communication. Therefore, the colonial economy remained incoherent and disarticulated until independence in 1960.

Neo-Colonialism

The attainment of independence in 1960 saw the emergence of neo-colonialism in the political independent Nigeria.Neo-colonialism simply entails the remote control of the economic and political systems of the independent contries by their former colonial masters.

Neo-colonialism refers to the continuation of colonial-like exploitation and dominance by powerful countries or corporations over weaker or developing nations, often through economic, cultural, or political means, rather than direct colonial occupation.The features could be seen in the areas of,economic dependence the rely aids and loans or investments;exploitation of resources in extraction of minerals,labour and market ;cultural dominance in imposition of western values, language and culture ;political influences they shape policies, influence elections and formation of government and lack of sovereigntyin which the countrie haveno controlovertheirinternal affair.

These features crystallise in the activities such as,structural Adjustment policies imposed by IMF and other financial institutions;foreign ownership of key industries eg mining and Agriculture; unequal trade agreements eg WTO,NAFTA ; Cultural harmonisation in globalisation of media and proxy wars.

Through these various methods and strategies, the former colonial powers of the

Industrialised and developed nations perpetuate inequality, undermines self-determination and hinders development in affected the nations

Multinational companies of Britain, U.S. France, Japan and other imperialist nations with the help of local bourgeoisies have continued the exploitation of Nigeria.

The economy of Nigeria has been rendered dependent and strongly tied to the Britain and the other imperialist powers who have made inroads into Nigerian economy to perpetuate the Country's underdevelopment.

Import-substitution industrialization embarked upon by the Nigerian has been identified as one of measures aiding neocolonialism in Nigeria.

The confines of this paper cannot allow me go into the full exposition of the concept of neo-colonialism in Nigeria but suffice it to say that it is perpetuating Nigeria's underdevelopment.

Conclusion

The British imperialism in Nigeria which started with mercantilist imperialism from 1441, reached its crescendo during the colonial period and still going on with the contemporary phase of multilateral imperialism has brought underdevelopment to the country

From the foregoing, it is clear that British imperialism is responsible for Nigeria's underdevelopment while it at same time enhanced British development. It is from this same standpoint, that onimode asserts that both development and underdevelopment are simultaneous product of the same imperialist system of domination, plunder and exploitation, that always and everywhere has manifested in development for the imperialist powers and development for the 'wretched of the earth' (Onimode:.8).

This situation is amply demonstrated in the relationship between Nigeria and Britain wherein the continual exploitation of the Nigerian resources by Britain through trade, remote political direct foreign investment, investment control, capital export surplus expropriation has led to the underdeveloped status of Nigeria.

The question is how can Nigeria come out this mess of underdevelopment and move towards development? This question calls for suggestions.

Our humble suggestion is that Nigeria should embark on a social revolution which will enable her completely restructure her economy and at the same time cut all ties between her and imperialist powers who perpetuate her underdevelopment as to put her on the right path to genuine development.

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THE ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC 1998-2024

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KEYWORDS
United Nations, MINUSCA, Peace supports Operations, Central African Republic

ABSTRACT
United Nations (UN) is authorised to sustain global peace and security. The UN aims to maintain this objective via many ways like through peace supports operations by sending personnel and experts to manage crisis conditions. The world organization has imbibed a number of strategies and techniques to enforce its peace supports operations. However, there has been many activities aiming on peace supports operation with nodal successful operations, but the UN still encounter problems with negative consequences on efficiency, effectiveness and success of its peace supports operations in Central African Republic. The main thrust of this work is to interrogate the pivotal activities of UN peace supports operations, their effect, and the main problems that marred their works and confront the UN peace supports operations in Central African Republic. This research is a departure from others in that it views the UN peace support role in CAR through the prism of Liberalism and documentary evidence. The period of the paper is also unique. This work uses the theory of liberalism as a tool of analysis and data were obtained from secondary sources like books, journals, newspapers, magazines, and internet materials. Documentary evidence was used as a data gathering technique. The work discovered that the UN peace supports operations achieved limited success in controlling conflictual conditions and inculcating peace in Central African Republic. Nevertheless, the administrative, military and humanitarian problems of the initiatives marred the peace support operations in Central African Republic thereby hindering them from having a total success. Drawing from this, the work encourages policy and institutional changes in conjunction with determination of parties, institutions, and other actors to collectively join hands together so as to strengthen peacekeeping operations and install a lasting peace in Central African Republic.

Introduction

United Nations peace support operations is a special and vigorous technique meant to help nations shattered by crisis develop platforms for sustainable harmony (Ibrahim, 2015). From origin, the UN in consonance with the help of its sister institutions has been galvanizing strength to guard and support peace and protection in the global arena. As a global institution, the UN work as a structure for sustainable conflict amelioration gadget among the nations plus settling inter-national crisis and ensuring post crisis and post war harmony and protection.

The UN peace keeping force may only be engaged when the two conflict groups agree for them to come. The major sub-units authorised for UN peace keeping are the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretariat and the department of peacekeeping which are committed in arranging, overseeing and helping of UN-backed peace keeping mission (John,2015). The central responsibilities of the UN peace keeping are funded from the normal regular programme finance and the personal duties from a unique purse of the UN (Smith,2015). The UN has always made effort to stop conflicts from upscaling into war, they encourage conflicting groups to embrace diplomacy rather than coercion and to ensure peace instead of conflictual situation. Peace keeping is one of the vital techniques to maintain harmonious situation in post-crisis condition (Agrawal,2011).

The UN peace keeping operations perform many branches of peace keeping like ensuring conflict resolutions, provision of emergency relief, political reconstruction, institution of the rule of law, separating opposing fighting forces, and encouraging truce, armistice or treaties leading to ceasefires (AngrawaL, 2011).

The Central African Republic experienced processes of peace-building efforts from different groups plus nearly 20 years of United Nation Support and effective engagement. No matter the UN peace effort there was the overthrow of March 2015 by the Seleka rebels. Due to the unimaginable suffering that accompanied the Seleka insurgency the UN has raised their peace effort in CAR, although these efforts have not stopped the crisis. UN peace support operation main objective in CAR is to install a lasting and sustainable peace that will ensure the development of the area (Adams, 2014). The work is sectionalized into ten:- introduction, literature review, conceptual definitions, methodology, theoretical framework, UN peace support operations, historical background of CAR crisis, the role of UN in CAR, conclusion and recommendations.

Literature review

Bois Dagne (2000) in his work "The UN and its Budget in CAR" only looked at the UN expenses in its peace support operation in Central Africa. To him the UN is over spending in their operations in CAR. This paper is divergent to this work in that while our focus is on the role of the UN in CAR, its effects, challenges and solutions Boi's work focus on its expenses. Gerald Best (2023) in his work "UN and its workers in CAR" focused on how the UN treats' its workers in Central African Republic. To him, the UN does not treat their workers well and he claimed that is why some of them engage in shady deals. His paper does not look at the role of the UN in CAR and this was in contradiction with the focus of this work.

Mongolo Ibu (2024) in her work "UN peace support and bureaucracy in CAR". Here he was engaged with the bureaucratic bottle necks that slowed and complicated things for the UN peace keepers in CAR. According to him it takes long for decision to be taken and many opportunities were lost because of this lackadaisical and ineptitude attitude. His work was good but he fails to examine the role of this global institution in CAR as this research aims to do. Ibrahim Abbas (2023) in his research "The UN peace support and infrastructure in CAR" focused on buildings, roads, housing, vehicles, stores and other logistical instruments in aiding or hampering the UN work in Central Africa Republic. His main view was only on the hinderances that confronted the UN peace support in the country unlike this work that is looking at the roles (positive and negative), effects and solutions out of the quagmire in CAR.

Finally, Boise Henry (2024) in his work "The UN and the vandalization of its equipment's in CAR" focused on how the UN equipment's were stolen and vandalized and its effect on the poor performance of the UN peace support in CAR. This may have restricted the UN work in CAR but certainly not the only factor. This is why a wholistic work has to be done as regards to their role, effect, challenges and solutions if the UN deeds in CAR will be duly appreciated and this is the pivot of this work.

Conceptual Definitions

Anti-Balaka: Christian-led Militia from Northwestern CAR.

BONUCA: United Nations peace-building support office in the Central African Republic.

MISAB: Central African peace support force made up of Gabon, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali.

MINURCA: United Nations Mission in Central African Republic.

PSO: Peace Support Operations (controlled by the UN)

Seleka: Muslim-led Militia groups from the Northeast of CAR.

Methodology

This is a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretative work. The research used secondary data obtained from journals, magazines, books, Newspapers and reports from UN peace keeping operation department. Documentary evidence was used as data gathering technique while the theory of liberal internationalism was used as the analytical tool.

Theoretical Framework

The theory this work used is the liberal theory. This theory maintains that liberal states should intervene in other independent countries so as to secure liberal objectives of which one of them is peace. One of the main proponents of this theory is John Locke of the Enlightenment fame. The liberalists believe that social bond linking human beings should be seen as a window for cooperation. They opined that inter-dependency, interaction, and cooperation among countries are emblem of peace and security. Liberals main goal is to see how global peace and cooperation can be ensured (Dume, 2014). This is the idea behind the UN peace support operations.

They acknowledge that might or bellicosity alone cannot be the only deciding factor in international arena and added that international institutions like the UN are veritable tools for ensuring and enforcing peaceful relations among nations. To them international organizations act as higher authority in ensuring peace amongst nations (Morgan, 1999). Liberals are in tandem that democratic states with free market economy are more conducive to peace than undemocratic countries. There are two types of liberal theory scholars: cosmopolitan interventionists and liberal interventionists. Cosmopolitan interventionists believe that intervention is a mandatory duty in case of a deliberate human rights abuses by a wicked government. Liberal internationalists envisage external intervention as a last check to end long lasting civil wars and widespread casualties. The UN combines both aspects of liberalism theory. They asserted that peace keeping operations must be globally agreed to and authorised by the UNSC to be authentic (Doyle,2011).

The United Nations peacekeeping operations was formed base on the ethics of liberalism which focused on installing peace in place of conflict globally. This is why this work adopted this theoretical construct in order to analyze and explain the role of United Nations Peace Support Operations in Central African Republic.

UN Peace Support Operation

United Nation peace support Operation is based on the first priority of the UN which focus on building peace and security. The first PSO was sent by the UN to form a buffer zone between the Israeli and the Egyptian soldiers in the Sinai Peninsula in 1948 (Richard,1970). Since then, many peace support operations have been initiated by the UN in many parts of the world. Importantly, peace support mission or operations are shaped to carry out a plethora of civil and armed forces duties, plus the sustenance of public peace. The peace support instrument works on the foundation of flexibility, giving room for the mission to adapt its strategy between peace keeping and peace enforcement based on the agreement of the conflictual groups (Richard, 1970).

UN peacekeeping is regulated by three fundamental objectives: agreement of the conflictual groups, impartiality, non-use of force except in self defence or in protection of the objectives (Sampson,2016). This implies that the UN peace support operations must be sent focused on the agreement of the fighting groups. Secondly, the UN peacekeeping forces must not take sides and thirdly, they must not use force unless on self defence or to implement the mandate they were given in case they were not allow to do so peacefully.

Historical Background of Central African Republic Crisis

The Central African Republic (CAR) is an inland state located in central Africa. It is bounded by Chad in the north, Sudan in the north-east, South Sudan in the south-east, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west. The CAR covers a land area of about 620,000 square kilometers (240, ooo sqml) with an estimated population of 4.7 million as of December, 2020. The CAR has been characterised by civil disturbances since 2021 (Abdul, 2022).

The control of finance and infidelities was the bane for the unprogressive and fragile economy, which was responsible for inadequacy in making available the fundamental provisions to the populace. Regional crisis within central Africa, added with domestic feeble governmental administrations and a lineage of armed forces grip have instigated a cycle of violence in the CAR. Since its freedom from France in 1960, CAR's story is characterised by repetitive coups and autocratic rule. Democratic elections held in 1993 abrogated a period of almost 30 years of turbulence (Obi, 2000). The elections favoured Ange Felix Patasse, a civilian political figure aided by Chad. Within Patasse's presidency 1993-2003, the CAR experienced economic crisis losing what was left of its administrative capacity to make available social services for its populace and heightened its reliance on foreign aid. Moreover, Patasse instituted the Presidential Guard (GP), further tribalizing the nation's armed forces and adding to increase in administrative and tribal tensions all through the 1990s (International Crisis Group 2014).

With the first reconciliation attempt by Gabon, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali the inter-African force in the Central African Republic (MISAB) was sent in February 1997 before being replaced in 1998 by the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) and by the United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) after 2000 (UN 2001). On March 15, 2003, General Francois Bozize dethroned Patasse in a foreign aided coup, removing the parliament and putting up a transitional government. The capital, Bangui, initially fell into crisis as the new Chadian and Sudanese armed forces extracted payments through widespread ravaging of civilians' properties. Within this period, the rebels carry out widespread acts of brutality in the north-west, causing the dislocation of over 100,000 people (Douglas,2017). The government did little to punish these behaviours, planting a behaviour of lawlessness while the legal use of force melted away.

With the 2005 elections, which re-elected Bozize, internal crisis increased and unleash throughout the CAR, plus the regional crisis that was already in central Africa, this stimulated the global community to intervene more seriously. By 2010, numerous peace treaties were concluded between the government and three of the major militias groups, setting the importance for inclusive political discussions and withdrawing of arms, dissolving the militias, and reconciliation (DDR). The CAR equally launched its first state seminar on protection sector reform (SSR). While these developments built a new sense of hope towards protection and institutional reconfiguration, there were no serious efforts as to implementation. By 2012, many Muslim-led militia groups, mainly from the marginalized North-east, established a union Known as the Seleka, embarking on a military raid and successfully dethroning Bozize on March 23, 2013. Michael Djotodia, former militia leader of L'Union des Forces Democratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR), pronounced himself President (Olalawe, 2014). This caused most of the Forces Arme es Centrafricaines (FACA) to flee and this triggered complete institutional destruction of the security wing, aiding comprehensive raids, plus human abuses, lootings, killings of civilians and vandalization of entire villages.

No matter the removal of the Seleka union, Djotodia cannot control the fighters. Calamitous attacks were often for instance in the Christian North-West area, which was seen as Bozize's stronghold. In turn, a majority Christian-led North-Western rebels called the anti-balakas came up and attacked Muslim communities, adding religious and inter-communal phase to the conflict and further increasing the violence. Seriously condemned for not being able to pacify the country, Djotodia left the leadership in January 2014 and was succeeded by Catherine Samba Panza (International Crisis Group, 2014).

To solve the problem, the UN joined Peace building Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) with the implementation of the handover process, the help to conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance; the stabilization of the protection condition and in the security of human rights, among others (UN Security Council agreement 2121) and this was

later put together in April 2014 into the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) (UN Security Council resolution 2149).

The Role of UN in Central African Republic

Worried by the protection, social, human rights, political conflict in Central African Republic and its regional consequences, the Security Council mandated on 10 April 2014 the sending of a comprehensive United Nations peacekeeping operation-MINUSCA with the protection of civilians as its utmost objective. Its other initial duties comprise support for the handover process, helping humanitarian needs, uplifting and security of human rights, support for legality and constitutionality, and removal of illegal arms, cancelling militias, encouraging togetherness and returning processes. On 15 September, 2014, the African-initiated International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) handover its power over to MINUSCA, in agreement with resolution 2149 (UN 2014). UN role in Central African Republic is divided into two-the positive and the negative role.

(i) UN Positive Roles

- MUNISCA unequivocally protected civilians and also help in consolidating state authority in CAR
- MINUSCA worked together with the then newly-formed Central African soldiers (FACA) outside of Bangui for the first time since 2013.
- The UN also brought up nearly 4,000 national police and 4,000 civil servants, built and trained prisons warders and reprimanded centers; helped the launch of CAR's new mixed Special Criminal Court (Douglas, 2017).
- The UN helped to reconstruct schools, community buildings, prefecture centers, and hospitals.
- MINUSCA support to establish 29 local peace and reconciliation committees in towns throughout the country, likewise a variety of local peace concord. For instance, in 2017, in the southeastern town of Pombolo, a MINUSCA political affairs worker helped an ex-Seleka herder leader write a missive to the local anti-Balaka chief town council, asking for forgiveness due to prior violence. The mayor received the missive, and the political affairs officer aided to write a consequent exchange of letters between the two sides. The community heads thereafter formalized their ways of dispute reconciliation, and since then, the town has seen few civilian deaths (George, 2015).
- MINUSCA brought the idea of gender balance by employing equal female and male employees. MINUSCA deployed a female Zambian engagement team who helped the town in many of ways. The female battalion helped MINUSCA to open 13 town halls in the town (George, 2015).
- MINUSCA and the CAR government have made available many supports for militia leaders to take part in non-violent politics. For instance, MINUSCA helped them to participate in then February 2019 peace accord. This act reduced the violence among the warring groups (Ebenezer, 2020).

(ii) UN Negative Roles

- The arrival of MINUSCA raised prices and increase prostitution as the local girls' scramble for the cash of the richer peacekeeping forces (Bashiru,2021).
- Due to the increased prostitution introduced by the MINUSCA there were widespread of HIV/AIDS and other STD'S among the local communities.
- Some members of MINUSCA indulge in human trafficking which involve mainly females. Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, keeping or receipt of persons by way of threat or use of force or other form of coercion, abduction, fraud, deceiving, and use of vulnerability or giving money or benefits for control of another person. This human trafficking business introduced local organised criminal networks within the community (Adaku, 2023).

- There was no formalized accountability or penalties for peacekeepers disobeying their code of conduct and

- No implementation of anti-trafficking policies in the peacekeeping operation (Santos, 2017).

- A strong gap in the system is that UN personnel are higher than the local laws, personnel seen trafficking or carrying out any other offence are simply sent to their country to face the law which are hardly implemented (Sandler, 2017). The UN peacekeeping should reduce bureaucratic bottle neck in order to have an efficient relief distribution system.

Conclusion

The UN played an important role in CAR no matter the obstacles they encountered. The Unted Nations peace supports operations in Central African Republic achieved some laudable progress like in protecting civilians, supporting local peace initiatives, and stabilizing violence where it still persists. But despite these enviable marks, MINUSCA failed in areas like introduction of prostitution, high prices of goods, human trafficking, spreading of HIV/AIDs and other STDs, and acting above the law in some instances.

Recommendations

1. All sections of the UN peacekeeping operations should obey international and domestic laws of indigenous people wherein they are serving so as to implement the UN peacekeeping mandate cordially.

2. The UN peacekeeping forces should be changed after 4 or 6 months to reduce promiscuity amongst them.

3. The UN peacekeeping should be restructured to adequately meet up with present realities

4. The UN peacekeeping should reduce their bureaucratic bottle necks in order to have flawless and reliable relief distribution system.

5. The UN peacekeeping should work closely with local community-based peace initiators in order to achieve a more reliable and sustainable peace.

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THE ROHINGYA CRISIS AND THE WAY FORWARD

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KEYWORDS
Crisis, Marginalization, Citizenship, Ethnic, Nationalism

ABSTRACT
The Rohingya challenges, characterized by the large dislocation and marginalization of the Rohingya Islamic people from Myanmar (former Burma), stood as an important social problem of the 21st Century. The origin of the conflict can be traced to years of tribal upheavals and the British imperial administration which engendered divisive tendencies amongst the people. These divisive tendencies skyrocketed even after independence and climaxed in the 1982 nationality or citizenship law, which made the Rohingya people stateless. The increase of tribal nationalism has played an important role in these divisions, with the main Myanmar tribal group seeing the Rohingya as aliens. The effect of the Rohingya conflict is unfathomable, affecting over a million people living in poor situations in Bangladesh, over stretching the country's resources and causing insecurity. The Myanmar administration's divisive policies, combative military behaviours, and socio-economic marginalization of the Rohingya have amounted to serious human rights abuses. This makes one to ask what are the causes of Rohingya people's crisis? What are the effects? How can the challenges be resolved or is there any way forward? To find answers to the above cited questions is the objectives of this work. In order to get undiluted answers to the questions raised, this work employs secondary sources like books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and internet materials. Ethnic nationalism theory was used as the theoretical construct while documentary evidence was used as the analytical tool. The work also did some literature review in order to enrich the background knowledge of the work. At the end the work discovered that factors like ethnic and religious discrimination, political and military issues, socio-economic marginalization, militarization and human rights abuses, and geopolitical dynamics caused the crisis. The effects are humanitarian impact, socio-economic strain on Bangladesh, security concerns, and international response. In proffering the way forward, the work recommended that all the causes of the conflict as highlighted above must be stopped and as the way forward factors like accountability, humanitarian support, strengthening of international cooperation, and promotion of other sustainable solutions must be vigorously pursued.

Introduction

Conflicts especially one that is caused by one group of people denying the other of their inalienable rights and citizenship is the most prevalent and widespread in the world today. Examples abound like the Darfurians in Sudan, Houthis in Yemen, Palestines in Israel, Kurds in Turkiye, Syria, Iraq and Rohingya in Myanmar etc. The Rohingya conflict Is one of the most intricating and protracted human problem of the decade, featured by many dislocations and marginalizations suffered by the Rohingya Islamic minority in Myanmar. In the centre of the crisis which has embrace Myanmar's Rakhine State, the ill-condition of the Rohingya citizens manifest as an ugly memory indicating persistent punishment and humane disregard.

This small tribal group, majorly Muslim, has withstood years of planned discriminations, marginalization and crisis, summed up in what the UN called a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" (Mustapha, 2022). This crisis, which is a humanitarian problem of unfathomable measurement, has caused above a million Rohingya to seek shelter in nearby countries like Bangladesh, escaping the brutal military pursuits, village incendiaries, and unprintable hardships.

The Rohingya populace (inhabitants of Rohano) are Muslims of the Aryan race who mainly dwell in the Rakhine province of Myanmar, formerly Burma. Before the Rohingya ethnic cleansing of 2017, when about 740,000 ran to Bangladesh, about 1.4 million lived in Myanmar (Mustapha, 2022). The Rohingya are regarded as the most marginalized minorities in the global arena. They are not accepted as citizens enforced by the 1982 Myanmar nationality or citizenship law, they are barred from free movement, denied acquisition of state education and jobs. Their situations have been equated with that of blacks in former apartheid South Africa. The Rohingya claimed to be citizens of western Myanmar while the Myanmar administration regard them as migrants from Chittagong in Bangladesh and therefore call them Bengalis. They have been revolting from 1940s and they have suffered series of military incursions in 1978, 1991-1992, 2012, 2015 and 2016-2018 when large number of Rohingya was forced into Bangladesh.

As the globe watch this unbearable act, it is of essence to look into the complex web of historical, ethnic, political, and socio-economic issues that have engendered and propel this conflict. By disclosing the complicated maze of causes, we will have a profound knowledge of the basic problems and make a way for sustainable answers that will hold human respect and recover harmony and legal rights to this marginalized people. This work is sectionalized into nine areas: -introduction, literature review, methodology, theoretical framework, historical background, causes, way forward, conclusion, and recommendations.

Literature Review

Gerald Deshi (2022) in his work titled "The Origin of Stateless people" objected to the citizenship law and tried to show that the Rohingya are truly from Myanmar. The issue of citizenship was without doubt one of the reasons for rejecting the Rohingyas from Myanmar but other factors were also pivotal in their predicament of which the author was silent about. This yawning gap in causal factors is what this research wants to fill. Indira Khan (2023) in his book "Rohingya the link between Myanmar and Bangladesh" looked at how Myanmar and Bangladesh could share the Rohingya people between themselves and if this is done according to him will bring peace to Myanmar, Bangladesh and Rohingya. He did not tell us how this will work out since both Myanmar and Bangladesh did not regard the Rohingyas' as citizens in their respective countries. His work did not look at the factors that caused the Rohingya peoples' plight, he only concentrated at building bridges of peace as he claimed. This lack in his work is what this research deems fit to fill.

Bradesh (2024) in her research titled "The Rohingya Refugees Crisis" focused on the sufferings of the Rohingya people in their deplorable refugee camps in Bangladesh. This work concentrated on the consequences of the crisis rather than on the causes of it. This missing link is the lacunae that this work wants to fill. Shingar Tak (2023) in his work titled "Rohingya and religion" linked the Rohingya woes with the religion they follow. He said "Had it been the Rohingya were Buddhists like the majority in Myanmar the story would have been different" Deducing from this, he opined that Rohingya predicament was strongly tied to the religion they follow. This is a factor but yet it does not give us a wholistic view of other factors that contributed to Rohingya peoples sorrow. To fill this wholistic causes is the objective of this work.

Anak Roh (2022) in her work "The Rohingya and Bangladesh" focused on the inhuman conditions in the Bangladesh camps in which the Rohingya refugees live. He pleaded for both the Bangladesh government and the UN to come to the aid of the Rohingya refugees. The author concentrated on woeful outcome of the Rohingya's crisis but not on the causes and way out. Furthermore, Bak Anon (2023) in his work "The Rohingya Militias" looked at the Rohingya militias fighting spirit and the type of ammunition they have. He failed to let us know why they are fighting and why they are putting much zeal. To fill these gaps is the pivot of this paper.

Methodology

This is a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretative study. The data for the work was obtained through secondary sources like books, journals, theses, magazines', newspapers, and internet materials. The data collected was analyzed through documentary evidence and; the ethnic nationalism theory was used as a tool of analysis. The data collection process follows specific criteria for relevance, reliability, and credibility.

Theoretical Framework

The ethnic nationalism theory maintains that a state is defined basically by a collective identity. This identity involves same ancestry, linguistic, norms and may be religious beliefs. Ethnic nationalism shows the significance of tribal commonality in the making and sustenance of a state, sometimes pointing to the inculcation of the dominant tribal sect and the segregation or oppression of others. Ethnic nationalism originated in the 19th century as a sequel to the powers of modernization and the upcoming of nations (Smith, 1986). This kind of nationalism acquire centre stage during the demise of heterogenous kingdoms such as Austro-Hungarian and Ottman kingdoms, as many tribal sects tries to set up their own independent nations (Thomas, 1990). Major propounders of this theory are Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. They posit that each tribal sect merits political independence (Barnard, 1969). Ethnic nationalism since then has engendered many agitations and crisis, redrawing boundaries and state identities throughout the globe.

The key characteristics or assumptions of the theory are the superiority of ethnic mark or identity, historical homogeneity, independence or self-determination, unadulterated citizenship and national indigenship, cultural sameness, and territorial ownership.

Ethnic nationalism theory has been attacked for encouraging separation and segregation rather than oneness and brotherhood. Critics posit that the claim on a single tribal image can discriminate and remove the power of voting from the minorities, provoking social disruption and crisis (Brubaker, 1996). This emphasis on tribal sameness often pays less attention on the many cultural and ethnic realities of modern states, metamorphosing in plans that can inculcate separation and inequality (Smith, 1986).

However, ethnic nationalism gives a frame for comprehending the basic causes of the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar. In regard to this theory, a state is known basically, by a common ethnic image or characteristics, comprising same language, culture, ancestorial origin, and historical background. In Myanmar, the main Burma ethnic sect sees the state through this periscope, perceiving themselves as the main owners of the country. This attitude has led to decisions and behavioral instinct that discriminate and oppress minority tribal groups, especially the Rohingya who are mainly Muslim and have different cultural and linguistic features.

The case on historical lineage in ethnic nationalism theory moreover complicates the issue. The Myanmar administration sees the Rohingya as aliens with no historical root in the state, no matter the Rohingya's historical presence in the region. This biased explanation of history is used to buttressed non-recognition of the Rohingya nativity and fundamental rights (Joseph, 2023). The 1982 Citizenship Law which made the Rohingya stateless was enacted to cement and formalized this obnoxious act. The Myanmar government has used the self-determination part of ethnic nationalism theory to mete out severe human rights abuses, mass dislocations and refugee problem against the Rohingya people. Ethnic nationalism theory enables us to unravel how identity and deprivation of others have led to the calculated oppression and exploitation of the Rohingya in Myanmar.

Historical Background

The Rohingya claimed to have established in the Rakhine region of Myanmar since the 18th century, when Arab merchants brought Islam to the area. With time, the province attracted many cultures of different religious background like the Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims. Old archives from the empires of Arakan (4th century-1785) cited a timeframe of cordiality and cohabitation among these heterogenous groups. Muslims occupy important positions in the empire's government, norms, and developments.

The Rohingya are mostly Muslim tribal group living in Myanmar's Rakhine region. The province now called Rakhine province, before known as Arakan, has being a place of abode for many tribal groups, plus the Rohingya, for decades. Ancient records have it that Muslim groups have been in the area right from the 18th century, involving in mercantile activities and cultural relationships with other kingdoms. The empire of Arkan, which was in place from about the 4th century to about 1785, was a sovereign state that established important cultural and governmental links with both South Asia and Southeast Asia. Arakan was a converging point of many tribal groups, plus Muslims who occupied important positions in the empire's government and community (Leider, 2022).

The British domination of Myanmar in 1824, led to important population and socio-political alteration in the province. Arkan was incorporated into British India, and the British allow the movement of workers from British India, especially Bengal, to Arakan for economic objectives. This movement enlarge the Muslim people in the province, adding to the tribal divisions and entrenching the foundation of crisis for many years to come (Charney, 2024). In the second world war, Arakan became a conflictual field between the British and Japanese army, increasing tribal differences between Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists. The British offered the Rohingya an independent Muslim nation in exchange for their support against the Japanese, a pact that was never kept.

When Myanmar became a sovereign state from Britain in 1948, the new administration refused the Rohingya official status, unleashing serious crisis. The Rohingya's quest for recognition and self-governance were rejected, and the administration saw them as aliens no matter their historical habitation in the area (Ahmed, 2020). The army overthrow in 1962 ushered a crossroad for the Rohingya, as the Myanmar armed forces regime brought plans that segregated them, climaxing in the obnoxious 1982 Citizenship Law. This law completely made the Rohingya stateless by removing them from known tribal groups, refusing them nationality privileges, and obstructing their rights to schools, hospitals, and jobs (Ibrahim, 2021).

Many important aggressions have been meted to the Rohingya over the years. In 1978, the Myanmar soldiers embarked on Operation Nagamin (Dragon king), directed at the Rohingya Muslims under the disguise of looking for unlawful migrants. The operation speaks of awful human rights maltreatment, imposed labour, illegal arrests, and unlawful killings, unleashing mass dislocation of the Rohingya. Another attack happened in 1991-92, leading to more crisis and dislocation of the Rohingya, with most of them running to Bangladesh. The condition became more gruesome in 2012 when serious conflict between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims busted out, leading to hundreds of casualties and dislocation of tens of thousands of Rohingya into unlivable areas. This conflict was engineered by profound tribal and religious crisis, increased by segregatory nation policies (Ibrahim, 2021).

The worst and most expansive objected attack happened in August 2017, after incursion by Rohingya armed groups on police locations. The Myanmar forces waged a murderous attack against the Rohingya people, with news of calculated killings, women abuse, and village incendiaries. This crisis led to over 700,000 Rohingya escaping to Bangladesh, producing one of the global most dangerous refugee conflict. The UN saw the Myanmar army action as genocide (Ahmed, 2020). The global society has reacted with palliative help and lawful initiatives. Many global societies have supplied essential support to Rohingya people in Bangladesh and those within Myanmar. The international Court of Justice (ICJ) case put up by the Gambian government in 2019 blamed Myanmar of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya, creating an important move towards judicial credence.

No matter these initiatives, most Rohingya remain in horrible camps in Bangladesh or as dislocated people in Rakhine region, Myanmar. Their conditions are still dangerous, with restricted opening to fundamental social

services, schools, and job openings. The problem of Rohingya nationality and rights are still to be resolved, with the Myanmar administration indicating little eagerness to resolve the basic causes of the conflict.

The Rohingya people's origin in Myanmar is anchored by their citizenship in the Rakhine area, population changes during the foreign rule era, and long years of post-independence marginalization and conflict. Comprehending this history is important to knowing the basic factors of the conflict and locating sustainable panaceas. The present sufferings of the Rohingya show the necessity for combined world support to ascertain the fundamental human right for one of the most segregated and marginalized people in the globe.

Causes of the Conflict

The Rohingya conflict is profoundly entrenched in old tribal/ethnic and religious upheavals between the mainly Muslim Rohingya minority and the Buddhist majority people in Myanmar. The Myanmar administration and many Buddhist nationalists have always seen the Rohingya as aliens from Bangladesh, engineering anti-Rohingya crisis and segregation policies (Bugarat, 2023). This view has been increased by the growing Buddhist nationalism and the multiplication of insultive comments and annoying comments directed at the Rohingya people. The aftermath community divisions and separation have produced a favourable ground for crisis and marginalization with ultra-nationalists on both sides adding to the exacerbation of the crisis and human right negligence.

The political factor in Myanmar has also contributed to the Rohingya conflict. The armed forces, called the Tatmadaw, has made the Rohingya issue a tool of consolidation of power and justification of their actions. The 2017 army suppression, which led to the large movement of over 700,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh, was clearly a reaction to incursion by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on police posts (Musa, 2023). Nevertheless, it speedily spiraled into expansive crisis against civilians, plus large killings, sexual abuse and burning of properties.

The Rohingya's lack of nationality and legitimate status in Myanmar has been an important moving power driving their segregation and frustration. Termed aliens, no matter their ancient presence in the area, they have been deliberately removed from the nation's political stage and debarred fundamental human rights (Saheed, 2022). The refusal of their inalienable rights has not only entrenched their sufferings but has also carved the foundation for further marginalization and abuses.

The Rohingya have been made to suffer socio-economic segregation. They undergo wicked hindrances on movement, education, health, and jobs. This deliberate denial has left the Rohingya poor and unprotected increasing their sufferings and hindering their power to ask for their rights (Jibril, 2023). The Rohingya populace has suffered veritable economic exploitations, involving restricted land acquisition, limited job opportunities, and hinderances on their rights of movement. This economic expropriation has entrenched a cyclical poverty, lack of food, and restricted access to fundamental services, moreover complicating the danger of the Rohingya people. The incapacity to have adequate sustenance and the refusal of life essentials have not only reduced their living standard but have also made them more vulnerable to deprivations and exploitations (Jibril, 2023).

There have been combative and inalienable rights abuses against the Rohingya. Their conflict graduated to a crescendo in August 2017 when the Myanmar army waged a murderous killing spree in reaction to incursions by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), a Rohingya militant movement. The Myanmar armed force's unequal reaction incorporate expansive and well-planned inalienable rights abuses, plus unlawful killings, women maltreatments, and scorch earthing the Rohingya villages (Adresh, 2022). These immeasurable wicked acts, depicted by the UN as the height of genocide, stimulated an avalanche of Rohingya migrants into nearby nations, especially Bangladesh. The coming of the Rohingya migrants has unleashed heavy pressure on the Bangladesh society, with overpopulated camps fighting to have fundamental needs and struggling to meet the overdue requirements of the dislocated populace (Adresh, 2022).

Moreover, the Rohingya conflict is also affected by continental and global geopolitical changes. Nations like China, India, and the US have special aims in Myanmar, which influenced their reactions to the conflict. For example, China's investments in Myanmar have led to a calculated move, while the United States has

placed an embargo on Myanmar's army rulers (Ismail, 2022).

Effects of the Conflict

The Social or humanitarian effect of the Rohingya conflict is incalculable. More than a million

Rohingya migrants' abode in squalid conditions in Bangladesh, expose to unfavourable situations with restricted access to fundamental services such as pure water, hygienic conditions, and hospital care. The dwellings are given to organic eventualities like dangerous windy conditions further complicating the Rohingya migrants' conditions (Sagir, 2023).

The in pouring of Rohingya migrants' in to Bangladesh has put a profound stress on the nation, especially in the Cox's Bazar province. The domestic sustenance, surroundings, and social linkages have been badly affected. The presence of a huge migrants' population has exacerbated struggle over sustenance, increasing costs, and humanitarian crisis between the migrants' and Bangladesh people (Sagir, 2023).

The delayed dislocation and lack of hope for the Rohingya have led to security issues. The migrants' dwellings have become training bases for unlawful behaviours, with human trading, illicit drug trade, and grooming of insurgent movements. These problems indicate important restrictions to both Bangladesh and regional peace.

Lastly, the global society's reaction to the Rohingya conflict has been complicated. While there have been important social efforts to support the migrants, administrative and negotiation moves have been less efficient. The UN has asked for credible, peaceful, and voluntary going back of the Rohingya to Myanmar, but advances has been tardy due to the complicated governmental condition in Myanmar and the lackluster manner of the global community (Hussein, 2022).

Way Forward

To remedy the Rohingya conflict, it is important to solve its basic causes. This involve eradicating the deliberate segregation and restrictions of the Rohingya in Myanmar. The Myanmar administration must accept the Rohingya as citizens and treat them equally like other indigenes of Myanmar. This necessitates correcting the obnoxious 1982 Citizenship Law and other segregatory pronouncements (Hussein, 2022).

Responsibility for the ills perpetrated against the Rohingya is vital for sustainable resolution. Global institutions like the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), should be used to bring those that cause mayhem against the Rohingya to book. This will help to stop other atrocities and made legal protection available to the oppressed (Anak, 2024).

Enhancing lasting panacea for the Rohingya conflict comprise making time for their peaceful, unforced, and respectful going back to Myanmar. This needs a wholistic intervention that involves political, social, and economic changes in Myanmar, including global support. Nations in the area, especially Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, and India, must join hands to locate a lasting cure to the conflict (Andrew, 2024).

The global society must join hands to redress the Rohingya conflict. This involves negotiation to force Myanmar to stop its segregation initiatives and see to the peaceful come back of the Rohingya. In addition, global institutions and aid giving nations should join their social supports to achieve their aim and help in building a lasting progress for the concerned areas.

Conclusion

The Rohingya conflict is a complicated and hydra-headed problem that demands a broad and articulated reaction. Resolving the basic causes of the conflict, being responsible for human rights restrictions, enabling social support, and ensuring lasting solutions are important stages in stopping the conflict. The global society must stand united in helping the Rohingya and ensuring a brighter tomorrow where they can stay in respect and harmony. By comprehending the historical, political, and social ramifications of the conflict, we can strongly support the inalienable rights and good living conditions for the Rohingya people and add to a more equitable and just globe.

Recommendations

- The Myanmar administration should correct or remove the atrocious 1982 Citizenship Law to give complete nationality to the Rohingya. This should involve the right to citizenship, which is basic to getting other privileges and security.

- The Myanmar government should put plans that ensure equal treatment for all tribes and religion in Myanmar. This involves access to movement, literacy, hospital care, and job leverages without segregation.

- The Myanmar administration should encourage government of all including the Rohingya and other segregated groups. This could call for putting up institutions for minority inclusion in policy making processes.

- The government should encourage and approve inter-tribal and inter-faith relationship meetings poised at building beneficial harmony and resolution between the Rohingya and other tribal entities in Myanmar, especially the Rakhine Buddhists.

- The global institutions like the UN, ASEAN, etc. must persevere to force the Myanmar administration to stop segregation policies and inalienable rights maltreatment against the Rohingya.

- The international community should put embargoes against persons and bodies who committed atrocities against the Rohingya. They should also encourage actions meant to bring the instigators to book.

- The Myanmar government should make sure that help like food, shelter, hospital care and education are giving to all in Myanmar, especially the Rohingya.

- The international community should help host countries like Bangladesh so that the migrants' surge will not overwhelm them.

- Both the international community and the Myanmar government should introduce enhancement programmes for the Rohingya like acquisition training, microfinance loans and job opportunities.

- The Myanmar government should build infrastructures in the Rakhine State that will be for all.

- The Myanmar government should ensure the protection of human rights, especially that of the Rohingya.

- Finally, the international community should ensure effective and efficient monitoring systems that will see that human rights are maintained for all in Myanmar.

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ASSESSMENT OF NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC INTEREST IN ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, 2012-2022

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KEYWORDS
Civil Society, Gender Equality, Economic Development, Nigeria

ABSTRACT
This paper investigates Nigeria's economic interest in its bilateral relations with the United States, 2012-2022. It explores the historical antecedents that have shaped Nigeria's interest, and post-independence economic policies, which have led to a mono-economy centred around oil exports. The historical and exploratory research method was employed through secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, government publications, conference and seminar lecture materials, and the Internet. While Nigeria has benefited from U.S. investments, market access, and technological transfers, these advantages have often come with significant drawbacks such as reduced policy autonomy and vulnerability to external economic shocks. The research adopted the dependency theory as the theoretical framework for analysis. The findings underscore the need for Nigeria to diversify its economy, strengthen regional trade partnerships, and improve governance to mitigate these challenges. It concludes that although the economic relationship with the U.S. has provided short-term gains, it has compromised Nigeria's long-term national interests, highlighting the importance of pursuing a more balanced and self-reliant economic strategy. The paper recommended that through economic diversification and regional integration, Nigeria can enhance its resilience and align its economic policies more closely with its national interests.

Introduction

The growing complexity and dynamism of the world state system, inevitably aided by growing global interrelationship, interconnectedness, and interdependency, relations among states whether small or big, rich or poor, strong or weak, democracy or non-democracy have become not only compelling but inevitable. Thus, the compulsive need to interact with one another has given rise to the imperative for states to consciously initiate, formulate, and implement foreign policies to attain national objectives and project core values. Due to growing domestic needs and challenges, states have made national economic interest objectives in their foreign policy implementation to achieve economic development in their interaction with others. According to Ukhami (2018), in the quest to formulate and design policies that would enable the state to attain its national interest, ideological goals, and economic prosperity, the act of foreign policy

becomes inevitably and compellingly necessary to every nation-state in the international system.

Nigeria (of about 200 million people) is the most populated country and the largest economy in Africa, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over $400 billion in 2021, and it is one of the most resource-rich countries in the world. The country holds the distinction of being called the "Giant of Africa," however, the country's economic growth has been hindered by various challenges, including persistent poverty, corruption, poor infrastructure, underdevelopment, and insecurity. As a result, Nigeria's economic performance is heavily reliant on the global oil market, which accounts for over 80% of the country's export earnings and 70% of government revenue. The country's oil industry is dominated by multinational corporations, many of which are based in the Great Powers such as the United States, China, and the United Kingdom. Nigeria's reliance on foreign aid and investment from the great powers to support its economic development cannot be underestimated.

Relations between Nigeria and the United States have historically been marked by cooperation and a degree of affinity. This started in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the United States' primary interest in Nigeria was oil. As of 1974 to be precise, Nigeria has been known to be the largest exporters of crude oil to the United States. The two countries have cooperated on various issues, including counterterrorism, peacekeeping, and economic development. Nigeria has also been a key recipient of U.S. foreign aid and investment, which have supported the country's economic growth and development. According to Tar and Ukhami (2018), these interest and economic benefits enjoyed by the two countries have prone American companies to have substantial investments and stakes in Shell, and Chevron in the Nigeria oil industry. Since then, Nigeria-US relations have metamorphosed into economic and diplomatic ties which Nigeria also values to improve its image among the comity of nations.

Nigeria's economic dependency on the U.S. has some implications for its national interest and foreign policy choices. Nigeria has long sought to establish itself as a leader in Africa and a major player on the global stage, but its economic reliance has limited its ability to pursue an independent foreign policy. Moreover, Nigeria's relations with the U.S. have been shaped by various factors, including geopolitical interests, economic interests, and historical ties. However, Nigeria's economic relations with the U.S. have also faced challenges and uncertainties. For example, the global economic slowdown and the COVID-19 pandemic have led to fluctuations in oil prices and reduced demand for Nigerian exports. In addition, geopolitical tensions between the United States and China have created new uncertainties for Nigeria, as the country seeks to balance its relations with both powers. According to Akinyemi (2017), Nigeria has a long history of economic dependence on foreign aid and investment from the U.S. This dependence has led to debates about the extent to which Nigeria's foreign policy decisions align with its national interest. Additionally, Iroegbu (2016) argues that Nigeria's economic dependence limits its ability to pursue policies that might be in its national interest but could conflict with the interests of the U.S.

The period from 2012 to 2022 has been marked by significant changes and developments in Nigeria's economic and foreign policy landscape. The country experienced a recession in 2016-2017 due to falling oil prices and has since embarked on a series of economic reforms and diversification efforts. Nigeria also faced a range of security challenges during this period, including the rise of Boko Haram and other extremist groups, as well as ethnic and religious conflicts in various parts of the country. Against this backdrop, Nigeria's relations with the U.S. have continued to evolve, presenting new opportunities and challenges for the country's leaders and policymakers. Therefore, the study aims to explore the dynamics of Nigeria's economic interest in its relations with the U.S. between 2012 and 2022.

Conceptual Clarification

Economic Interest

Economic interest has been a subject of extensive study across various fields, including economics, political science, and international relations. It encompasses the pursuit of material gain and wealth, often driving individual and collective actions in both domestic and international contexts. Scholars have approached economic interest from different angles, with some emphasizing its foundational role in shaping human behavior and societal structures, while others critique its overemphasis, especially in policy-making. Adam

Smith, regarded as the father of modern economics, proposed that economic interest is an inherent force guiding market activities. He introduced the concept of the "invisible hand," suggesting that individuals, in pursuing their self-interest, inadvertently contribute to societal welfare (Smith, 1776). Sen (1999) integrates ethics with economics, stressing that economic interest should not only focus on wealth accumulation but also on expanding human capabilities and freedoms. This shift introduces a broader conception of economic interest, where societal well-being and individual empowerment are prioritized alongside material wealth.

Matusevich (2014) defines economic interests as the personified vital material and spiritual conditions of human existence, essentially the conscious economic needs of people. These needs serve as the motivation for socioeconomic actions and are the driving force behind economic reproduction. Babina and Lozova (2013) describe economic interest as a complex category that encompasses the motives and incentives of market actors, as well as the internal and external factors that shape economic interests and the goals they aim to achieve. Expanding on this, Didenko (2013) argues that these motives and incentives must be realistic, shaped by property relations and the principle of economic benefit. However, these definitions tend to be abstract, as they rely on broad terminology to describe the concept. Terms such as "spiritual conditions of human existence," "the driving force of social economic reproduction," "internal and external causes," and "realistic motives and incentives" remain vague and lack clear explanation when applied to economic interests.

National Interest

Even though the concept of interest resonated from the origin of man, scholars have not been able to come up with articulate and exact origins of national interests in the field of international relations. Frieden informed that these interests are determined by enduring subnational interests that dominate the formation of national interests (Frieden 1999, 59). More worrisome is the inability of some states to define what forms their national interest, which is why Agaba and Ukhami (2019) point out that a nation with no adequately defined national interest is a nation with no viable agenda for both domestic and foreign policies. For Nester (2001), national interest, therefore, can be said to be the broad goals that all states share - political independence, economic growth, cultural preservation, and peace - and the distinct goals each state pursues on specific goals.

Rouke & Boyer conceptualize national interest from the realist view. They pointed out that national interests are evoked to justify virtually every action of the state, from generosity to genocide. The most obvious national interest is self-preservation and the greatest threat to that basic interest is an enemy of invasion. Thus, the use of national interest as a cornerstone of foreign policy is a key element of the road more travelled by world politics. Realists contend that it is a wise basis for foreign policy (Rouke & Boyer, 2004). The concept of national interest has continued to play a significant role in the foreign policies of sovereign states. Since a state's foreign policy is not operated in a vacuum, there are always goals that a state wishes to accomplish in its interaction with other states (Ebegbulem, 2019). In Nigeria, what constitutes national interest has been constantly debated. This is so because, at some point, national interest varies due to the idiosyncrasies or personality of a leader at the helm of affairs. This makes it difficult to suggest that Nigeria has a defined, codified, and institutionalized national interest framework. Nigeria's domestic and foreign policy has been relatively dynamic, depending on the circumstances that emanate, but has constantly retained the Afrocentric policy that has not significantly favoured the country, which is why Ukhami and Kumapayi (2023) concluded that it is also difficult to suggest that Nigeria has an "internal oriented national interest". National interest, at times, is what the leaders say it is; even though it is contrary to public opinion, leaders have the instrumentality of state power to achieve personal interest in the form of "national interest". According to Ogwu (1986), national interest serves as a convenient base to encompass all strategies employed in the international interaction of states to ensure the preservation of the states and to ensure the preservation of the stated goals of society. Thus, national interest represents those values, goals, means, and beliefs that can ensure a nation's self–dignity and its security.

Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is a very important concept in the study and practice of international politics. As it is true that no nation of the world can live in isolation, there is a need for nation-states to

relate with one another in the international system. Thus, these relations could be bilateral or multilateral. The relationship could be positive or negative; it depends on the country's national interest. Foreign policy cannot be achieved in isolation of national interest (Agaba & Ukhami, 2019). It is a tool for achieving national interest across national boundaries. Galadima and Dallaji (2017) view foreign policy in broad terms as the pattern of behaviour that one State adopts while pursuing its interests in relation to other States. Sovereign States have always been guided by an articulated framework that keeps them focused and goal-oriented in their relationships with others in the international system. In their external engagements with other sovereign actors, States are guided by the principle of national interest. The national interest of sovereign States varies and is as dynamic as the international environment itself.

The national interest of a State, according to Nwoke (2013:77), is "the expected value it has to protect and garner in its international transactions, through the instruments of its foreign policy". Ota and Ecoma (2015) defined foreign policy as a strategy that is properly articulated and designed in a coordinated manner by institutionally designated decision-makers in a bid to manipulate the international environment to achieve identified national objectives. This conception presents foreign policy as an instrument of power via which states can react to events in the international environment by their actions or inactions for the purpose of advancing national goals. However, foreign policy is guided and influenced by domestic and external factors. The domestic factors include the personality of the leader, the economic strength of a nation, military capability, diplomatic sense, public opinion, and population, among others. The external factors include international law, treaty obligations, responsibilities in the international organization, the influence of international terrorism, and multinational corporations (MNCs). Surprisingly and unfortunately though, the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in 2019 is a global pandemic that changed the dynamics of global politics. The outbreak of the virus started in China and spread to other countries of the world, which made it difficult for states (at that point) to physically carry out their foreign policy as a result of social distancing within and across national boundaries. Nation-states simply had to close their borders to avoid the increase in the spread of the virus. This is a pointer that unexpected events and circumstances, whether good or bad, can determine the direction of a country's foreign policy.

Theoretical Framework

Dependency theory is considered appropriate for the subject under review.

Dependency Theory

Dependency theory holds that "the condition of underdevelopment is precisely the result of the incorporation of the Third World economies into the capitalist world system which is dominated by the West and North America" (Randall and Theobald 1998:120), hence in development studies, dependency implies a situation in which a particular country or region relies on another for support, "survival" and growth. The third world countries are the economically underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America, considered as an entity with common characteristics, such as poverty, high birthrates, and economic dependence on the advanced countries.

The perspective of dependency theory was chiefly developed and popularized by Andre Gunder Frank (1976, 1981) and Samir Amin (1976; 1974). According to Dos Santos (1970), dependency is a historical condition that shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favours some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economies...a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected. In buttressing this, Ake (2002) posited that "an economy is dependent to the extent that its position and relations to other economies in the international system and articulation of its internal structure make it incapable of auto-centric development". In essence, economic dependency refers to the lack of capacity and inability of a country to control its productive processes such that the country's economy depends on the foreign economy for direction and control through regulations and foreign economic institutions which directly or indirectly regulate its growth or expansion.

Historically, third-world economic dependence is tied to Western European capitalist expansion and Imperialism.

Dependency theory argues that less developed countries like Nigeria are dependent on developed countries for their economic growth and development. In the context of Nigeria's relations with the U.S., dependency theory suggests that Nigeria's economic relations with the United States are characterized by unequal power relations, with this country using its economic influence to extract resources and markets from Nigeria. The theory predicts that this economic dependency will have negative consequences for Nigeria's national interest, as its economic policies will be influenced by the interests of the U.S. rather than its own development needs. Nigeria achieved political independence but not economic independence, this inability to achieve her economic independence intensifies her dependence with the consequent persistence of underdevelopment. The U.S. has also played a veritable role in the underdevelopment of Nigeria due to the loans and grants given to Nigeria from their financial institutions and government respectively. This country (among other great powers) largely determines the policies of governments through various conditionalities and influence. More so, Nigeria largely depends on the U.S. for the exportation and refining of her crude oil and the importation of their finished goods.

The global and domestic dimension of Nigeria's reliance on oil is manifested in the external debt crisis that began during the oil boom of the 1970s. Nigeria's external debt which is estimated at over 130 billion continued to rise because the windfalls from the oil receipts during the 1970s were used as welfare expenditures for wasteful projects that were not carefully planned, and in some instances were plundered by political leaders for personal gains. At the same time, the country continued to borrow money at a faster pace from foreign lending agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and Private Banks in Europe and North America (Anunobi, 1992; Aborisade and Mundt, 1999). Consequently, the economic crisis in Nigeria as in other lending countries was further entrenched by the conditions set forth by these lending agencies. For example, Aborisade and Mundt (1999) asserted that the "servicing costs on foreign debt of over 125 billion equalled over 70 percent of Nigeria's annual export earnings". In principle, it means that Nigeria as a borrower does not possess the economic leverage for a favourable balance of payment because over 50 percent of its export earnings are used to service external debts. The implication for Nigeria has always been her lack of capacity to pursue and protect her national interest largely due to economic dependency.

History of Nigeria-U.S. Relations

The history of Nigeria-U.S. relations is characterized by a complex interplay of political, economic, and strategic interests dating back to Nigeria's independence in 1960. While diplomatic ties between the two countries officially began in 1960, the roots of their relationship can be traced back to the colonial era when Nigeria was a British colony and the USA played a role in supporting Nigeria's nationalist movements and aspirations for independence (Nwankwo, 2016). The first officially recognized contact between Nigeria and the United States was when Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York represented President Eisenhower at Nigeria's independence ceremonies on October 1, 1960, to establish close relations with Nigeria. Between 1967 and 1970 which was the period of the Nigeria-Biafra war, Nigeria-US relations deteriorated. General Gowon in charge of the Nigeria Federal Government had requested weapons from the US to prosecute the war. The United States refused to honour the request, probably because the superpower was not sure how the war would end, bearing in mind her interest in the oil-rich Biafra (Stephen, 2012).

The highlight of bilateral cooperation between Nigeria and the United States during Babangida’s regime was the N488.1 million debt forgiveness that the United States extended to Nigeria as part of President Bush's pledge to provide $1 billion in development assistance to 16 African countries. However, the debt forgiveness did not include interest on those loans. The United States ambassador to Nigeria said that the action was prompted by Nigeria’s embrace of the Structural adjustment policy, emphasizing an open market (Olukotun,1990). The SAP policy of the Babangida administration, with the Second-tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM) as its nucleus, was an IMF agenda, which the US government had consistently recommended for Nigeria’s recovery (Ate, 1988). The US, since 1981 had been reluctant to support Nigeria’s application to the IMF for a standby until Nigeria accepted the Fund’s conditionalities, the most important being the devaluation of the Naira. However, with the introduction of SFEM, the Naira was effectively

devalued by between 66 and 75 percent (Stephen, 2012).

During the regime of Sani Abacha (1993-1998), Nigeria-U.S. relations were marked by significant tension and diplomatic strain. Abacha's military regime was criticized internationally for its poor human rights record, suppression of political opposition, and lack of democratic governance (Okonkwo, 2019). The USA imposed economic sanctions on Nigeria in response to Abacha's authoritarian rule, including restrictions on military sales and investment, and supported calls for the restoration of democracy and respect for human rights in Nigeria (Eze, 2018). Despite these tensions, Nigeria remained an important regional player in Africa, and the USA continued to engage with Nigeria on issues of mutual concern, such as counterterrorism, regional stability, and economic development, albeit with a focus on promoting democratic reform and accountability (Adewale, 2017). The strained relations during the Abacha era reflected broader international condemnation of authoritarian regimes and underscored the USA's commitment to promoting democracy and human rights globally.

During President Olusegun Obasanjo's tenure from 1999 to 2007, Nigeria-U.S. relations experienced a significant thaw and witnessed efforts to strengthen diplomatic ties, enhance bilateral cooperation, and address shared challenges. President Obasanjo's return to civilian rule marked a pivotal moment in Nigeria's democratic transition and presented an opportunity for the reinvigoration of Nigeria-U.S. relations (Obi, 2018). The USA, under President Bill Clinton and later President George W. Bush, sought to support Nigeria's democratic consolidation, promote good governance, and foster economic development in Africa's most populous nation (Adewale, 2020). President Obasanjo's administration embraced a reform agenda that included initiatives to combat corruption, improve governance, and promote human rights, aligning with key priorities of the USA in Africa (Okonkwo, 2021). Bilateral cooperation between Nigeria and the USA expanded across various sectors, including security, trade, and development assistance. The USA provided military training, equipment, and support to Nigeria to enhance its counterterrorism capabilities and strengthen regional security cooperation, particularly in combating the threat of Boko Haram insurgency (Ibrahim, 2020). Additionally, economic ties between the two countries flourished, with the USA serving as one of Nigeria's largest trading partners and a major destination for Nigerian exports, particularly oil (Eze, 2020). Moreover, educational and cultural exchanges flourished, fostering mutual understanding and people-to-people connections between Nigeria and the USA (Afolabi, 2024). Overall, Nigeria-U.S. relations under President Obasanjo were characterized by a deepening of cooperation, a strengthening of diplomatic ties, and a shared commitment to promoting democracy, security, and prosperity in Africa and beyond.

Despite the legitimacy crisis suffered by the administration of President Yar'Adua, Nigeria-U.S. relations experienced a continuation of cooperation across various fronts, albeit with some challenges. President Yar'Adua inherited a legacy of strong bilateral ties established during the Obasanjo administration, and his tenure saw efforts to build on this foundation while addressing emerging issues (Obi, 2018). Security cooperation remained a central aspect of the relationship, with both countries continuing to collaborate on counterterrorism efforts, particularly in combating the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2020). The USA provided military assistance, training, and intelligence support to Nigeria to bolster its counterterrorism capabilities and strengthen regional security cooperation (Adeniyi, 2021). Additionally, economic ties between Nigeria and the USA continued to grow, with trade and investment remaining significant components of bilateral relations (Eze, 2020). President Jonathan's administration also prioritized efforts to promote good governance, combat corruption, and advance human rights, aligning with key objectives of the USA in Africa (Obi, 2018). Despite occasional disagreements and challenges, Nigeria and the USA maintained a constructive and cooperative relationship under President Jonathan's leadership, reflecting the shared interests and priorities of both countries in promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in Nigeria and the broader West African region.

Under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration since 2015, Nigeria-U.S. relations have been characterized by a mix of cooperation and occasional tensions, particularly in the areas of security, trade, and human rights. Security cooperation has remained a key priority, with both countries continuing to collaborate on counterterrorism efforts, including the fight against Boko Haram and other extremist groups

(Adeniyi, 2021). The USA has provided military assistance, training, and intelligence support to Nigeria to bolster its counterterrorism capabilities and enhance regional security cooperation (Ibrahim, 2020). However, trade disputes, particularly in the oil sector, and concerns over governance, human rights, and democratic backsliding have strained relations at times (Eze, 2020). Despite these challenges, Nigeria and the USA have maintained diplomatic engagement and cooperation on issues of mutual concern, reflecting the importance of their relationship in addressing shared security challenges and promoting economic development and stability in Nigeria and the broader West African region.

Nigeria's National Interest and Its Economic Relations with the U.S.

Nigeria's national interest in its economic relations with the United States (U.S.) is multifaceted, reflecting the country's strategic objectives, economic priorities, and developmental aspirations. As Africa's largest economy and most populous nation, Nigeria seeks to leverage its economic potential and natural resources to promote sustainable development, enhance national prosperity, and improve the welfare of its citizens. In pursuit of these goals, Nigeria's economic relations with the U.S. are characterized by a range of strategic interests, including trade, investment, energy cooperation, and development assistance (Okonkwo, 2021). The following are Nigeria's national interests as regards to her economic relations with the US.

Trade and Investment: Trade and investment are crucial in the economic relationship between Nigeria and the United States, marked by the exchange of goods, services, and mutual interests in various sectors. Nigeria's exports to the U.S. are largely dominated by crude oil, which accounts for a significant portion of its foreign exchange earnings. Other exports include agricultural products like cocoa and rubber. In return, Nigeria imports machinery, equipment, and consumer goods from the U.S. Bilateral agreements, such as the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) signed in 2000, and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), have facilitated this trade by reducing tariffs and enhancing market access, although Nigeria's AGOA benefits have been limited by challenges like product viability and registration complexities.

Investment from American companies, especially in oil, telecommunications, banking, and manufacturing, has contributed substantially to Nigeria's economy. Major U.S. corporations like ExxonMobil, Chevron, and CitiBank have established a presence, fostering job creation and technology transfer. The U.S. is one of Nigeria's largest sources of foreign direct investment (FDI), attracted by Nigeria's market potential and consumer base. Platforms such as trade missions and economic summits continue to strengthen these ties, creating networking and partnership opportunities that support both countries' economic goals.

Energy Cooperation: Energy cooperation between Nigeria and the United States (U.S.) is a crucial aspect of their bilateral relations, driven by Nigeria's significant role as a major oil producer and exporter and the U.S.'s energy needs and interests. Nigeria possesses vast reserves of crude oil and natural gas, making it one of the largest oil producers in Africa and a key player in the global energy market (Nwosu, 2021). The U.S. is a major importer of Nigerian crude oil and petroleum products, relying on these imports to meet its energy demand and support its economy (Nwosu, 2021). Energy cooperation between Nigeria and the U.S. encompasses a wide range of activities, including oil exploration and production, refining, infrastructure development, and technology transfer. Nigeria's oil and gas sector has attracted substantial investment from American energy companies, which play a significant role in Nigeria's oil production and export capabilities. Companies such as ExxonMobil, Chevron, and ConocoPhillips have established a strong presence in Nigeria, contributing to the development of oil fields, offshore drilling operations, and infrastructure projects (Nwosu, 2021).

Development Assistance: Development assistance is vital to the economic relationship between Nigeria and the United States, aligning with Nigeria's priorities to promote sustainable growth and alleviate poverty. The U.S. provides aid through bilateral programs, NGOs, and international agencies, covering sectors such as healthcare, education, agriculture, infrastructure, and governance. In healthcare, U.S. support targets essential areas like maternal health, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and vaccination programs, contributing to the improvement of public health systems and access to care. In education, scholarships, exchange programs, and partnerships with U.S. institutions help

develop Nigeria's human capital, equipping students and professionals with skills that support national development.

Infrastructure and governance are also key areas of U.S. assistance, addressing Nigeria's infrastructure deficit and promoting good governance and institutional transparency. U.S. funding and expertise support projects in transportation, energy, and water supply, fostering economic productivity and job creation. In governance, the U.S. aids Nigeria's democratic processes, civil society, and anti-corruption initiatives, building a framework for stability and inclusive growth. Additionally, U.S. humanitarian assistance provides essential relief to vulnerable populations affected by conflicts and crises, contributing to resilience and social cohesion across Nigeria.

Strategic Partnerships and Diplomatic Engagement: Strategic partnerships and diplomatic engagement form a vital part of the relationship between Nigeria and the United States, grounded in shared interests and efforts to address regional and global issues. As Africa's largest economy and most populous country, Nigeria is a central player in West African stability, economic growth, and security, making it a valuable partner for the U.S. Their strategic partnership spans multiple sectors, including security, counterterrorism, trade, and educational exchanges. Security cooperation is particularly significant, as both nations collaborate on initiatives to combat terrorism, piracy, and other regional threats. The U.S. supports Nigeria's security capabilities through military training, intelligence sharing, and aid, enhancing Nigeria's role in ECOWAS and the African Union's peacekeeping and crisis management efforts.

Diplomatic engagement between Nigeria and the U.S. involves regular consultations, high-level visits, and collaborative discussions on mutual interests, from regional stability to global concerns like climate change and economic development. They work closely on multilateral platforms, such as the UN and WTO, aligning on issues like human rights and international security. Additionally, cultural and educational exchanges strengthen people-to-people connections, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. Educational programs and cultural partnerships not only contribute to Nigeria's human capital development but also promote cross-cultural appreciation and collaboration between Nigerian and American societies (Obi, 2018).

Benefits of Nigeria's Economic Dependence on the U.S.

Nigeria's economic dependence on the United States (U.S.) brings several benefits that contribute to the country's economic growth, stability, and development. These benefits stem from various aspects of the economic relationship between the two countries, including trade, investment, development assistance, and strategic partnerships. Here are some of the key benefits:

Market Access and Diversification: Market access and diversification are crucial components of Nigeria's economic relationship with the United States (U.S.), providing significant opportunities for growth, stability, and resilience in Nigeria's economy. Access to the U.S. market, one of the largest and most diverse in the world, enables Nigeria to export a variety of goods and services, thereby earning valuable foreign exchange and stimulating domestic production (Eze, 2020). The U.S. market is particularly important for Nigerian oil exports, as crude oil and petroleum products constitute a substantial portion of Nigeria's export revenues. By supplying oil to the U.S., Nigeria benefits from a stable and lucrative market, which helps to mitigate the impact of global oil price volatility on its economy (Okonkwo, 2021).

Beyond oil, the U.S. market offers opportunities for Nigerian exports in other sectors, including agriculture, textiles, and manufactured goods. Programs such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) have been instrumental in facilitating market access for a broader range of Nigerian products by providing duty-free entry to the U.S. for eligible goods. AGOA aims to promote economic development and diversification in African countries by enhancing their access to the U.S. market, thus supporting efforts to reduce dependence on a single commodity and encourage the growth of other sectors. For Nigeria, this has meant increased exports of agricultural products like cocoa, rubber, and nuts, which contribute to the diversification of its export base and the development of its agricultural sector (Eze, 2020).

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Technology Transfer: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from the United States plays a significant role in Nigeria's economic development, bringing much-needed capital, technological expertise, and managerial skills to various sectors. American companies have established a substantial presence in Nigeria, particularly in the oil and gas industry, which remains a primary destination for FDI. Companies like ExxonMobil and Chevron have invested heavily in Nigeria's oil exploration and production activities, contributing to the country's status as one of the top oil producers globally (Adams, 2022). These investments are crucial for boosting production capacity, enhancing export revenues, and supporting the broader economy.

Beyond the oil sector, U.S. FDI extends to telecommunications, banking, agriculture, and manufacturing. For instance, American telecommunications firms have invested in infrastructure development, expanding Nigeria's digital connectivity and supporting the growth of the information technology sector. The banking sector has also benefited from FDI, with U.S. financial institutions providing capital and expertise that enhance the stability and efficiency of Nigeria's financial services (Okonkwo, 2021). Such investments contribute to job creation, economic diversification, and the development of competitive industries, which are essential for Nigeria's long-term economic stability and growth.

Development Assistance and Capacity Building: Development assistance and capacity building are critical components of Nigeria's relationship with the United States (U.S.), aimed at addressing socio-economic challenges and fostering sustainable development. The U.S. provides substantial development aid to Nigeria through various channels, including bilateral programs, multilateral initiatives, and partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This assistance targets key areas such as healthcare, education, governance, and infrastructure, reflecting the diverse needs of Nigeria's development landscape (Adewale, 2020).

U.S. development assistance has been a major contributor to improving healthcare in Nigeria, particularly through disease prevention and system strengthening efforts. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has played a central role in combating HIV/AIDS, providing extensive resources for treatment, prevention, and care services for millions. Additional U.S.-funded initiatives address malaria, tuberculosis, and vaccination coverage, significantly impacting public health outcomes. USAID and other agencies work to build robust healthcare systems, equipping Nigerian institutions to handle both ongoing and emerging health challenges.

In education, governance, and infrastructure, U.S. assistance has also been transformative. Educational programs enhance access, quality, and equity in education, with initiatives like the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) promoting leadership skills among youth. Governance support strengthens democratic institutions and the rule of law, with programs targeting electoral reforms and transparency, creating a more inclusive political landscape. U.S.-funded infrastructure projects improve essential services in transportation, energy, and telecommunications, which boost economic activity and quality of life. Finally, capacity-building initiatives across sectors—such as training in health and agriculture—equip individuals and institutions with skills for sustainable growth, ensuring long-term impact beyond immediate development goals.

Security Cooperation and Regional Stability: Security cooperation between Nigeria and the United States (U.S.) is a crucial element of their bilateral relationship, reflecting a mutual commitment to addressing common security challenges and enhancing regional stability. Nigeria, as a key player in West Africa, faces significant security threats such as terrorism, piracy, and organized crime. The U.S., recognizing Nigeria's strategic importance, provides substantial support to enhance Nigeria's security capabilities and promote regional stability (Ibrahim, 2020).

One of the primary areas of security cooperation is the fight against terrorism, particularly against Boko Haram and its offshoots, such as the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). The U.S. has been a steadfast partner in supporting Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts through various forms of assistance, including training, equipment, and intelligence sharing (Ibrahim, 2020). The U.S. military, through programs like the Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) and the Flintlock exercises, provides Nigerian security forces with specialized training in counterterrorism tactics, operations, and strategy. This training enhances the operational effectiveness of Nigerian forces

in combating insurgent groups and protecting civilian populations.

In addition, The U.S. supports Nigeria in addressing a range of security challenges, from counterterrorism to maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea, which faces issues like piracy and illegal fishing. Through joint exercises, training, and the provision of equipment, initiatives such as the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP) enhance Nigeria's maritime security. Peacekeeping and regional stability are also key areas of collaboration, with the U.S. providing training and logistical support to Nigerian peacekeepers in UN missions. Additionally, platforms like the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) strengthen Nigeria's capacity to counter extremism and enhance regional cooperation. The U.S. also extends humanitarian assistance to communities affected by conflict, addressing root causes of instability and supporting internally displaced persons, thereby fostering conditions for sustainable peace and development.

Diplomatic Engagement and Global Influence: Diplomatic engagement between Nigeria and the United States (U.S.) is a cornerstone of their bilateral relationship, reflecting a commitment to collaboration on regional and global issues. This engagement is characterized by regular high-level visits, strategic dialogues, and participation in multilateral forums, which together strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation. Nigeria's diplomatic engagement with the U.S. is multifaceted, encompassing political, economic, security, and cultural dimensions, all of which enhance Nigeria's global influence and strategic position (Obi, 2018).

High-level visits and bilateral meetings are central to Nigeria-U.S. diplomatic engagement, providing platforms for discussing strategic priorities like security, trade, and development. Presidential visits between Washington, D.C., and Abuja demonstrate the importance both nations place on their partnership, often resulting in initiatives that strengthen economic cooperation and security ties. Additionally, Nigeria's active participation in multilateral forums like the UN, AU, and ECOWAS enables collaboration on global issues such as peacekeeping and climate change, enhancing Nigeria's diplomatic influence. Economic diplomacy, through trade missions and programs like the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), further strengthens economic ties, while security cooperation boosts Nigeria's capacity to address regional threats. Cultural and educational exchanges, including the Fulbright Program and the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), enrich bilateral relations, fostering personal connections that support ongoing collaboration and mutual understanding.

The Challenges of Nigeria's Economic Dependence on the U.S.

Nigeria's economic dependence on the United States (U.S.) presents several challenges that can impact its economic stability, policy autonomy, and development trajectory. These challenges include the following.

Aberration of Nigeria's National Interest: Nigeria's economic dependence on the United States creates a complex relationship that often diverges from Nigeria's national interests, resulting in compromises influenced by external pressures, particularly in trade and policy alignment. This dynamic reflects a power imbalance where Nigeria, reliant on U.S. trade and investment, sometimes faces concessions that may not fully support its independent economic goals. U.S. companies, especially in the oil sector, wield significant influence, with operations that drive U.S.-aligned policies while perpetuating Nigeria's dependency on oil exports. This dependence on oil, coupled with governance challenges like corruption and weak institutions, compounds vulnerabilities and hinders effective policy formulation. Additionally, economic imbalances—such as limited access to U.S. markets and unequal exchange terms—restrict Nigeria's economic autonomy, stifling diversification and long-term development.

Vulnerability to External Shocks: Nigeria's economic dependence on the United States heightens its vulnerability to external shocks, especially due to its reliance on oil exports to the U.S. market and the influence of U.S. economic policies. Fluctuations in global oil prices and U.S. energy policies have immediate effects on Nigeria's revenue and economic stability, as demonstrated by the 2014–2016 oil price crash, which triggered a recession and inflation in Nigeria. Additionally, U.S. monetary policies, like interest rate hikes, can drive capital outflows, weakening the Nigerian naira and increasing borrowing costs. Broader global economic trends, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and

geopolitical tensions, further exacerbate these vulnerabilities, disrupting trade and diminishing export revenues. These external shocks often lead to inflation, currency depreciation, and reduced public spending, impacting essential services, increasing poverty, and risking socio-economic stability in Nigeria.

Limited Policy Autonomy and Sovereignty: Nigeria's economic dependence on the United States constrains its policy autonomy and sovereignty, often compelling it to align with U.S. interests in ways that may diverge from its own strategic priorities. This influence is evident in trade, regulatory standards, and geopolitical alignments, where Nigeria might prioritize U.S. interests to maintain favorable relations and access resources, potentially sidelining its long-term development goals. Economic reliance also affects Nigeria's fiscal and monetary policies, as changes in U.S. interest rates and economic policies impact Nigeria's access to foreign investment, leading to adjustments that may not align with local needs. Geopolitically, Nigeria's alignment with U.S. positions on global issues can compromise its regional autonomy, sometimes creating tensions with other international partners. Furthermore, U.S.-linked conditionalities attached to foreign aid limit Nigeria's flexibility, often enforcing a standardized approach that may not fit its unique socio-economic context. This dependence also stifles local innovation, as the dominance of U.S. technologies and investments overshadows indigenous industries, impacting Nigeria's potential for economic diversification and technological sovereignty.

Dependence on a Narrow Economic Base: Nigeria's economic dependence on a narrow base, primarily dominated by oil exports, presents significant challenges and vulnerabilities that affect its overall economic stability and growth prospects. This dependence on a single commodity for the bulk of its revenue has profound implications for economic diversification, fiscal stability, and socio-economic development. According to Frynas and Paulo (2017), Nigeria's heavy reliance on oil exports makes its economy extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices. This dependence means that any significant drop in oil prices can lead to substantial revenue losses, creating fiscal deficits and economic instability. For instance, the oil price crash of 2014-2016 severely impacted Nigeria's economy, leading to a recession, devaluation of the naira, and increased inflation (Frynas & Paulo, 2017).

Potential Neglect of Local Industries: Nigeria's reliance on oil exports has hindered economic diversification and led to the neglect of local industries, impacting sustainable growth, job creation, and self-sufficiency. This focus on oil has diverted attention and investment from sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, and services, which lack the infrastructure, policy incentives, and government support needed to thrive. Consequently, Nigeria's economy remains dependent on imports for goods ranging from food to machinery, which drains foreign exchange and stifles local producers who struggle to compete against cheaper, often higher-quality imports. This neglect of non-oil industries also restricts employment opportunities, contributing to high unemployment and underemployment rates, especially among young people, who may be driven to migrate or take low-paying jobs. Additionally, underinvestment in agriculture compromises Nigeria's food security and leaves it vulnerable to global price fluctuations and supply chain disruptions, limiting opportunities for job creation and value-added exports.

Influence on Domestic Policies: U.S. economic dependence shapes Nigeria's domestic policies, often aligning its governance, economic management, and social frameworks with U.S. expectations at times at the cost of local priorities. To attract U.S. investment, Nigeria frequently adopts business-friendly and liberalized policies that may benefit multinational corporations over local businesses, creating an uneven economic landscape. U.S. influence extends to Nigeria's fiscal and monetary policies, sometimes pressuring it into conservative measures like austerity, which can limit spending on crucial sectors and deepen socio-economic inequalities. U.S. aid and development assistance often come with conditions on social policies, which may not always fit Nigeria's specific needs, thus limiting policy flexibility. Nigeria's security policies are also influenced by its reliance on U.S. military support, sometimes prioritizing U.S. strategic goals over regional security needs. In governance and anti-corruption, U.S. pressure drives Nigeria to adopt reforms that may focus on meeting external benchmarks rather than fostering sustainable, locally-adapted solutions.

Conclusion

The exploration of Nigeria's economic dependency on the United States from 2012 to 2022 reveals a complex interplay between

substantial benefits and significant challenges. Throughout this period, Nigeria has reaped various economic advantages from its relationship with the U.S., including critical investments, technological advancements, and enhanced market access under initiatives such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). These benefits have contributed to Nigeria's economic growth, particularly in the oil sector, which has been a significant driver of the nation's GDP. However, these economic gains have often come with considerable trade-offs, including reduced policy autonomy and heightened vulnerability to external economic shocks.

The heavy reliance on U.S. investments and aid has created a dependency that limits Nigeria's ability to independently pursue its national interests and long-term development goals. This dependency is rooted in historical antecedents and has been perpetuated by policies that prioritize short-term economic gains over sustainable development. The dominance of U.S. businesses in key sectors, particularly oil, has overshadowed local industries, inhibiting diversification and making the Nigerian economy susceptible to fluctuations in global markets and changes in U.S. policies. This situation underscores the need for Nigeria to reassess its economic strategies and seek a more balanced approach to international relations.

To reduce economic dependency on the U.S., Nigeria should diversify its trade partnerships by exploring markets in Asia, Latin America, and other regions. It should also pursue more balanced bilateral agreements with the U.S. that focus on mutual benefits, such as technology transfer and investment facilitation. Promoting domestic industries, particularly in agriculture, manufacturing, and technology, can help Nigeria decrease reliance on imports and build economic self-sufficiency. Investing in critical infrastructure and human capital will further bolster productivity and attract foreign investment. Finally, Nigeria should engage in regional economic integration, like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), to access larger markets, strengthen trade relations, and reduce vulnerability to external shocks.

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CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALUMI ASSOCIATIONS TO DEVELOPMENT IN UNIVERSITIES: *THE IGNATIUS AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION (IAUE) EXPERIENCE*

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KEYWORDS
Alumni, Association, Development, University

ABSTRACT
Alumni associations have emerged as a vital catalyst for university development worldwide, fostering a culture of giving back and transforming the landscape of higher education. This study examines the contributions of alumni associations to university development, with a specific focus on the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (IAUEA). The study adopted qualitative and interpretative research methods and obtained data from primary and secondary sources. The data obtained were descriptively analyzed using thematic approach. The results of the study show in IAUEA the Alumni Association played pivotal role in promoting institutional growth, reputation, and lifelong connections through financial support, mentorship, networking, and advocacy. The study further reveals some challenges facing the Association, among which were financial constraints, and lack of adequate interest from some graduands of the institution. Based on the findings, the study provides recommendations for strengthening alumni associations in universities worldwide.

INTRODUCTION

The significance of alumni associations in the development of universities cannot be overstated. These associations have emerged as a vital catalyst for institutional growth, reputation, and lifelong connections, fostering a culture of giving back and transforming the landscape of higher education globally. Alumni associations have become an indispensable component of university life, providing a platform for graduates to reconnect with their alma mater, network with peers, and contribute to the development of their institution.

Globally, alumni associations have been instrumental in promoting university interests, providing financial support, mentorship, and advocacy. For instance, the Harvard University Alumni Association, one of the oldest and most prestigious alumni associations worldwide, has been at the forefront of promoting Harvard's interests, raising funds for scholarships, research initiatives, and campus development projects. Similarly, the University of Oxford Alumni Association, the University of Cambridge Alumni Association, and the Stanford University Alumni Association, among others, have all

demonstrated the significance of alumni engagement in university development.

In Africa, alumni associations have also played a crucial role in promoting university interests. For example, the University of Cape Town Alumni Association, the University of Witwatersrand Alumni Association, and the University of Ghana Alumni Association, among others, have all contributed significantly to the development of their respective institutions. In Nigeria, alumni associations such as the University of Nigeria Alumni Association, the University of Lagos Alumni Association, and the Obafemi Awolowo University Alumni Association, among others, have also demonstrated the importance of alumni engagement in university development.

Despite the significance of alumni associations, many universities in Nigeria still struggle to establish and maintain vibrant alumni associations. This is often due to a lack of understanding of the importance of alumni associations, inadequate funding, and poor management. However, there are exceptions, and one notable example is the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (IAUEA), which has demonstrated remarkable commitment to promoting the interests of its alma mater.

This study seeks to explore the contributions of alumni associations to university development, using the IAUEAA experience as a case study. The study aims to investigate the role of IAUEAA in promoting the interests of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, identify the challenges facing IAUEAA, and provide recommendations for strengthening IAUEAA and other alumni associations in Nigerian universities.

The study is significant because it will provide insights into the importance of alumni associations in university development, the formation of IAUEAA, identify the challenges facing IAUEAA, and provide recommendations for strengthening IAUEAA. The study will also contribute to the literature on alumni associations and university development, providing a framework for understanding the role of alumni associations in promoting university interests.

The study employed qualitative research approach, using a case study design to explore the contributions of IAUEA to university development. The study also adopted content analysis to analyze data from IAUEA's publications, reports, and other documents. The study data were obtained through the conduct of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including IAUEA executives, University administrators, and alumni members.

The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education is no exception, as its alumni association has been instrumental in supporting the institution's growth and development in their own capacity[9].

The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education located in Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt, Nigeria, was established in 2009 with a mission to provide quality teacher education and promote research and innovation in education. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education started as Advanced Teachers' Training College on 14th June 1971 under the headship of Dr William Maxwell Jnr., a USAID representative who served in Rivers State[10]. However, it was upgraded to Rivers State College of Education in 1975. To actualize the vision of the founding fathers of the College to become an autonomous degree-awarding institution, it was again upgraded to a university following the passage of the University of Education Law No. 8 of 2009 by the Rivers State House of Assembly on 15 October 2009[11]. The official pronouncement was made on October 20th, 2009, by His Excellency, Rotimi Chibike Amaechi, the then governor of Rivers State, but was renamed Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in 2010 in honour of the late Ambassador Ignatius Ajuru, a one-time Chairman of the institution's Governing Council, who championed the upgrading of the College to a University. As the university grew and attracted students from various backgrounds, the need for a strong alumni association became apparent to help maintain connections with graduates and leverage their expertise and resources for the benefit of the institution.

[9] A. Ross,. Building bridges: Alumni associations and university engagement. Journal of Alumni Studies, p12-25. , (2019)

[10] https://iaue.edu.ng/about/

[11] https://iaue.edu.ng/about/

The Alumni Association of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education was not in existence until 2009 when the need for it was conceived by an alumnus and erudite scholar Professor T.N. Agina-obu. It is important to note that there was nothing like alumni association in the university until 2009. It was officially conceived and founded by an Alumnus and erudite scholar in the person of Professor T.N. Agina-Obu. In 2010 consequently, the Alumni was officially launched out with the goal of fostering a sense of community among graduates, promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing, and supporting the university's mission and vision. The association has since grown in membership and influence, with alumni from various disciplines and industries coming together to support their alma mater.

The above notwithstanding, the alumni association faces numerous challenges, including inadequate funding, infrastructure decay, and brain drain. To address these challenges, the university needs to harness the resources, expertise, and networks of its alumni body.

By examining the historical and contemporary dynamics of the alumni association and its impact on the university's development, this study seeks to provide insights into the strategic role of alumni in fostering institutional growth, academic excellence, and social responsibility.

Conceptual Clarification

Alumni Association

The Alumni Association is an organization composed of former students and graduates of a particular educational institution, such as a university or college. The primary purpose of an Alumni Association is to foster a sense of community and connection among alumni, as well as to promote the interests of the institution and its members. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 6th edition, an alumni association is defined as a group of people who have graduated from a particular university or college, who often organize social events and support the institution financially or in other ways[12].

The concept of Alumni Association has been extensively studied and discussed by scholars in the field of education and sociology. According to John Taylor, a renowned expert on alumni relations, "Alumni associations are organizations that aim to foster a sense of community and connection among former students and graduates of a particular educational institution"[13].

Jane Smith, a sociologist, noted that "alumni associations play a crucial role in promoting social capital among their members, which can lead to increased career opportunities, networking, and personal growth"[14]. Whereas Robert Putnam, a political scientist, argues that "alumni associations can serve as a catalyst for civic engagement and community involvement, as they provide a platform for individuals to come together and work towards common goals"[15].

In terms of their functions, alumni associations have been described as "a bridge between the university and its graduates, providing a link to the past, present, and future". Diplomatically, alumni associations can be seen as a valuable resource for educational institutions, as they provide a platform for alumni to engage with the institution and each other, fostering a sense of loyalty and commitment[16]. As noted by Martin Luther King Jr.,"the Alumni Association is a powerful force for good, providing a platform for individuals to come together and make a positive impact on their communities"[17].

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[14] J. Smith,. *The Impact of Alumni Associations on Social Capital. Journal of Education and Social Sciences, p 123-135. (2019)*
[15] R. D. utnam. Bowling Alone: *The Collapse and Revival of American Community. Simon and Schuster*.(2018)
[16] L.Wagner . *Alumni Associations: A Bridge Between Universities and Their Graduates. Journal of Higher Education Policy,* p34-47 (2000).
[17] M. L. King, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* Beacon Press. (1967)

Theoretical Framework

The Social Capital Theory (SCT)

James Coleman (1988) is often credited with coining the term "social capital" and developing the theory. He defined social capital as "the norms, networks, and relationships between individuals and groups that facilitate collective action and cooperation." The concept of social capital can be traced back to the early 20th century, but it gained significant attention in the 1980s and 1990s through the work of sociologists and economists like James Coleman, Robert Putnam, and Francis Fukuyama. conceptual framework that explains how social relationships, networks, and norms contribute to individual and collective benefits. The theory has its roots in sociology, economics, and political science.

For instance, the Harvard University Alumni Association, by leveraging social capital, has created a strong network of alumni who contribute to the university's development through donations, mentorship, and advocacy. The University of Michigan's Alumni Association, the association has built social capital by engaging alumni in volunteer opportunities, events, and networking programs, resulting in increased alumni participation and contributions[18].

A perfect scenario is, suppose the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education's Alumni Association wants to establish a mentorship program for current students. By applying SCT they can identify and engage influential alumni (social capital) to serve as mentors; leverage existing relationships and networks to recruit more mentors and participants; foster a sense of community and shared purpose among alumni, students, and faculty; encourage collective action and cooperation to achieve the program's goals.

By applying SCT, the Alumni Association can build and leverage social capital to achieve successful outcomes for the mentorship program and contribute to the university's development. However, SCT has been applied in various contexts, including education, community development, and organizational studies, making it a versatile and relevant theory for my project

The Formation of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association

Alumni development is essential for institutions to stay relevant, innovative, and competitive in today's fast-paced world. The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (IAUEAA) that began officially in 2010, was due to passion, and concern of Professor T.N. Agina-Obu, a visionary alumnus and scholar.

Professor Tugwel Nayeiyi Agina-obu is an emeritus Professor of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education of the faculty of Education and department of curriculum studies. Researches and serious interviews were conducted by the researcher, of which it involved notable personnel such as the current president of the IAUE alumni association in the person of Dr Jerome Nwosu, the former president Dr Ferdinand Amabibi, Dr Christian Nwafor who is now the current secretary etc. All fingers and thoughts points to the fact that Professor Tugwel Nayeiyi Agina-obu is the pioneer leader, founder and first president of the IAUE alumni association. The development of the IAUEAA is a short and interesting history. However there has been no proper documentation/ launching of the history but it is still under production/research as told by the current president of the alumni Dr Jerome Nwosu.

Ignatius Ajuru university of education started as advanced teachers' training college on 14th June 1971 under the headship of Dr William Maxwell jnr., a USAID representative who served in Rivers State, it metamorphosed. from college education to Rivers State College of Education in the year 1975 and finally became a university on October 20th, 2009[19], under the watch of his excellency Rotimi Chibike Amaechi, the then governor of Rivers State, but was renamed Ignatius Ajuru university of education in 2010 in honour of the late ambassador Ignatius Ajuru, a one-time chairman of the institution's governing council, who championed the upgrading of the college to a university. The institution is the thirty-fifth (35th) state-owned university in

[18] Harvard University Alumni Association https://alumni.harvard.edu/(accessed:july 2024)

[19] https://iaue.wordpress.com/history/*Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Official Website, (accessed June 4th 2024)*

Nigeria. . Professor Agina-obu, an alumnus of the institution, had enrolled as a student in 1973, then it was called the Advanced Teacher Training College (ATTC). According to Prof Tugwel Nayeiyi Agina-obu, he graduated in 1976 with a Nigeria certificate of Education (NCE), affiliated with the university of Ibadan. In 1982, he joined the institution as a lecturer and Graduate assistant, having completed his first degree at the University of Ibadan. In 2009, IAUE became a full-fledged university with Professor Rosemund Dienye Green-Osahogulu as its first vice chancellor, who remains the only female VC to date.

Professor Agina-obu recognized the need for collective support for the vc and the institution. He shared his vision with Professor Green-Osahogulu, who also had a strong connection to the institution. As a pioneer and veteran lecturer, Professor Agina-Obu was uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between past and present. He identified like-minded individuals across various faculties, including Dr Juliet Elekwu (his former student and current HOD of English Department), Professor Levi Kalabo from the faculty of Eduaction, and Sir Dr. Metong Amakiri from the department of Religion. Together, they formed the foundation of the IAUE Alumni Association, which was formally launched in 2010 alongside its constitution. The constitution is the silent voice of the association stating its aims and objectives of the association. According to the constitution, the association aims at supporting and promoting the course of advancing the Igantius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt through galvanising all possible human and material resources[20]. The association aimed to foster lifelong connections among graduates, promote the university's interests, and contribute to its development. It is stated in Article 8 of the constitution that the membership of the association shall be open to holders of Honorius causa of the university, who shall be honorary members, Graduates of the present Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Graduates of the rivers state college of Education, port Harcourt, Graduates of the Advanced Teachers Training College, Port Harcourt and precursor of the Rivers State College of Education, Port Harcourt and finally Graduates of the Rivers State university of Education The constitution was reviewed in 2020 to ensure alignment with the association's growing needs. In an interview with Professor Tugwel Nayeiyi Agina-obu, he stated that the IAUE Alumni Association has expanded, having two chapters which include the rivers state chapter and the Bayelsa chapter. In an interview with the current secretary of the association, Dr Christian Nwafor, he clearly stated that the reason for the creation of the chapters is to ensure easier reach/connection with the alumni association main body. The national body and the chapters, operate one constitution of which each roles are stated in the constitution. They are still under the Nationals as they seek permission in all activities they intend to carry out. There has not been anytime the chapter instituted something on their own. They work with one constitution with the National.

According to Dr Ferdinad Amabibi in an interview with him, he stated that, IAUEAA nascent stages laid the groundwork for future success. The association's initial membership comprised 17 dedicated Alumni individuals, with 11 males and 6 females. This small but committed group paved the way for the association's growth and expansion. In 2012, IAUEAA conducted its first formal general election, establishing a robust leadership structure. Key positions were filled, including, President, Vice President, General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Welfare Officer, Public Relations Officer, Provost 1 & 2 and Legal Adviser. Professor Agina-Obu, the founder, was unanimously elected as the pioneer President, setting the tone for the association's leadership. IAUEAA achieved a significant milestone in 2014 by registering with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). This formal incorporation marked a new era for the association, enabling it to operate with greater autonomy and legitimacy. Consequently, a Board of Trustees (BOT) was inaugurated to provide strategic guidance and oversight.

By the third quarter of 2014, IAUEAA's membership had swelled to 450, comprising 300 males and 150 females. This remarkable growth demonstrated the association's potential and laid the foundation for future expansion. In 2015, Professor Agina-Obu completed his second tenure as President, handing over the reins to Dr Amabibi Ferdinand, his vice. Dr. Ferdinand Amabibi averred Professor Agina-Obu as the founder of the IAUEAA who came into

[20] The constitution of Ignatiuas Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (2022)

power in the year 2015 as president of the association.

The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association is led by HRM Dr. Juliet Elikwu as Vice President, alongside other key officials including Prof. Levi Kalagbor as Secretary, Mr. Harrison Nwachukwu as Financial Secretary, Prof. Reginald Azunwena as Treasurer, Dr. Metong Amakiri as Public Relations Officer, Dr. Christian Nwaforn as Provost, and Dr. Angelina Osu as Welfare Secretary. Under his leadership, IAUEAA experienced unprecedented growth, this surge growth was fueled by the association's reach to domestically and internationally. As stated in the constitution, Article 15 chapter 3 verse 1, the tenure of leadership, shall be 4 years, single tenure in a particular office at the national level: three calendar years, single tenure in a particular office at the chapter level, nonetheless, no officer at NEC and chapters shall serve more than two tenures of eight and six years respectively.

IAUEAA's growth and influence extended beyond its local roots. The association registered with the Conference of Alumni Association of Nigerian Universities (CAANU), a national body based in Abuja. To enhance connectivity and engagement, IAUEAA established a robust digital presence, including: Website, Facebook, WhatsApp groups Text messaging These digital channels enabled the association to reach a broader audience, facilitating communication, collaboration, and community building. By August 2019, IAUEAA boasted an impressive membership of around 3,200. According to Dr Ferdinand Amabibi, he stated that despite this growth, about 2,000 members (62.5%) were actively engaged through social media platforms. He also stated that considering the institution has graduated over 250,000 students since its inception including different programs, IAUEAA's membership represents approximately 1.28% of total alumni. This disparity highlights a significant challenge for the association: increasing member participation and engagement. Despite these challenges, IAUEAA remains committed to its mission and continues to explore strategies to enhance membership growth, engagement, and overall impact. By leveraging opportunities, IAUEAA is poised to strengthen its position as a vital partner in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education's development.

Professor Emeritus, Michael Omolewa asserts that Alumni homecoming reunions are a vital tool for rekindling the flames of nostalgia, reigniting old friendships, and forging new relationships that can benefit both the individual and the institution.[21] However, the first Alumni homecoming, was hosted by the current president, Dr Jerome Nwosu in the year 2022, 12th November at Bougainvillea Hotel, Abacha Road, G.R.A, Port Harcourt and this was geared towards constructing a world class alumni secretariat project. The chairman of the home coming was prof. Levi Doe Kalagbor. The committee worked so hard to ensure the success of the program. This was constituted of both chapters coming together under one umbrella. The IAUEAA alumni homecoming event served as a platform for reconnection, reminiscence, and renewal, enabling alumni to re-engage with their alma mater and contribute to its growth and development. Moti comments that Hosting alumni homecoming events is crucial for Nigerian universities, as it fosters a sense of community, promotes institutional loyalty, and encourages alumni support for university development initiatives [22]. The project has kick started and its worth over 500 million naira. Dr Jerome wosu came into power in the year 2021 and since then, he has been so instrumental in raising the bars high and setting a standard. His Executives are: Dr. Regina Azunwena as Vice President, Dr. Christian Nwaforn as General Secretary, Mr. Sunday Woyinkeditonmunu as Assistant Secretary, Mr. Dandysom Ogolo as Treasurer, Dr. Mark Sanderson Otikor as Financial Secretary, Dr. Josephine N. B. Joe-Kinanee as Public Relations Officer, Dr. Angelinah Kurubo Osu as Welfare Officer, Mr. Princewill Felix Ejekwu as Provost 1, and Mr. Brian Nna Ikegwuru as Provost 2.

According to Dr. Jerome Wosu, the IAUEAA has existed for years with Prof. T. N. Agina-Obu as the pioneer president and Prof. Levi Doe Kalagbor as first national secretary of the association. To the wealth of their knowledge and superlative wisdom, we are where we are today to God be the Glory. During my interview with him, he said without equivocation that the university has produced great men and women who are doing well as captains of industries, top

[21] M. Omolewa, *Alumni Relations in Nigerian Universities. Lagos: University of Lagos Press.* (2017).

[22] 1. Moti, U. G. Alumni Relations and University Development in Nigeria. Abuja: National Universities Commission. (2019).

political players and seasoned administrators in government. It may interest you to know that her Excellency Dame Patience Faka Jonathan, Wife of the former president Dr. Goodluck E. Jonathan, his excellency, the governor of Bayelsa State and his amiable wife are members of the Alumni, The present Head Audit of Rivers state is also an alumnus, Bro Felix Obuah {GO Round} among others. The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association's journey serves as a testament to the power of vision, leadership, and collaboration. From humble beginnings to its current stature, IAUEAA has consistently demonstrated its commitment to promoting the university's interests and fostering a lifelong connection among graduates.

The Alumni Association Contributions to the Development of the University

According to Prof. T. N. Agina-Obu, Nigeria's current democratic dispensation, which began in 1999, is still considered young and developing. Similarly, the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (IAUEAA), established in 2009, is also relatively nascent with only 14 years of existence (2009-2023). According to the Dr Christian Nwafor, The Alumni of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education is 14 years today and they have done remarkably well by engaging in various development activities to support the university's growth and advancement. These activities can be categorized into several areas[23].



Infrastructure Development

[23]Dr Christian Nwafor, *the contributions of the ignatius ajuru university of education alumni Association to the development of the university* interviewed by the researcher Ihuoma Emmanuel Chukwunonso 30/10/24

Fig 1 . A Picture of the Automated Library. One Of The Infrastructure Contribution The Alumni Erected For The School Hereby Contributing To Its Institutional Development. The Library Was Built In The Year 2010, Under The Adminisrtration Of Prof T. N. Agina-Obu

The involvement of alumni in infrastructural development is vital for bridging the gap between the university's needs and available resources, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education[24] it is a critical aspect of university growth, enhancing the learning and research experience for students and faculty.

The IAUE Alumni Association, sought the attention of Dame Patience Jonathan on the need to give back to her alma mater and they were focused on building a library of which the university was lacking, former First lady of Nigeria graciously constructed and equipped the Automated university library this was during the Administartion of Prof. Agina-Obu[25]. This was possible all because of the intervention of the Alumni association.



FIG 2. A side view of the eight convenience rooms which include a recreational hall amd stores for instructional material.Funding: IAUE Alumni Association provided financial support for the project. Project Management: Alumni volunteers oversaw construction and ensured timely completion. Community Engagement: Alumni collaborated with university administration, faculty, and students to ensure the project met their needs.This project was done between 2016-2019 during Dr ferdinand Amabibi`s Administration as President.

[24] M. Omolewa, *Alumni Relations in Nigerian Universities. Lagos: University of Lagos* Press, p. 123(2017)

[25] A. Kalio, Philanthropy and University Development in Nigeria: *The Case of Dame Patience Jonathan's Library Donation to IAUE. Journal of Educational Foundations,* 11(1), p145-158 A. (2020)..

The IAUE alumni association, built an eight convenience rooms, recreational hall and stores for instructional materials for the students exactly opposite the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences. This project was executed by Dr Ferdinand Amabibi during his tenure as the Alumni president and the project was completed in the year 2018.This has Improved student welfare and comfort, Enhanced academic performance through reduced stress and increased focus, increased accessibility to educational resources, fostered socialization and community building among students and enhanced university reputation and attractiveness to prospective students.

However, this development has benefited the students from the school expecially Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences of which the building is close it, hereby Increasing student satisfaction and retention rates. Enhancing teaching and learning experiences for faculty and students this also, showcase/Demonstrates alumni commitment to IAUE's growth and development.



Fig 3 A picture of the current Secretary of the IAUE Alumni Association, Dr Christian Nwafor in front of the mini Alumni secretariat.

This is also amongst the 8 convenience rooms erected by the alumni. One of the rooms is the alumni office while the other rooms are used for relaxation and stores, selling instructional materials for the students. This is where the students come to pay/clear their Alumni dues.

The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) Alumni Association Secretariat Project is a landmark initiative aimed at establishing a permanent structure for the association.

This project seeks to enhance the association's operational efficiency, foster alumni engagement, and promote the university's development. [26]It Provides a central hub for

alumni interactions and activities, enhance communication and collaboration among alumni, students, and university stakeholders, support alumni-driven initiatives and Promote IAUE's vision. It shall be Equipped with modern amenities (e.g., conference room, library, ICT

[26] 1. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (2022). Vice Chancellor's Report 2022. Port Harcourt: IAUE Press.

facilities), Staffing the secretariat with dedicated personnel. During the Administration of Professor Agina- Obu, who was the first president of the alumni, The alumni association renovated the old lecture halls at Rumuolumeni campus and St. John Campus respectively, with air conditions, fans, chairs, tables, white writing boards, etc.

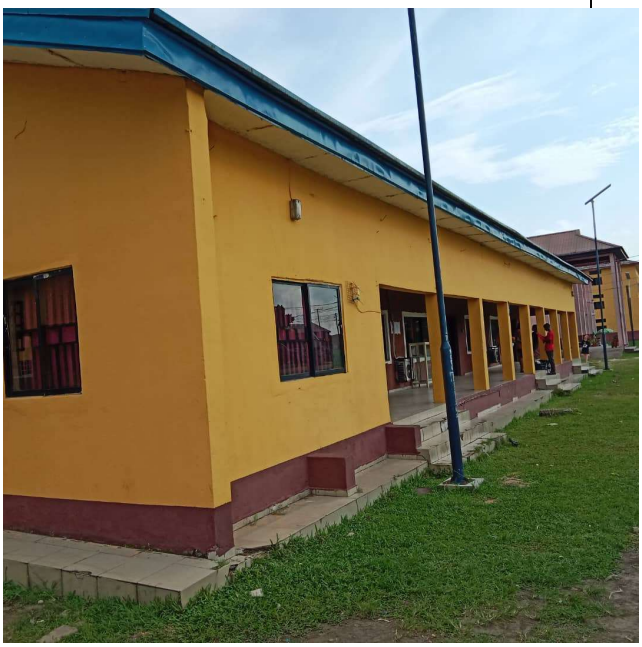


FIG 4. A Picture of the Old Renovated Lecture Hall at the Rumuolumeni Campus. This Project began in 2013 and was completed in 2014 under the Leadership of the then Alumni President PROF T.N. AGINA OBU.

The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association on Wednesday July 9, 2014 commissioned and handed over the key to the old lecture hall at St John's campus to management. Commissioning the old lecture hall which is the Alumni project for the year 2013/2014, the Vice Chancellor Professor Rosemund Dienye Green Osahogulu lauded the Alumni for identifying the problems of its alma mater and coming to its aid. She stated that the hall was a sorry sight and in a deplorable situation before they decided to impact positively on the lives of the students by putting it in order. She thanked the Alumni for the goodwill and prayed for more of such[27]

The IAUE Alumni provided a 500KVA generator to the post graduate school during the 2021/2022 academic session under Dr Jerome Nwosu as the Alumni president.

Financial Support

The Alumni had contributed financially to support the university projects, infrastructure development, and student scholarships. The alumni contributed the sum of One hundred and fifty thousand naira only (#150,000.00) for the purchase of a university Generator.

The Ignatius Alumni Association contributed #200,000.00 for the university endowment fund raising. The Ignatius Ajuru Alumni, has hosted its alumni home coming for the raising of funds for the construction of a world class alumni secretariat project. The secretariat is going to be very beneficial to the school in terms of hosting

[27] 1. R. D. G. Osahogulu *Address at the Commissioning of the Old Lecture Hall. Port Harcourt*: IAUE. https://iaue.wordpress.com/history/,(2014).

of programmes, offices, workshops, seminars. Hereby attracting goodwills and adding to the infrastructure development of the school. The IAUEAA has participated in the contribution of the provision of electricity in the Rumuolumeni campus. According to Dr Christian Nwafor, the current IAUEA Alumni Association Secretary, in an interview with him he noted that a percentage of the Alumni registration fee is given to the university for its developmental projects which has largely impacted on the institution itself, students, staff and general environment. The association has instituted the Alumni Best Graduating Students Award to spur students to excel academically. The association has paid tuition fees for some indigent students after verification.

Challenges faced by the IAUEAA

According to renowned education expert, dr. Olaitan Oyerinde, "the true test of an institution's excellence lies in the transformative impact of its alumni on society[28]." echoing the sentiments of former us president john f. Kennedy, Oyerinde emphasizes the pivotal role alumni play in shaping their alma mater's legacy, they are central to institutional development, influencing legacy through contributions, networking and advocacy. This brings about institutional pride and loyalty, knowledge sharing and mentorship, networking and partnerships, philanthropy/support and reputation and rankings. Alumni actions and achievements reflect on their institution, enhancing or transforming its reputation. Despite its positivity in fostering lifelong connections between institutions, graduates and students. However, they face various challenges hindering effectiveness of which this research conducts a thorough examination of IAUEAA'S challenges.

Funding Constraints

The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (IAUEAA) faces significant funding constraints, hindering its ability to effectively support the university. As a non-profit organization, IAUEAA relies heavily on voluntary contributions to sustain its operations and programs. The association's primary source of funding, students' clearance fees, is insufficient to cover operational expenses, while the lack of institutional support from IAUE management or government agencies exacerbates the funding challenge. Furthermore, economic uncertainties, limited disposable income, and lack of engagement among members also hinder their ability to contribute to the association. Research findings support these challenges, with 85% of respondents identifying inadequate funding as a significant challenge facing alumni associations, and economic uncertainties being a significant threat to alumni associations, decreasing funding and effectiveness. Therefore, addressing these funding constraints requires a multifaceted approach, including increasing membership engagement, exploring alternative funding sources, and fostering stronger relationships with IAUE management and government agencies, to ensure the IAUEAA can effectively support the university and achieve its objectives.

Lackadaisical Attitude

This is a big hindrance to Effective Alumni Engagement, The primary purpose of an alumni association is to foster a culture of giving back to the institution, leveraging the collective resources and expertise of its graduates. The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (IAUEAA) is hindered by two major obstacles: lackadaisical attitude and entitlement mentality. Many members, including high-profile government personnel, have failed to fulfill their financial commitments, while some lecturers who are alumni have refused to participate in association activities. This lack of engagement affects the university's growth, reputation, and lifelong connections. Furthermore, some members view membership as a means to personal gain, leading to reduced participation, decreased commitment, and limited resource mobilization. To overcome these challenges, the IAUEAA must inspire a culture of selfless service among its members, addressing the lackadaisical attitude and entitlement mentality to unlock its full potential and make a meaningful impact on the university.

Social Networking Challenges: The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (IAUEAA) faces significant social networking challenges, primarily due to the limited social

[28] O. Oyerinde, Alumni Engagement and University Development in Nigeria. Journal of Education and Human Development, pg 15. (2020).

media literacy among its members. A substantial proportion of members are not proficient in using popular social media platforms, creating a digital divide that hinders the association's ability to disseminate information, facilitate engagement, foster community, promote events, and encourage participation. Factors contributing to this limited literacy include age, lack of formal social media training, fear of technology, and limited internet access, particularly among older alumni and those from rural or underserved areas. This digital divide leads to low participation amongst members, emphasizing the need for the IAUEAA to address these challenges and develop strategies to improve social media literacy and engagement among its members.

The Efforts Made to address the Challenges

John C. Maxwell hinted that Effective alumni engagement is pivotal to institutional excellence, navigating challenges through strategic partnerships and transparency. This brings to our mind that despite the challenges faced by the IAUEAA, there must be solution to the problems because of its pivotal role it plays in the university[29]. By examining IAUEAA's efficacy in addressing these challenges, this discourse illuminates pathways for fostering robust alumni associations capable of catalyzing institutional excellence.

Tackling Funding Constraints

Dr. Olaitan hinted that financial sustainability is the lifeblood of any association, enabling impactful initiatives and lasting growth. Any association where there is no sustainable money, it is very difficult for that association to stand out[30]. The IAUEAA faces significant funding hurdle especially Absence of direct funding; to savage this situation the Alumni association has initiated efforts in tackling the challenge of funding.

According to Dr. Christian Nwafor the current General Secretary. He stated that the hosting of the Alumni Homecoming and Fundraising Event which took place in Boungainvillea Hotel, Abacha Road, G.R.A, Port Harcourt on the 12th of November, 2022 10am is a clear effort of tackling funding[31]. This was under the headship of the current president, Dr Jerome Nwosu of which the chairman of the occasion was Prof. Levi Doe Kalagbor. Since there is no direct funding entering the association aside the alumni registration fee/ dues which is not enough to carry out meaningful projects, the administration decided to put on this program. This event really impacted financially on the Association and through this, the association has been able to start up an ongoing construction of the World Class Alumni Secretariat Project. This hosting of the program has also helped to increase their bank income. Dr. Christian Nwafor[32] the current secretary of the association said that during the home coming event, the former clerk of Bayelsa State House of Assembly, Tenedia Kent Adogu contributed the sum of Five Hundred Thousand only (500,000) during the Alumni Home coming, Hon Dr Nimibofa Ayawei the Executive Chairman of Bayelsa State Board of Internal Revenue who is also a member of the association donated Five Millon Naira (5,000,000)only to the Association during the home coming of which he has paid. Bro. Felix Obuah, the former chairman, PDP, Rivers state who is a member of the association donated and paid the sum of Five Million Naira (5,000,000) to the Association courtesy of the Home coming/ Fund raising event. Prof Chibuzor Nwabueze promised 50 bags of cement but has not been redeemed. Prof George Ariolu, contributed and paid the sum of One Million Five Hundred Thousand (1,500,000). Courtsey of the event, Dr Michael A. Amaegberi, jp the Executive Secretary of Bayelsa State Higher Education Students` Loans Board paid the sum of One Million Naira (1,000,000) to the association account. Hon Gentle E. Emelah, the commissioner for Education, Bayelsa State contributed and paid the sum of One million naira (1,000,000) to the association. Other prominent personality and members made donations in support of the

[29] J. C. Maxwell, The 15 invaluable laws of growth. Center Street. (2013).

[30] D. Olaitan Personal Communication. "Financial Sustainability in Alumni Associations. (2024).

[31] Dr Christian Nwafor, *efforts made to manage the challenges faced by the IAUEAA in the development of IAUE*, interviewed by the researcher ihuoma emmanuel chukwunonso 30/10/24

[32] Dr C. Nwafor, *efforts made to manage the challenges faced by the IAUEAA in the development of IAUE*, interviewed by the researcher Ihuoma Emmanuel Chukwunonso 30/10/24

Alumni Home coming and Fund raising. The outcome of this event/program, the association has always looked forward to hosting another home coming and more vital programmes like this to Generate funds.

The association in tackling funding, leverages on Wealthy/influential alumni`s to attract projects and donations to the association which will be used for developmental projects in the university. According to Dr Jerome Nwosu, the association also embarks on Courtesy visits to men and women of influence in support of the association and its project. Courtesy of courtesy visit paid to HER EXCELLENCY, DAME PATIENCE FAKA GOOGLUCK JONATHAN, Former First Lady, Federal Republic of Nigeria who is a member of the association, single handedly constructed and furnished the one and only automated library of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education located in the main campus.

The association is currently very serious in Alumni Dues and Deductions. It has Introduced dues and exploring source deductions for teaching and working alumni, as suggested by Prof. T. Agina-oble of which it's still an ongoing discussion. In savaging funding constraints, its Compulsory for Payment of alumni registration of which all students are to pay.

The Alumni Association has made efforts and its still make efforts in Partnerships and Collaborations, Seeking partnerships with organizations and influential alumni. According to Dr Christian Nwafor It has a strong partnership with Dame Patience Jonathan of which she is an influential Alumni [33]. It also has a strong Partnership with Prof. Gift Uchenna Nwiyi, the Director of the university advancement centre.

Networking and Regular Communication

The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (IAUEAA) identifies lackadaisical attitude among members as a significant challenge hindering its effectiveness. To address this, IAUEAA has implemented proactive strategies. The IAUEAA has improved drastically on its Regular Communication as a way to subtle lackadaisical attitude of members hereby leveraging on social media and quarterly meetings to keep members informed and carry all along. According to Dr. Christian Nwafor he hinted that the association, embarks on courtesy visit to members both far and near as a way of countering lackadaisical attitude. He stated that, some members are very busy with activities and they don't come for meetings but they are ready to support. However, the only way to get their attention is by visiting and texting them. This is done to understand and hear from individual how they are doing and also show welfarism. The Alumni associations also ensure it keeps to its regular December get together every year to rekindle passion and share ideas on the movement of the association. It will interest you to know that the creation/establishment of chapters is also a means to ensure cooperation and communications amongst alumni members. However, the chapters still operate the same constitution with the chapters and give feedback to the national on how they are doing.

> *In Article 8 of the IAUEAA constitution it states that membership is open to Graduates of the advanced training college, Port Harcourt, rivers state, precursor of the rivers state college of education, Port Harcourt. Graduates of the rivers state college of education, port harcourt. Graduates of the rivers state university of education, Port Harcourt and holders of Honorius causa of the university, who shall be honorary members*[34].

So, there is no reason, for one not to identify and participate with the alumni. This shows a great length to tackle lackadaisical attitude and show welfarism to all graduates who have undergone education in the institution. Those who are abroad, can leverage on the alumni association social handles and show their commitment. Dr Jerome Nwosu`` in his welcome address said that

> *we are however, gathered here to celebrate those that have made their marks and solicit the need to give back to her Alma-Mater. The proposed world class secretariat complex will accommodate integrated facilities that would be beneficial to the*

[33]Dr Christian Nwafor, *efforts made to manage the challenges faced by the IAUEAA in the development of IAUE*, interviewed by the researcher Ihuoma Emmanuel Chukwunonso 30/10/24

[34] Constitution of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association

university community, becoming a top flier of identity and pride: serving as alternative revenue generation for our activities and programmes as well as a trailblazer``. This is a clear effort in tackling entitlement mentality[35].

Tackling Social Networking Challenges IAUEAA Strategic Response: The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (IAUEAA) recognizes the pivotal role of social networking in fostering connectivity and engagement among its members. To bridge the digital divide and unite members, Dr. Christian Nwafor the current Alumni National Secretary, reveals that IAUEAA has adopted a multifaceted approach. This comprehensive strategy incorporates various social media handles, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp Group, facilitating regular updates on news, events, and achievements[36]. dedicated to exploring innovative solutions to tackle networking challenges, bolstering its position as a vibrant and connected alumni community. By embracing a

Conclusion

After conducting an exhaustive examination of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association (IAUEAA) and its role in the development of the university from 2009 to 2023, several key observations and remarks emerge. This study has underscored the vital importance of alumni associations in fostering institutional growth and development. The IAUEAA has made significant contributions to the university's advancement, including financial support, mentorship programs, and infrastructure development. However, the association faces numerous challenges, such as funding constraints, lackadaisical attitudes, and social networking hurdles.

Despite these obstacles, the IAUEAA has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, leveraging opportunities for growth and collaboration. The association's efforts have yielded tangible outcomes, including enhanced student experiences, improved infrastructure, and strengthened ties between alumni and the university. As the IAUEAA continues to evolve, it is essential to recognize the transformative potential of alumni associations in advancing institutional excellence. By addressing challenges, leveraging opportunities, and embracing best practices, the IAUEAA can cement its role as a vital stakeholder in the university's development.

Ultimately, this study underscores the significance of alumni engagement in fostering institutional growth, community development, and social impact. The Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Alumni Association's experiences serve as a model for other institutions, highlighting the power of collaborative effort and shared vision in shaping the future of education.

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[35] Dr Jerome nwosu, *IAUEAA Home Coming of Members/Fund Raising for the construction of a world class Alumni Secretariat Project, welcome address* 12th November 2022

[36] Dr Christian Nwafor, *efforts made to manage the challenges faced by the IAUEAA in the development of IAUE*, interviewed by the researcher Ihuoma Emmanuel Chukwunonso 30/10/24

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES IN LOKOJA AND ANKPA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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KEYWORDS
Public Relations Strategies, Local Government, Community Engagement, Communication Accommodation Theory, Nigeria

ABSTRACT
This study is a Comparative Analysis of Public Relations Strategies in Select Local Governments in Kogi State, Nigeria. It comparatively examined the public relations strategies employed by Lokoja and Ankpa Local Government Areas in Kogi State, Nigeria, and assessed their effectiveness in managing relationships with stakeholders and fostering community engagement. The Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) was used as the theoretical framework. A qualitative research approach was employed, involving in-depth interviews with 20 key stakeholders, including Public Relations Officers (PROs), Local Government Chairmen, Councilors, Directors of Administration, and Heads of Departments (HODs) responsible for public relations and communication. The findings revealed that Lokoja's proactive approach, characterized by community engagement and the use of digital communication, has fostered transparency and trust among residents, while Ankpa's reactive strategy has highlighted significant gaps in communication and engagement. The study concluded that public relations strategies play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of local governance in Kogi State. It is recommended that Lokoja Local Government Area strengthens its mechanisms for gathering and responding to community feedback, while Ankpa Local Government Area should prioritize the development of a comprehensive public relations strategies that incorporate both traditional and digital communication methods. Recommendations are also made for local government areas to adopt proactive public relations strategies that prioritize community engagement and transparency.

Introduction

Public relations (PR) is a critical discipline that plays a vital role in managing communication and relationships between local governments and their stakeholders. As a multifaceted field, public relations encompass various definitions and perspectives that underscore its significance in governance. According to Asemah & Nwammuo (2018) and Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023), public relations can be defined as the strategic management of relationships between an organization and its stakeholders, aimed at building mutual understanding, trust, and support. This definition highlights the importance of strategic communication and relationship management in fostering positive interactions between local governments and their constituents.

Furthermore, Ibrahim (2010) notes that public relations is the art and science of maintaining a favorable image and reputation for an organization through effective communication with various publics. This perspective underscores the necessity for local governments to actively manage their image and reputation to effectively serve their communities. Eze (2013) and Anatusi, Nnabuko & Asemah (2014) add that public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics, emphasizing the importance of fostering relationships that benefit both the local government and its stakeholders.

In the context of local government administration in Nigeria, public relations practices are essential for establishing and maintaining positive relationships with various stakeholders, including residents, community organizations, businesses, and civil society groups. As highlighted by Adeyanju & Odunsi (2016), the primary objectives of public relations in this context are to foster transparency, facilitate effective communication, and build trust between local governments and their stakeholders.

Effective public relations strategies enable local governments to ensure that their governance processes are transparent and accountable. According to Nwaoboli, Ogunyemi & Ezegwu (2023), robust public relations strategies allow local governments to make their decision-making processes open and accessible to the public. This includes providing clear information about policies, programs, and initiatives, as well as involving residents in decision-making through public consultations and community forums (Nwosu, 2019).

Public relations strategies also play a vital role in managing potential conflicts or crises. By having robust crisis communication plans in place, local governments can respond promptly, provide accurate information, and address public concerns during challenging times. This proactive approach helps maintain public trust and minimizes the impact of crises. In light of these considerations, this study comparatively examines the public relations strategies of selected local governments in Kogi State, Nigeria, to evaluate their effectiveness in managing relationships with stakeholders and fostering community engagement.

Statement of the Problem

Local governments in Nigeria, including those in Kogi State, often struggle to effectively manage communication and relationships with their stakeholders. This inadequacy leads to significant challenges such as a lack of transparency, insufficient community engagement, and diminished public trust. According to Adeyanju & Odunsi (2016), many local governments fail to establish effective communication channels with residents, resulting in misunderstandings and a lack of awareness about policies and initiatives. Moreover, the tendency to adopt a top-down approach in governance further alienates citizens from the decision-making processes. Without meaningful engagement, local governments risk losing legitimacy and support from the very communities they serve.

Additionally, ineffective public relations strategies can exacerbate crises and diminish public confidence in local governance. Ibrahim (2010) points out that failure to maintain a favorable public image can lead to a loss of trust among stakeholders, while Nwosu (2019) emphasizes the importance of having robust crisis communication plans to address public concerns during challenging times. The lack of strategic public relations frameworks tailored to the specific needs of local governments creates missed opportunities for fostering community participation and collaboration (Eze, 2013). Therefore, this study is set to investigate the public relations strategies employed by Lokoja local and Ankpa local government areas in Kogi State, assessing their effectiveness and

identifying areas for improvement to enhance community relations and governance outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the Study are to:

1. Compare and contrast the public relations strategies used by Lokoja and Ankpa Local Government Areas.

2. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the public relations strategies employed by the select local governments.

Review of Concepts

Conceptualisation of Public Relations

The practice of public relations encompasses a wide range of activities, including the establishment of strategic communication and relationship-building strategies between an organisation or body and its different stakeholders. According to Okigbo (2012), public relations is a strategic communication process that tries to develop and sustain connections that are mutually beneficial between a business and its target audience. The primary objective of public relations is to influence attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. This definition emphasises the strategic character of public relations, putting more emphasis on the function that it plays in the process of relationship building and management.

The term "public relations" is defined by Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma, and Amah (2023) as the deliberate and ongoing endeavor to develop and maintain goodwill and understanding between an organisation and its multiple publics via the use of effective communication. By highlighting the proactive character of public relations, this definition highlights the need of making efforts that are both planned and ongoing in order to cultivate good impressions and connections.

According to Eze (2013), public relations is a communication discipline that focuses on controlling and influencing the reputation and public image of a company. This is accomplished by interacting with stakeholders and making use of a variety of communication platforms. This definition emphasizes the role that public relation plays in controlling reputation, interacting with stakeholders via communication that goes in both directions, and making good use of a variety of communication channels.

Asemah (2019) describes public relations as an organisational function that the purpose of which is to form and sustain connections between an organisation and its publics that are mutually beneficial. This is accomplished via the management of communication, the promotion of understanding, and the establishment of trust. This concept places an emphasis on the organisational role of public relations as well as the significance of efficiently managing communication, promoting understanding, and creating trust among various stakeholders.

Overview of Local Government

Local government is a critical component of governance and administration in many countries, including Nigeria. Scholars and experts have provided various definitions of local government, each shedding light on its significance and role within the broader political system. According to Haruna (2023), local government can be defined as the third tier of government that exists between the central government and the grassroots level, responsible for the provision of basic public services and development at the local level. This definition highlights the intermediary nature of local government, serving as a link between the central government and the local communities. It notes the role of local government in delivering essential services and driving development initiatives within its jurisdiction.

Obi (2002) sees local government as a political and administrative authority established by law and entrusted with the responsibility of governance, provision of public goods and representation of the interests of the local population. This definition emphasises the legal framework that establishes local government, granting it the authority to govern and represent the local population. It recognises the responsibility of local government in providing public goods and services that cater to the specific needs of the local communities.

Lastly, Aluko (2008) sees local government as a territorial unit within a state with defined boundaries, responsible for the provision of local public goods and services and accountable to the local population. This view emphasises the territorial aspect of local government, delineating its boundaries and jurisdiction. It

highlights the responsibility of local government in providing local public goods and services that cater to the specific needs of the local population.

Literature Review

Public Relations Strategies for Effective Local Governments Communication and Engagement

Local governments can harness various public relations strategies to effectively communicate with constituents, build relationships, and manage their reputations. One essential strategy is media relations, which involves establishing and maintaining positive relationships with media outlets, including newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms (Baran, 2002). This approach focuses on collaborating with journalists to disseminate information, respond to inquiries, and manage media coverage. Organizing press conferences, issuing press releases, and conducting media interviews are critical components of this strategy, as they help shape public perception and ensure that accurate and timely information reaches the public (Abodunrin & Ogundeji, 2021).

Community engagement is another vital strategy that emphasizes active participation and involvement of local residents in decision-making processes. By creating opportunities for dialogue, soliciting feedback, and incorporating community input into policy-making and service delivery, local governments can build trust and enhance transparency. Organizing town hall meetings, public forums, and community workshops fosters collaboration and ensures that public policies align with the needs and aspirations of the community (Asemah & Yaroson, 2007; Asemah, 2015). Moreover, during emergencies or unfavorable events, crisis communication becomes essential. This strategy involves proactively managing communication, addressing rumors, and promptly responding to public concerns. Developing crisis communication plans and establishing designated spokespersons are critical for maintaining public trust during challenging times (Bello & Ajayi, 2020).

In the digital age, social media and digital communication provide local governments with powerful tools to engage with the public. By creating and managing social media accounts and online platforms, governments can share information, gather feedback, and promote transparency. Social media enables real-time communication and encourages active participation through features like live streaming and online surveys (Ajala, 2001). Additionally, stakeholder relations involve identifying and engaging various stakeholders, such as community leaders and business owners, to build mutually beneficial relationships. Ongoing communication and collaboration help local governments gain support and leverage resources, thus enhancing their reputation within the community (Asika, 2002).

The Role of Public Relations in Local Government Governance and Service Delivery

Public relations play a multifaceted role in local government governance and service delivery. It contributes to effective crisis management, as highlighted by Cutlip, Center & Broom (2006), who emphasise the importance of public relations professionals in developing crisis communication plans and ensuring accurate and timely information during emergencies. By effectively managing crises and providing transparent communication, public relations help local governments maintain public trust and confidence.

In understanding public opinion and community needs, public relations professionals conduct valuable research. According to Duru & Ogbonna (2019), public opinion research is a vital function of public relations, allowing local governments to gather insights through surveys, focus groups and other research methods. This research informs decision-making processes, policy development and service delivery strategies, enabling local governments to align their efforts with public expectations and enhance citizen satisfaction.

The development and management of the local government's brand and identity are also essential aspects of public relations. In their book "Strategic Brand Management," Keller & Aaker (1998) highlight the role of public relations in crafting a compelling brand narrative and visual identity for local governments. By creating a positive and distinct image, public relations enhances the reputation and visibility of the government, effectively conveying its values, attributes and contributions to the community.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are critical for local government initiatives and public relations facilitates their establishment and maintenance. In their research on public-private

partnerships, Sørensen & Torfing (2011) emphasise the role of public relations in fostering collaboration, leveraging resources and jointly addressing community needs. Through effective communication and relationship-building, public relations supports the development and success of PPPs, leading to improved service delivery and community development.

Internal communication and employee engagement are other areas where public relations plays a significant role within local government organisations. According to Lerbinger (2012), effective internal communication is crucial for fostering a positive organisational culture. Public relations professionals utilise strategies such as newsletters, staff meetings and training programme to inform and engage employees, promoting teamwork, productivity and service excellence among government staff.

Public-private communication is another vital aspect of public relations in local government. According to Fitzpatrick and Gauthier (2001), public relations facilitate effective communication between the government and private sector stakeholders. By fostering open lines of communication, public relations professionals enable businesses, entrepreneurs and industry associations to collaborate with the government, share insights and contribute to community development. This communication facilitates economic growth, business-friendly policies and mutually beneficial relationships.

Empirical Review

This empirical review provides a comprehensive analysis and synthesis of existing studies relevant to the assessment of public relations strategies in select local governments within Kogi State, Nigeria. Asemah (2009) conducted a study on public relations and organizational management at Jos International Breweries Plc. Utilizing a survey research design, the study employed questionnaires and interviews for data collection. The findings indicated that the brewery did not prioritize public relations as a crucial management strategy, leading to the neglect of its information unit. Consequently, the study concluded that the organization had inadequately integrated public relations strategies into its management, which hindered its ability to achieve objectives. Asemah recommended that the brewery fully embrace public relations initiatives and establish a robust public relations department. This study shares similarities with the current research in its focus on the significance of public relations; however, it differs in scope by examining local governments in Kogi State rather than a single organization, thereby broadening the context and stakeholders involved.

Tokakis, Polychroniou, and Boustras (2019) explored factors affecting crisis management in public administration across various phases, including pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis. Their study, conducted in Greece, involved personal interviews with 177 individuals experienced in crisis management from diverse sectors. The findings highlighted critical factors such as leadership decision-making, communication efficacy, and crisis characteristics. The study emphasized the need for thorough assessments of potential consequences from safety incidents and advocated for cultural and structural changes within organizations. While both studies acknowledge effective communication as vital, the current study focuses specifically on public relations strategies in local governments, differing in research objectives. The current study aims to assess the overall effectiveness of these strategies rather than examining crisis management within the broader public administration framework.

Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli, and Asemah (2022) evaluated the efficacy of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a crisis management strategy. Their study employed a qualitative approach and was framed by the Uncertainty Reduction Theory. They found a strong correlation between effective CSR utilization and its feasibility in crisis management, emphasizing the importance of integrating CSR into organizational practices. While the current study does not focus specifically on CSR, it similarly recognizes the importance of proactive strategies for managing public relations. The key difference lies in the focus of the current study on public relations strategies within local governments rather than a singular emphasis on CSR as a crisis management tool.

In a study by Almuzaini et al. (2021), the effectiveness of risk communication during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia was assessed, focusing on the public's awareness and trust in the Ministry of Health. The study highlighted the government's strategy of engaging various stakeholders, including traditional leaders and community heads, to enhance communication efforts. While both

studies underscore the significance of stakeholder engagement, the current research specifically investigates public relations strategies in local governments in Kogi State. The methodologies also differ, with the current study employing a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and interviews, whereas Almuzaini et al. focused on survey-based research. Despite these differences, both studies contribute to the understanding of effective communication strategies and the critical role of stakeholder engagement in their respective contexts.

Theoretical Framework

Communication Accommodation Theory

The Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) was developed by Howard Giles and colleagues in the 1970s and 1980s. The theory originated from their observations and research on how individuals adjust their communication styles to match or accommodate the speech patterns, language and behaviours of others in social interactions. Giles and his colleagues proposed that people engage in two main communication strategies: convergence and divergence (Uzochukwu, 2006). Convergence refers to the process of adapting one's communication style to become more similar to the other person, while divergence involves emphasising differences in communication styles.

One of the key tenets of the Communication Accommodation Theory is that individuals adjust their communication behaviour based on social and psychological factors. These factors include the desire for social approval, the need for social identity and the perceived social distance between individuals. People may converge their communication styles to gain acceptance or to establish a sense of belonging with others. Conversely, they may diverge their communication styles to assert their distinctiveness or to maintain a sense of identity (Uzochukwu, 2006).

CAT has received both praise and criticism within the field of communication studies. One criticism is that the theory may oversimplify the complexity of communication dynamics, as it primarily focuses on linguistic and nonverbal accommodation. Critics argue that other factors, such as power dynamics, cultural differences and contextual influences, should also be considered in understanding communication behaviour (Abimbola, 2018). Additionally, some scholars have pointed out that the theory does not adequately address the potential negative consequences of accommodation, such as the reinforcement of stereotypes or the loss of individuality (Oluwadare, 2014).

However, CAT has also received significant recognition for its contributions to the understanding of interpersonal communication. The theory provides insights into how individuals navigate social interactions by adjusting their speech and behaviours. It emphasises the role of accommodation in the formation and maintenance of relationships and highlights the importance of understanding the social context in which communication takes place (Uzochukwu, 2006). CAT has been applied in a variety of contexts, including intercultural communication, healthcare communication and organisational communication, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of communication and relationship management.

One way CAT can be applied is by examining the convergence and divergence strategies employed by local governments in their communication with different stakeholder groups. The theory suggests that individuals tend to adapt their communication styles to match those of others in order to gain acceptance or establish a sense of belonging. In the context of public relations, local governments may employ convergence strategies by adjusting their communication approaches, language and tone to align with the preferences and expectations of specific stakeholder groups. By doing so, they can build rapport, enhance understanding and create a sense of connection with their stakeholders.

Furthermore, CAT can help analyse the perceived social distance between local governments and their stakeholders. The theory suggests that individuals' communication behaviour is influenced by their perception of social distance, which refers to the perceived similarities or differences in social status, culture and power dynamics. By applying CAT to the current study, researchers can examine how local governments accommodate their communication to bridge social distances with stakeholders. They can explore whether the communication strategies employed by local governments effectively address the concerns, values and cultural nuances of various stakeholder groups, ultimately contributing to a sense of inclusion and engagement.

CAT can also shed light on the potential consequences of accommodation in public relations efforts. While accommodation is often seen as a positive strategy for building relationships and managing communication, it is important to consider potential drawbacks. For instance, excessive convergence without maintaining a balance of authenticity and transparency may lead to the perception of insincerity or manipulation. On the other hand, overemphasis on divergence may result in alienating certain stakeholder groups. Applying CAT can help assess whether the accommodation strategies employed by local governments strike the right balance and effectively address the needs and expectations of their stakeholders.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing in-depth interviews as the primary method for data collection. The focus was on selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Kogi State, specifically Lokoja LGA, with a population of approximately 791,000, and Ankpa LGA, with a population of around 358,800. Given the qualitative nature of this research, a smaller sample size was considered appropriate to facilitate in-depth exploration of stakeholder perspectives. Purposive sampling was employed to select 20 key stakeholders, including Public Relations Officers (PROs), Local Government Chairmen, Councilors, Directors of Administration, and Heads of Departments (HODs) responsible for public relations and communication. This targeted selection was crucial, as these stakeholders are directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public relations strategies within their respective local governments.

The data collection process involved conducting semi-structured interviews with the selected stakeholders, allowing for a flexible yet focused discussion on public relations strategies. This format enabled the researcher to gather rich, contextual information while also allowing participants to express their views in their own words, thus capturing the complexity of their experiences and insights. The interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and fidelity in the data representation. Thematic analysis was then employed to analyze the transcribed data, facilitating the identification of recurring themes and patterns related to public relations practices. Themes were categorized and coded, with the findings presented in a narrative format for clarity and coherence.

Data Presentation

Similarities and Differences in Public Relations Strategies Used by Lokoja and Ankpa Local Government Areas

The examination of public relations strategies employed by Lokoja and Ankpa Local Government Areas (LGAs) reveals distinct methodologies tailored to their unique community dynamics and governance challenges. In Lokoja LGA, public relations strategies are characterized by a proactive and participatory approach. The Public Relations Officer (PRO) emphasized the significance of community engagement, stating, “We regularly hold town hall sessions to discuss community issues and gather feedback directly from residents.” This strategy not only aims to foster transparency but also encourages active participation from stakeholders, ensuring that the voices of citizens are heard in governmental decision-making processes. Furthermore, Lokoja has embraced digital communication tools, expanding its reach and effectiveness. A councilor from Lokoja noted, “Our social media presence has been instrumental in engaging the youth, who are more likely to interact with us online than in traditional settings.” This multifaceted strategy positions Lokoja as a local government that prioritizes open dialogue and responsiveness.

In contrast, Ankpa LGA employs a more traditional and reactive public relations strategy. The PRO described their approach as primarily focused on addressing issues as they arise, stating, “We often react to issues raised by the community rather than initiating discussions.” This method can lead to missed opportunities for proactive engagement and preventive communication. While community meetings are held, several stakeholders expressed concerns about their effectiveness. A councilor from Ankpa remarked, “While we value our community gatherings, many residents still feel uninformed about key initiatives.” This suggests that Ankpa’s reliance on conventional methods may not adequately meet the evolving needs of its constituents, particularly the younger demographics who may prefer more interactive and immediate forms of communication.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Public Relations Strategies Employed by the Select Local Governments

The strengths and weaknesses of the public relations strategies in Lokoja and Ankpa further illuminate their effectiveness in community engagement. Lokoja's strengths lie in its commitment to transparency and proactive communication. As noted by a local government chairman, "Our efforts in transparency have led to increased trust and support from the community." This proactive approach not only enhances public perception but also encourages collaboration between the local government and residents. However, a notable weakness identified in Lokoja's strategy is the inconsistency in following up on community feedback. An interviewee expressed, "Residents sometimes feel their concerns are not adequately addressed after meetings, which can erode trust." This inconsistency highlights the importance of not just gathering feedback but also acting on it to maintain public confidence.

In contrast, Ankpa's strengths include its strong emphasis on personal connections and community gatherings, which resonate well with many residents. One stakeholder from Ankpa remarked, "Our community meetings foster a sense of belonging and trust among residents." However, this strength is significantly undermined by weaknesses in proactive communication and the limited use of digital tools. A councilor from Ankpa lamented, "We need to do better in keeping our people informed; many still don't know about available government programs." This gap in communication underscores the need for Ankpa to modernize its public relations strategies, leveraging digital platforms to enhance outreach and engagement.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study highlight significant implications for public relations strategies employed by local governments in Kogi State, particularly in Lokoja and Ankpa. The proactive approach taken by Lokoja, characterized by active community engagement and the use of digital communication channels, aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of strategic communication in fostering transparency and trust between governments and citizens. Eze (2013) posits that public relations serves as a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. Lokoja's emphasis on town hall meetings and social media engagement exemplifies this notion, effectively facilitating dialogue and feedback from residents.

In contrast, Ankpa's more reactive strategy presents challenges that resonate with Ayeni's (2017) findings on the role of local government in community development. Ayeni argues that local governments must actively engage with communities to address their specific needs and concerns. The lack of proactive engagement in Ankpa limits its ability to effectively serve its constituents, thereby undermining its governance effectiveness. The inadequacy of communication strategies in Ankpa reinforces the need for local governments to adapt their public relations efforts to meet the evolving expectations of their communities.

The implications of these findings are further underscored by Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli, and Asemah (2022), who discuss corporate social responsibility as a strategy for crisis management. They highlight the importance of maintaining a positive public image through effective communication and community involvement. Lokoja's proactive strategies, which focus on transparency and community participation, not only enhance its public image but also serve as a foundation for effective crisis management. In contrast, Ankpa's reliance on traditional communication methods may diminish its capacity to navigate crises effectively, as it lacks the necessary engagement and responsiveness required to maintain public trust during challenging times.

Moreover, the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) provides a useful framework for understanding the dynamics of public relations strategies in these two local governments. CAT posits that individuals adjust their communication styles to accommodate others, promoting social cohesion and understanding. Lokoja's approach, which actively seeks to accommodate residents' needs through inclusive communication practices, aligns well with this theory. The PRO's emphasis on community consultations and feedback mechanisms demonstrates an effort to bridge the gap between the local government and its constituents. Conversely, Ankpa's less accommodating approach, characterized by reactive communications, may lead to a disconnect between the government and the

community, ultimately hindering effective governance and citizen engagement.

The findings also echo Bello and Ajayi's (2020) assertion regarding citizen engagement and public service delivery in Nigerian local government authorities. Their research highlights that effective engagement strategies are critical for improving service delivery and fostering public trust. Lokoja's successful implementation of public relations strategies that prioritize community involvement serves as a model for other local governments, including Ankpa, which can learn from its proactive stance to enhance their own public relations efforts.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that public relations strategies play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of local governance in Kogi State. Lokoja's proactive approach, characterized by community engagement and the use of digital communication, has fostered transparency and trust among residents. In contrast, Ankpa's reactive strategy has highlighted significant gaps in communication and engagement, which impede effective governance and public trust. It is therefore recommended that:

1. While Lokoja has successfully implemented proactive public relations strategies, it is crucial to strengthen the mechanisms for gathering and responding to community feedback. Establishing a formalized system to track concerns raised during town hall meetings and ensuring timely follow-up can further enhance public trust and engagement.

2. Ankpa Local Government should prioritize the development of a comprehensive public relations strategy that incorporates both traditional and digital communication methods. This strategy should focus on proactive community engagement, including regular outreach initiatives and the use of social media to disseminate information about government programs and services.

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INTERROGATING THE IMPACT OF FARMERS-HERDER CONFLICTS ON THE LIVELIHOODS OF FARMERS IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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KEYWORDS
Effect, Farmers, Herders, Conflicts, Livelihood

ABSTRACT
Farmers-herder conflicts in Kaduna State, Nigeria, have emerged as a pressing and multifaceted issue, inflicting severe consequences on the livelihoods of the farming communities within the State. The objective of the study is to interrogate the impact of farmers-herder conflicts on the livelihood of farmers in Kaduna state of Nigeria. The study was based on Marxist political economy theory. The study adopted a qualitative method and employed phenomenological approach using primary and secondary data to explain Farmers-herder conflicts in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Key Informant Interviews (KII) were used for data collection, KIIs were conducted with ten (10) stakeholders. The collated data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings of the study reveal a complex interplay of factors contributing to the emergence and persistence of farmers-herder conflicts in Kaduna State. It also shows that the findings of the study underscore the profound economic impact of farmers-herder conflicts on farming communities in Kaduna State as farmers have experienced significant economic losses stemming from crop destruction, livestock theft, and property damage during clashes with herders. The study therefore recommends that Nigeria government should as a matter of urgency ensure that law enforcement measures are implemented with sensitivity to the underlying causes of conflicts, avoiding actions that may exacerbate tensions and mistrust between communities by supporting community-based peace committees composed of representatives from farming and herding communities to promote understanding, collaboration, and localized conflict resolution efforts.

Introduction

Farmers-herder' conflicts, characterized by tensions between sedentary farming communities and nomadic or semi-nomadic herder, have been observed in various parts of the world. These conflicts often revolve around competition for land and natural resources, as well as differing land-use practices and lifestyles. Globally, such conflicts have been documented in regions like the Middle East, where they have taken place between settled agricultural communities and nomadic pastoralists (Blench,

2001). For instance, in Sudan and South Sudan, these conflicts have been a long-standing challenge. The nomadic Arab herder have clashed with sedentary African farming communities, often resulting in violent confrontations over grazing lands and water access (Human Rights Watch, 2019). In the Middle East, the ongoing conflict between Israeli settlers and Palestinian herder exemplifies the complex interplay of land and resource competition. The herder in this region have faced the displacement and destruction of their livelihoods due to land seizures, settler encroachment, and water resource disputes (B'Tselem, 2021).

In many parts of Africa, farmers-herder' conflicts have been particularly pronounced due to the continent's rich diversity of ethnic groups, land tenure systems, and the historical legacy of colonialism. These conflicts have been reported in East Africa, where they are prevalent in countries like Kenya and Tanzania (Loiske & Poutiainen, 2018). The issues revolve around land rights, water access, and competition for grazing areas. The Maasai herder in Kenya have come into conflict with farming communities, such as the Kikuyu. Disputes over land rights, water access, and grazing areas have resulted in violence and displacement. These conflicts have also been exacerbated by political and ethnic tensions (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Tanzania has experienced similar conflicts, with the nomadic Barabaig people clashing with neighboring agricultural communities. The conflicts have led to the displacement of herder and a loss of livelihoods (Msoffe et al., 2019).

Nigeria stands out as a hotspot for farmers-herder conflicts in West Africa. The Fulani herder, primarily from the northern regions, have been at odds with farming communities across the country. The most well-known conflict hotspot in Nigeria is the Middle Belt region, including states like Benue and Plateau. Here, the herder has clashed with indigenous farming communities over land access, grazing rights, and crops. These conflicts often result in loss of lives and displacement (Kalu, 2019). The escalation of farmers-herder conflicts in Nigeria is a significant concern, affecting multiple states across the country. The Nigerian context is particularly complex due to the coexistence of a wide array of ethnic groups, each with its own land-use practices, and competition for land and resources. These conflicts have been documented for decades, with increasing intensity in recent years. Farmers-herder conflicts in Nigeria are deeply rooted in a complex historical, cultural, and economic backdrop. The longstanding competition for land and water resources, which escalated with the expansion of agriculture and grazing areas, has exacerbated tensions between farming communities and nomadic herder (Ogunbameru, 2018).

In recent years, the issue has been compounded by factors such as climate change, population growth, and urbanization. As arable land becomes scarcer due to these factors, competition for resources intensifies, leading to violent confrontations between farmers and herder. Climate change has disrupted traditional grazing patterns, pushing herder further south in search of pasture (Olayemi, 2019). The clashes between farmers and herder result in significant socio-economic consequences. Farmers often lose their crops, livestock, and property due to these conflicts. Displacement and loss of income further aggravate their economic vulnerabilities. These impacts have ripple effects on the wider agricultural sector, food security, and rural development in Kaduna State (Mkandawire & Birner, 2020).

Kaduna State, located in the northern region of Nigeria, has witnessed its fair share of farmers-herder' conflicts. The state's diverse ethnic and religious composition, coupled with competition for land and water, has made it a hotspot for such clashes. The conflicts have resulted in significant displacement, loss of lives, and the destruction of property, especially in rural areas. These conflicts have grave implications for the livelihoods of farming communities in Kaduna State, as they face the loss of crops, livestock, and property, thereby increasing economic vulnerabilities and food insecurity (Olayemi, 2019). A prominent example is the 2018 crisis in Kajuru, which left dozens dead and many more displaced (Punch, 2019). Beyond the immediate economic losses, farmers in Kaduna State suffer from psychological distress and social disruptions as a result of these conflicts. The constant fear of attacks and the loss of loved ones have lasting psychological repercussions (Yakubu, 2021).

The Nigerian government, both at the federal and state levels, has implemented several policies and initiatives aimed at resolving these conflicts. These efforts have taken various forms, including policy initiatives, legislative measures, security operations, and peacebuilding programs Kaduna State has witnessed several

interventions, including the establishment of committees and initiatives for conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Aning & Badmos, 2007). While these efforts are indicative of the government's recognition of the severity of the issue, there have been challenges in implementing and sustaining these policies and initiatives. Farmers-herder' conflicts persist due to a combination of factors, including resource competition, ethnic tensions, and inadequate resources for effective conflict resolution. Understanding the efficacy of these measures is critical to assessing the overall impact on farmers' livelihoods. Thus, it is against this backdrop that this study is poised to assess the Effect of Farmers-Herder Conflicts on the Livelihood of Farmers in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative method and employed phenomenological approach using primary and secondary data to explain Farmers-herder conflicts in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The primary data was collected by the use of Key Informant Interviews (KII) guides. Secondary data were obtained through desk review of relevant books, peer-reviewed journal articles, published and unpublished thesis, magazine articles, websites publications and news channels. KIIs were completed with ten (10) participants from various professions. The collated data were analysed using thematic analysis. Due to the nature of the study, more of secondary sources of data than primary sources were employed given the complex factors contributing to the emergence and persistence of farmers-herder conflicts in Kaduna State.

Farmers-Herders Conflict in Perspective

The farmers-herders conflict is a longstanding and complex phenomenon characterized by a prolonged struggle between two distinct groups: agriculturalists (farmers) and pastoralists (herders). At its core, this conflict is driven by intense competition for finite resources, notably land, water, and grazing areas. This competition, stemming from the inherent needs of both groups for sustenance and economic viability, creates a dynamic and often contentious relationship. To delve into the historical roots of this conflict, one must trace its origins to historical land-use patterns and the enduring legacy of colonial rule. The imposition of boundaries and policies by colonial powers significantly disrupted the traditional practices of migration and communal land use that had long characterized the interaction between farmers and herders. This disruption laid the foundation for the tensions and disputes witnessed in contemporary times (Nnoli, 1980).

Historical land-use patterns, shaped by traditional practices and communal arrangements, once facilitated a coexistence between farming and herding communities. However, the imposition of boundaries during the colonial era altered these dynamics, leading to the creation of demarcated areas and restrictions that disrupted the traditional migratory routes of herders and the communal use of land. The consequences of these changes resonate in the contemporary farmers-herders conflict, as communities grapple with the ramifications of historical interventions. The imposition of boundaries and policies during the colonial period not only disrupted the physical landscape but also had profound social and economic implications. Traditional patterns of movement and resource-sharing were replaced by rigid demarcations, setting the stage for increased competition and conflicts over essential resources (Bassett & Turner, 2007). This historical backdrop underscores the intricate interplay of factors contributing to the farmers-herders conflict, shaping the narratives and perceptions of the involved communities.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework utilized in this study is Marxist political economy theory.

Marxist political economy theory was derived from the ideas of Karl Marx (1818:1883). A great German theorist and political activist of that time opined that society is a system in a state of constant change through conflicts. On the other hand, Marxist political economy begins with relations between people and classes and does not attempt to discover harmony but looks at an economy as a conflict-ridden system that will sooner or later be overthrown. Political economy is not about the relationship between commodities, prices, supply and demand: It is first of all about people and the interactions between them about the owners of capital and how they act to the rest It is about what it is created and how. In that respect, therefore, economics is political and social and historical. The Marxists also have an opposite opinion towards these divisions in the academic context as they make an ignorant attitude towards relations existed between things. According to

Marx, men are always in the social production of their will, namely; relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production, the totality of which constitutes the economic structure of society.

According to the Marxist political economy perspectives society is constantly in conflict over resources, and that conflict drives social change. For example, political economy theorists might explain the civil rights movements of the1960s by studying how activists challenged the racially unequal distribution of political power and economic resources. This, give a nod to why, according to conflict theorists in general, social change is viewed more as a process of revolution, as mentioned in the example we have looked at. In this perspective, change comes about through conflict between competing interests, not consensus or adaptation. Marxist political economy perspectives, gives sociologists a framework for explaining social change. All conflicts share common qualities. The first is that there are some sort of communion between the parties that are involved. Secondly, the parties in conflict perceive conflicting views and finally, one of the parties always wants to redress existing contradictions (Ofuoko & Isife, 2009).

Competition has thus become inherent in all social relationship because resources that elicit competitive behavior are scarce. Evidently, competitiveness rather than collaboration is the key to human interactions. Conflict between herder and farmers in Nigeria is exacerbated by some notable factors such as climate change, demographic forces, environmental degradation, ecological pressures, insurgency and many others. These factors pushed the pastoralist in search for land and water in other region to feed their livestock and to ensure their livelihood and economic sustenance. These sudden changes caused by natural or artificial forces which affected their mode of production led to what affects the economic production of other group (farmers) thereby causing serious effect on their source of livelihood and long-term practice of farming which thereby resulted to struggle and conflict. Farmers crops were destroyed thereby leading to poor yield, low productivity and food insecurity. Herder's cows are rustled or killed as a pay back. The struggle for control and ownership of land by farmers and inability of the herder to discontinue their pastoral activities on lands which are sometimes claimed by them as grazing route has breeds form of conflict. This has led to destruction of properties and losses of lives where this form of conflict is predominantly found like in Kaduna State and other parts of the country.

Subsume within the discourse of this study, according to Aristotle in one of his greatest aphorisms, in Obi, et al (2018) he said; "Man by nature is a political animal". This assertion is hunched on two factors: Every satisfactory definition of quality must meet at least two conditions: (i) there is a scarce resource in the society (ii) many people subscribe to this scarce resource. Thus, in the process of allocating or distributing this resource, conflict becomes inevitable in the society because man as a pleasure seeker and pain avoider tend to encroach the fundamental human rights of others which in turn translate to conflict. In other words, resource use is the breed factor of conflict between man and his fellow man. Conflict between farmers and herder, which evolved over time is in accordance with changes in society's means of meeting its material needs, i.e., changes in society's mode of production.

Critics to this theory such as Dahrendorf conclude that society can be characterized correctly in terms of conflict between competing interest groups. In the light of this argument, Dahrendorf point out what he considers the weaknesses of Marx's theories. For him, the basic weakness of Marx's approach is that the way he ties power - economic and social, political to the ownership of the means of production. Dahrendorf is wrong for insisting that most people in society cannot be involved one merely big political-economic-social-industrial confrontation, that is born from single structural relation, property relations. Instead, alterations of social structures produce the social structural potential of interest groups and thus bases of conflict (Dahrendorf, 1959 p. 106). In other words, Marxist political economy perspectives have been criticized for its focus on change and neglect of social stability. Still, there are many critics who truly understand the fact that societies are always in change but argue the change is gradual. For instance, most of the modern so called capitalist nations have never experienced communism revolution and instead, have developed complex welfare systems. While conflict theorists very frequently examine processes hold, they have painted a social change picture and formulated a theory with respect to social stability as well. Also, based on the ideas of Marxist political economy, differentiation in the distribution of power and

remuneration is inherently integrated into all types of social relations. Any structure that is beneficial to any individual or group seeks to keep it that way. For instance, the rich will defend their right as privileged groups in the society and access to better education by resisting policies spearheading change such as affirmative and public schooling. This is applicable to herder who will struggle to resist any measure that will affect their traditional mode of grazing along with their livestock's, likewise farmers to give out their farm land without resistance which is their traditional mode of practice.

Overview of Farmer-Herders Conflict in Nigeria

The Nigeria farmer-herder conflict is a stable and complex crisis that has impact on the nation's peace, security and, socio economic development. This conflict is informed by historical, environmental, economical, political, and socio-cultural factors which make multiple layers of conflict hard to deal with making the conflict to persist and even escalate (Ikezue, & Ezeah, 2017). The disturbances of farmer-herder relationships in Nigeria are traceable back to colonial days when the British policy of indirect rule made certain policy decisions that shaped the allocation of land, the land use rights and often, the territorial borders. This historical background laid down the foundation of fairly complicated and sustainable relationship between farmers and herders in the country. Another area of influence of the colonial masters was the introduction of what they called land tenure systems. Prior to the advent of colonialism, most societies in Nigeria embraced communal land tenure system, which allowed societies' or individuals' occupancy of land on conventional and communal line. However, with the introduction of western mode of land tenure system, such organized customary encounters was under threat (Adigun, 2019). The colonial powers brought in individual title and property boundaries and more often than not did not take into consideration the transhumance patterns of people in the region where they would move around from place to another in search of grazing lands for animals. This can be best seen as the extension of boundaries during the period had drastically changed the mobility of herders. Such phenomenon affected the traditional migration corridors that were vital to graze and water sources for pastoralist by the provision of individual tenure. They exercised little political authority over their own affairs, and were bordered by artificial fronts that put them into conflict as they trespassed on farming communities or ranked with other groups of herders vying for limited pasture. It was also seen that the colonial influence was responsible for setting up of grazing reserves and forest reserves thus advancing the farmer-herder interactions. These reserves were usually created without due consideration of the ecological requirements of the herding communities thus compounding resource constrains and thereby increasing conflict (Ogunbameru, 2018).

Farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria has been receiving interest from scholars, policymakers and researchers who have been concerned with the nature, root causes, impact and future of this conflict. The conflict has brought about the negative effects on peace, security and socio-economy of the country (Ogunbameru, 2018). As is the story of many states in Nigeria, the land and politics of Kaduna State is shaped by lines of history such as colonial structures on land, structures of boundary. Such background historical forces distorted circular mobility and community land use practices and set the stage for present day disputes (Nnoli, 1980). The past continues to resound in the present in the form of current conflicts between farmers and herders owing to past land-use systems (Yakubu, 2021).

Factors Contributing to The Emergence and Persistence of Farmers-Herder Conflicts in Kaduna State

Farmer herder conflicts and their sustenance in Kaduna State, Nigeria has been blamed on the following factors as analysed by recent literature. All these factors have made the conflicts dynamic and long-drawn security threats that affect people's economic activities, security, and social-economic transformation. This paper argues that the antecedent factors and the effects of colonialism and pre-colonial settlement patterns are responsible for farmer-herder conflict in Kaduna State, as discussed by Suleiman (2017) and Isah & Umar (2020). Colonial contracts superimposed land tenure systems and boundaries thus the creation of modern day conflict over migration and communal use of the land. All these aspects of Hima remain a historical legacy in current developments that shape conflicting situation on

land and over resources between farmers and herders.

In addition, Ibrahim (2018) and Yahaya and Ahmed (2021) reveal how unsustainabilities, including those relating to land and water, are responsible for conflicts between farmers and herder in Kaduna State. Since the rate at which this kind of population is growing is way higher than the rate of production of available resources other factors such as urbanization and environmental degradation meaning that the available resources get depleted within a short span of time hence there is added pressure in the competition between the two groups. While moving with their cattle in search of pasture, they come into contact with the settled agricultural people with whom conflict is inevitable. Power relations and domination, which is influential in generating conflicts, makes the context' economic opportunities such as poverty, unemployment, and unequal resource distribution as well explained by Mohammed (2019) & Yahaya & Ahmed (2021). Existing dynamics of market and living conditions also turn out to be contributing factors as mostly both farmers and herders depend much on agriculture and animal production. Ethnic, religious and cultural characteristics discussed by Isah and Umar (2020) and Suleiman (2017) also have an influence on the Farmer-herder conflict in Kaduna State. In this case cultural differences, tribe, and rivalry enmity plus hatred history prolong conflict more often than not. Also, as noted by both Ibrahim, (2018) and Mohammed, (2019), issues of weak governance and failing institutions contributed to the problem, and continue to hamper the search for solutions to the conflicts.

To support this analysis on factors on how farmers-herder conflicts have emerged and sustained in Kaduna state, information from SU interviews has also helped elaborate on the matter. The KII study respondents described their experiences and points of view based on their own experiences through their responses.

> *To be precise one incidence which is sometimes a cause of concern is the intrusion of the herders into our farmlands and over the years, there has been a gradual tendency of expanding grazing areas into the agricultural land and thus the constant incidences of conflict of land use. It is as regards to this encroachment that has raised tension and sometimes led to confrontation between farmers and herders because this hands cannot fold and watch everything we labored for disappear through the naked incursion of the ransacking herders…. (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).*

Interestingly, this respondent's view echoes findings made from community meetings as well as documentary research conducted in this study. Society meetings have time and again complained of herders intruding into farmlands and the resultant unrest in the society. In the same way, the analysis of documents provides evidence of conflict that originated from land use and misuse by farmers and the herders in the region. The respondent's description of the gradual growth of the territorial base, its constant conflict over the use of land seems closer to history and present, described in historiographic records.

In addition, the form of how the respondent described the herders as 'marauding,' correlates with findings made in the participant observation session where the mobility, actions, and interactions of herders and their stock were recorded within the farmers' crops fields. This observation supports the perception used by the farmers with regard to acts of the herders as invasive and a menace to their sources of income. However other data from our semistructured interviews with some of the community leaders give more background to the tensions mentioned by the respondent suggesting that the tensions between farming and herding communities in the area go back to older conflicts.

> *You see, conflicts arising from issues to do with land use such as grazing land, have been common in our region, hence triggers to farmer and herder confrontations. Because of the escalating competition for scarce land space for farming, cases of land disputes over ownership and usage have emerged prominently in Runji village in Zangon Kataf district. When land resources are scarce this creates rivalries and tensions for the control of this valuable resource as were evidenced by just recent skirmishes between farmers and herders… … (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).*

The respondent's position in relation to prior research situates the conclusions in an

academical dialogue on the causes of such conflict in Kaduna State among farmers-herders. Yahaya and Ahmed (2021) and Ibrahim (2018) reveal how scarcity of resources such as land and water fuels farmers and herders clashes in the region. As earlier noted by the respondent there are tendencies to land issues, which trigger tension and fight among the population. In addition, the discus- sion about the problems such as high population growth rate, urbanization, and deterioration of the natural environment, identified by Ibrahim (2018) and Yahaya and Ahmed (2021), also backed the respondent's view on the dwindling stock of resources. This scarcity raises the conflict between farmers and herders as the respondent mentioned when referring to increasing competition for the use of the piece of land.

Furthermore, the effects of poverty and unemployment, and overall inequitable distribution of resources earmarked by Mohammed (2019) and Yahaya and Ahmed (2021) contextualises the respondent's narrative. Such economic factors are that both farmers and herders experience some form of vulnerability, which fuels the competition for resources and possibly conflict.

> *Allow me to be blunt with you, there have been clear religious and ethnic undertone here in southern Kaduna consequently playing into farmers-herders' clashes. In some instances, the conflicts have born religious and ethnic roots and some it has evidenced from micro level occurrences of targeted violence and retaliation on ethnic ground. These tensions even fuel the conflicts and freeze the compromises… (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).*

This paper has elicited the KII respondent's impression of existing literature that offers understanding about the contribution made to the Farmers-Herders conflicts in Kaduna State by Ethnic, religious, and Cultural factors. The respondent's comment on the relevance of religion and ethnicity echo what Isah & Umar (2020) and Suleiman (2017) discovered. These studies describe how ethnic hatreds, politics of identity, and past enmities breeding conflicts in concord with the respondent's accentuation of religious and ethnic hatreds underlying conflicts. In addition, the use of words as 'targeted attacks' and 'reprisals based on identity' complements well the discourse referring to ethnic and religious tensions, which prevent people from living in harmony, as noted Isah and Umar (2020) Suleiman (2017). This suggests that the conflicts as not motivated solely by contest over resources but also by underlying hostility between the different groups and identity issues.

Furthermore, the analysis of weak governance and institutional failures as described by Ibrahim (2018) and Mohammed (2019) can also help to understand the perception of the respondent. Inadequate governance and an especially institutional setting amplify the ethnic and religious hatred and fail to address the causes of the conflict. This implies that conflict solving procedures must look at not only the game resource contentions, but also at the governance and institutional structures that keep fueling intergroup rivalry.

With the above analysis in mind, this study also brings out various categories of factors to show how they have influenced the occurrence and continuance of farmers-herder conflicts in Kaduna State. Disturbances resulting from existing colonial unjust systems of land tenure, delimitation of land and territories, and resulting displacement of traditional land use and social structures have created modern fertile grounds for the conflict. Extensive environmental pressures such as population pressure and degradation propel interests to further competition over available resources such as land and water to the extent of violently competing over resources between farmers and cattle grazers. All such conflicts are compounded by socio-economic differences particularly in matters of economic power and access to resources, which are noticeable determinants of animosity and impacts of violence on the affected communities.

Additionally, ethnic and religious factors remain key to enhancing intergroup hostility and impastoing constant cycles of conflict despite resilience to peacebuilding. High levels political interferences, poor resource management, as well as poor governance structures also reduce effectiveness of conflict resolution processes. This is why; regardless of various endeavours to rectify these concerns, the recurrence of the farmers-herder conflicts necessitates additional effective analyses that focus on the reasons of clashes and guarantee fair sharing of resources and peaceful confabulation.

Economic Impact of Farmers-Herder Conflicts on Farming Communities in Kaduna State

The consequences of farmers-herder conflicts in Kaduna State in particular and Nigeria as a whole on the part of the farming populace are enormous and far-reaching as research literatures have portrayed. Such conflicts affect agriculture production, destabilize food security and poverty levels enhancing the affected community's unfavorable conditions. Scholars like Ahmed, et al. (2020) and Musa and Yusuf (2019) endorse the farm level economic damages through crop, livestock and property losses during conflicts. Most of these are felt within the farming communities because the impacts affect their main source of livelihood that is farming. gone and lost their productivity as most farmers are unable to overcome the living destruction that has been wreaked on their farmland.

In addition, according to Ahmed et al. (2020) and Salisu & Yusuf (2018), farmers and herders are displaced from their land and this affects the agricultural labor demand and supply keeping the workforce inadequate or too expensive. Disputes endangerment to properties and policies, perceived as unpredictable dissuades the farmers from innovations through acquisition of better technologies that would improve on output in the farming sector. Also, as indicated by Musa and Yusuf (2019) and Salisu and Yusuf (2018), funding allocation towards conflict prevention and protective precautions creates additional workload on the already limited resources of farming societies. Money that could otherwise be used for development of agricultural sectors or for participating in earning activities are used for handling the consequences of conflict and rehabilitation.

Therefore, this not only imposes spending losses, but long term ones, as expounded in Ahmed et al. (2020) and Musa & Yusuf (2019). Sustained insecurity and unpredictability dissuade investors and strategic partners who may society and encourage growth of agri businesses and value chains in the region. In addition, increased social capital and trust within communities, strategic as described by Salisu and Yusuf (2018) and Ahmed et al. (2020), hampers economic development for cooperation and coordination efforts to foster development cannot be easily coordinated.

Additional qualitative evidence on the economic effects of farmers-herder conflicts on farming communities in Kaduna state, was provided by the participants' informal discussion. KII study respondents shared their firsthand experience and point of view through their response.

> *Well, the reality is that the effects from the causalities between farmers and herders on the economy of Kaduna state especially for farmers have been disastrous in the last few years. In this area of Kajuru our crops are usually attacked or stamped by stray herds and this is a great loss on both production and income. The wiping out of farmland and controlled water systems also extends our financial challenges that make it challenging to feed our families] … (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).*

The KII respondent's perception about the adverse economic loss as a result of conflict with the herders coincides with Ahmed et al., (2020) and Musa and Yusuf, (2019) findings. These studies focus on the working of the direct calculations of economic impact by estimating the costs of crops, animal losses and damaged properties due to wars.

The respondent's observation on the crops being destroyed or trampled by the wandering herds corresponds with the previous findings made elsewhere by Ahmed et al., (2020) Musa and Yusuf (2019) on agricultural destruction. This is illustrative of the extent of harm that conflicts pose for farmers, as that which are central to their sustenance- crops- are rendered unproductive by the damages done by herds.

In addition, the respondent's assertion of worsening financial difficulties due to destruction of farmland and irrigation systems is also found in the literature. According to population, Ahmed et al. (2020) and Musa and Yusuf (2019), the negative impact is not only in terms of monetary value of the destroyed infrastructure, but also in terms of prospective yields and farmers' income.

> *You see, various people threats and insecurity challenges have derailed our agricultural practices as a people. Threats from the herders make it even impossible or at least unprofitable to invest in crop growing in some areas*

and thus making our yields low. Hence, the costs of the conflicts have now driven many of the farmers in Kaduna State into debts and poverty. Sometimes it seems that there is no recourse for these expenses, no one to go to for reimbursement. In order to foster long-term peace and stability, it is imperative to speak about the economic problems of the farming population… (Female, KII Respondent, 2024).

The respondent of the KII also echoed opinion of Salisu and Yusuf (2018) and Ahmed et al. (2020) on how violence and insecurity disrupted agricultural practices. These studies show how daily threats of attacks by herders threaten production through disrupting labor supply and messing up supply chains through causing labor scarcities, and higher production costs.

The respondent's perception on attacks which makes farmers to quit or reduce cultivation in particular areas due to perceived danger is consistent with the impacts of conflicts on yields as explained by Salisu and Yusuf (2018) and Ahmed et al (2020). This highlights how insecurity affects farmers, making them give less of their farmlands and lacking the capability to embrace state of the art farming technology hence farm output will indeed be poor.

Also, the respondent's description of the economic repercussion of conflicts which has seen most farmers mortgage their future due to debts is well documented. According to Salisu & Yusuf (2018) and Ahmed et al. (2020) factional conflicts swing money to conflict resolution and protection measures thus denying farming populations sufficient capital to use for farming advancement or create income-generating undertakings.

As pointed out above, one major difficulty is the theft, particularly of livestock which forms a basic source of revenue and food for most farming societies. During conflicts, herders take or even slaughter our livestock leaving us lose worthy stock and property. This loss is not only an individual farmer's loss, but it also demoralizes the strength of the community or theöm because we rely on the grace of the herders… (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).

The respondent's concern for reduction of stock loss as an important source of income and food security for households engaging in animal farming is supported by Ahmed et al. (2020) and Musa and Yusuf (2019). These studies concentrate more on the flow of direct resource losses in the conflicts among farmers-herders, effects that do not only retard but also have Unfavourable impacts on economic development in the area. Ahmed et al. (2020) and Musa & Yusuf (2019) discussed various cases of theft and destruction of livestock, the respondent witnessing herders steal or kill them during clashes. This goes to show that farming communities are easily subjected to loses and food deficits since they are dealing with a rapid degeneration of important capital assets and resources.

Also, the respondent's mention of the effect on the capacity of the communities goes along with the discusions made by Salisu and Yusuf (2018) as well as Ahmed et al. (2020) about decreased social capital and trust in communities. Long standing insecurity and instability prevent the emergence and development of agribusinesses as well as value chains through discouraging investors and business partners alike.

Based on the aforementioned analysis, the conclusion of the study applies light on a traumatic economic implication of farmers-herder conflicts in affecting the farming communities in Kaduna State. Farmers have suffered grave economic losses because their crops are being gother and their livestock stolen while herders attack them during their operations. It is their own losses – both big and small – as they not only monetarily but also personally, strip a farmer, which is equally significant for a community, hence offending its sustainability as a locality as most of the assets and resources are being defaulted or damaged.

In addition, land degradation through clearing of farmland and irrigation systems compounds the difficulties and places most farmers in serious financial straits. Food insecurity, famine, and population displacement arising from conflicts negatively affect agriculture by making available labour scarce, producers having to spend more on production, low yields. Funds that could otherwise be invested in agricultural development projects, or in income generating activities for food producing households as well as financial

support to farming families are channeled to conflict mitigation and security enhances.

That is why this study revealed the imperative of multi-faceted approaches towards mitigating the economic loses generated from farmers-herder conflicts in Kaduna State. The strategies developed in relation to food security should thus address the ways to assist vulnerable farming communities, rebuild the livelihoods and encourage sustainable use of agricultural land to prevent adverse long-term economic impacts of enduring peaceless.

Impact of Farmers-Herder Conflicts on Food Security in Kaduna State

Hence, the incidence of farmers-herder conflicts has implications on almost all dimensions of food security in Kaduna State. As has been pointed out by current academic research on the subject, these conflicts interfere with agricultural production, cause low yields, famine – and hence food insecurity amongst the affected groups.

Another social cost of farmers-herder conflicts on food security rightly pointed out by Akinola et al., (2020) is land and crop sabotage. The violence being perpetrated normally and drastically impacts on the crops, livestock, and other farm implements, and thus cause immense loss of property for farmers (Akinola et al., 2020). They however pointed out that this destruction not only decreases the supply of food but also disappears the means of life for agriculturists.

Moreover, Ibrahim et al., (2018) opines that, farming aggression affect crop growing processes such as planting, reaping, and animal rearing. Popovic et al. (2015) argue that concerns surrounding violent attack and insecurity push farmers away from their farmland or grazing fields, and consequently, they end up with untended fields, and a minimal harvest of crops. The disruption of orthodox farming practices by further steroiding the problem of food insecurity in Kaduna State due to the live hazards that accompany the conflict.

But as pointed out earlier, displacement of farming communities through farmers-herder conflicts is also a cause of food insecurity. Farming displaced populations can end up being homeless, and become unemployed; therefore they lose their means of livelihood and feeding (Omotesho et al., 2019). A high population of IDPs experiences extremely Low food and water security, minimal procurement of basic needs which escalates food insecurity in the region.

However, as explained by Adisa et al., (2017), conflicts involving farmers and herders destabilize food supply chains, markets, food availability, and price stabilization. For instance, most roads may be closed due to conflicts in the areas where food products have to be transported from production centers to markets (Adisa et al., 2017). Such disruption of food chains leads to food deficits and further intensifies food insecure status in vulnerable groups. Therefore it is safe to conclude that farmers-herder conflict affects the food security in Kaduna State in a very major way. These are some of the conflict hot issues that require solution in efforts to bring about a peaceful environment in the food security and better livelihood of farmers in the region.

Besides, interviews conducted with the participants provide additional evidence on how farmers-herder conflicts affects food security in Kaduna state. From the answers given by the participants of the KII study, they expressed their own experiences and views to encounters.

> *From my observation in previous years or so concerning farmers-herder conflicts, it has escalated food insecurity in Kaduna State. Due to disturbances in farming activities accompanied by crop damage there is production reduction. In this context, market changes and increase in the prices of food stuff means that families face difficulties in sourcing for foodstuffs.... (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).*

The respondent herein admitted that food insecurity has recently deteriorated in Kaduna State and largely blamed it on farmers-herder conflict, in confirmation with the works of Akinola et al. (2020) who identified destruction of farmlands and crops as among the effects of such conflict. Most of the cases involve the use of force that leads to the burning of facilities; crops and livestock, which are major set backs to farmers.

The respondent's source of worry in relation to farming and food production is in synch with the outcomes of conflict mediated damage to agricultural land and crops as captured by Akinola et al. (2020). Besides, the destruction of

property diminishes the food supply while decimating the source of income for farmers through farming.

Additionally, the respondent's comment on market disruptions, increase in food prices is contained in the discourse made by Akinola et al (2020) on economic consequences of farmers-herders' conflicts on food security. Market shocks and food price increases negatively affect food security since the households have poor access to adequate quantities of food.

> *Yes, indeed, there are many ways in which access to food gets an issue because of conflicts. For instance, when farmers are evicted from their farmland or when there is insecurity personnel within a given market, it becomes hard for people to acquire foods. This usually results to increase in hunger and nutrition unsustainability in the affected communities…… (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).*

With respect to the respondent's observation on how the conflicts impacted negatively on food availability, Adisa et al. realize that farmers-herders conflicts significantly disrupt food distribution network and markets. Road construction could be interfered by instabilities in the society in form of conflict that makes transport of food from production point to market area difficult. These disruptions in the supply chain mean that a lot of food is not reaching the markets and therefore affect food security for those most in need.

In addition, the respondent's awareness of the increased hunger and malnutrition in the affected communities owing to the diminished food access finding confirms with a larger picture of farmers-herders' conflict consequence of food security highlighted by Adisa et al. (2017). Unavailability of food due to changes in market and transport hampers negatively aversion of hunger and malnutrition affecting the vulnerable persons.

> *To be more honest let me say that Food insecurity results from the farmer-herder conflict in the region. They make a direct impact on the agricultural production and food supply chains disrupting them across the country. When markets are either not available or when the transport routes are insecure it becomes difficult for people to access food hence high food insecurity levels… (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).*

The opinion of the respondent regarding the domino effect of farmers-herders on food security in the region corresponds with the view of Adisa et al., (2017) who noted disturbance of food systems and markets as impact of conflicts between farmers and herders. Thus, the observation of the respondent that conflicts do impact directly the production of agricultural; The conflicts also lead to food shortage and high food prices because of interruptions in supply chains as posited by Adisa et al (2017) on farmers-herders conflict..

Similarly, the respondent mentioned the problems of doing without food when markets are out of reach or transport routes become insecure, something similarly noted by Adisa et al. (2017) about the problems of moving food from production areas to markets in war zones. These challenges lead to food deficits, and thus increased food insecurity among food insecure groups of people, thus parallel to the general effects of farmers-herders' conflicts on food security as has been established in the body of knowledge.

Based on the analysis provided in this study, the following conclusions are drawn in relation to the main findings: Information derived from the analysis undertaken in this study shows the extent to which farmers-herder conflicts affects Kaduna State's farming population economically. There is evidenced from available global reports that farmers suffered severe loss in terms of economic returns from farming, food processing, and animal produts resulting from crop depredation, livestock raiding, and destruction of properties and infrastructure during some conflicts. Agent of land degradation: loss of soil productivity through farming has been made worse by the destruction of farmland and irrigation systems, which have in turn deepened financial problems and made farmers dwindle into outright poverty and indebtedness. The insecurity crises, including Boko haram and the civil unrest have cumulatively affected agricultural productivity and sustainability because they cause the following problems: the shortage of labor, high production costs, among others. Thus, the allocation of resources to conflict solution and ensuring measures increasingly overburdens the financial resources of farming populations; it

slows the effective outcome and availability of projects and activities aimed at agriculture and income generation. Such insights this study brings out underscore the importance of effort to address the economic impact of farmers-herder conflicts and come up with measures to foster and support the livelihoods of the people of Kaduna State.

Effectiveness of Strategies Employed to Address Farmers-Herder' Conflicts in Kaduna State

This paper has observed the differences in the success rates of measures taken to address the farmers-herder conflict situation in Kaduna State, thus underlining the complex processes in developing conflict situations. Measures by government, non-governmental organizations, and community members to reduce the levels of tensions and fears between farmers and herders have been put in place as follows. However, a recent review of the literature attempting to demonstrate the effectiveness of these strategies has revealed contrasting trends, some of these strategies may be promising while others are experiencing challenges and restrictions. Of course, one that has been undertaken before is; the creation of institutions for peace building and conflict resolution at the grassroots. Such efforts are targeted at helping warring factions sit down and dialogue, mediate, and reconcile since somebody else takes the role of evaluating complaints and seeking for a solution (Abubakar et al., 2018). Religious leaders and other stakeholders have come together to form the community-based peace committees to mediate and negotiate localized farming and herding conflict and the resultant agreements (Murtala et al., 2019).

Also, attempt has been made to address the issue of natural resources, especially land and water and regenerate farmers and herders struggle. Conservation and land-use planning measures aim to identify and define grazing corridors, establish space around those corridors as well as control access to resources in an effort to avoid over grazing and land degradation (Salihu et al., 2020). Likewise, water resource management projects' goals are to foster easier access to water for crops and livestock, one of the main causes of interfarner and inter-pastoralist conflicts (Adisa et al., 2017).

Additionally, the expansion of livelihood diversification initiatives and economic livelihood activities is listed as a policy approach to enhance non-dependence on agriculture and eliminate source based conflicts. Programs that include skills development, vocational education, and micro-finance boost undertakings hope to change the farmer and herder income diversification thereby decreasing competition for resources, and socio-economic vulnerability (Omotesho et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, there is still much difficulty in handling farmers-herder conflicts in Kaduna State. Lack of human and material resources, lack of funding as well as political interference hampers the effectiveness of peace building initiatives as well as resource management projects (Akinola et al., 2020). However, the inter-communal conflicts remain prevalent due to long-standing socio-cultural self-organizing, historical injustices and ethno-religious differences, which are key factors hindering positive and sustainable farming and herder reconciliation and harmony (Ibrahim et al 2018).

In order to support the verification of the effect of farmers-herder conflict on food security in Kaduna state, the experiences of the participants of this study are as follows: From the answer given by the respondents for KII study, the first-hand experience and observation of the participants were presented.

> *All I can say is that, several tries have been made to solve farmers-herder in Kaduna State such as the formation of peace and dialogue committees. These are to bring together the conflicting parties in an effort to talk and solve the problems in between them but most of the time, due to bitterness and refusal to surrender, the conflict has continued to act itself out… (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).*

Contrary to the findings made by Abubakar et al. (2018) about various limitations of peace committees and dialogue platforms in handling farmers-herders conflicts because of deep and bitter resentment between the conflicting sides, the respondent saw these modalities as more appropriate ways of solving the conflicts although not very effective. However, the development of such measures has not stopped the conflicts as pointed out by the respondent by their constant occurrence and the multifaceted nature of the issues.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to mention here the respondent's comment about the community level peace committee and function of developing cohesion and understanding of the process, which also finds echoes in the views expressed by Murtala et al. (2019) about the significance of peace agreements on the domestic level and therefore conflict soluton process. However, the respondent's view means that those efforts are not fully efficient to solve the conflicts' causes or to promote sustainable peace.

Actually, some policing actions, including deployment security operatives to areas that experience farmer/herder conflicts to check the spate of violence is in motion in Kaduna. While these provisions may offer a temporary solution to eliminate the conflicts, it can be largely noted that such attempts do not remedy the sources of the conflicts and at times actually escalate the degree of hostility between the communities and the security forces… (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).

With reference to the observation make by the respondent about deployment of security forces to the conflict zones, the studies by Adisa et al (2017) have also claimed that employing the law enforcement measures as strategy of preventing violence and maintaining law and order in the areas affected by farmers-herders' conflicts. However, the respondent's view implies that such efforts give short-term remedies which do not deal with roots of conflicts.

This has been in line with other scholarly works that have correctly pointed out that Police operations to control the farmers-herders' conflicts cannot effectively deal with the fundamental causes. Likewise, Abubakar et al, (2018) has argued that there should be more research about the economic, social and-political factors that cause these conflicts, not merely security solutions. The above statement made by the respondent highlights the failure by the implementers of the conflicts solution strategies to go an extra mile and look at the root cause of the conflicts about issues of encroachment and trespass between some communities and security personnel.

> *In some regions, the prior projects that would try to address the issues of conflict and ethnic reconciliation have been developed. The strategies include the mobilization of stakeholder groups such as local associations, religious bodies and institutions, and cultural and traditional institutions in the promotion of farmer/ herder relations. Such efforts are promising in a particular context but face problems in scaling up and making them sustainable in the future… (Male, KII Respondent, 2024).*

The respondent's attitudes towards community-based interventions correspond to the scholarly discourse on the role of grassroots organisations in reconciliation and interethnic conflict transformation in the identified conflict-affected communities. Other authors also underlined the importance of integrating community and local actors in building peace, as it is warmly supported by grassroots organizations, religious and traditional leaders to reduce conflict between farmers and herders as it has been discussed by Akinola et al. (2020).

But the remark of the respondent is also demanding the issues around the scalability and sustaining community-based interventions a concern highlighted by the research. Akinola et al. (2020) and Ibrahim et al. (2018) review some of these limitations considering that poor institutional capacity, inadequate fund and political interference may counteract the influence of cooperation aimed at peace building and resource management.

> *There is the need to emphasize on the core issues in socio-economic injustices that trigger bearing of arms in Kaduna State. Strategies aimed at enhancing the land and resource base, promoting the diversification of the livelihoods, educating communities and ensuring resource share are effective in solving origin of conflict and preventing emerging violence. Hence this interview with a Kenyan postgraduate female student (Female, KII Respondent, 2024).*

Appeals to socio-economic justice to reduce conflict hotbeds in Kaduna State draw on the respondent's comment and with prior academic literature to call for improved livelihood diversification opportunities, education, and distributional fairness. Similar observations have been made by Salihu et al., 2020; Adisa et al., 2017, and others who mentioned the key socio-economic factors contributing to farmers-

herders' conflicts and called for measures going to the root of the problem.

Furthermore, the experience of the respondent expands the existing approaches towards better natural resource management especially on land and water. According to Salihu et al. (2020), some of the land use management measures include outlining of grazing land and provision of restricted resources access buffer zones. Likewise, Adisa et al. (2017) note water resources management initiatives for improving water availability for farming and to the rearing of livestock as having the potential of resolving one of the major sources of conflict between farmers and herders.

> *There is a need to have better or wide spread and liberal forums in which women, Young people and other disabled groups are encouraged to participate in decision making processes. They remain voiceless and unnoticed despite the fact that they provide essential voices, ideas, and needed solutions for depression… (Female, KII Respondent, 2024).*

The respondent's perception echoes the views that encourage for the creation of more artisan and representative forums that include the women and youth that victims and marginalized groups where am, in the decision-making process –The scholarly discourse on the effect of community involvement to conflict resolution initiatives. Murtala et al. (2019) have enumerated similar points and they stressed the importance of other drivers for collaboration and adaptation, including peace committees of the communities which are involved both in farming and cattle herding.

Furthermore, the respondent's perception completes other attempts made towards cultivating dialogue-based conflict resolution platforms, which would embrace members of Kaduna State. Through the awareness that everyone counts in decision making the respondent underscores the principle of participation in the peace building process as a positive value.

Based on the analysis done above the following study findings indicate that; various strategies have been used in trying to solve farmers herders conflict in Kaduna State. There are common truce making committees and dialogue intermediaries for the purpose of resolving conflicts from the conflicting factions. However, their effectiveness has been hampered by unresolved structured tension and systematic distrust of the parties. Also, punitive actions that include mobilization of security personnel have been used in a bid to tame the raging violence. However, these measures are usually ineffective in preventing emergence of new conflicts besides it tends to exacerbate existing conflicts in some cases.

Additionally, some community based efforts towards post conflict reconciliation and conflict resolution mechanism have been begun in some regions. Although several of these initiatives have had some effectiveness, issues related to the scalability and sustainability of the approaches have been seen as major barriers. Besides more efforts being needed to prevent and contain consequences of conflicts, more attention should be paid to factors associated with socioeconomic issues which trigger the conflict in the first place. These range from those that provide for means of income generation, access to education opportunities and fair share to resources. In this regard, the following fundamental issues have been addressed: it is therefore widely believed that sustainable peace as well as stability in Kaduna State can only be attained.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study contributes to the understanding of the multiple face of F-H conflicts in Kaduna State, the multiple-layered interaction of past, land use change, poverty, and culture. This study establishes the colonial impact as the fundamental basis for current concerns regarding land use and human interactions on that land. Main driving factors are population increase, environmental challenges, natural resource struggles which increase conflict between farmers and herders.

Besides, social factors of strife, in form of demands for equality and equity in the distribution of resources such as employment opportunities – have aggravated people's animosity and contributed to the escalation of conflicts. Ethnic and religious factors have also however come into play contributing to inter-ethnic tensions, and slowing down the processes of post war reconciliation and recovery. Political instability, poor policy implementation, corruption, poor resource mobilization and misallocation also contributed to poor resolution of conflicts' source. The consequences borne by

farming communities mostly affected by the farmers-herder conflicts have not only been in form of poverty, indebtedness and insecurity without food. Livestock raiding, crop destruction and physical damage to farming inputs have impaired production through destruction and loss of stocks, including food crops leading to increased food insecurity among the affected communities. However, current approaches to tackle conflicts have been partially successful based on the use of symbols called Peace Committees and through force as represented by police forces, laws etc, whereas the major root causes are rooted on imperialism, vendorism, three worlds theory, fundamentalism, civil strife, corruption and general lack of representation of minorities. Hence, there are require significant efforts and approaches in conflict solution that respond to socioeconomic, politic, and cultural circumstances.

Base on the findings, the study recommended the following;

- The Kaduna state government should encourage the establishment of grass root level peace committees with members drawn from farming and herding -value chain sectors in order to foster understanding, cooperation and local level conflict solving mechanisms
- Nigeria government should as a matter of urgency ensure that law enforcement measures are hardly accompanied with adherence to root causes feelings that fuels conflict and even enhance antagonistic perceptions.
- Kaduna state government should ensure that measures could be taken in the following areas as emergency preparedness and response to conflicts influences food security in different ways: These are food support structures and network, market access projects and programmes and stabilization of food prices during conflicts.
- Compensate farmers who have been driven away from their land by conflict and help restore farmland and irrigation systems where they can; ensure that farmers have the means to rebuild and develop, with recovered land where possible.
- Subnational government and federal should enhance institutional capability in resource management, land use planning, water resources and conflict sensitive resource utilization.

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DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS IN RIVERS STATE, 2015-2020

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KEYWORDS
Drug Abuse, Youths, Rivers State

ABSTRACT
This study examines the effects of drug abuse in Rivers State 2015-2020, with a focus on the link between drugs and youths. The study reveals that drug abuse is a significant problem in Rivers State, which causes a major risk behaviour with physical and mental health complications, with various factors contributing to its prevalence. The journal discusses the framework for controlling drug abuse, institutional frameworks, types of drugs abused, factors responsible for drug abuse and drug trafficking, the impact of drug abuse on individuals, families, and society, the responses to drug abuse in Rivers State by government, NGOs, Community organizations and educational programs and prevention strategies. The study also highlights challenges in controlling drug abuse. This study discovered that the problem is as a result of a lot of factors which has roots in the family, society and the institutions of learning. The study utilized historical research methodology in obtaining data from oral and written sources, especially from medical practitioners and social workers responsible for patients with psychiatric challenges, this also required the application of a multidisciplinary approach to arriving at the expected conclusion. The utilization of the agency of social theories in providing insight into this endemic social problem which transcends national and regional borders became necessary. The study concludes that the failure of the social and political structures of the state have created a lacuna that is consuming the vital energy of our youthful population into this cesspit of drug use and abuse.

Introduction

Drug abuse developed over the years prior to this study period (2015-2020) and at different times had taken different forms, was accepted for different reasons and brought about different effects.

In the Pre-Colonial Period traditional substance use in Nigeria included the use of indigenous plants for medicinal and ceremonial purposes. Herbs and plants like kola nuts and certain psychoactive substances were integral to cultural practices. During the colonial era (1861-1960), the introduction of colonial rule brought Western influences and an increase in the availability of alcohol and opiates. The British

colonial administration established regulations on drug use, primarily targeting harmful substances. In the post-Independence period (1960-1980), following independence, drug use began to rise significantly, with increasing access to both legal and illegal substances. The 1970s saw the emergence of cannabis as a widely used drug among youth, often associated with counterculture movements.

Alongside the use of drugs 1980s experienced Drug Trafficking Boom as Nigeria became a major transit route for international drug trafficking, particularly for heroin and cocaine. This period marked a shift where drug use became intertwined with organized crime and corruption, significantly affecting social structures. The 1990s saw the introduction of synthetic drugs, such as methamphetamines and prescription medications like tramadol. These substances gained popularity, especially among urban youths in cities like Port Harcourt, Lagos and other parts of Nigeria, leading to rising addiction rates.

Drug Abuse is not new given the above position in Nigeria. However, it prevalent among the youth has been disadvantageous for the overall growth and sustainable development in Nigeria. Though, it is a nation-wide problem, especially in major cities like Rivers State among others. Drug abuse is a significant issue for public health, growth and individuals and it is believed causes economic problem (Ekpenyang, 2012).

Stakeholders such as the parents, community leaders, Police, NDLEA and the general public have expressed deep concerns about the intensity or prevalence of drug abuse, its origins and effect on young people.

The 2000s witnessed government response and legislation towards drug abuse as the Nigerian government enacted several laws aimed at curbing drug abuse, including the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Act in 1989. Despite these efforts, drug use continued to escalate, particularly among the youth. In 2010s Increased Awareness and Campaigns were carried out as drug abuse became a more pressing public health issue, various awareness campaigns and rehabilitation programs were initiated. NGOs and international organizations began collaborating with the government to address the growing crisis. Around 2020s Current Trends existed as reports indicated a surge in drug abuse among youths, with cannabis and prescription drugs being the most commonly abused substances.

In Rivers state, there are issues of violence, rape, kidnapping, arm robbery and many other several vices. These nefarious activities are attributed to drug abuse. Hardly a day passes without news of violent activities. The frequency of these activities is due to the high rate of drug abuse. Drug itself is not bad, but when consumed with complete disregard to medical expert advice result in ill-behaviour. The youth in this habit use drug to “getting high” with undesirable consequences. Therefore, it is against this background that the study examines causes of drugs abuse, its effects, and major high spot in Rivers State.

Study Method

The methodology of historical investigation, interrogation of evidence(s), and interpretation of said evidence(s) was designed to grasp the effects of drug abuse in Rivers State, with the focus being narrowed to Youths in Rivers State. It depended on both the primary and secondary sources of historical reconstruction. The primary source of historical reconstruction involved in-depth interviews with persons who work in the public health sector, personnels of government agencies, and workers of Local Government Councils that are susceptible to drug abuse like Obio-Akpor, Khana, Port Harcourt, Gokana, Tai, Etche, and Ahoada East Local Government Councils and members of Cult groups, those who witnessed the cases of drug abuse and were going through rehabilitation from drug abuse were interviewed, or have opinions of drug use and abuse as a result of hear-say, words of testimony, and people from neighborhood where drug abuse is common (tie-in reference), focus group discussions of youths in Rivers State, gaining insights into their experiences of drug use, including its impact on their health, family dynamics, economic opportunities, and political participation. The people interviewed were from 14 years of age to 65, while the focus group ranged from 16 to 45 years. The various youth groups or associations interviewed were Igburu Youth Federation, Omoku Youth Association, Rumuekini Youth Association, Ogu-gbolo Youth Association, Abonnema Youths Association, Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) Eastern Zone, PDP Students Wing Rivers State Chapter, Egi Women Assembly, National Association of Nigeria Students (NANS) Joint Campus Committee (JCC) Rivers State Axis, Nigeria Economics Students Association (NESA) National, and Ikiri Youths

Association. The secondary evidence used included a systematic literature review of existing research on Drug Abuse in Nigeria and Rivers State, textbooks, pamphlets, magazines, and articles in journals, domiciled in the University of Port Harcourt Library, River State University Library, as well as online libraries and internet sources.

Theoretical Framework

Theories are analytical tools for understanding, explaining, and making predictions about a subject matter. Theories provide the view of a spectacle to enhance the understanding of phenomena like this present analysis of the developments in Rivers State as it relates to drug use and abuse from 2015 to 2020. In order to achieve the aim of research of the subject matter, theoretical perspectives are applied to analyze the issue of drug use and abuse within Rivers State. The study will show within theoretical frameworks, why youths begin taking drugs, why youths maintain their drug-taking behaviours, how or why drug taking behaviours escalates to abuse, why or how youths stop taking drugs. What accounts for the restarting of the drug dependence behaviour or cycle once stopped. It will further highlight theoretically why youths indulge in acts like drug trafficking. These theories cover different scopes and, in some cases, interrelated.

The yardstick for the classification of drug abuse cases into theories are somewhat complex as some fall into more than one group or class of theories, thus it's best left for those who propounded these theories to classify. Theories on drug abuse can be classified into academic disciplines such as Psychiatry, Genetics, Biology, Sociology, Criminology, Anthropology etc. Theories on drug abuse are numerous; some explain the abuse of certain drugs, some are subject to a given race, gender, or locality. Several major theories explain drug abuse, each highlighting different factors and mechanisms. Here we will examine some prominent ones:

Sociological Theories

Social Control Theory: Social control theory is a sociological concept that explains how individuals engage in criminal behavior due to societal influences. Attachment to society, such as parents and teachers, can lead to positive, constructive behavior, while disconnection can result in destructive behavior. Social controls are developed in childhood, with positive behavior associated with rewards and negative behavior with punishments. As individual's age and paradigms change, acceptance of these social controls shifts. This theory, also known as social bond theory, suggests that exploiting socialization and learning can build self-control and reduce anti-social behavior. It was developed by Ivan Nye in 1958 and consists of three types: direct control, indirect control, and internal control. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) played a significant role in public sensitization against drug abuse from 2015 to 2020, through publications and broadcasts, encouraging individuals to show good examples and join the fight against drug abuse.

Social Learning Theory: The Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura in 1977, suggests that drug abuse is learned through interaction with others and observing significant people in one's life. It also involves reinforcement of drug use through social rewards or acceptance. In Rivers State, teenagers and youths in the region often emulated those they respected, such as oil bunkers, cultists, kidnappers, and fraudsters. The influence of internet and social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Telegram, and Snapchat, has increased among teenagers and youths in Rivers State. The music industry, particularly the music industry, has also played a significant role in influencing substance abuse. The romance between marijuana and music began in the 20th century, with the first recorded American use of marijuana in 1909. Hip-Hop stars like Tu-Pac, Dr. Dre, Lemar, Sly Stone, James Browns, Akon, and Snoop Doggy have also been influenced by marijuana use. Other new generation of music makers, such as 9ice, Sean Tero, Asa, Terry-G, Wande Coal, Davido, Wizkid, Naira Marley, Olamide, and Burna Boy, have also been influenced by substance use in their lyrics and performances.

Strain Theory: Strain Theory, developed by Robert Merton in 1938, suggests that drug abuse is a response to societal pressures and frustrations, such as poverty, unemployment, and broken homes. In Rivers State, Nigeria, over 30% of substance abuse cases were diagnosed with depression, stress, and anxiety. Young people, both graduates and those unable to achieve their goals, turned to drugs and other anti-social vices to cope with these strains.

The use of these theories provides a framework for understanding drug abuse in Rivers State from 2015 to 2020, emphasizing the need for multifaceted approaches to prevention and treatment of drug abuse cases in Rivers State and other parts of the world.

Conceptual Review

Drug Abuse

Pharmaceutically, a drug may be defined as any artificial, natural or endogenous molecule, which exerts a biochemical or physiological effect on the cell. A pharmaceutical drug, also called a medication or medicine, is a chemical substance used to treat, cure, prevent or diagnose a disease or promote well-being. The phenomenon of drug abuse is a multi-faceted problem that different scholars have tried to interpret the concept based on their individual or disciplinary perspectives,

Drug abuse or drug dispense as proffered by the World Health Organization, is "a state of psychic or physical dependence, or both on a drug, following administration of the drug on a periodic or continuous basis." Because WHO found the term "abuse" ambiguous, it abandoned its use; instead, the WHO glossary speaks of "harmful use" and "hazardous use", which is defined as first, "Harmful use" which is a pattern of psychoactive substance use that is causing damage to health both physical or mental, harmful use as commonly referred but not invariably has adverse social consequences. Also, the term "Hazardous use" is a pattern of substance use that increases the risk of harmful consequences for the user. In contrast to harmful use, hazardous use refers to patterns of use that are of public health significance despite the absence of any current disorder in the individual user. Similar terms like "Drug misuse" are also used but in a different context, this term is used to describe a situation when prescription of medication with a sedative, analgesic or stimulant property is used for mood alteration or intoxication ignoring the fact that overdose of such medicines can sometimes have serious adverse effects, it sometimes involves drug diversion from the individual for whom it was prescribed to another. Prescription misuse has been defined differently and rather inconsistently based on the circumstance of the drug prescription, the use without prescription, intentional use to achieve an intoxicating effect, route of administration maybe by co-ingestion with alcohol and the presence or absence of dependence symptoms.

According to Asare, drug abuse as a multi-factorial problem influenced by socio-economic conditions and a lack of awareness about the health impacts of substance use. He emphasizes the need for comprehensive educational campaigns and improved access to treatment facilities. In the same vein, Akinyemi considers drug abuse as a significant public health issue exacerbated by urbanization and poverty. He advocates for integrated intervention strategies combining public health and law enforcement. This assertion was further supported by Olubunmi who submits that drug abuse as a social epidemic is linked to family dysfunction and peer pressure among adolescents. She highlights the role of community-based prevention programmes.

However, Suleiman in his research identifies drug abuse as a challenge to national security due to its link with organized crime and terrorism. He calls for a multi-agency approach to address this issue, on her part, Adamu examines drug abuse within the context of gender disparities, noting that women are often disproportionately affected. She advocates for gender-sensitive treatment and prevention strategies.

Ijeoma's research in Nigeria highlighted the economic implication of drug abuse, particularly how it undermines productivity and economic development. He recommended economic support programmes for recovering addicts. Chukwuma in her studies focused on the relationship between drug abuse and mental health disorders, by emphasizing the need for integrated mental health services. Nkrumah in another dimension explores the role of traditional beliefs and practices in drug abuse, arguing that cultural factors can both hinder and help drug prevention efforts.

Owusu identified the problem from her environment as she observed drug abuse to be a critical issue among youth in Ghana, linking it to educational failures and social instability. She supports school-based intervention programmes.

Nwabueze's recognized the role of the government and policy frameworks in combating drug abuse in Nigeria, advocating for stronger regulatory measures and enforcement. Bello defined drug abuse through a public health

lens, that it was a national problem that needed the application of preventive measures and the effectiveness of health education campaigns in Nigeria.

The impact of drug abuse on family dynamics according to Adeyemi is a serious impact on society, he emphasized the need for family-centered rehabilitation approaches. Atieno sees drug abuse as a socio-economic issue intertwined with unemployment and lack of opportunities. She calls for socio-economic development as part of drug prevention strategies.

Osei highlights the role of international drug trafficking in local drug abuse problems, advocating for cross-border collaboration in addressing the issue. In another twist, Ijeoma sees drug abuse as an inhibition on the educational attainment among Nigerian students, recommending targeted interventions in schools. Madu said that drug abuse is also a challenge among the elderly in Nigeria, highlighting a less discussed but growing issue, and calling for more inclusive research and intervention strategies.

Owusu Acheampong from Ghana stated that there was an intersection between drug abuse and HIV/AIDS, highlighting the need for dual-focused health interventions. Abah stated that the prevalence of drug abuse was due to the authorities not amplifying the role of religious institutions in addressing drug abuse, emphasizing their potential for community mobilization and support.

Ndlovu recognized that the effects of drug abuse on community safety and security are enormous and he advocated for community-based approaches to prevention and treatment. Adebayo saw the link between drug abuse and youth violence in Nigeria, proposing integrated violence prevention and drug abuse treatment programmes.

According to Lakhanpal and Agnihotri defined drug abuse as the “arbitrary” over dependence or miss-use of one particular drug with or without a prior medical diagnosis from qualified health practitioners.

Edwards and Arif defined drug abuse as “the use of a drug which is viewed as posing a problem by the society concerned” they acknowledge the fact that other authors have defined it as the unspecified use of a drug other than for legitimate purposes, but however posits that most societies do not usually disapprove of the abuse of drugs which do not produce overt behavioural changes.

These perspectives illustrate the diverse approaches to understanding and addressing drug abuse across different contexts within Rivers State and beyond. In the context of international drug control, drug abuse constitutes the use of any substance under international control outside therapeutic indications, in excessive dose levels, or over an unjustified period of time.

There is no universally accepted interpretation of the term “drug abuse" in all the inquiry from available literature. This research in trying to explain the phenomena in the context of its findings and research objectives adopts the conceptualization of drug abuse as “the use of a drug for non-medical purpose, the continuous or occasional use of drugs that would cause behaviourial change of an individual either of his own choice or under a feeling of compulsion, to achieve his wellbeing or what he conceives as his own well-being.

Youths

Youth generally refer to a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, characterized by physical, psychological, and social development. While the exact age range can vary by context, it is commonly defined as encompassing individuals from approximately ages 15 to 24, with some definitions extending up to 35 years in specific cultural contexts. Different perspectives exist as different scholars have their views of who a youth is and traits associated with youths.

In Western societies, youth is often associated with freedom, exploration, and sometimes a lack of responsibility. Scholars like Jeffrey Arnett (2000) highlight "emerging adulthood" as a distinct phase characterized by exploration of personal and professional identities.

While in many African contexts, youth is linked to socio-economic challenges and community responsibilities. According to Olabisi Scholars emphasize the role of young people in nation-building and social change, recognizing the impact of issues like unemployment and political instability.

In Nigeria, youth is often defined within the framework of the African Union's definition, which encompasses ages 15 to 35, and according to Odukoy as Nigerian scholars emphasize the potential of youth to drive social progress despite facing significant challenges such as poverty and lack of access to education.

Youths are defined by different characteristics which explain not just their involvement in drug abuse but the seemingly susceptibility of same towards drug abuse in Rivers State such as:

Developmental stage of youths, it is a stage often marked by significant physical, emotional, and cognitive development, it is a period that includes identity formation and exploration of personal values. Young people are often seen as forming their social identities, influenced by peer interactions, cultural norms, and societal expectations, and this social formation makes them susceptible to drug abuse and other antisocial vices.

Economic factors significantly affect youths, including education, employment opportunities, and access to resources. This can shape their roles within families and communities to either remain law abiding or not. Cultural Expression is one characteristic of youths as they often engage in cultural practices and expressions that reflect both traditional values and contemporary influences, navigating a complex interplay of local and global identities.

Youth is a multifaceted concept that varies across cultural, economic, and social contexts. It embodies a critical period of development and exploration, with implications for individual identity, community roles, and societal progress. Understanding youth involvement in drug abuse and other antisocial vices requires a nuanced approach that considers these diverse perspectives.

Discussion of findings

The study analysis revealed that Peer pressure had significantly impacted adolescents, encouraging drug use as they shift reliance from parents to friends. In Rivers State, similar to other areas, acceptance in social circles often requires conformity to group norms. This was overwhelmingly accepted by all the respondents, including position taken at the end of the focus group discussion held at Bori, Obiokpor, Ahoada and Port Harcourt. This was further collaborated by cult members that were interviewed. One of the Cult members confessed that he was lured by his friend to take a particular drugs called Nkporomini , a local name for concoction prepared from highly induced drug which , the cult member could not remember. Depression, unemployment and poverty were also identified as major causes of drug abuse in the state. It is established that

When individuals face distressing situations, they may turn to drugs as a means to cope and regain happiness, leading to habitual use. Then, lack of job opportunities. Frustration from unemployment led to substance use as a temporary escape from stress. Many youths from impoverished backgrounds, facing social challenges, resorted to drug use. The economic status in Rivers State was generally low, with rising unemployment and broken homes, pushing many youths to seek employment or engaged in begging.

From the analysis, the result indicates that areas like Ogoni, Ahoada, Etche, Port Harcourt and Obio Akpor are the hotspots for drug abuse in Rivers State. It is also observed that these areas are prone to violence and criminality. Crime records on Rivers State indicated these places as having highest criminal index in the state. The study therefore infers that violence in these areas are as a result of drug abuse. The anti-robbery police units in the affected areas lend credence to the fact, when an officer interviewed said most criminals apprehended do always have one drug substance or the other in their bags.

Statistics on Drug Abuse in Rivers State from 2015 to 2020

Prevalence of Drug Use in Rivers State was evident in the year 2015 as seen in the Annual report on drug abuse in Nigeria for the year 2015 from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, approximately 12.5% of youths in Rivers State reported using drugs, with cannabis being the most commonly abused substance.

In 2016 there was report on Substance Use Among Students as a survey on the prevalence of substance use among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State indicated that 15% of secondary school students in Port Harcourt had experimented with drugs, predominantly cannabis.

2017 had report on gender disparity as about 70% of reported drug users were male, with increased usage among urban youths, according to the annual report on drug abuse in Nigeria for the year 2017 from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency

In 2018 from the annual report on substance abuse in Rivers State from the Rivers State Ministry of Health, there was rise in prescription Drug Abuse, around 20% of youths aged 15-24 reported misuse of prescription medications such as tramadol and codeine.

In the year 2019 the Annual report on drug abuse in Nigeria for the year 2019 from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency reported the rise in Poly-drug Use in Rivers State, as approximately 25% of drug users among youths reported engaging in poly drug use, combining various substances.

In the year 2020 the Annual report on drug abuse in Nigeria for the year 2020 from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency reported the Impact of COVID-19 on drug abuse in Rivers State as Drug abuse rates among youths surged to 23%, with increased reliance on substances as coping mechanisms during the pandemic.

In summary, the overall drug use among youths increased from 12.5% in 2015 to 23% in 2020. Among the predominant substances Cannabis remained the most abused, with significant increases in prescription drug misuse. Demographically, a consistent trend of higher usage among males and urban youths was observed. These statistics highlights the growing concern of drug abuse in Rivers State over the study period (2015-2020), reflecting changing patterns and emerging challenges in substance use among youths.

Analysis of Trends in Drug Abuse Rates in Rivers State from 2015 to 2020

The data on drug abuse in Rivers State from 2015 to 2020 reveals significant trends in prevalence, substance types, and demographic factors among users. The overall increase in drug abuse rates highlights growing public health concerns.

1. Increase in Overall Drug Abuse Rates

From 2015 to 2020, the percentage of youths engaging in drug use rose from 12.5% to 23%. This upward trend indicates a worsening situation regarding substance abuse, exacerbated by various socio-economic and environmental factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Shifts in Substance Preferences

Cannabis: Remained the most commonly abused drug throughout the period, but its prevalence among users stabilized around 50% of reported cases by 2020.

Prescription Drugs: There was a notable increase in the abuse of prescription medications, particularly tramadol and codeine, which became more prevalent from 2017 onward. By 2018, approximately 20% of youths reported misuse, reflecting changing patterns in substance preference.

Poly-drug Use: The trend toward poly-drug use emerged strongly, with about 25% of drug users engaging in multiple substances by 2019, complicating treatment and rehabilitation efforts.

Consequences or effects of drug abuse

Understanding the consequences of drug abuse involves recognizing immediate, intermediate, and long-term effects. Short-term effects, such as the impact of alcohol on reaction time, can be assessed using experimental designs. More innovative methods, like the balanced placebo design, help differentiate between actual drug effects and expectancy effects. Naturally occurring short-term consequences include overdoses, accidents, and increased aggression.

In contrast, long-term consequences are more challenging to study due to ethical limitations in controlling drug use and duration. For example, assigning students to smoke marijuana daily versus not using it is unethical, making it difficult to assess their long-term functioning. Researchers often track individuals over time, evaluating their drug use alongside their biological, psychological, and social development.

To establish causal links between long-term drug use and consequences, four criteria must be met: a reliable association between drug use

and the outcome, temporal precedence of drug use, evidence that drug use affects the outcome, and the elimination of confounding factors. While multivariate models can help identify potential causal relationships, limitations remain.

Research on the consequences of drug abuse has explored three main areas: health, psychological impacts, and social effects. This summary focuses on specific aspects within these categories.

Health Consequences

Short-term health impacts of drug use are well-documented, including overdoses, aggression, and accidents. Long-term health effects, however, are harder to determine due to complex physiological mechanisms. Cigarette use is linked to cancer, emphysema, and heart disease, contributing to over 400,000 deaths annually. Alcohol is responsible for a similar number of traffic fatalities and over 25,000 deaths from liver cirrhosis. Illicit drug use also carries severe health risks, such as increased likelihood of suicide, violence, and HIV infection. In Rivers State, drug use is a significant factor in the spread of HIV, particularly through injecting drug use and risky sexual behaviors.

Mental Health Consequences

Longitudinal studies have indicated that drug use can negatively impact emotional health. For instance, individuals who abuse alcohol are significantly more likely to experience severe depression.

Antisocial Behavior

Although there is a clear correlation between drug use and criminality, several problems contribute to uncertainty as to how they are causally related

Interpersonal Relationships

The two key consequence areas relative to interpersonal relationships that have been studies are parenting practices and workplace behaviors.

Impact on Adult Parenting Practices

The presence of substance abuse in an adult may or may not be an indicator that he or she is a dysfunctional parent. Most work involving the influence of drug use on parenting looks at treatment or clinical samples. A few community studies have found associations between drug use and poor parenting. Drug-using parents are more likely to live unconventional life styles and endorse nonconventional values, and these values influence their role and functioning as parents. For instance, substance using parents have displayed poor parenting skills, provided inadequate supervision of their children, and disciplined their children in a lax or coercive manner.

Financial Effect on Individual and Effect of Drug Abuse on Nigeria Economy

The person addicted to drugs tends to spend more money on the purchase of these drugs. This can make the taker to become bankrupt or start searching for money by all means. This will eventually increase the problem of the taker.

The social and economic costs related to male and female drug abuse are high. The negative effects include the financial losses and distress suffered by alcohol and drug related crime victims, increased burdens for the support of adolescents and young adults who are not able to become self-supporting, and greater demands for medical and other treatment services for these youth (Ashton, 1987). NDLEA operatives towards fighting the menace of illicit drugs production, circulation, marketing and consumption, more people are being recruited daily by drug barons to serve as couriers just as many more, especially youths and ladies are increasingly becoming addicted to assorted drugs From this work, it can be drawn that the effects of drug abuse can really be divided into two which are;

Social effects:

There are numerous numbers of social effects of drug abuse in Rivers State which include

- The Social effect looks at issues dealing with increasing criminal activities associated with drug abuse like robbery, burglary, rape, vandalization of public properties, increasing rate of HIV/AIDS, the congestion of penitentiaries where the government spends more in the maintenance of prisoners, and of course the growing numbers of destitute which our social welfare administration system

cannot carter thereby depleting government's budget.

- Drug abuse increase number of political thuggeries which resulted to killing of innocent citizen
- It increases number of insurgencies and unrest because 95% of the insurgent are drug addicted
- Drug addict increases number of insane persons in the society
- Its increases number of criminal offences like robbery, kidnap and arm bandits

Economic Effects

1. The economic impact includes the loss of potential labor, decreased productivity, and a discouraging environment for investors, which ultimately harms the Gross Developmental Income and state-generated revenue.
2. The Rivers State government is allocating substantial resources to security and the support of internally displaced persons (IDPs) caused by drug-related violence, diverting funds from essential services and infrastructure development.
3. Drug abuse damages the state's reputation.
4. It fosters corruption among the population in Rivers State.
5. Drug abuse also encourages looting of public funds.
6. It leads to political instability within the state.

Government Efforts to Combat Drug Abuse

Efforts to reduce drug circulation and consumption, especially among Nigeria's youth, have been ongoing. In 1984, President Buhari introduced a decree imposing strict penalties on drug traffickers and users, but this failed to deter either group. Under Babangida, the decree was repealed, leading to the establishment of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). These initiatives reflect the government's ongoing concern, yet they have not been effective.

In January 1992, a national conference at the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies highlighted key issues regarding drug abuse, including its roots in societal corruption and the pursuit of material wealth. Nigeria's role has shifted from being merely a transit country to a significant drug-consuming nation.

The Catholic Bishop of Jos, Dr. G. G. Ganaka, emphasized that while hard drugs themselves are not inherently bad, their misuse destroys both body and soul. Gannon (1987) noted the failures of prevention efforts, indicating a growing number of users and addicts.

The NDLEA has created community rehabilitation centers aimed at supporting addicts, stressing the importance of not losing this battle, which could jeopardize future generations. Babangida's 1991 call for a drug-free Nigeria underscores the need for global cooperation to address this issue, which remains pressing despite numerous policies and arrests.

1. Establishment of Rehabilitation Centers: The Rivers State government initiated several rehabilitation centers aimed at providing treatment and support for individuals struggling with substance abuse. These centers offered a range of services, including counseling, detoxification, and reintegration programs.

Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) enhanced the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts. Programs like "Hope for the Youth" partnered with local NGOs to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services tailored to the specific needs of the youth population.

2. **Awareness Campaigns**

Drug Awareness Initiatives: The government launched awareness campaigns targeting schools and communities to educate youths about the dangers of drug abuse. These campaigns included workshops, seminars, and outreach programs aimed at informing the public about the risks associated with drug use.

Involvement of Traditional Leaders: Engaging traditional leaders and community stakeholders in awareness campaigns proved effective in reaching broader audiences. These initiatives helped to destigmatize drug abuse

discussions and encouraged community support for affected individuals.

3. Policy Framework

Implementation of the National Drug Control Master Plan: The Rivers State government adopted policies aligned with Nigeria's National Drug Control Master Plan, focusing on prevention, treatment, and law enforcement strategies. This alignment ensured a coordinated response to the drug abuse crisis.

Legislative Measures: The government introduced stricter regulations regarding the sale and distribution of controlled substances. This included penalties for illegal trafficking and increased monitoring of pharmacies to curb prescription drug abuse.

4. Collaborative Efforts

Partnership with Law Enforcement: The collaboration between the NDLEA and local law enforcement agencies intensified efforts to combat drug trafficking and distribution. This included joint operations targeting hotspots known for drug-related activities.

Training for Healthcare Providers: Training programs for healthcare professionals on recognizing and addressing substance abuse issues were implemented, improving the capacity of local health systems to respond to drug-related health crises.

The government initiatives in Rivers State from 2015 to 2020 have aimed to address the drug abuse crisis through rehabilitation programs, awareness campaigns, policy frameworks, and collaborative efforts with law enforcement and healthcare providers. These strategies are essential in mitigating the effects of drug abuse and promoting healthier communities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Youths are critical to societal progress, and investing in their development is essential. The rampant drug abuse in Rivers State leads to crime, diverting government resources from essential services. To address this issue, the following recommendations are proposed:

Job Creation: The government should implement feasible policies to generate employment and social services.

Community Engagement: Communities must actively participate in preventing drug abuse through education and value reinforcement.

Empower Enforcement Agencies: Strengthening the NDLEA and NAFDAC to effectively combat drug trafficking and abuse.

Media Campaigns: Utilizing mass media for anti-drug campaigns while avoiding promotions of substances like alcohol.

Enhanced Security Measures: Employing more personnel for drug enforcement agencies and providing necessary equipment.

Licensing and Training: Proper scrutiny of patent medicine stores and ensuring they are operated by qualified pharmacists.

Education Initiatives: Educational institutions should host programs to inform about the dangers of drugs and substance abuse.

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INTERNAL SECURITY CRISES AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN NIGERIA IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

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KEYWORDS
Internal security, securitization, human right violation, social movements

ABSTRACT
This study investigated internal security crises and human rights abuse in Nigeria in the fourth republic. Internal security crises are those crises generated internally that threaten the peaceful, co-existence and institutional stability of a state. Internal security crises are caused by struggles between classes, struggle for economic and political control of the states, ethno religious diversity and other factors that seek to change the political and economic status quo or to enthrone new crop of elites. In Nigeria, the management of these internal security crises have led to several crises within the state especially crises bordering on human rights abuse. The manner at which the Nigeria security forces respond to internal security crises through the use of excessive force, arbitrary arrest, extra judicial execution and other unprofessional practices have undermined human rights in Nigeria. In the theoretical framework, the theory of securitization by Ole Waever was adopted. The study concludes that the manner at which internal security is managed in Nigeria is a threat to human rights as it accounts for most human rights violation in Nigeria. The study hereby recommends for the strict adherence of the rule of engagement while managing internal crises and the use of police to maintain internal peace.

Introduction

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, faces profound challenges in maintaining internal security, which in turn have severe implications for human rights across the country. Known for its economic potential and rich cultural diversity, Nigeria is also home to multiple security crises that threaten both stability and the safety of its citizens. These crises include the violent insurgency of Boko Haram in the northeast, rampant banditry and kidnappings in the northwest, and the herdsmen-farmer conflicts in the central regions. Additionally, oil-related militancy in the Niger Delta and rising ethnic tensions across the country contribute to the complexity of Nigeria's security landscape. As these issues persist, they continue to fuel a

vicious cycle of violence, displacement, and economic hardship, worsening the humanitarian situation for millions. The maintenance of internal security is the core value of every state as Dawood and Salusi (2014:1) opined that internal security is very critical to the functions of the state.

In response to these crises, the Nigerian government has deployed significant security resources, but the results have been mixed. Rather than restoring peace, security efforts have often led to accusations of human rights abuses committed by security forces, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, torture, and even sexual violence. According to Egbefo (2014:4) many scholars have identified religious, political, intolerance, mismanagement of resources, subversion, sabotage, espionage, armed robbery, muting and coop d'état and so on as the main cause of internal security crisis in Nigeria. There are equally other structural problems that arises due to the failure of Nigeria government to address certain root causes of internal security crises. These incidents have eroded public trust in state institutions, leading many to question the ability of the government to protect its people without violating basic rights. Moreover, impunity for those involved in these abuses remains a significant issue, as perpetrators often go unpunished, encouraging a culture of disregard for human rights within security agencies (Egbefo, 2014).

Non-state actors, including terrorist organizations, bandits, and militias, have also contributed to the human rights crisis. Groups like Boko Haram and armed bandits often target civilians in their attacks, committing acts of violence that include kidnappings, murder, and forced displacement. Many communities, feeling abandoned by the government, have formed vigilante groups to protect themselves, though these groups sometimes resort to violence and extrajudicial measures, further complicating the human rights landscape. This cycle of violence and mistrust highlights the difficult balance Nigeria faces in addressing security needs while protecting the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

The struggle to manage the above internal security crises and maintain internal peace by the Nigeria security operatives have impugned on different rights of Nigerians. The problem lays heavily on the management method employed by the security operatives against internal peace. Moreover, Mbah and Nwangwu (2014:2) observed that the activities of the Nigeria security force in the northern region have not only eroded the spirit of Section 14 (2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which makes the security and welfare of the people the primary purpose of government but also undermined the fundamental human rights of the citizenry as enshrined in Chapter Four of the document. They have equally negated other relevant laws established under the constitution as well as several international human rights treaties which the government has, at one time or the other, ratified. It is therefore ironical that the security agents who are statutorily responsible for the protection and preservation of the fundamental rights of the nationals are increasingly indicted in the infraction of these rights.

The method of managing internal security crises by the Nigeria security operatives like the Nigeria Armed forces (soldiers, airforce, navy), the Nigeria police force (NPF), the state security service (SSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Nigerian Prison service, the Nigeria Immigration service and National intelligence Agencies have generated a lot of crises due to the human right violation as regard to the manner at which the security forces handles security issues in Nigeria. As Nigeria confronts these internal security challenges, it becomes clear that a holistic approach is necessary. Addressing the root causes of these conflicts, promoting accountability within security agencies, and fostering stronger ties between communities and law enforcement are essential steps in creating a safer, more just society. the paper examines the complex interplay between Nigeria's internal security crises and human rights abuses, analyzing the roles of both state and non-state actors in perpetuating violence and highlighting strategies for meaningful change.

Conceptual Clarification

Internal Security

The concept of internal security revolves around the measures a state takes to maintain peace, law, and order within its borders, protecting citizens from domestic threats that can undermine stability and governance. Unlike external threats that arise from foreign adversaries, internal security concerns focus on issues that originate within the state, such as terrorism, insurgency, organized crime, ethnic conflict, and civil unrest. Effective internal security ensures that individuals and

communities can carry out their daily lives without fear of violence, theft, or other threats to their safety and wellbeing. In a country as diverse as Nigeria, with its myriad ethnic, religious, and cultural groups, maintaining internal security is particularly challenging, as security crises can arise from deep-seated social and economic grievances that create fertile ground for conflict and instability (Mbachu, 1998: 23).

Tedheke (1998:6), argues, "Security is beyond militarism. The term security goes well beyond military consideration. Security can be understanding both as a defense against external (or internal) threats as well as overall socio-economic well-being of the society". McNamara (in Tedheke, 1998:6) shares the opinion:

> *In a modernizing society, security means development. Security is not military force though it may involve it: security is not traditional military ability though it may encompass it; security is not military hardware though it may include it. Security is development and without development, there can be no security.*

McNamara (in Tedheke, 1998:7) further elucidates:

> *Any country that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of acute food shortages, population explosion, and low level of productivity, fragile infrastructural base for technological development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities and chronic problem of unemployment has false sense of security.*

It equally implies the freedom from danger to life and property and the presence of conducive atmosphere for the people to pursue their legitimate matters within the society. Also Iweze (1990:7) affirms that internal security could also be viewed as the totality of the nation's equilibrium state which must be maintained to enhance the state performance of its responsibility without unnecessary interruptions from anywhere. Internal security involves government coordination of all those actions that would guarantee that the equilibrium of state is constantly maintained or quickly brought to stability whenever it is threatened by any form of civil disturbances or distractions from students, political or religious groups. It is therefore evident from the above definitions that a nation is said to be secured to the extent that it is not in a position to lose core values, life, property and liberty (Iweze 1990).

In Nigeria, the concept of internal security has also taken on a human rights dimension, as efforts to combat security threats frequently result in human rights abuses. Security forces are often accused of heavy-handed tactics, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings. Such actions not only violate fundamental rights but also alienate communities, creating an environment in which violence and unrest can thrive. Therefore, Nigeria's internal security crises are not merely about addressing threats to physical safety but also about ensuring that measures to restore order do not come at the expense of human rights.

Human Right Abuse

Human rights are the fundamental rights and freedoms to which every individual is entitled, regardless of nationality, race, religion, or any other characteristic. These rights are considered universal, inalienable, and indivisible, meaning they apply equally to all people, cannot be taken away, and are interconnected in supporting individual dignity and freedom. Recognized by international frameworks like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and various treaties, human rights encompass a broad range of protections, including civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression, freedom from torture, and the right to a fair trial, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights, such as the right to education, healthcare, and an adequate standard of living. Together, these rights provide a foundation for individuals to live with dignity, free from discrimination and oppression, and with the ability to participate fully in society.

Human rights is defined by Donnelly (2013) who also referred to it as "the rights of man", as "literally the rights that one has because one is human." As pointed out by Bantekas and Oette (2016), many people and groups loosely use human rights to mean rights available to every person because they are human. As loosely as that understanding might be, it reflects on a basic level, the essence of the two words that came together to form the term. Human refers to everyone on earth irrespective of their age, ethnicity, nationality, ideology, orientation, sex

or creed. Rights refer to privileges that one compulsorily deserves irrespective of his or her age, ethnicity, nationality, ideology, orientation, sex or creed. Rights are usually legally enforceable in character and application. Human rights are therefore privileges and opportunities which a person is entitled to by the simple virtue of the fact that he is a human being.

According to the United Nations 'human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status." These rights include "the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education… and everyone is entitled to access to these rights, without discrimination." Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights states that "Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right."

Human rights have been viewed from three main categories, namely: Civil and political rights, which protect people from the infringements of governments, organisations or other people; Socioeconomic and cultural rights, which include the right to education, housing and satisfactory living conditions; and Solidarity rights, which recognizes the importance of equality and non-discrimination. (Foster, 2006). In essence, human rights represent the basic ethical standards for human treatment, affirming that all individuals have the right to live without fear, discrimination, or oppression. Upholding these rights requires vigilance, commitment, and a balanced approach that recognizes the needs of society as a whole while respecting the dignity and freedoms of each individual.

Theoretical Framework

This work adopts the theory of securitization theory. The major thrust or the basic assumption of the securitization theory is that it states the sole actor in the international system that makes any issue a security issue. Also, it assumes that security is an illocutionary speech act that solely by mere pronouncement. In international politics, securitization refers to the ability of state actors to make a particular issue a security matter. It could be regarded as an extreme politicisation of issues that enables extraordinary means to be used in the name of security. The theory of securitization is the ideology of Copenhagen School of thought but the word securitization was coiled by Ole Waever in 1995. Securitization is a process-oriented conception of security, which stands in contrast to materialist approaches of classical security studies. Classical approaches of security focus on the material dispositions of the threat including distribution of power, military capabilities, and polarity, whereas securitization examines how a certain issue is transformed by an actor into a matter of security in order to allow for the use of extraordinary measures.

It therefore follows that by labeling an object a matter of security, it becomes one. According to Waever (2004:13), an objective transforms into a security issue once a state actor pronounces it. By stating that a particular referent object is threatened in its existence, a securitizing actor claims a right to extraordinary measures to ensure the referent object's survival. The issue is then moved out of the sphere of normal politics into the realm of emergency politics, where it can be dealt with swiftly and without the normal (democratic) rules and regulations of policy-making.

From the basic tenet of securitization theory, one could decipher two core reasons why human rights abuse has been the order of the day by the Nigerian security agencies in the course of managing internal security crises in Nigeria. The Nigeria military operations against internal security crises have been geared towards the protection of the state and its sovereignty over the people, which accounts for the failure because of the unpronounced attitude of the government toward upholding human rights. The state-centric approach to security in Nigeria has made the security of the state the core issue of the Nigeria security apparatus or agencies. Issues that threaten national unity or the sovereignty of Nigeria are swiftly dealt with in Nigeria than issues bordering on human rights. To this extent, the Nigerian state and its security can move to any extent to protect the state even if it amounts to violation of the citizens' rights to live. The above assertion is correct because the government has securitized the safety of the state as an entity while other issues of core national interest like human rights receive little or no attention from the government. Going by the fiscal budget, the money allotted for defence alone is greater than the budget for other factors like education and human rights.

Secondly, the repression of social movements especially those ones which the state feels that

their existence constitutes a threat to the government of the state shows contentious politicalization of human rights in Nigeria is an abuse of rights itself. Most of the time human rights issues become subjective of whose rights were violated. And who violated it? The theory of securitization is of the assertion that objects that need attention should be securitized in order to attract extraordinary attention, but the continuous politicization of rights or the failure to secutilize human rights accounts for the increase in rights violations during internal security management.

Nigeria's Internal Security Crises

Nigeria's internal security crises are among the most complex and persistent in Africa, affecting nearly every region and creating far-reaching consequences for national stability, development, and human rights. The country faces multiple, region-specific security challenges that include terrorism, banditry, communal violence, and militancy. Each of these issues stems from a combination of historical grievances, socio-economic disparities, and weak governance structures, making them difficult to address through conventional security measures alone. These crises undermine public safety, disrupt economic activities, and erode public trust in the government's ability to maintain law and order.

One of Nigeria's most high-profile internal security threats is the Boko Haram insurgency, which has ravaged the northeastern region since 2009. This militant group, and its splinter faction, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), seek to establish an Islamic state and have targeted both military and civilian populations through bombings, kidnappings, and large-scale assaults on towns and villages. The insurgency has led to the displacement of millions, creating a humanitarian crisis that extends beyond Nigeria's borders. Despite government efforts to counter Boko Haram, the group remains a formidable threat due to its ability to exploit economic hardship, religious ideology, and grievances among local populations to recruit and sustain its operations.

The struggle to manage this plethora of internal security crises in Nigeria led the Nigerian security forces to stage several military campaigns that were designed to take care of the internal security crises in Nigeria. In most of the country, one campaign or the other was designed by the military to respond to one threat. To this effect, the manners in which the military campaign against internal security crises, the crises itself have accounted for several human rights violations in Nigeria. Rights violations as a result of internal security crises have resulted in the course of military campaigns against these crises. Each internal security challenge that Nigeria has witnessed has varying degrees of human rights violation as a result of the activity of the actors or the purveyors of the conflicts. The Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen crises which are the leading internal security crises in Nigeria as noted by SBM INTEL (2018) have accounted for more deaths and have violated mostly the civil, political, and economic rights of the people, while so many have been displaced all over the northeastern region as a result of the conflicts.

In the northwest, banditry has emerged as a significant security challenge, with armed groups conducting kidnappings, extortions, and attacks on rural communities. Originally driven by disputes over resources, banditry has evolved into a highly organized form of crime, with groups holding entire villages hostage for ransom. The impact of these activities is profound: families are forced to pay hefty ransoms, farming activities are disrupted, and communities live in constant fear. These groups often exploit weak governance and a lack of adequate security presence, which allows them to operate with minimal resistance. Their actions further impoverish already vulnerable communities, exacerbating social and economic inequalities and driving disillusionment with the government.

Communal violence, particularly between farmers and herders, adds another layer to Nigeria's internal security crises. This conflict, concentrated in the North Central and Middle Belt regions, is often rooted in competition for land and resources, which are increasingly scarce due to population growth and climate change. These clashes are frequently cast in ethnic and religious terms, as most herders are Fulani Muslims, while the farming communities are largely Christian. This framing intensifies the violence and widens societal divides, making the conflict even harder to resolve. Many communities feel unprotected and, in response, have formed their self-defense groups, which often leads to further violence and a breakdown of social cohesion. For instance, the Ijo (Ijaw) Itshekiri and Urhobo with several other conflicts have become a perennial problem for the

national government yet to be resolved. (Otite 2000).

In the oil-rich Niger Delta, the legacy of environmental degradation, poverty, and unemployment has fueled militancy and occasional attacks on oil installations. Militants in this region, driven by the perception that local communities do not benefit equitably from Nigeria's oil wealth, have targeted pipelines and other infrastructure, disrupting the economy and contributing to national instability. While the government's amnesty program in 2009 helped to reduce hostilities, grievances over environmental damage and lack of economic opportunity continue to simmer, leaving the region vulnerable to renewed violence (Ake, 1967, Akindele, 1998, Dudleg 1973, Takaya 1995).

Human Rights Abuses by Security Forces

Consequently, to determine, the extent of human rights violations as a result of military campaigns against this crisis, the following military campaigns; Operation Hakuri 11, Operation Boyona, and JTF operations will be analyzed to determine how they account for violations of the following rights; social rights violation, civil rights violation, political violation, economic rights violation, right association violation.

Operation Boyona and Human Rights Abuse in North East

The word BOYONA is an acronym that originates from the keywords of the states in Nigeria where the operation was meant to cover; that is the Bornu (BO) state, the Yobe (YO) state and the Adamawa (A) State. The preceding security situation in the country that necessitated the operation was the rising wave of insurgence as a result of the Boko Haram activities, Nigeria Army (2013) The operation BOYONA was launched in May 2013 with a total number of 10,000 troops. It kicked off when the state of emergency was declared in those three states and was meant to tackle insurgency in the northeast. During this operation, the major human rights violated were the economic, cultural, and civil rights while the major violators were the two parties in the conflicts; the Nigeria security forces and the Boko haram terrorist organization.

Among all the rights violated by the military during this operation, the most abused rights were civil rights. This is because both actors in the conflict played an enormous role in the violation of these rights especially towards non-combatants. As regards the violation of civil rights by the Nigerian security forces during the operation BOYONA, the breakdown of civil rights violated are; extrajudicial or summary execution/ death in custody due to denial of life-saving treatment to detainees, unlawful detention, torture, and forced disappearance.

For the sake of clarity, the researcher quantified and put into a chart to depict the extent of the violation of the component of the civil rights of the citizens in the three states where Operation Boyona was conducted. The figures used in constructing this histogram were extracted from the Amnesty International report "Stars on their shoulders, blood on their hands".



***Source**: compiled by author from the amnesty international report Stars On Their Shoulders. Blood on their hands. War crimes committed by the Nigerian military (2014)*

Amnesty International report titled Stars on Their Shoulders. Blood on their hands. War crimes allegedly committed by the Nigerian military (2014) and Hagler (2018) noted that death has occurred in the custody of the Nigerian security forces, there are torture, unlawful detention, mass arrest, forced disappearance, and summarized execution.

On death in custody, Amnesty International (2014) noted that more than 1400 deaths have been reported at detention facilities of Giwa and Mai Malari barracks in Maiduguri, and in the Multinational JTF facility in Mile 4, Baga, in sector Alpha ("Guantanamo"), Presidential Lodge in Damaturu and the JTF base ("Rest House") in Potiskum (Yobe State) and 23 Brigade Barracks in Yola (Adamawa State). It is therefore paramount to note that most of the deaths that occur in the detention facilities have been masterminded by the Nigerian security forces either directly or indirectly. A report from the same human rights organization has it that some detainees were left to either die of hunger or ailments, while some were executed. To buttress and give more clarity to this point; The Nigeria Right Watch (2014) observed that some are suffered to die. The major causes of deaths in detention facilities were starvation, thirst, severe overcrowding that led to the spread of disease, torture and lack of medical attention, and the use of fumigation chemicals in unventilated cells.

According to Hagler (2018), the Nigerian Security Forces have been alleged to be responsible for various deaths of detainees in detention facilities scattered in the North East. Hagler (2018) attested that in March 2011, more than 7, 000 men and boys have died in detention facilities. Amnesty International (2014) reported that the highest death rate was recorded in Giwa Barracks in May, June, and July 2013 when about 180 deaths were reported. Even though the problem of the Amnesty International report lies in the fact of difficult verification of data presented about the actual number of deaths that have occurred under the watch of the Nigeria security forces but United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2015) noted that detainees in the above detention facilities were deprived of food and water and kept in overcrowded conditions which resulted in death. It has been noted of the numerous condemnable and atrocious incidents of extrajudicial killing and executions carried out by the security forces of government in the Northeast. At least about 27 of those incidents are recorded that were committed between 2012 and 2014. Amnesty

International. At least 1, 200 men and boys were killed in these incidents. These individuals were killed by Nigerian Security Forces after capture and when they presented no danger, in gross violation of international humanitarian law (IHL).

One such horrific mass extrajudicial execution occurred on 14 March 2014 in Maiduguri, Borno State. This happened after the attack by Boko Haram on the military detention facility at Giwa Barracks during which detainees were released. Nigerian Security Forces were alleged to have slaughtered about 649 men and boys who ran away from the Boko Haram attack and were recaptured. On many occasions, most of these executions are carried out by the military in collaboration with the civilian JTF members. Again, in Bama, after the security forces took over in March 2015, shot and killed everyone who was not cleared by the Civilian JTF as a resident and who had no link or sympathy to Boko Haram. Extrajudicial executions of members of Boko Haram suspects and sympathizers were routine practice for the Nigerian Military. This is for persons who were captured and who presented no more danger. Others were shot dead inside detention facilities, while others were either shot or had their throats cut right after being captured during cordon and search operations (Amnesty International, 2014).

Furthermore, another instance of civil rights violation during Operation BOYONA is the torture of those in detention facilities. Torture is routinely and systematically used by the Nigerian Security Forces to extract confessions or as a form of punishment. Torture in detention facilities of the Nigerian security forces always takes the form of driving a broom into a man's genitals, beating, and tying the bicep and triceps muscles of the hand with the rope until blood seizes to circulate the veins and arteries. According to Amnesty International (2014), victims of torture are always suspended from metal poles and shocked with electric batons by soldiers among other methods. Victims of torture or other ill-treatment rarely have access to medical assistance and many die as a result of their injuries. Amnesty International has previously documented a widespread pattern of torture and ill-treatment in both police and military custody across Nigeria. A detailed report, 'Welcome to hell fire': torture and other ill-treatment in Nigeria, published in September 2014, found that torture and other ill-treatment in the northeast of Nigeria increased as the conflict escalated.

Amnesty International has also documented arrests during house-to-house raids and at checkpoints, as well as targeted arrests of suspected Boko Haram members' relatives. Most of those arrested are young men, although Amnesty International has recorded arrests and detention of boys as young as nine years old. Amnesty International has also documented the arrest and detention of 30 women and girls. The number of arrests increased significantly following the imposition of a state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states.

Operation Hakurri 11 and Human Rights Violation in South-South

The word "HAKURRI" is a Hausa language which stands for "SORRY" in English. Operation Hakurri 11 was the first joint task force operation in Nigeria. The operation's special mandate was to Protect lives and property; particularly oil platforms, flow stations, operating rig terminals and pipelines, refineries, and power installations in the Niger Delta (Tom, 2000). Basically, 'Operation HAKURI II' was a punitive military operation that resulted in massive destruction of lives and property after two days of continuous bombardment of Odi community in the Niger Delta (Human Rights Watch 1999). Interestingly the core motive of any JTF operations is intended to protect civilians from violence and their presence often creates the expectation among host communities that they will be protected from violence and human rights abuses.

However, internal security operations of JTFs have become notorious for bombing insurgents in civilian populated areas thereby killing innocent people and destroying human habitations and sources of livelihood (Lawan, 2013; Amnesty International, 2012). The failure of such operations to protect the civilian population was demonstrated in the 20 November 1999 bombardment of the Odi community in Bayelsa state by operatives of 'Operation HAKURI II'. After two days of intense bombardment with heavy artillery, aircraft, grenade launchers, mortar bombs, and other sophisticated and deadly weapons, about 2,483 persons mainly women and children were killed and numerous buildings destroyed (Courson 2006:3). The atrocious spectacle of Odi was replayed on 22 and 24 October 2001, when a detachment of the Nigerian Army invaded Zaki Biam and neighbouring communities in North-Central Nigeria, in a reprisal attack that resulted in the extra-judicial executions of many unarmed civilians and the destruction of numerous

property (Human Rights Watch, 2002). The killings in Odi and Zaki Biam are arbitrary and thus a violation of the human rights of the inhabitants of those communities because those who were killed were neither insurgents nor organized armed groups. Organised armed groups, according to the 'Interpretive Guidance' of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), are those that recruit their members mainly from the civilian population and possess the capacity and military organization to either 'take a direct part in hostilities' or conduct hostilities 'on behalf of a party to the conflict' (Melzer, 2009, p.69-72). These attacks were generally condemned as a violation of human rights law and international humanitarian law (Human Rights Watch, 1999; 2002).

Also, in May 2009 the JTF code named 'Operation Restore Hope' allegedly destroyed seven communities suspected of harboring militant camps in Delta state. Subsequent hostilities between MEND and men of 'Operation Restore Hope' in Gbaramatu kingdom in Delta state claimed more than 500 lives and displaced about 5,000 people (Francis et al. 2011:200). This particular operation was very atrocious because it was a coordinated land, water and aerial bombardment, involving a combine force of the Army, Air Force and Navy personnel. The bombardment which lasted for two weeks from 13 to 27 May 2009 caused the violent death of many people, mostly women, children and the aged, and endangered the lives of many others who were forced out of their communities into forests and swamps (Francis et al, 2011). Ironically, the use of excessive force by operatives of 'Operation Restore Hope' actually intensified the level of organized violence in the Niger Delta as it triggered a cycle of attacks and counter-attacks that eventually resulted in high civilian fatalities (Chiluwa, 2011).

Social Movements and Human Rights Violations

Social movements have long played a vital role in advocating for human rights and social justice, often emerging as powerful forces that challenge oppression, inequality, and government abuses. These movements are typically driven by ordinary citizens who unite to demand change, highlighting injustices and pushing for accountability. Social movements can be local, national, or global, and they often use a combination of protests, online activism, legal actions, and public awareness campaigns to amplify their voices. In countries with limited democratic space or where state institutions are weak, social movements become crucial advocates for human rights, mobilizing citizens to demand reforms that the state may be unwilling to undertake. They have become particularly influential in the digital age, as social media platforms allow movements to grow rapidly, transcend geographical boundaries, and gain international solidarity. According to Snow, Soule and Kries (2004) collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture, or world order of which they are a part.

One notable example is Nigeria's #EndSARS movement, which was launched to protest police brutality, specifically against the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). What began as a call to end police abuses evolved into a broader movement demanding systemic reforms and accountability. The movement brought widespread attention to issues of police violence, corruption, and human rights violations. However, it was met with a violent response from the state, culminating in the tragic Lekki Toll Gate incident where security forces opened fire on unarmed protesters. This violent crackdown exposed the lengths to which governments may go to suppress social movements, even when they seek to address legitimate grievances. The events surrounding #EndSARS highlighted how government responses to social movements can exacerbate human rights violations rather than address the underlying issues that gave rise to the protests.

The social movements that have suffered directly or indirectly from the government actions in Nigeria are the press or the journalist, secessionist groups or ethic based groups like (Oduduwa people congress, Ohanaeze, IPOB) religious movements like the Islamic movements of Nigeria, resource control, environmental groups like the MEND. Even though these lists are not mutually exclusive or collectively exhaustive, the government tends to control these groups through suppression and use of security forces against their members and against their activities (Soule and Kries, 2004).

The Press and Human Rights Violation

Despite the freedom of information acts and other legislation that protects the rights of the press, the Nigerian journalist and pressmen have face some many plethora of rights violation from the government. The freedom of information acts (FOA) which provides for; make public records and information more freely available, provide for public access to public records and information, protect public records and information to the extent consistent with the public interest and the protection of personal privacy, protect serving public officers from adverse consequences of disclosing certain kinds of official information without authorization and establish procedures for the achievement of those purposes and; for related matters (Freedom of Information Act, 2011) is supposed to be the safe haven for all pressmen in Nigeria offers little or no protection to the press as Nigeria government and her security forces turn blind eyes to the provision while dealing with the press.

All over the world and especially in Africa, the press is always the victim of direct violence and at the mercy of repressive dictatorial government. According to the committee on the protection of journalist report (2018) the group reported at the event of 28 september2018 general assembly of the United Nations (UN) that journalist is regularly threatened, attacked, imprisoned and killed around the world. According the group, at the end of 2017, around 262 journalists were jailed all over the world; 70 in turkey, 40 china, 20 Egypt, 2 killed in Nigeria while 12 were assaulted and 52% were behind bars for reporting human rights violation in their countries or divulging what native laws or government called official secret. Moreover, in 2015, the total number of journalist killed on the course of carrying out their duty was put to the figure of 110 by the International Press Centre (IPC) Lagos. Similarly, in a May 2018 report of the UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) lamented of arbitrary imprisonment of journalist which foster self-sensor ship and impinges on the public rights to access of information is on continual rise.

In Nigeria, the press is not spared as both state and federal government in one way or the other clamp on the rights of the press to exist and operate freely like every other organization whose rights are protected. In most cases the police or other security agencies engages on illegal detention, arrest and or even kill journalist especially when the report against the government, government officials or even some protected individuals.

Chronicles of Killed Nigerian Journalist

S/N	Name	Media House	Date	Events
1	Jerry Edoho		January 6, 2018	He was picked up in Uyo by police personnel from the Force headquarters in Abuja
2	Nsebiet John	The Ink, Akwa-Ibom State	January 6, 2018	He was detained for a night in police cell, arraigned and granted bail to the sum of N250,000
3	Dapo Olorunyomi	PREMIUM TIMES	January 19.	arrested by armed police officers

4	Evelyn Okakwu	PREMIUM TIMES	January 19.	arrested by armed police officers
	Godwin Aliuna	National Mirror, Ebonyi State:	February 22.	He was attacked by alleged armed robbers in his residence
5	Famous Giobaro	Bayelsa State-owned radio station, Glory FM	April 16.	He was shot dead by suspected hired assassins
6	Samuel Nweze:	Publisher of the People's Leader	June 2.	He was shot by gunmen in front of his office in Abakaliki
7	Charles Otu of the:	Conscience Newspaper	June 2.	He was beaten to stupor with dangerous weapons and later abducted by suspected political thugs in Abakaliki
8	Lawrence Okojie	Nigerian Television Authority, Benin	July 8.	: He was shot dead by gunmen at 8 p.m. while returning from work
9	Amadin Uyi	Silverbird Television, Abuja	August 8.	He was brutalized by police officers during the protest by Ourmumudondo group at Unity Fountain in Abuja
10	Segun Salami	Channels Television, Kogi	August 28.	: He was battered at the state house detention centre by security personnel attached to Kogi State government house
11	Wale Odunsi,	an editor with Daily Post (online publication)	October 11	He was reportedly attacked by security officials at the Kogi State government house

12	Ikechukwu Ibe	Daily Trust Newspapers	October 26.	He was allegedly brutally assaulted by an Army captain at Jabi area of Abuja

Note: compiled from welcome address presented by the Chairman of International Press Centre, Lagos Mr. Arogundade on November 2 2018 (https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/248117-two-nigerian-journalists-killed-12-assaulted-2017-full-list-ipc.html).

From the ongoing, the data above shows the level of the security forces clamp down on the press even in the government houses especially that of Kogi states and the Ebonyi state. While attack of press houses especially on that of the premium times and the (Nigeria Union of Journalist) NUJ secretariat in south east which was invaded by soldiers on Python dance assaulting 12 journalists during the raid. It is evident from these, even not mentioning prominent case like that of Dele Giwa that the relationship between the press and the Nigeria security forces could be likened to that of hammer and anvil and this amount to several human rights violation towards the group by the government.

Addressing Human Rights and Security Challenges

Addressing human rights and security challenges in Nigeria requires a multifaceted and balanced approach that combines effective security measures with a strong commitment to human rights. Security interventions, particularly in regions afflicted by terrorism, banditry, and communal violence, must prioritize the safety of citizens without infringing on their basic rights. This delicate balance is essential because, historically, heavy-handed security measures have often exacerbated violence, fueled resentment, and led to human rights abuses. Instances of arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings by security forces have eroded public trust in the state, alienating communities and sometimes even driving support for non-state actors. To be effective, security operations must be coupled with accountability mechanisms that prevent abuses, protect vulnerable populations, and foster community cooperation with authorities.

One of the most pressing steps in addressing these dual challenges is to reform and strengthen Nigeria's security institutions. This includes investing in the training and equipment of police and military forces, ensuring that they are equipped not only with tactical skills but also with a strong understanding of human rights principles. Specialized training on crowd control, conflict resolution, and community engagement can help security personnel interact more constructively with the public and reduce incidents of abuse. Additionally, improving the welfare of security personnel by providing fair wages and support can help to curb corruption within the ranks, which is often a major factor in public mistrust. Transparent accountability structures, such as independent oversight bodies, should be established to investigate and prosecute cases of abuse, ensuring that violations are addressed and not tolerated within the security sector (Ali 1993).

Beyond security reform, addressing the socio-economic root causes of conflict is essential for achieving long-term peace. Many of Nigeria's security crises are deeply intertwined with poverty, unemployment, and inequality, which create conditions that can breed violence. For instance, regions affected by insurgency and banditry often suffer from limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Young people, lacking viable pathways for social mobility, may be drawn into criminal or insurgent activities. Government-led initiatives to improve social services, create jobs, and develop infrastructure can help mitigate these underlying grievances, providing communities with alternatives to violence and reducing the appeal of extremist and criminal groups. Investments in education, vocational training, and small business development can empower citizens and enhance their resilience against manipulation by violent groups.

Fostering stronger ties between the government and local communities is also crucial in addressing human rights and security challenges. Community engagement initiatives that involve local leaders, civil society, and religious organizations can help to build trust and ensure that security measures align with

community needs. In many cases, community-led security initiatives, such as neighborhood watch programs and dialogue platforms, have proven effective in reducing crime and managing tensions. By partnering with communities, the government can develop culturally and contextually appropriate solutions, reducing reliance on force and creating a sense of shared responsibility for security. Mediation, intervention, dialog, government enquires, intercession by government delegates and traditional rules and other Nigerians of substance should always be used to settle internal security threats rather than raw and brutal application of military might been experience any time there is any eruptions of security crisis in the country. (Ali 1993, Alubo 2006, Otite 2000, Fleiner 2002, Imobighe 1990).

International partnerships can further support Nigeria's efforts to address human rights and security challenges. Collaborations with organizations such as the United Nations, African Union, and regional bodies can provide technical assistance, funding, and training resources for both human rights and security reform. International agencies can also play a role in monitoring human rights compliance and providing support for transitional justice initiatives in conflict-affected areas. Such partnerships bring expertise and global perspectives that can aid Nigeria in implementing best practices and adapting successful approaches used in other regions.

Ultimately, addressing human rights and security challenges in Nigeria is not a short-term endeavor; it requires sustained political will, community participation, and a commitment to justice and fairness. By balancing effective security strategies with respect for human rights, Nigeria can foster an environment of trust and collaboration, laying the foundation for lasting peace and stability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Nigeria's internal security crises and human rights abuses represent complex and intertwined challenges that require both immediate and long-term solutions. The persistent issues of terrorism, banditry, ethnic conflicts, and militancy are exacerbated by economic hardship, lack of education, and insufficient government accountability. These conditions create an environment where violence can thrive, undermining stability and citizen trust in the government's ability to protect its people. Efforts to address these security concerns have often been met with reports of human rights abuses by security forces, which further strain relations between the government and the communities it serves. Moreover, the rise of social movements, like #EndSARS, underscores the population's desire for justice and accountability, as well as the urgent need to reform security practices that infringe upon human rights. Achieving lasting peace and security in Nigeria, therefore, requires a comprehensive approach that prioritizes not only safety but also respect for human rights.

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AFFORESTATION AS A MECHANISM FOR MITIGATING VIOLENT CONFLICTS BETWEEN FARMERS AND HERDERS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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KEYWORDS
Afforestation, Conflict, Mitigation, Climate Change, Farmer, Herder

ABSTRACT
In the quest for sustainable peace against the spate of conflicts between Farmers and Herders in Northern Nigeria, this paper examined the viability of afforestation in taming the protracted violent embroil which has claimed many lives and property across the region. The strategy of using tree planting is borne out of the capacity of trees in providing the desired vegetation for both Famers and Herders and ability to fight climate change with its vulnerabilities such desertification, drought, erosion, erratic rainfall, heat waves etc. which often times trigger the South-Ward migration of herders in desperate search for greener pasture and water points which consciously or unconsciously leads to encroachment of famer lands which subsequently sparks resentment, mistrust and violent conflicts. The study relied on secondary sources of data collection mainly from newspapers, reports, published journals, and text books. The paper adopted Eco-Violence theory as a framework of analysis. Thus, the study discovered that, tree planting can go a long way in addressing our environmental condition by absorbing Greenhouse Gases (GHG) which through emission deplete the ozone layer that over time caused change in climate condition. To this end, the paper suggested greater collaboration of government with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), community heads, religious and traditional institution, inclusion of Climate Change Education in our schools' curriculums and strengthening our legal frameworks for environmental protection against climate change among other policy recommendations.

"Climate change is not a distant threat –it is happening now. It is causing displacement and migration, and we must act swiftly to address it" Ban Ki-Moon

Introduction

One of the major problems promoting unending discourse about the future of the world, is the issue of global warming. Today, Nigeria is a country whose majority of its federating units are confronted with the scorching impact of climate change in one form or the other. This confrontation is visible in different forms ranging from heat waves, extreme rains, flooding, land degradation, drought, fluctuating rainfall, desertification etc. What does this implies? The implication is that, the climate change variability is hitting hard on lives and livelihoods causing forced migration, and displacement with attendant effect on health, and food security of people across the world.

Nigeria is not an exception to the vulnerability of climate change especially on the Northern flank. This is manifested in the migratory trends of itinerary pastoralists in relations to the rising spate of violent communal conflicts between them and sedentary crop farmers in North-East and Central states such as Adamawa, Taraba, Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, and Niger States.

In a study of climate change and global security, Okoye (2023) posits that, "at the moment, climate change constitutes one of the greatest challenges the world is battling with in the 21st century. He further clarifies that… Although climate change does not directly trigger violent conflicts, but its manifestations such as drought, erratic rainfall, desertification, water scarcity and shrinking of water bodies etc. contributes to the escalation of pre-existing conflicts and breeds new areas of conflicts, in other words posing what is called structural violence.

As a response to the consequences of shift in the climate, tree planting becomes imperative to tame the impending effects of the injured climate. As we speak, our ozone layer in the stratosphere that sits between 15km and 30km above the earth surface that shields us and other living things from the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation is severely injured. The harm to the natural canopy (ozone layer) is caused by two major factors; (a) natural process (Biogeographical) (b) human activities (Anthropogenic).

Our focus therefore, in the paper, shall be on the imperatives for tree planting as a viable strategy for reducing violent conflicts among farmers and herders in Northern Nigeria. Focus shall also be put on the implications of deforestation which is one of the contributors to the greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions that continues to harm the climate to the disadvantage of human security in Northern Nigeria.

It is against the foregoing that, this paper attempts to establish the nexus between climate change and the prolonged farmer-herder violent conflicts and to further establish how afforestation serves as a panacea to the embroils between the two land users in Northern Nigeria.

Theoretical Basis

Eco-Violence Theory

The environmental resource scarcity theory is applicable in this research in attempting to equate the trends of farmers-herders upheaval across Nigeria. Thomas Homer-Dixon (1999) is one of the major proponents of the theory alongside; Baechler; Percival and Gleditsch.

Thomas Homer-Dixon (1999), adduces wide arrays of empirical work linking environmental degradation with violent outcomes, and articulates a preliminary theoretical framework to explain these linkages.

The Theory holds that:

> *Decreased in quality and quantity of resources, population growth, and resource access at singly or in various combinations to increase the scarcity, for certain population groups, of cropland, water, forests, and fish. This can reduce economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity ad for the larger regional and national economies. The affected people may*

> *migrate or be expelled to new lands. Migrating groups often trigger ethnic conflicts when they move to new area; while decreases in wealth can cause can cause deprivation conflicts (Homer-Doxon, 1999).*

The conflicts between the herders and crop growers on the transhumance corridors and routes of North-Central Nigeria typify ecological resources-conflict aggravated by the impacts of global climate change, what is at issue in the conflicts is livelihood struggles in a context of stiff ecological scarcity and competition. The desperation exhibited by the principal actors in the conflicts can only be properly conjectured by understanding the conflicts situation as a struggle for collective subsistence in an ecological domain fraught with resource-scarcity and do-or-die contestation. In this context, it becomes expedient for the parties to apply counter-group tactics in an attempt to live through the ecological struggle. This apparently explains the level of violence that has characterized such conflicts situation in contemporary time (Okoli, 2015).

The central thesis of the eco-violence theory is that, scarcity of renewable resource can, in combination with other social factors, contribute to macro-level violent outcomes such as ethnic clashes and insurgencies…. Violent outcomes are often the product of interactions between scarcity and a number of other factors, such as inequality, migration and the functioning of social institutions. He further presented an overview of intellectual currents over the last two centuries, first focusing the discussion around the broad trends of neo-Malthusian population-based ideas, economic theories of ingenuity and optimism, and resource distribution models. He then gives overviews of nine physical trends of global warming, ozone depletion, cropland scarcity, freshwater depletion, decline of fish stocks and biodiversity loss (Homer-Dixon, 1999).

Further advancement of the theory connotes that;

> *Decreases in the quality and quantity of renewable resources, population growth and unequal resource access act singly or in various combinations to increase the scarcity, for certain population groups, of cropland, water, forests and fish. This can reduce economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economics. The affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands. Migrating groups often trigger ethnic conflicts when they move to new areas, while decreases in wealth can cause deprivation conflicts.*

According to Gleditsch and Blitt (1998) cited in Odoh and Chigozi (2012);

> *"The fundamental theoretical assumption of the theory is that resource scarcity is the product of an insufficient supply; too much demand and an unequal distribution of resources as a result of environmental hazards that forces some sector of a society into a condition of deprivation and violence. These four sources of scarcity are in turn caused by variables such as population growth, economic development, pollution and obviously climate change. Thus, environmental, pollution and obviously climate change. Thus, environmental resource, scarcity will constrain agricultural and economic productivity, further inducing the disruption of economic livelihoods, poverty and migration. Migration can occur either because of environmental quality of a habitat has become unlivable or, more commonly, because the migrants economic outcome is likely to strengthen the segmentation around already existing religious, class, ethnic or linguistic cleavages in a society".*

Accordingly, the environmental scarcity theory has three main dimensions: supply-induced scarcity, demand-induced scarcity and structural scarcity. Supply-induced scarcity emerges when resources are reduced and degraded faster than they are replenished. Demand-induced scarcity arises out of population growth as against its source of

livelihood, while structural scarcity exists because of inequitable distribution of resources due to their concentration in the hands of a few, while the rest of the population suffers from resource inadequacy (Homer-Dixion, 1999).

In agreement with that, Haugh and Ellingsen (1998) cited in Eje *et al* (2014), state;

> *"Increased environmental scarcity caused by one or more of these factors is assumed to have several consequences, which in turn may lead to domestic armed conflicts", with intervening variables such as decreased agricultural production, decreased economic activity, migration and a weakened state helping to build up the environmental scarcity and violent conflict. As people's quality of life diminishes due to decrease in environmental resources such as fertile land, there is the tendency that competition may ensue over the scare resources, such competition if unchecked could turned fierce, may result into violent conflict. This theory is adapted in this to provide support to structural conflict theory because of diverse meanings and explanations it brings to environmentally linked-resource conflicts. Unlike ecological balance which is linked directly to ecological degradation, resulting to human degradation as structural violence. Environmental scarcity in the case connotes the limited supply of grazing land, farmland and water".*

It is pertinent to note that one of the key strategies of adapting the effect of climate change and its environmental effects by the pastoralists is migration. Equating the violent conflict phenomenon between the Fulani herders and the agrarian communities within the framework of eco-violence theory, the four environmental resources (fresh water, cropland, forests and fish) are all vulnerable to climate change. Basically, the shrinking speed of Lake Chad basin has continued to exacerbate hardship of many dependents for farming purposes, fishing and cattle rearing.

Similarly, expansion of farmlands due to population growth and capitalists' involvement in farming business, fast degradation of soil nutrients has constituted a serious concern and exacerbated worries and frustration among huge population across the Sahel region and Nigeria inclusive. With little or no attention to address the shrinking Lake Chad Basin, there is likelihood of increase in insecurity as migration increases, violence becomes inevitable. Homer-Dixon (1999) argues that, with environmental degradation comes increasing scarcity and that is likely to become more acute as time goes on, and so violent outcomes are likely to increase in the future.

Moreover, it is an established fact that climate change has huge consequences on livelihoods, especially on agriculture practices. From the background of the literature reviewed, this theory establishes the link between climate change, migration and insecurity across Nigeria. Poor attention in addressing this situation has continued to threaten the corporate existence of Nigeria as a political entity. As a result, insecurity, poor farm produces, frequent migration have become a symbol of North-central Nigeria.

Contextualizing the Manifestations of Climate Change in Nigeria

While the activities of the developed countries are mostly responsible for the changing climate, the developing nations are those suffering more of the impacts due to inability to cope as a result of poverty and low technological development (Ati, Agubamah & Abaje, 2018).

Ishaku (2018) expanded the argument:

> *The culprits of this gaseous emission were the industrialized countries of the world; the US, for example accounted for 5.7 billion tons of gaseous emission, representing 23% of the global total ;Africa ,in contrast, accounts for only a meagerly 920.000 tons (i.e 4%).However, the fact is that Africa is the most vulnerable to the effects of the climate change because about 40% of its Gross Domestic Product*

(GDP) is generated through agriculture, an activity that is most at risk from global warming.

In addition, lack of awareness and inability of Nigerian government to enforce existing legal frameworks for environmental protection also exacerbated the worsening condition of climate vulnerability in Nigeria.

It is on the strength of the above assertions that Nigeria is experiencing the following climate change effects:

a) Increased climate variability: The climate variability here refers to the ways our climate condition (e.g., temperature, rainfall,) fluctuates from year to year. It is the excessive climatic change that created unbearable environmental condition that withers the green vegetation and dried up water points, which eventually leads to forced migration that serves as a recipe for violent conflicts. According to Bashir (2018), high temperature has dried up most of the rivers and streams along with the lofty vegetation in their valleys. The combined effect of these twin forces produced a drastic decline in the pasture-livestock ratio thus igniting a destructive struggle on how to access these resources among humans and animals alike.

b) Changing rainfall pattern: According to Bdliya (2018), rainfall amount has declined by 30% in Nigeria during the Sahel drought (late 1960s to 1990s). Other associated effects of drought include but not limited to heat waves, thunder storm, rise in sea level etc. Drought largely manifests in northern parts of Nigeria with ,35% of previously cultivated land in 11 northern states of Nigeria has been overran by desertification due to short duration of rainfall (Badru,2020). This further accentuate violent conflicts as resources become scares for both farmers and herders in many parts of Northern Nigeria such as Benue, Plateau, etc.

c) Erosion: This is another current issue due to climate change resulting to heavy rainfall pattern particularly in the Eastern part of Nigeria. According to Bashir (2018), in Anambra State alone, there are about one hundred and fifty devastating erosion sites, destroying physical infrastructural facilities, farmlands, etc. Similarly, destruction by wind erosion is seen all over Northern especially Kano, Kebbi, Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, Zamfara, Sokoto, Jigawa, Benue amongst other affected stats in Northern Nigeria.

d) Drought: The environmental challenges resulting from climate change has many divergent components. It should be noted that, deforestation which is the excessive falling of trees for animal feeds, energy purpose, local bridge and house construction etc. gave birth to drought. Similarly, drought gives rise to desertification, while desertification gives rise to increase in temperature resulting to undesirable and unbearable ecosystem which subsequently becomes harmful to inhabitants. Drought can also be seen as a product of erratic rainfall especially in the Northern parts of Nigeria with adverse consequences on losing biodiversity, intense flooding, degradation of land and increase in varying weather events, forced migration, displacement and increased diseases etc. These drought scenarios, more often than not, serve as a push factor in the perennial conflicts between sedentary crop farmers and Fulani pastoralists Northern Nigeria (Vahyala & Diah,2024)

Empathically, Abbass (2018), comprehensively posits that, The continuing violent clashes that ensured between Fulani pastoralists and farmers have usually been manipulated and thus taken as typical ethnic/tribal and religions/cultural conflict…He viewed the prolonged breach in security across the rural communities of North-Central Nigeria as a contest for survival…Since the occasional drought of the 1970s and 1980s, nomadic pastoralists have continued to increase pressures on farmers by penetrating the semi-arid and humid regions with their herds. This penetration has been much deeper, longer and with much greater intensity and numbers unprecedented in pastoralist nomadism in Nigeria.

Climate Change and Farmer-Herder Crisis: A Nexus

It is imperative to note that, the magnitude at which human lives and materials are wasted as a result of farmers-herders conflicts in Nigeria is worrisome. Emphatically. Mohanty et al (2021) further posits that, around 4,000 people died in Nigeria as a result of farmers-

herders conflicts between 2016 and 2019. The dryness of the Lake Chad basin led to poor livelihood and lack of income generation opportunities in the region, hence compels young people to join rebel groups and engage in anti-social activities through extremist organizations.

Aside that, the conflicts more often exposed tens of thousands into a horrendous humanitarian displacement.

The conflict nature of most part of northern Nigeria, and central Nigeria to be specific can be imaged within the context of farmer-herder contestation for scarce resources such as water, flora and fauna. Adekunle and Adisa (2010) notes that, conflict arising from herders' search for resources such as water, forest and land in host communities have remained a "most important" problem faced by Fulani pastoralists in the course of tending their herds.

According to International Crisis Group (ICG) (2017), herders migrating into the Savannah and rain forest of the central and southern states are moving into regions where high population growth over the last four decades has heightened pressure on farmland, increasing the frequency of disputes over crop damage, water pollution and cattle theft. Similarly, urbanization, mechanized farming, excessive grazing and bush burning also exacerbated the environmental degradation aid the sustained violent conflicts between farmers and herders in Northern Nigeria. In the absence of mutually accepted moderation mechanism, these disagreements increasingly turn into violence.

According to Blench (2004);

> *As farmers take up more of the river-bank for farm, they come into conflict with the other users, especially the herders. The herders have been coming to the river for many years, for the grasses and tend to consider they have ownership rights when they arrive and find their grazing site now covered by plants, they may become very angry. The farmers often desperate to feed their families in a situation where the old rain-fed system no longer work regards the herders as dangerous and intrusive. Too often, there are fights and people are sometimes killed.*

The above quotation underscores the arguments and assertions that, the protracted violent conflicts between the two land users is basically instigated by scarce resources occasioned by climate change. These violent communal reprisals have for long inundated many parts of northern Nigeria particularly north-central and north-eastern parts of Nigeria. Buttressing the facts of this submission; Abbass (2015) pungently argued that; "Clashes between farmers and pastoralists in northern Nigeria are ubiquitous and on the increase. These clashes generally centered on access to and competition for grazing land and water. As a pasture land shrinks, sequel to taking over of such land by farmers, conflicts become inevitable.

In our discourse about perennial conflicts between farmers and herders; the paper discovered that, water is central and formed the center stage of our analysis. This is borne out of the fact that both farmers and herders depend largely on availability of water for domestic irrigation purposes and feeding herds respectively. Unfortunately, rainfall amount has significantly declined in already desert prone areas in Northern Nigeria with its negative effect on millions of people. The main cause of all these impending dangers is the changing climate.

Central to the analysis is also the obvious and alarming receding of the Lake Chad Basin, one of the African largest freshwater bodies. According to Mohanty, Rotson, Ngueping and Nanda (2021), the Lake Chad Basin has shrunk by 90 per cent. Over 10 million people across the basin countries of Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon are in need of emergency assistance…the Lake in the Sahel straddled Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon is home to million people, it is blessed with rich aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity…for years, the Lake has been supporting drinking water, irrigation, fishing, livestock and livelihoods of over 30million people in the region. Sad enough, the lake has shrunk by 90 percent over the last 60 years, since the chronic drought surged at the beginning of 1970s. The surface area of the Lake was 26,000 square kilometers in 1963; it has now significantly reduced to less than

1,500 square kilometers. (Mohanty,et al,2021).

It is therefore, germane at this point, to establish that the depleting natural resources and grazing space in the region has exacerbated violent conflicts between Fulani pastoralists who are desperately searching for water and greeneries, and farmers who are constantly increasing their farm lands and in search of water for domestic purposes.

Thus, as the struggle for survival continues, the present reality of the Lake Chad keeps hitting hard as succinctly observed:

Up till today, the shrinkage of Chad Hydrological Basin has continued to attract migratory waves from far and near, especially from the countries ravaged by the Sahara Desert to the north, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger. This has compounded the land resource and deficiency, both for human and animal needs in Nigeria and thus intensifying the struggle for land among farmers and pasture among herders (Bashir, 2018).

The sudden disappearance of our forests as a result of human activities and neglects of supervising authorities, has continues to worsen the food and human security situations in Northern Nigeria. This is not peculiar to Northern Nigeria or Africa. United Nation Food and Agriculture Organization (2020) estimated that, 100 billion square meters of forest were cut down each year over the last decade, while tropical deforestation has contributed 8% of global emissions.

Relating this scenario to Nigeria, it is in the public domain that, our forests in Northern Nigeria are under intense pressure due to excessive abuse from people either for energy, building construction or grazing purposes. Equally, it is a known fact that, our forest is severely under attacks as a result of the ongoing fight against Boko-Haram insurgency in Sambisa Forest (North East Nigeria), fight against banditry in Zamfara State (Dan Sadau Forest, Dan-Gulbi Forest, Bagega forest and Shububu forest) in North-west Nigeria.

It is therefore, established by this paper that, the sustained combat against insurgency and banditry has further exacerbated Nigeria environmental condition with its attendant implications on global warming. Corroborating this assertion, in a high-powered delegation to New York, at a United Nations (UN's) High level segment roundtable on: Forest based solutions to the triple planetory crisis, Governor of Borno State, Zulum (2024) expressed that, "Borno state has been, significantly impacted by the crisis of insecurity caused by Boko-Haram insurgency… The loss of forest has resulted in soil erosion, reduced water availability, loss of biodiversity and increased vulnerability of climate change impacts".

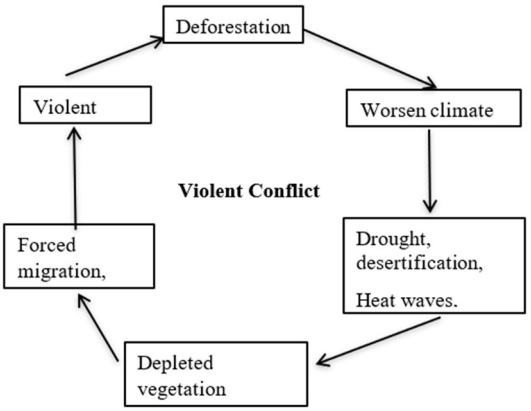


Fig 1: Vicious circle of conflict due to poor afforestation and reforestation, **Designed by the Author**

Statistics of Lives Lost to Farmer-Herder Conflict in Recent Attacks

S/N	Nature of Attack	No. of Casualties/ Deaths	Year	Location/State	Source
1.	Farmer/Herder Clash	2,600	2021	Benue, Plateau, Nassarawa and Taraba States	Armed Conflict Locations and Events, 2023.
2.	Farmer/Herder Clash	1,868 deaths, 300,000 displaced	2018, 2019, 2020	Benue, Plateau, Nassarawa, Niger and Taraba States	International Center for Investigation Reporting, 2021.
3.	Farmer/Herder Clash	1,300	2018	Benue, Plateau, Adamawa and Taraba States	Relief Web International, 2018
4.	Farmer/Herder Clash	3,641	2018	Benue, Plateau, Adamawa, Taraba, Kaduna and Nassarawa States	Amnesty International, 2018
5.	Farmer/Herder Clash	261	2024	Plateau State	Directorate of Research, Planning and Documentation, Plateau State Government, 2024.
6.	Farmer/Herder Clash	3087	2014-2019	Benue, Taraba and Kaduna States.	Nigerian Security Tracker (NST) in Olalekan, 2022.

Source: Compilation by the author from different reports, 2024.

Taming Famer-Herder Conflicts through Afforestation

Series of efforts have been made by various stakeholders in ending farmer-herder crises. But many do not recognize the potency of afforestation in addressing the problem. Therefore, against the foregoing life-threatening capacity of climate change variability in Nigeria, sustainable measures are urgently needed in the right place and time to arrest the scorching effect of the new environmental phenomenon confronting the existence of living things and non-living things on the earth surface. Thus, the first action in this regard is to plant sufficient number of drought-tolerant trees to cushion the effect of climate change. This action becomes imperative in lieu of the fact that climate change is now a reality that we must acknowledged. Beyond acknowledging its presence and manifestations, we should all see it as a common "new" enemy to fiercely fight with all arsenals at our disposal.

Therefore, we should begin to see trees as viable tool for combating climate change variability in our society thereby preventing the trigger of conflicts most especially between famers and herders. This can be achieved through massive afforestation and reforestation (to recover lost forest). This is because indiscriminate cutting down of trees and destruction of forest can indeed be damaging to the environment and invariably worsen climate change effects. Trees and forests play a crucial role in absorbing carbon dioxide and regulating the earth's climate.

Therefore, when trees are cut down, it releases stored carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere contributing to greenhouse gases emissions. Additionally, deforestation can disrupt ecosystem, leading to loss of biodiversity and affect local communities who depend on forest for their survival. Thus, promoting sustainable tree planting and nurturing the existing ones are important measures in mitigating the reality effects of climate change in our society.

Other associated value of trees includes but not limited to the followings;

a. They help to ameliorate the effect of climate change; tress naturally absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and releases oxygen, helping in reducing the effects of global warming.

b. Trees improve air purity because they absorb pollutants and other injurious gases that are inimical to our health.

c. Trees prevent soil erosion as they help to maintain soil nutrients and protects the land against slides and other natural phenomenon.

d. Trees provides home for wildlife like birds, insects and other living things, helping to aid biological diversity and promote sustainable ecosystem.

e. Trees provide canopy and coolers, making our environmental climatic condition more comfortable and habitable for living things.

f. Trees serve as sources of pharmaceutical drugs and provide herbs for local medicine.

g. Trees serve as good and healthy sources of food to human beings and animals.

h. Trees serve as a reliable wind tracker which helped in prolonging lifespan of buildings and prevent them from violent destructions.

i. Trees serve as a source of building construction materials which eased the housing challenges for million population in our societies.

It is the position of this paper that, the natural climate solution and a mitigation strategy to reducing the impact of desertification, refreshers ecosystem, eliminate $C2^0$ from the atmosphere and mitigate violent conflict between farmers and herders lies on afforestation.

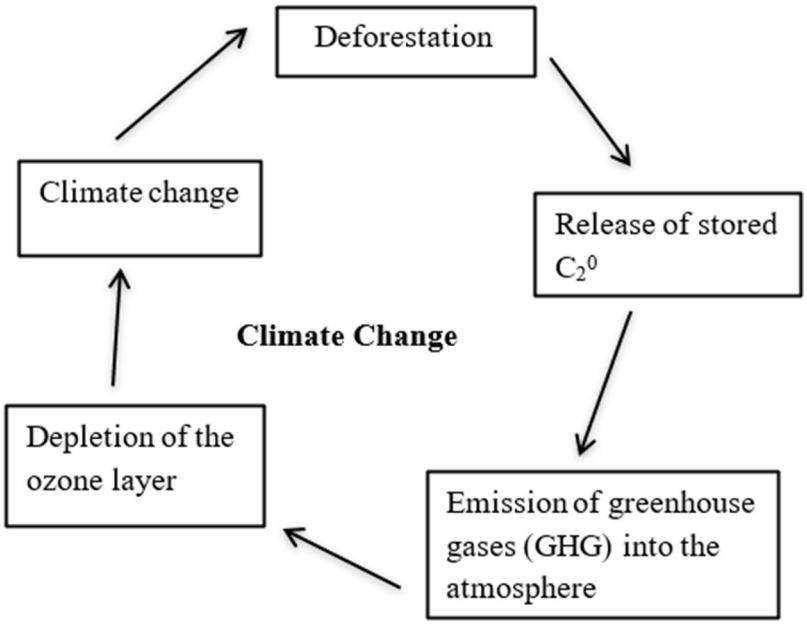


Fig 2: Relationship between human activities and climate change: **Designed by the author**

Conclusion

This paper examines the efficacy of afforestation in curtailing the disturbing resource-based conflict between farmers and Fulani pastoralists in Northern Nigeria. It is on record that, northern Nigeria particularly, north-central and north-east have been noted for violent conflicts between the two land users for decades. It is on this premise, that, the paper identifies climate change as a push factor to the protracted conflicts between farmers and herders and therefore, advocates for afforestation as a viable strategy for ameliorating the effects of climate change which invariably would mitigate the occurrence of violent conflicts between farmers and herders in northern Nigeria.

The paper unequivocally advocates for aggressive trees planting to tackle the menace of desertification and drought in the interest of securing sustainable environment for all living things on the surface of the earth.

Specific Policy Recommendations

1. The government in collaboration with Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) community heads, religious institutions should be deliberate in reversing the acceleration of desertification through massive and aggressive tree planting in the region.

2. In the obvious reality of climate change today, federal, state and local authorities, including the private sectors, should invest more in institutions and agencies that are essential to responding to the challenges of climate change to invent and produced improved drought-tolerant seedlings to fight the new phenomenon.

3. In search of a sustainable, resilient and endearing environment and lasting peace between sedentary agrarian communities and Fulani pastoralists against violent competition for scares resources, we should as a government and citizens embarked on environmental rebirth by claiming our lost forests through massive afforestation and reforestation.

4. We need a sustained climate campaign through sponsored media (old and new) awareness with a transparent reward - driven policies to individuals or group that promotes and practices tree plantings with a clear frameworks to nurture the tree(s) to maturity.

5. Our education curriculum at all levels should be tinkered with, to accommodate contents that promotes teaching and understanding to what I called Climate Change Education, its effects on human existence, and viable ways of mitigating its impacts.

6. Nigeria's legal frameworks for combating climate change should be strengthen and international protocols and convention against climate change be adequately domesticated in adherence to global best practices.

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RELIGION, INSECURITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

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KEYWORDS
Religion, Insecurity and Social Cohesion

ABSTRACT
Nigeria is one of the fastest growing economies in West Africa. It is also a home to multitude of ethnic groups, religions and cultural affiliations. However, the country has been experimented with several political formations with mixed results ranging from raising insecurity and disruption in social cohesion. The recent transformation into a federal state has put religion, ethnicity and the nature of the federal state into direct confrontation with each other. Like many developing countries. Nigeria faces the major challenges in managing diversity of religion. ethnicity and social cohesion. The study adopted multidisciplinary research approach. Available literatures reviewed indicated that recent events show a rising tension between various ethnic groups, and various religion organizations in Nigeria. The raising level of conflicts between Islam and Christianity which are the major religious affiliation of most Nigerians has affected greatly the nature of security and social cohesion existing in the nation prior the inception of religion in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper explores the role of religion in addressing the raising reports of insecurity and disruption of social cohesion in Nigeria as a prerequisite to development of Nigeria. The article argues that social cohesion can only be enhanced and deeply promoted through collaborative efforts of all religions and through engagement with federal and state authorities in finding a common grounds for various religious organizations in Nigeria.

Introduction

To some religion may be a source of conflict, chaos, violence, and destruction, but this limited view is due to the multidimensional aspects of religious life. Religion is considered to be a destructive force rather than a constructive positive force in society due to intolerance, injustice, and social conflict in the name of religion (Clifford, 2014; 12)[1]. Conflicts based on religious differences arise in a form of social dysfunction when followers of a certain creed are unable to comprehend the spirit of religion. The inability to grasp the essence of religious teachings leads to clashes on a personal and social level. Religious politics manipulate human emotions and use wars, crusades, and jihad as an excuse for personal and political gains[2]. It is not religion itself that is a problem but the misuse of power and authority that comes along with it and the negative attitude behind it. Therefore, the issue of religion being a source of conflict leading to rising insecurity in the country is a multifaceted and complex issue that should be analyzed by peeling off the layers. This is because religion affects every aspect of human life, such as social, economic, emotional, psychological, and spiritual, it is beyond ritualistic practice (Daniel, 2017; 132)[3].

Many scholars viewed religion as a motive for conflict as it emerged as a critical component in many past and present conflicts. Religion does not always, however, drive conflict, but it is also an integral factor for the peace-building and post-conflict reconciliation process (Cole and Brett, 2010). Connectivity between religion and rising insecurity is easy as most of the world's violent outbreaks, both present and past, are couched in religious terms. This is evidenced by the contemporary conflicts in Nigeria, Iraq, Israel/West Bank/Gaza and Sri Lanka. (USAID, 2009). Also, connecting religion and social cohesion is equally easy as religiously motivated actors acted in extraordinary ways to bridge divides, promote reconciliation, or advocate peaceful coexistence among various ethnic group in the country (USAID, 2009). It thus becomes clear that understanding the dynamics of conflict both the sources of discord and the forces of quires an understanding of the connections between religion, insecurity and social cohesion[4].

According to Fletcher, Catherine and Timothy, (2015), social cohesion is a state of cohering or uniting people together. It refers to a process of building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities, in wealth and income and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise facing shared challenges and that they are members of the same community (Jensen,2018). Religion gives people the opportunity to share common values, create a sense of unity and foster a sense of community (Daniel, 2017). More so, religious rituals, traditions, and customs are not meaningless, but they contribute to social cohesion. Celebrating Christmas, fasting for the month of Ramadan, and celebrating Diwali bring unity and togetherness to society. Religious diversity is not always a source of conflict or societal dysfunction, but it enriches our life by discovering unity within diverse religious communities. Religious institutions serve a greater purpose for the betterment of humanity.

Active involvement of religious institutions in creating a social environment contributes to societal health. Besides promoting coherence in a society, the primary concern of religious institutions is the spiritual evolution of humanity. The main goal of religious and philosophical awareness that is highly encouraged throughout world religion is to inspire humanity to become responsible and beneficial members of society. Moral philosophy emphasized by religious institutions establishes a sense of responsibility that transcends beyond personal to social responsibility (Dennett, 2016). Religious institutions enthusiastically promote

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'Clifford George. What is African Traditional Religion? Studies in Comparative Religion. U.K: Oxford University press, 2014 Vol. 10, No. 2.
Published articles has it that religion does not only manipulate human emotions but use wars, crusades, and jihad as an excuse for personal and political gains all over the world.

[3]Daniel David. "Exporting the Local Perspectives on 'Religion' as a Culture Category. America: Penguin Press. 2017.

[4] Further articles on connections between religion, insecurity and social cohesion was provided in the published work of Fletcher, Catherine, and Timothy. Religion and Social Cohesion in Nigeria: *Frustration, Polarisation, and Violence. Case Study overview.* 2015.

philanthropic activities and altruistic values by offering services to the elderly, organizing events to collects and providing assistance to those who are in need.

However, since 2010, incidents of ethnic-based conflicts arising from the proliferation of various religious organizations appear to be on the rise, reversing the overall trend of a steady decline in armed conflict more generally, and identity-based conflict, in particular, that characterized the post-Cold War era. In a deeply divided society, religious oriented violence continues to present grave threats to international peace and security (Fletcher and Catharine, 2014). As a part of the social and political aspect of human life, conflict is inherent and legitimate. However, conflict turns violent in many circumstances, causing grave damages in terms of lives and properties. The costs and consequences of conflict become highly unacceptable as it destroyed the social fabric of the society (Ramadhan, 2015).

These days the prevalent view in secular society is that religion is the cause of insecurity and societal dysfunction. Religion, for many, is a source of conflict on various levels; social, economic, and political (Fagan, 2016). Throughout world history, humanity has suffered greatly in the name of nationality and religion. There is a negative connotation with religion, because crusades, jihad, holy wars, or violence are part of religious history. In order to understand the role of religion on insecurity and society dysfunction - beneficial or non-beneficial- should be analyzed through a sociological context. Religious life is multidimensional and consists of many aspects; therefore, it is crucial to examine the following facets associated with religion, such as social cohesion and philanthropic benefits. Focusing on these two aspects will help establish a correlation between religion, insecurity and social cohesion.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Definition of Religion: The Word "Religion" According to Barbour, (2016), there are many definitions of religion andonly few are stated here. The typical dictionary definition of religion refers to a "belief in, or the worship of, a god or gods" or the "service and worship of God or the supernatural". However, writers and scholars have expanded upon the "belief in god" definitions as insufficient to capture the diversity of religious thought and experience.

According to James (2010) religion is a relatively-bounded systems of beliefs, symbols and practices that addresses the nature of existence, and in which communion with others and otherness is fixed as if it both takes in and spiritually transcends socially-grounded ontologies of time, space, embodiment and knowing. Religion fosters national unity and development. It offer people the understanding of existence and provide rules and regulations which controls people behavior as it is believed that to live a godly life according to one's religion is to carry out one's duty both to God and men. Religion is also characterized as a sound entity that is functional in the sense that it contribute to the maintenance of societal stability of equilibrium.

Clifford (2014), define religion as "a relatively-bounded system of beliefs symbols and practices that addresses the nature of existence and in which communion with others and otherness is lived as if it both takes in and spiritually transcends socially grounded ontologies of time, space embodiment and knowing"[5]. This definition is intended, they write, to get away from the modernist dualisms or dichotomous understandings of immanence/transcendence, spirituality/materialism, and sacredness/secularity.

Clifford (2014), also defined religion as "the belief in spiritual beings". He argued, back in 1871, that narrowing the definition to mean the belief in a supreme deity or judgment after death or idolatry and so on, would exclude many people's from the category of religious, and thus "has the fault of identifying religion rather with particular developments than with the deeper motives which underlies them". He also argued

[5] Based on the established definition, religion could be seen as the set of beliefs, feelings, dogmas and practices that define the relations between human being and sacred or divinity.

that the belief in spiritual beings exists in all known societies.

Religion could also be seen as a social-cultural system of designated behaviors and practices, morals, worldviews, texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics, or organizations, that relates humanity to supernatural, transcendental, or spiritual elements (Nongbri, 2013)[6]. However, there is no scholarly consensus over what precisely constitutes a religion. Different religions may or may not contain various elements ranging from the divine, sacred things, faith, a supernatural being or supernatural beings or "some sort of ultimacy and transcendence that will provide norms and power for the rest of life". Ezeanga, (2010) opined that religious practices may include rituals, sermons, commemoration or veneration (of deities), sacrifices, festivals, feasts, trances, initiations, funerary services, matrimonial services, meditation, prayer, music, art, dance, public service, or other aspects of human culture. Religions have sacred histories and narratives, which may be preserved in sacred scriptures, and symbols and holy places, that aim mostly to give a meaning to life. Religions may contain symbolic stories, which are sometimes said by followers to be true, that have the side purpose of explaining the origin of life, the universe, and other things (Odudele, 2016)[7]. Traditionally, faith, in addition to reason, has been considered a source of religious beliefs.

Definition of Insecurity: Insecurity is the state of being subject to danger or injury. The anxiety that is experienced when one feels vulnerable and insecure. Cole and Brett (2010) affirms that above definitions of insecurity as "a state of being not secure, lack of confidence; to enable us understand this term, we now turn to the meaning of the word 'insecure' which the Advance English Dictionary defines as 'not confident about yourself or your relationships with other people; not safe or protected[8]. This definition further expounds the meaning of the term to include not just the general meaning but it touches the individual person "not being confident about one self'. Insecurity is a feeling of uncertainty, a lack of confident of anxiety about yourself. It can also describe the state of being open to danger or threat.

Definition of Social Cohesion: According to Jensen (2018), social cohesion refers to a process "... of building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities, in wealth and income and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise facing shared challenges and that they are members of the same community"[9]. Sartori (2017: 58-69) claims that human beings "endlessly seek identity in some kind of belonging". In all societies, people live in social groups stratified by ethnicity, race, tribe, religion, caste, class or clan. In the past, men organized themselves in groups so as to assist each other through communal labor and so did the women.

Social cohesion is the connectedness among individuals of social groups that facilitates collaboration and equitable resource distribution at household, community and state level. It refers to those things which hold a society together. A society can cohere due to things like shared ethnicity, shared religion, for example. Religious traditions can also help to tie a society together by reinforcing a feeling of unity in its people. Social cohesion is vital for societal stability and facilitates the easing of material and psychological strain of poverty. It also affirms individual and group identities and includes rather than exclude less powerful groups (Deepa et al., 2009: 175). Social cohesion is an aspect of social wellbeing. It is determined by unity within a community, demonstrated by shared understanding, mutual support and reciprocity in relationships (Deepaet *al.,* 2010: 151).

At a community level, social cohesion is an asset that provides security, regulates behavior and improves on people's standards of living, while at state level, cohesive societies are likely to be efficient and capital rich therefore making

[6]Nongbri, Bethel. *Before religion: A History of a Modern Concept.* Yale University Press. 2013.

[7]Odudele, Raphael. *Religion and Moral Instructions in Schools'.* Al-Hafiz Publishers, 14 - 23. 2016.

[8]Cole & Brett. Law and religion: national, international, and comparative perspectives. Princeton: Aspen Publications, 2010.

[9]James, Jensen. "Mapping Social Cohesion." Paper presented to the Policy Research Secretariat Conference on Policy Research: Creating Linkages. Ottawa, October 1, 2018.

them to be more productive than in fragmented societies. Putnam *et al.,* (2013: 175) showed that a lack of "social capital is not merely a loss of community in some warm and cuddly sense"; rather social cohesion and civic engagements are "practical preconditions for better schools, security, faster economic growth more efficient government and improved standards of living". With inadequate 'supplies' of socialcapital, social institutions weaken and lose efficiency.

At a state level, cohesion plays a major role in determining the effectiveness of a particular state. In countries with high tensions or insecurity, for example, emphasis should be placed on measures that create bonds among disparate groups. This is especially important in countries where multiple identity groups are not concentrated in particular areas but are spread throughout the country, making it pointless to introduce federalism and other territorially based institutional

arrangements. In such countries, programs should be adopted that create stronger social and cultural bonds across groups, that institutionalize cooperation, and that promote reconciliation where there has been a history of intergroup hostility.

Religion, Insecurity and Social Cohesion

Following the above background, the question of what is right and wrong (Ethics) lacks concrete definitions in the context of Nigerians since her dominant religious groups have contrary believe about ethics. For instance, the issue of violence via killing of lives, destruction of properties was totally abhorred in the Christian religious but the Muslim counterpart indulge in it without feeling remorse. In other words, the Christians value lives as precious while other religion consider killing of lives as holy as otherwise. However, the essence of national development as a multidimensional ideology that requires proper coordination of the entire structure irrespective of religious affiliation should be encouraged. Of course, religion and ethics have strong role to play in determining the status of national security of a given nation like Nigeria. Besides, we cannot forget in a haste to talk about religious fanaticism/extremism as a serious factor behind the cause of insecurity in Nigeria today. It is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the nation unity, economic growth and development.

Religious fanaticism and extremism have been among the major cause of insecurity in Nigeria. The previous and recent incidences of attack on churches and Christians in Northern part of the country by Muslim extremist have rendered several states in the north unsafe for life and properties. The damage of these extremists have caused can been seen in the following words. Religion has unleashed on mankind...it has left in its wake, a heavy toll of destroyed lives and wanton destruction of property. It has delayed workable political agreements and brutalized societies. Religious violence has been responsible for the collapse of one political order or the other throughout history (Ogunade,2012).

Role of Religion in Ensuring Social Cohesion

Religion permeates every aspect of man's existence in the universe, be it politics, social, cultural or economic life of the people (Bankston and Zhou, 2015; 530-534)[10] [11]. It has been used as the most important instrument in the social control of man and the society. It performs the social functions such as providing aims, purpose forms, defense and sense of direction. The role of religion in promoting peace security and eradicating the youth's militancy cannot be over emphasized.

1. Religion Stimulates Social Habits and Checks Anti- Social Behavior.

Religion is "an efficient means of social control, stimulates social habits and checks anti-social tendencies". It offers the whole society a concept of its own scared value. It prescribes a particular kind of behavior or conduct to its adherents in terms of knowledge, thinking, reflection decisions, choices, tastes, opinion, habits, feelings and freedom of actions (Benson, Leffert, Scales& Blyth, 2008; 138-140)[12]. Such

"Bankston, & Zhou. Religious participation, ethnic identification, and adaptation of Vietnamese adolescents in an immigrant community. *Sociological Quarterly, 36,* 523-534.2015.

[12] Benson,Leffert, Scales, & Blyth. Beyond the "village"

particular life styles are created, maintained and sustained through religions doctrines, ethics, and laws safe guards are prescribed against deviation from these life styles. Religion polishes and fashions morality in positive dimension. To neglect religion is to do away with morality, without religion moral development of the society will be meaningless.

2. Religion gives Emotional Security, Spiritual and Material Support.

Religion is an instrument for defense. It provides belief and attitudes that help to defend the people against vexing doubts, anxieties and aggression. As people do struggle with life of uncertainties, powerlessness and insecurity religion provides answer to the things that threaten people's life and survival. It was even noted that religion offers emotional, spiritual and material support to its members in times of tension, stress or hardship (Lawai, 2013; 32). The poor and wretched ones are to be given alms or gifts from the rich ones among them. Victims of natural hazards or wars are to be aided and their life must protect as a sacred entity and peaceful coexistence of the society. Also religion offers resistance against frustration, hostility, suffering, anxiety, despair and hatred.

3. Religion Reforms and Resettles Deviants

A deviant is person who is deficient in moral and social standards from what is normal and accepted. Religion can be used to call the out law persons or sinners back to repentance, and makes them become socially integrated into the society (Odudele, 2016; 20-23). Religion struggles with the ultimate problems of human life that deprive man from behaving in the morally and socially accepted ways[13]. It gives a sense of direction and makes people to perceive, feel, think, act and behave in a specifically desired ways. It moves people a way from despair and restores confidence in them. Armed robbers, adulterers, drunkards, drug- addicts, lawbreakers and frauds to mention a few have been changed to behave in a socially approved manners and society see and treat them with trust and confidence.

4. Religion Fosters Social Solidarity and Friendships.

Religion serves as a powerful means for the solidarity among its members and nearly all the great social institutions have been bom in religion (Ezeanya, 2010; 50). Also, religion regulates social life of the society by creating some sort of order for its members to live together. Religion encourages solidarity, consensus, cordially, harmony, cooperation, unity, stability, security and peaceful co-existence. Religion creates several fellowship groups for the adults and youths alike. Out of these fellowships, friendships, marriage and brother hoods emerged. It allows the adherents to coordinate their activities in submission to rules and regulations under the guidance of values, so that they can live harmoniously with their fellow human beings.

5. Religion helps to bring about Social Change.

A change haves place in religion as a social phenomenon. In Nigeria, religion helps to bring about social change. Social change has described as the change that occurs in world views, ideas, values, beliefs, rules, relationships, institutions, symbols speech, languages, style of thinking and behaviors and the means of production and distribution of goods and services (Fadiyimu, 2014; 110)[14]. A social change is the alteration in the patterns of social action and interactions. Religion introduces and disseminates new idea and information about education, medicine, literature, agriculture, games, markets organization and administration. Religion brings establishes new form of education, dressing, marriage, law courts and languages in Nigeria.

6. The Relevance of Religion in Cultural Development.

Religion helps in transforming the society by introducing new cultural elements. Religious doctrines, laws organizations, modes of dressing,

rhetoric: Creating healthy communities for children and adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science, 2,*138-159.2008.

[13]Odudele Raphael. *Religion and Moral Instructions in Schools:* Al-Hafiz Publishers, 14- 23. 2016.

[14]Fadiyimu. *The Youth and the Church,* Ibadan Oluseyi Press. 110.2014.

dogma, buildings, patterns of marriages, training of children, burying the dead and many other items of culture are influence through religion. Morality is used to give meaning and purpose to the cultural behavior (Obikunle, 2015). Wherein the culture deviates from the real religious meaning, then it has to be checked, so that there is balanced relationship between the cultural elements and religious ideology. Indecent modes of dress, is discouraged for the sake of modesty and moral implication given.

7. Religion Ensures the Retinues Existence of the Society.

Ayuba and Alex (2016; 46)[15] opined the positive role of religion is to holding society together as a form of "social glue". Religion serves as a social bond that holds the society together. It strengthens the basis belief and values of the society. It stresses for the social cohesion of all its members to live in unity and peace. Religious ceremonies are performed to remind people that they have a common history and identity, thereby ensuring the continuity for the existence of the society. There are events in the life of an individual and in the life of a society that point to the fact that God is working out this purpose for the common good of the individual and the society.

Effects of Raising Insecurity Occasioned by Religious Crisis on Social Cohesion

The resultant effects of religious crisis have increased the rate of insecurity in Nigeria, thus, negating the economicgrowth of the country. It effect pervades all the sector of the economy.

Generally, crisis breeds insecurity, discrimination, mutual distrust and slow economic development. This is the case in Nigeria where in addition to gratuitous killings and maiming of thousands of persons properties worth billions of naira have been destroyed. Certainly, these huge losses have deprived the nation of needed manpower and services for the growth of it's wobbling economy.

Another major consequence of religious crisis on the economic development of Nigeria is on the reputation of Nigeria in the international community. Many countries have started seeing Nigeria as a terrorist country which affects our business men and women that travel round the world to do business. Onwumah (2014) also affirms that religious crisis portrays Nigeria in a very bad light internationally[16]. It depicts our leaders, at all levels and in different facets of life as weak, naive, selfish and self-centered. In an environment of strong dedicated and selfless leadership, the diversity and complexity of the Nigerian society would have been harnessed and channeled into national development efforts.

In an atmosphere of peace, the economy tends to grow more as more foreign investment and earnings are attracted via FDI and tourism. Nigeria would have been a tourist haven, but the frequent occurrence of crisis in different parts of the country at different points in time will definitely discourage foreign tourists (Onwumah, 2014). The effect of it is that, foreign exchange needed to drive development that could have been brought in by foreigners is lost.

Though Nigeria is richly endowed in terms of tourism and resources, it is said that, by African standards, her performance is an abysmal failure. Places like Kenya, Ghana, Egypt and others have more people coming into their countries than Nigeria. The reason for this is not farfetched.

Nigeria is perceived as unsafe and indeed not conducive in terms of security caused mainly by communal and religious crisis.

Religious crisis has had devastating effect on Nigerian educational standards ranging from incessant closure of schools, destruction of school facilities to abduction and raping of schools children which has serious effect on the psychologies of school children in the nation. This assertion was supported by Adebayo (2010)[17], according to him, education is very vital in any sustainable developmental program. The nation is striving to put in place amenities for the purpose of elevating the education standard of

[15]Ayuba, and Alex. "The role of Religion in Promoting Peace, Security and National Development in Nigeria". In *Peace, Security and National Development,* 46-49. 2016

[16]Onwumah. Communal and Ethno-Religious crises and their implications for National Development in Nigeria. Developing country studies. 4,17. 2014.

[17]Adebayo. Ethno-Religious crisis and the challenges of

the country. This is, however, hampered by incessant closure of schools and institutions in places where religious crisis are being witnessed. Many schools had been burnt down while many were forced to close down for months. The education of innocent youths was equally disrupted under tumultuous situations created by religious and ethnicity crises, as many were forced to emigrate from crisis area.

Religious and ethnicity crisis will definitely affect the foreign direct investment (FDI) flow into Nigeria. FDI has positive relationship with economic growth as the more FDI flows into the country the more jobs are created, the per capital income and the higher the standard of living. This was buttressed by Onwumah (2014) when he posited that in economic terms, religious and ethnicity crisis damages resources and facilities which took time to be acquired. No foreign investor will like to invest funds in country that is divided by communal, religious and ethnic crises (Ayinla, 2013)[18]. There are fears at two levels.

i. The basic aim of foreign investment is to make profit which is not possible in an environment of crises.

ii. The resources invested already will definitely go down the drains.

Meanwhile, the source of Muslims and Christians crises in Nigeria has been religious ethnicity, social and political. The dramas of intolerance by the two religions led to successive misunderstanding between them, sometimes degenerating into violent open war or skirmishes. This drama was marked by the 1980 religious crises that started in Zaria involving members oftwo religions, resulting to the Wanton destruction of live and properties. The misunderstanding led to loss of lives, torching of churches/mosque, business premises (Adega, 2011)[19].

Theoretical Review

The study was based on the **Durkheim theory of religion.** Durkheim viewed religion in his Elementary *Forms of the Religious Life,* which is certainly the best-known study on the sociology of religion. Within the context of the entire society and acknowledged its place in influencing the thinking and behaviour of the members of society. Durkheim, accordingly, believes religion is a part of the human condition and the content of religion might be different from society to society over time. Religion will, in some form or another, always be a part of social life. Durkheim also argues that religion is the most fundamental social institution, with almost all other social institutions, at some point in human history, being bom from it. For these reasons he gave special analysis to this phenomenon, providing a philosophy of religion that is perhaps as provocative as it is rich with insights (Durkheim, 1912).

People tend to separate religious symbols, objects, and rituals, according to Durkheim, which are sacred, from the daily symbols, objects, and routines of existence referred to as the profane. Sacred objects are often believed to have divine properties that separate them from profane objects (ibid). Even in more-advanced cultures, people still view sacred objects with a sense of reverence and awe, even if they do not believe that the objects have some special power.

Durkheim also argued that religion is not only concerned with beliefs, rather, encompasses regular rituals and ceremonies on the part of a group of believers, who then develop and strengthen a sense of group solidarity (Durkheim, 1915). Rituals are necessary to bind together the members of a religious group, and they allow individuals to escape from the mundane aspects of daily life into higher realms of experience. Sacred rituals and ceremonies are especially important for marking occasions such as births, marriages, times of crisis, and deaths (Durkheim, 1915).

Durkheim's theory of religion exemplifies how functionalists examine sociological

sustainable Development in *Nigeria Journal of sustainable Development in Africa,* 12(4). 2010.

[18]Ayinla. Managing Religious Intolerance and Violence in Nigeria, Problems and Solutions. A Paper Presented at the National Conference on Social Problems Development and The Challenge of Globalization, ObafemiAwolowo University, lle-lfe. 2003.

[19]Adega. "Muslim, Christian conflicts in Nigeria, 1900-2006: Implications for National Security.2011.

phenomena. According to Durkheim, people see religion as contributing to the general well-being and continuation of society in general. Thus, religion functions to bind society's members by prompting them to affirm their common values and beliefs regularly. The theory states that religion allows for social cohesion, while social rituals are the mechanism providing the means to this end.

Methodology

This paper adopted the multidisciplinary research method[20]. Multidisciplinary research is a pursuit of truth with the help of numerous specialized branches of learning which aims at achieving a common goal with the aid of knowledge of other disciplines. The study method always tries to understand what is in the mind of the people i.e., how things should be or what needs to be done. Therefore, the paper relies mainly on research works such as journals, online materials, thesis, dissertations, research journals, newspapers and magazines among others and is to examine the role religion play in addressing insecurity and promoting social cohesion among different ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Discussion

It is generally agreed in academic circles and elsewhere that religion continues to be a strong ideological source for identity formations and values including those dealing with power, conflict, peace and development. In Nigeria, religion has a new resonance in politics, economics and regional integration. Religious actors (including among others Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Pentecostal Christians and others) are playing critical roles in bridging the gap between the state's capacity to consolidate gains in its policy of Ethnic Federalism and social cohesion based on ethnic lines.

With a population of over 150 million inhabitants, the major religious groups in Nigeria are Christianity and Islam. The foremost incidence of religious crisis since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 was triggered by an alleged violation of a traditional religious rite. Although lack of statistical data has made it extremely difficult to estimate the exact number of religious crises in Nigeria and their resultant fatalities (Salawu 2010), the general assumption is that the incidence of religious crises has grown exponentially since the return to democracy rule in 1999. The history and findings on religious crises across the country however showed that 90 percent of them occurred in the northern part of the country (Ezeanokwasa, 2009).

In view of the perennial religious tensions between the two dominant religious groups in Nigeria, there is a sustained culture of mutual suspicion and unhealthy rivalry between them. The perceived hatred between Nigerian Christians and Muslims, have often manifested in interreligious crisis. Most of these crises had led to destruction of lives and properties particularly in the Northern part of the country. Some of these cases are listed in the table below for further confirmation and as evidence to the foregoing assertion.

Table 1: Cases of Religious Crisis in Nigeria, 1999-2018

S/N	Date	Town/State	Nature of Crisis
1	July 1, 1999	Sagamu, Ogun State,	Crisis between Yoruba traditional worshipers and Hausa groups as a result of the killing of a Hausa woman by the Oro Masqueraders for violating traditional rites.
2	December 20, 1999	Ilorin, KwaraState	Muslim fundamentalists attacked and destroyed over 14 Churches, properties worth several millions of naira destroyed.

[20] Sourcing for data across various field of discipline for the purpose of acquiring reliable and factual data for the purpose of detailed theoretical and empirical evidences

3		bia State	
	February 28, 2000		Religious crisis that led to the killing of over 450 persons.
4	February 21-22, 2000	Kaduna, Kaduna State	Crisis over the introduction of Sharia, an estimated 3000 people died.
5	October12, 2001	Cano State	Religious crises, in protest to U.S. invasion of Afghanistan over Osama bin Laden. Over 150 persons were killed.
6	September,?-17, 2007	teau State	Religious crisis between Muslims and Christians. Mosques, churches and several properties were damaged.
7	Novemberl6, 2002	Kaduna, Kaduna State	Attacked of Christians by the Muslims over article written by Isioma Daniel on Miss World, over 250 people were killed and several churches destroyed

8	February 14, 2004	Numan, Adamawa State	Religious crisis between Christians and Muslims over location of the Central Mosque close to Bachama Paramount ruler's palace. Over 17 persons killed. Religious crisis between Christians and Muslims over location of the Central Mosque close to Bachama Paramount ruler's palace. Over 17 persons killed.
9	February 18, 2006	Maiduguri, Bomo State	Religious crisis between Christians and Muslims over Danish Cartoon on Prophet Mohammed in JyllandSposten newspaper. Over 50 persons killed and 30churches destroyed over 200 shops, 50 houses and 100 vehicles vandalized
10	March 22, 2007	Gombe, Gombe State,	Religious crisis over the killing of Christians teacher for allegedly desecrating the Qur'an while attempting to stop a student from cheating in an examination hall.
11	November 28, 2008	Jos, Plateau State,	Religious crisis between Muslims and Christians over the controversial results of local election. Over 700 people killed.
12	July 26-30, 2009	Bauch, Bomo,	Religious crisis unleashed by Boko Haram sect on Kano and Yobe Christians. Over 700 people killed 3,500 persons g_{tate} internally displaced, 1,264 children orphaned, and over 392 woman widowed, and several properties destroyed.
13	March?, 2010	Jos, Plateau State	Attacks by Fulani Moslems on Christians-dominated villages of Dogo-Nahawa, Shen and Fan. 13 person killed.
14	April 11, 2010	Jos South, Plateau State	Attack on a Christians villages Fulani herdsman. 3 houses and 6 vehicles were torched.
15	January 5-6, 2012	Gombe, Gombe State,	Gunmen stormed a Deeper Life Church, shooting indiscriminately at worshippers. The Boko Haram Islamist sect claimed responsibility for the shooting
16	January 5-6, 2012	Mubi, Adamawa State	Suspected Boko Haram militants stormed a gathering of Igbo Christians and shot sporadically, killing over 12 and injuring others.
17	May 2016	Padongari, Niger State	Religious crisis that left 4 persons dead.
18	June 8, 2016	Kakuri, Kaduna State	A Christian man was stabbed for not joining Ramadan Fast.
19	March 14,2018	Abuja	Protest by Muslim Groups Rocks National Assembly on the Public Hearing over AmasaFirdus, Law School Hijab controversy.

Source: Adapted from Sampson, 2012; Sahara reporter, 2019.

However, despite the above empirical evidences on the effect of religious crisis on the raising cases of insecurity and disruption of social cohesion, the study which centred on the role of religion in addressing the raising cases of insecurity and promotion of social cohesion in Nigeria through interviews conducted realized that in many developing countries, social orders and religious establishments are the essential suppliers of public administrations to the networks/communities. However, in multi-religion settings, religious establishments address the security challenges brought about by viciousness that have religious suggestions, the communities keep on connecting in these shared spaces. Supporting the above, Ramadhan,(2O15)[57] that the connector elements of these spaces make religion in the entirety of its viewpoints; values, structures, assets and so on helpful for peace-building and social cohesion.

Moreso. the findings showed that as a divider, religion is utilized by culprits to take part in brutality focusing on religious people and structures having a place with different beliefs, bringing about bigotry, dread, doubt and profiling dependent on religious association as had happens in Southern part of Kaduna and some part of Plateau states in Nigeria (Ramadhan, 2015).The essential tenet of all religions is to recommend morals, standards and qualities that advance social equity and sympathy for those out of luck. Casualties of viciousness, both of strict or in any case are arranged as those out of luck, religion plays a fundamental to mitigate their anguish.

Additionally, it was also realized that religion has been an inspiration for activity, explicitly to help reconciliation, social attachment and peace-building endeavours. Abrahamic beliefs specifically contain clear statutes and directions for equity and harmony, yet all through mankind's set of experiences, religion has been a significant supporter of treacheries, viciousness, disdain, and prejudice. Similarly, findings made showed that in the peace-building process, there are alot of religious/faith-based local and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well as Civil Society Organisations that are working in collaboration with the Federal and State government to promote peace-building and social cohesion in Nigeria.

Based on the above, it can be said that religion's role in conflict management and social cohesion is a complex and controversial one. Religion can not only be part of the solution, it can potentially be part of the problem in social exclusion. Taking religious leaders and other religious actors to task in social cohesion is crucial in transforming previously divided societies. Religious entities and their leaders have resonance within communities (both at the federal and local levels) to provide a political and social voice for the voiceless and can become powerful symbols to militate against violent or divisive behavior, promote conflict management, develop a socially cohesive society and rebuild social relations through reconciliation. The finding is inline with the observation of Gilat & Razin (2016)[58] whichstate that Muslim and Christian communities in Nigeria need to continue to work earnestly and decide to what extent they can express themselves with a common purpose and avoid being manipulated by political forces. This will ensure that their members do not instigate activities capable of increasing the insecurity state of the nation.

Conclusion

Counteraction to compromise and long term peaceful and comprehensive social orders, Faith Actors should be available and dynamic at all phases of contention. There are a few areas wherein faith actors are especially connected with and focused on, for example, countering radicalism and endeavours for interreligious agreement as to the case with the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) and the Christian Aid Council (CAC).

[57]Shehu, Ramadhan. Inter-Religious Action as a Force for Peace. The Journal of Social Encounter, *Vol. 1, ISS 1, Article 5, 54-62.2017.*

[58]Gilat,&Razin. A Theory of Religion: *Linking Individual Beliefs, Rituals, and Social Cohesion. 2016*

Complementarity between various religious elements' approaches in ways to deal with building social attachment is important. As such, cultivating social cohesion requires the integration of security, harmony and advancement activities between various religious groups in Nigeria. The danger of insecurity cannot be over emphasized. When a nation is saddled with the problem of insecurity every other plan are stalled. Nigeria a country with a population of over one and fifty million people cannot allow insecurity to derail her political and economic development plans. However, to address the raising cases of insecurity and social dysfunction in the country, the paper concludes that religious organization must play a pivotal role in educating their members on the negative implication of religious fabricated conflicts on rising insecurity and disruption of social cohesion.

Recommendations

Based on the above observations made on the study conducted on religion, insecurity and social cohesion, the following recommendations are made;

i. Promoting resistance and passing messages of peaceful co-existence towards other religious networks;

ii. Building unions by working in and through with other religious pioneers;

iii. To build attention to social attachment through the use of strict based schools and training

iv. organizations;

v. By censuring demonstrations of violence or violent talk dependent on strict contrasts through the issuance of joint articulations;

vi. Engaging in exchange to building synergistic associations with different partners;

vii. Ensuring powerful correspondence frameworks between various strict gatherings;

viii. Identify and use instruments that help solidarity and managing conflict; and

ix. Support interpersonal organizations that unite isolated groups.

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