

Leadership and Challenges of National Security in Nigeria: a Socio-Political Discourse of interwoven variables to insecurity

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Abstract

Nigeria since independence in 1960 has had several leaders. Some of the leaders were military while others were civilians. Each has its leadership style. Every nation state, Nigeria inclusive has its national security challenges. Leaders addressed national security issues differently based on their perceived evidences and ideology. With the use of primary data, this research study found that successive leaderships in Nigeria have been able to maintain the national security as a whole but not without some nagging challenges of insecurity. This study recommends monitoring, evaluation and sustainability of government programmes and projects to enhance the national security.

Key words: Leadership, National Security, Terrorism, Militancy, farmers-herdsmen clashes, poverty, food security and insecurity.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria lies between latitudes 4° 1' and 13° 9'N and longitudes 2° 2' and 14° 30' E. it is bounded to the north by Niger Republic and in the east by Republic of Benin, in the South by the Gold of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean (NPC, 1998) The Country Nigeria has

over 350 ethnic groups spread across the 36 States of the Federation and FCT Abuja (Bahal and Muhammed, 2016). The Nigerian setting can be described as a stepped pyramid. At the top, on a narrow area, there stand the ruling elites of civilian leaders, advised by civil servants open to persuasion. Sloping down lies crowded contractors traders and artisans. Then down to the broad base of peasant farmers and labourers, and the poor in the society. Nigeria is the giant of Africa blessed with human and natural resource and is also Africa's most populous nation. Nigeria since independence has aspired to pan-African political economic and military leadership. Nigeria has amongst other operations sent peace keepers to Congo, Chad, Liberia, Somalia and Sierra Leone, provided military training to armies from Gambia to Tanzania and supplied military assistance to liberation movements in southern Africa. Economically it has promoted sub regional integration through ECOWAS and provided bilateral and technical assistance to African countries. (Adebajo, 2002). National security challenges exists in Nigeria, Africa's big brother, these challenges are not limited to but include, hunger, poverty, religious intolerance, and lack of sustainable development, closely related to these challenges are challenges of terrorism and its religious under tones Nigeria with these underlining conflicts is largely characterized by scarce resources, legacies of corrupt government, collapsing state institutions, and political entrepreneurs who compete with one another to arm marginalized youths to increasingly radicalized agendas. (Reno, 2004)

The leadership question is important and critical to Nigeria's security as it has been of interest of other societies such as the ancient Greek whose philosophers lay emphasis on which is also relevant to modern Nigeria. The importance of leadership cannot be over emphasized as it holds the answers to the successes of individuals, organizations, societies and nations in general. Most Nigerian leaders have shown that they have no interest in the future of the country, as they acquire this position through illegal means, empty the common purse stand for reelection and when success seems impossible they transfer leaderships to their cronies (Odo, 2017). Nigeria's leadership tussle is daring

and cumbersome, this is even seen as the nation comes close to its general elections as threats and counter threats insults and burning down of electoral institutions has become the order of the day. The struggle for leadership is fierce and harsh as all stakeholders engage in tactics that make the contest a do or die affair. This posture is closely related to the fact that the winner takes all and in most cases nothing is left for the loser even in advisory capacity.

Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 several security challenges have been in existence, from sectarian violence, religious clashes, terrorist activities, crisis in the Niger Delta region, Boko Haram terrorist and farmer herds men crisis. Other issues of security challenges include unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, corruption, infrastructural decay, and food insecurity. Some of these national security challenges were a carryover of the long stay in leadership by the military while others are fresh issues coming up as a result of successive leadership Nigeria has had since 1999. It is against this backdrop that this academic discourse has as its objective one, to established if there is any existing relationship between leadership and national security challenges in Nigeria and to find whether successive leaders have been able to tackle national security challenges in Nigeria. The major questions which this paper tries to answer are:

Research Questions

1. Has leadership affected Nigeria's national security?
2. Is there an existing link between leadership and Nigeria's national security?

Research Proposition

Successive leadership has failed to maintain Nigeria's National security.

Conceptual Clarification/Analysis

Leadership

The actual meaning of leadership seems elusive as many scholars have attempted to define the concept. Some view leadership as the consequence of a set of traits or characteristics possessed by leaders. Others view leadership as a social process that may emerge naturally as a result of group relations (Bolden, 2015). On the other hand, leadership can be a process when a person empowers and motivates people towards a desirable change, towards some form of desirable and valued change, it is a purposeful process ultimately value based. Furthermore, leadership is the process through which individuals either secure or are enlisted into roles of office holding either in a formal system, informal system or a political system (Johary 1989). Also, leadership is the process through which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way thereby making it more cohesive and coherent. Since leadership is learned, skills possessed by the leader are influenced by his/her attributes, beliefs, values, ethics and character. It is pertinent to note that knowledge and skills contribute to the leadership process as every leader is unique in his/her way (Oladejo, 2012).

Consequently, to Chemers, (2002) leadership is a process of social influence by which a person influences others with like minds to accomplish an objective and directs the organization which is either formal or informal in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Aransi (2009) agrees with this when he asserts that, leadership is the ability to influence the actions and activities of others towards the achievement of the given objectives or goals. He further submits that leadership cannot exist without followers thereby, making leadership the relationship that exists with the leader and the led. In concluding his submission, he observes that sources of authority include the position the leader occupies, the expertise the leader possesses or the authority given by the leader to either punish or reward. Leadership has to do with the process that leads to decisions that bear on issues concerning challenges of national security in the Nigerian context and the person who has the final say, decision maker, then takes the

applause when issues bothering on national security go well and on the other hand takes the major blame when it is vice versa.

NATIONAL SECURITY

National security emanates from the word security. Security is freedom from anxiety, danger and fear, a situation of a nation state being free from internal rang-lings and external attacks. From a broader perspective, security is a struggle to secure the basic necessities of life which include but not limited to food, clothing, shelter and good health (Obafemi, 2006). Therefore, National Security refers to the ability of a nation to prevent all forms of threats to its survival ranging from external aggression to threats of economic, political, military and environmental insecurities, alongside the struggle of nation building and good governance (Gbenda, 2006). Closely related, to Okoli and Orinya (2013) national security refers to the safe guard of the citizenry from poverty, disease, ignorance, hunger and all forms of territorial and environmental vulnerabilities; it comprehends territorial and non-territorial military and non-military concerns of national sustainability. Watson (2008) notes that earlier, national security focused on military might and ware-fare, but recently national security encompasses a broader range of facts of humanity which covers the non-military or economic wellbeing of a nation and values held in high esteem. Maier (1990) observes that national security involves the protection and safety of a nation and its citizens as well as the overall security of its internal and external environment. Aliyu, (2004), in his observation listed global and regional issues that have threatened the Nigerian economic and religious security to include: fundamentalism, corruption, moral-decadence, poverty, terrorism and environmental problems. Wanan, (2016) notes that measures to be taken by a nation to ensure national security amongst others include diplomacy to isolate threats, marshaling economic power,

maintaining an effective armed forces with military preparedness and also ensuring the resilience of critical infrastructure.

THEORITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Elitist Theory

The elitist theory is of the view that the rich are in charge of activities in society. In elitist societies a few rich people exists and they take decisions on how society is run at the expense of the majority who are usually made up of the less important whose decision usually do not count. The theory, postulates that power is concentrated in the hands of a few thereby making the remaining average and poor voiceless (Hurst, 2015). Elitism as a theory is discriminative, primitive and very oppressive in nature with disregard for mass opinion and competence. The elites claim and retain power by all means, through perpetuation as the theory comes into play as conscious effort is made to exercise decisions making as a prerogative social position of class (Mbah, 2006). Entry into these elite power positions is predetermined with or without elections. Members of the group determine how the economy is run which includes profit and wealth distribution which is usually uneven. The government in power maintains a favourable climate for few elites to run their businesses which are exploitative and at the expense of the majority who make up a greater number of the population (Hurst, 2015). In the elite theory there exist two classes, the class that rules and the class that is ruled. The ruling class is always in minority and performs all the functions, monopolizes and legitimates powers to their advantage.

Despite numerous resources which Nigerians as a nation state poses with high revenues from the oil and the non-oil sector various challenges of national security are in existence. These range from poverty, infrastructural decadence, food insecurity, terrorist activities and unemployment mentioning a few. Nigerian

leaders are in most cases interested in forming policies that favour the few in society as projects and policies formed for the majority of the citizens are either not sustained or terminated mid-way. Most of the citizens suffer from poverty while the few "opportuned" grow in wealth and remain in power. Elections in most cases favours the ruling elites as even elections are not fair while the lower members of society cannot venture into politics and have no hope of becoming leaders since the process of obtaining any electoral position is far beyond their reach. They thereby have to maintain their status as the status has remains. This system is detrimental to societal growth and breeds envy as a lot injustice is perceived thereby compounding the existing challenges to Nigerian's national security.

EMERGING NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

Terrorist Activities

Terrorism exists with major emphasis on the Boko-Haram terrorist group. Boko-haram is a controversial Nigerian Militant group seeking imposition of Sharia. (Dunin,2010). This group is basically based in the North with the ideology of averting western education and anything it represents. They have enthroned Sharia law in some parts of the North. Their adherents are government institutions such as police, military through armed attacks and suicide bombings amongst others. Notable attacks carried out by Boko-Haram are bombing of Mogadisho Barracks in Abuja, Nigerian Police Force Headquarters in Abuja and the United Nations Office building also in Abuja, these are among other attacks.

These attacks and several others have made governance difficult and have made it look as if government is insensitive and cannot take care of the citizens. (Mejida, 2018)

MILITANCY/KIDNAPPING

Militancy takes place in the Niger-Delta, region of Nigeria when activities of militants in the Niger Delta were high, oil was and still the mainstay of the Nigerian economy. Productivity reduced to 700,000 barrels from 2,000,000.00 per barrel, this has negative impact on the Nigerian economy as revenue from oil reduced. Kidnapping was the method used by the militants to attract attention of oil companies and the government to struggle for resource (Ahitunde, 2002). It is pertinent to note that kidnapping which was prominent in the South-eastern part of Nigeria has spread to other part of the country and is a serious national security challenge, since. It has created amongst other things fear and insecurity among Nigerians and foreigners. (Olonisakin, 2008).

FARMERS/HERDSMEN CLASHES

Farmers and Herdsmen crisis in Nigeria are perennial mostly in the north-central parts of Nigeria. When these conflicts take place, they are usually fatal and most cases both parties record serious loss of lives, millions are destroyed, people are displaced, cattle are killed. This usually occurs in the six (6) states which makes up North-central Nigeria, namely:- Benue, Niger, Plateau, Nassarawa, Kogi and Kwara. (Pivot, 2014).

POVERTY/UNEMPLOYMENT

Obviously, Nigeria is endowed with human and natural resources. Despite this, Nigeria remains one of the poorest in the world since most Nigerians live in abject poverty; unemployment and poverty are a national security challenge in Nigeria. Nigeria a very high growth rate of an average of 74%, poverty is significant at

33.1% (World Bank, 2014). Nigeria has a population figure of almost 180 million, the population of youths is on the increase, and unemployment is also on the rise. About 1.8 million Nigerian youths enter the labour market every year (Falusi, 2014). Unemployment figures in Nigeria have increased by 18.8 percent in third quarter of 2017 from 16.20 percent in the second quarter of 2017 and have gone up to 23.16% in the first quarter of 2019 (NBS, 2018). It is pertinent to note that, poverty and unemployment are interwoven as they go hand in hand. The dual are together a major national security challenge to Nigeria.

FOOD SECURITY/INSECURITY

Food security is the ability of individuals of a nation to have access to food at all times. This concept exists when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy life. (Ohaji, 2016). Three fundamental issues in food security are food availability, food use. Food availability involves consistent food sufficiency; food access is where individuals are empowered to have adequate resources to have food with nutritional value (Ibid). Achieving food security in its totality remains a national security challenge to most developing countries of the world, Nigeria inclusive with the advent of Boko-haram terrorist in the North-east farmers have difficulties accessing their farms thereby reducing production rate of food in the same vain activities of transporters moving food items across the country has been on the decline. Since Northern part of the country produces most food items consumed, in recent past, there has been a decline in food supply within the country since there is a gap in the food supply chain.

The above mentioned national security challenge exists in some specific parts of the country, while some are wide spread. The fact remains that their effects can

be felt across the country as all the states are inter-dependent with happenings in one affecting others simultaneously.

BRIEF OVER-VIEW OF SUCCESSIVE LEADERS ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

S/N	LEADERS NAME	TENURE/GOVERNMENT TYPE	EFFORTS IN ADDRESSING NATIONS SECURITY CHALLENGES
1	Sir AbubakarTafawa Balewa	Civilian (1960-1966)	First Development Plan in Nigeria for National Development, Construction of 2000 miles of Farm to Market Roads
2	General Yakubu Gowon	Military (1966-1975)	Introduced National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative Bank, Formed Indigenization Policy making. Nigerians own major companies
3	Murtala/Obasanjo	Military (1975-1979)	Operation Feed the Nation to Boost Food Production, Reduce Poverty, Promoted Self Reliance of Citizens.
4	Alh. ShehuShagari	Civilian (1979-1983)	Green Revolution Programme. Introduced New ,Technologies
5	General MohammaduBuhari	Military (1983-1985)	Introduced War Against Indiscipline (WAI) to reduce corruption and bring about Financial Discipline, Restore the Economy and Sustainable Growth
6	Gen. Ibrahim Babaginda	Military (1985-1993)	Initiated Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure, (DFRRI). National Directorate of Employment (NDE). DFRRI to produce Feeder Roads and General Infrastructure NDE was to develop the country and create employment in order to eradicate poverty.
7	Gen. SaniAbacha	Military (1993-1998)	Brought about National Land Development Agency to provide

			support for land development, promote rural sources, relocation of population and land resources. Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP). TO improve family welfare through soft loans co-operate Financing, Produce small scale industries.
8	Chief OlusegunObasanjo	Civilian (1999-2009)	Started National Economic Empowerment Programme (NEEDS). For Economic growth and development, Integrated and Partnered/ with states producing NEEDS/SEEDS at states level. States Economic Empowerment Programme concept of Wealth Creation, Poverty Reduction, employment generation and value reorientation, Millennium Development Goals set up al (MDGS), set up in conjunction with United Nations (U.N) targeted at Poverty reduction, gender equality, achieving Primary Education amongst others. National Poverty Alleviation Project (NAPEP) to reduce poverty and create employment at Federal, States and Local Government levels.
9	Yaradua/Good Luck Jonathan	Civilian (2010-2015)	Set up the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE P). To Reinvest the Federal Government Savings from Fuel Subsidy on Critical Infrastructural Projects with Social

			Programmes with direct benefits to the common citizens. Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS). Unemployed Graduate to be paid monthly stipends. You Win launched in 2011 as a Youth Development Programme to empower the Nigeria Youth. Programme is a private Initiative with the aim of financing outstanding business plans all geared towards poverty reduction and wealth creation.
10	Alh. Mohammadu Buhari	Civilian (2015-2019)	N-Power Project, to engage youths for a period of two years renewable. Home Grown School Feeding Programme meant to provide pupils in public primary schools with one meal per-day across the nation. Trader- Moni-project for market women to boost their business. Blochage of financial leakages through the Treasury Single Account (TSA). Established 21 improved revenue generation of efficiency units in all MDA's. Stoppage of Corruption through the Whistle Blowing Policy. Diversification of the economy to stop over-dependence on oil revenues with a target of improving the non-oil sector. Improved infrastructural development with revamping of the railways and renovation of airports.

Source: Saliu, M.N (2016) and Channels T.V (2018)

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Survey Design was used for the study. Survey design is a suitable method of obtaining information through several respondents in a physical setting. This method allows for the generalization of data and representation.

Area of Study

The Area of this Study was centered in the north eastern part of Nigeria to be specific; the states of interest in the North east were Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. It is however pertinent to note here that the North east states are made up of Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, Bauchi and Taraba states. The states of study Borno, Adamawa and Yobe were randomly selected. Adamawa state has a population of 3,168,100, (LGIDD, 2012). Borno 4,151, 193 (NBS, 2012) and Yobe 2,321,339 (NPC, 2017.)

Targeted Population of Study

The targeted population of study were indigenes, residents and people around the area and the respondents were farmers, security experts, the academia and also the general public.

Determination of Sample Size

The Sample Size determination for this study was calculated at a confidence level of 96%. The statistical formula used by this study to determine the sample size of the population was Taro Yamane. The formula was appropriate since the population size was known as 9,640,633.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where

n = Sample Size
N = Total Population
e = Acceptable error link or margin error
n = 9640663
e = 4% = 0.04
(e)² = 0.0016

$$n = \frac{9640663}{1 + 9640663 (0.0016)}$$

$$n = \frac{9640663}{1 + 15425.0608}$$

$$n = \frac{9640663}{1 + 15425.0608}$$

$$n = \frac{9640663}{15426.0608}$$

$$n = 624$$

$$n = 600 \text{ (rounded)}$$

The sample size was rounded down to 600 thereby having a round figure of 200 per state to have equal representation.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for Data Collection was a questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised both open and close ended questions. A total of 600 questionnaires were administered. However, 377 copies were returned thereby giving a success rate of 97%.

Method of Data Analysis

Simple percentages were used to answer the research questions as well as to confirm or disapprove the proposition. All these were computed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

TABLE ON SUCCESSIVE LEADERS FAILURE TO MAINTAIN NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
A	157	27.2
S A	32	5.5
S D	153	26.4
D	237	40.9
Total	579	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The table above shows that out of 579 respondents that answered the item, 153 respondents representing (26.4%) strongly, disagree that successive leaders have failed to maintain Nigeria's national security, while 237 respondents representing (40.9%) also disagree that successive leaders have failed to maintain Nigeria's national security. The 157 respondents representing (27.2%) however, agree that successive leaders have failed to maintain Nigeria's national security and 32 respondents representing (5.5%) strongly agree that successive leaders to maintain Nigeria's national security. This therefore, indicates that successive leaders have failed to maintain Nigeria's national security.

From the table and the preposition of the research study indicates that 26.4% of the respondents strongly disagree while 40.9% disagree summing up to 67.3% of the

simple percentage. This therefore means that successive leaders have been able to maintain Nigeria's national security. This research study agrees with the findings of Ndifreke and Umo-udo (2014) who conducted a similar study and reported that citizens truly enjoy meaningful dividends of democracy through successive leaderships by popular participation and the consent of the people and most programmes are implemented to bring dividends of democracy to the citizens which have a positive influence on national security. In the same vein, Okeshola and Igba (2013) also agreed with the findings of this study when they reported that many policies and programme have not only been initiated but also implemented by successive leadership for citizens to benefit, since the advent of democracy till date. These are with the intention of improving on Nigeria's national security. These projects include the introduction of a new salary scale for civil servants across the country by the Obasanjo leadership, multi-party system, deregulation of the communication sector leading to the introduction of Global system for mobile communication (GSM).

Furthermore, under the leaderships of Yaradua/Jonathan, the Federal Government made sure Nigerian's experienced debt relief and to a very large extent great achievement in the implementation of the seven (7) point agenda meant to better the lives of Nigerians. Also, the passage of the freedom of press bill, the establishment of nine (9) Federal universities and the deregulation of the downstream sector. Aderonmo and Yakubu (2010) in their study reported that the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was introduced with the aim of creating employment opportunities for over 200,000 unemployed youths in Nigeria's with the aim of inculcating and improving better attitudes towards provision and maintenance culture in urban and rural roads as well as public buildings. In agreement with how successive leaders have maintained national security, Asobie (2007) reported that the National Economic Empowerment Development Scheme (NEEDS) strategy was conceived at the Federal level, it was tagged (SEEDS) and the local government level (LEEDS). This programme

was holistic and its effects felt across board and touched lives of those in urban and rural areas.

Sani (2014) also agrees with the findings of study when he reports that, the petroleum subsidy removal was designed to cushion the effect of subsidy removal on the valuable population in the areas of material and child health care, public work, employment schemes, mass transit programmes, vocational training and skill acquisition and to re-invest in small scale business with the aim of making positive impact on lives of the Nigerian people.

Channels (2018) in agreement with the findings of this study reports that the most recent leadership introduced the whistle blowing policy which has saved the Federal Government large sums of money through tax invasion, ghost workers, misappropriation of funds and illegal recruitment. This has enabled the present leadership put in place the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) which has given out loans to market women, traders, farmers and artisans across the country. Other human development programmes include Home Grown School Feeding Programme (H.G.S.F.P) which feeds primary school pupils across the country and has also created jobs through participation. The Cash Transfer Scheme (CTS) pays stipends to the poorest and most vulnerable members of the society. The transport sector is not left out with rehabilitation of the railway system, additional power generation capacity by expansion and distribution of power. All these and others and initiated with the intention of improving upon the national security of the country.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study looked at leadership in Nigeria in relation to existing national security challenges. Its major view was to find out whether successive leadership in Nigeria have been able to maintain Nigeria's national security and to observe the existing relationship that exists between leadership and national security challenges in Nigeria.

Findings from the study reveal that successive leaderships in Nigeria have been able to a large extent maintain Nigeria's national security. Furthermore, based on reviewed literatures and results from the field and empirical evidence showed that there is strong and existing relationship between leadership and national security challenges in Nigeria. With the above findings in view, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism need to be put in place to check excess. Furthermore, there is need to find out the success rate of these project that are in place to improve on national security.
2. There is need for sustainability in government programmes because as seen in the study, successive leaders come up with their projects, but such projects terminate with them as when there is a change in leadership, new projects are initiated which leads to wastage and instability of the polity.
3. There is need to inculcate sound leadership training to equip citizens tackle leadership challenges and expectations

More research can be carried on in the area of comparism of how successive leaderships have fared in the area of national security and also a comparism of successive leaderships with specific references to regime type viz a viz civilian and military regimes. This will bring to the fore how successive military regimes fared in regards to national security challenges in Nigeria.

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