



## Bad Governance and Insecurity in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examined the link between bad governance and perpetuation of insecurity in Nigeria. Using theoretical arguments, the paper holds that, the current security challenges that bedeviled Nigeria are attributable to injustice, corruption and selfish governance by the leadership class. Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, after a lengthy military rule that lasted for almost three decades, incidences of ethnic, communal, religious and resource conflicts continue to persist across most part of the country. This is aggravated by the apparent failure of the leadership to address key issues affecting the country such as poverty alleviation, employment generation, resource allocation, infrastructural development etc. Thus, the paper concludes that tackling insecurity in Nigeria is an enormous task, but one which is not impossible. Therefore, Nigerians must unite and the governing class must develop a strong political will and total commitment to fighting insecurity.

**Keywords:** *bad governance, governance, insecurity, security, development*

### Introduction

In the current wave of globalization, Nigeria is part of the 'global village'. The fact that Nigeria is the eighth largest exporter of crude oil, endowed with human and natural resources and still has more than 59% of its population living below the poverty line depicts a paradox in the country. World Bank (2014) claimed that, out of about 170 million human populations, 100 million Nigerians are living in destitution. Factors such as corruption and injustice are undoubtedly behind this suffering. This is because the logic of the Nigerian political leadership class has been that of self-service and personal goals (Ogbeidi, 2012).

While fighting poverty by a government is an integral aspect of security measure, lack of security of life is another pressing issue that can necessitate prompt intervention. And going by what transpires at the moment, national security threat has been a major issue for the Nigeria government in recent years. Recently, Nigeria has been characterized with different turmoil ranging from human abduction, political mayhem, terrorism and bomb attacks (Ogunleye *et al.* 2011). This is what poses the dilemma over the security assistance by the United States government, and later from neighboring African states (Niger, Benin, Chad and Cameroon) about the *Boko Haram* insurgency in Nigeria. The foreign security assistance, particularly by the US, equates 'security invasion' because popular reactions by the people demonstrate that Nigerians are skeptical of the US's altruism. The myth of conspiracy by foreign powers is becoming widespread though, believing that some nations can mastermind Nigeria's plight is something of the past because the country is no longer under the control of other nations by coercion, but rather by choice.

Adebayo (2013) observes that, security and crime have been deeply rooted in the political history of the Nigeria, particularly in recent time, hence struggle for good governance, sustainable democracy and development by the few patriotic citizens of the country. In the same vein, Omede (2012) agreed that, the reason why unrest, violence and other forms of social vices in which youth are the vanguard is as a result of bad governance, poverty and unemployment among the youth. So, rather than tracing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria to uncorrelated factors, it will provide a framework for empirical examination when it is attributed to systemic collapse breeds by

bad governance because “brutal condition breeds brutal behavior” (Currie, 1985:160). Such condition makes crime and other social vices the order of the day in the country. Among the youth, for example, unemployment appears to be the root cause of violence in Nigeria (Ajaegbu, 2012). As noted by Gandu, (2012), unemployment is usually accompanied with poverty; the fundamental reality is that, poverty is linked with terrorism because it (poverty) breeds hopelessness, frustration and terror tendency

This paper will therefore examine the perpetuation of insecurity in Nigeria due to bad governance while the actual factors underlying the incessant insecurity in the country are ignored.

### Conceptual Issues: Security, Insecurity and Bad Governance

There is no agreement by definers of the term ‘security’ as to what the concept uniformly means. For the purpose of this paper, **security** can be broadly defined as the presence or existence of contentment, feeling of safety, fortification from harm outside and exposure to danger within an environment. Security is multifaceted concept as to involve the assurance of the complex human needs and prevention of anything that can constitute a threat or nuisance to some or all members of the society. Thus, the typology of security includes; political security, regional and international security, national security, state security, community security, and domestic security. Hassan (2014:10 as cited in Mukhtar, Muhammed & Sani, 2016) defined the term ‘security’: Security entails improvement in the socioeconomic, health, environmental and physical conditions of the people; protecting the dominant values, ideology and way of life of the state from threats and forestalling any form of socioeconomic, political and religious assault on the state.

For the purpose of this, national security is worth explained to compliment message of this paper. Dambazau (2011) defined **national security** as the aggregate of the security interest of all individuals, communities, ethnic groups, political entities and institutions which inhabit the territory of a nation, Nigeria for instance. In contrast, **insecurity** is the threat to individual security, state security and security of the environment. It is a condition that can undermine internal cohesion and corporate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital

institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political objectives of the people. Insecurity therefore implies the presence or apprehension of danger to life and property, and the presence of a non-conducive atmosphere for the people to pursue their legitimate interest within the society. As Robert-Okah, (2014) simplifies the concept of insecurity, he suggests that, it is embodiment of any lack of security-freedom, happiness, peace, etc.

### Governance

Attempts to come up with a comprehensive meaning of the term **governance** has generated controversy among management experts and scholars from political science and political sociologists, particularly on the practical aspect the term. But it has been widely agreed to be “the management of society by the people, or as the exercise of authority to manage a country's affairs and resources” (Simonis, 2004). Good governance is an ingredient that adds beauty to or decorates governance. According to Surendra Munshi (cited in United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2006:4), **good governance** “signifies a participative manner of governing that functions in a responsible, accountable and transparent manner based on the principles of efficiency, legitimacy and consensus for the purpose of promoting the rights of individual citizens and the public interest, thus indicating the exercise of political will for ensuring the material welfare of society and sustainable development with social justice”. **Bad governance**, on the other hand, is the opposite of good governance. It is the failure to govern competently, effectively and proficiently. Any leadership that is devoid of transparency, accountability, credibility, justice, selflessness, and fair play is a bad leadership. In the developmental aspect, also, governing without transformative capacity is bad governance. In view of this, Sobhan (1998:13) argued:

The basic argument about the role of governance in development holds that weak governance originates due to a sequential failure of the state to: a) project a developmental vision; b) demonstrate a commitment to realize this vision, through putting in place policies and programs, as well as calibrating its allocative priorities to realize this vision; c) develop a capacity to fulfill its commitments. This includes administrative and technical capacity as well as political capacity to mobilize necessary support both within civil society as well as in the political arena to translate the vision into reality.

While visionary leaders are very rare in Nigeria, other bad leadership practices are also reasons behind insecurity in the country. Among other factors, corruption, and injustice are also prevalent in the country and are some of the major reasons why insecurity perpetuates.

### **Governance and Security Responsibility**

Security should be the prime objective of all societies. It is also an essential component of good governance and sustainable development. But Nigeria has been experiencing decline in the security of lives and property over the years (Radda and Dumbulum, 2011). Two decades ago, Nigeria's military was seen as a force for stability across West Africa. Now it is struggling to restore security within its own borders because of the Islamist radical youth in the northeast kills thousands and subjecting the region into a terror zone. In November 2013, the Nigerian groups *Boko Haram* and *Ansaru* were classified by the United States as "Foreign Terrorist Organizations" and as "Specially Designated Global Terrorists" (Persson, 2014).

A lack of investment in training, failure to maintain equipment and dwindling cooperation with Western forces has damaged Nigeria's armed services. Radda (2008) examined the situation of Nigeria and remarked that government is the sole body responsible for safeguarding the wellbeing of the citizenry because it is a binding contract between the government and the citizens, thus;

The essence of government is to improve the general welfare of the populace. In specific terms, governments are formed to offer security, protection and enhanced quality life to the citizenry; and government enjoys the monopoly of weapons of coercion to be deployed in the interest of the common good which gives it legitimacy. People under a legitimate government have agreed to give it the right to police state activities for the promotion and protection of their rights; they are not surrendering their rights per se; it is a social contract between the government and the governed (Radda 2008:6).

The above argument is apparently in tune with the utilitarian position. Thomas Hobbes is one of the classical social contract theorists who held that the state authority is grounded in the consent of the governed. Without freely given, consent the government is illegitimate and subject has no moral obligation to obey its laws. People voluntary give up

to the state their natural freedom in order to have their interest served. These interest or natural right is: right to life liberty property and the pursuit of happiness. Governance is cooperative enterprise that enables us to live better than we could live in an uncoordinated social situation (Pojman, 2003).

But the issue is whether Nigerian government represents a coordinated system that enhances the right of the citizens can be enhanced. This is because ordinary citizens are bargaining to live in peace, without fear or falling as victims of their treacherous rulers. Now the country is in shamble. Issue of insecurity is the order of the day and instead of adopting measures necessary to tackle it, the leaders are perpetuating the state of insecurity on political objectives. Moreover, not only that innocent lives are lost, but also innocent individual are arrested tortured as scapegoats for the violent crimes committed by another culprit.

### **Theoretical explanation**

In order to provide a theoretical frame of analysis upon which this study would be based, two interrelated theories: *Social Structure and Anomie theory* will be employed. In trying to link the **social structure and anomie** theory, the paper has dilemma as to talk of insecurity or talk on crime. On whatever phenomenon, the theory can be used to explain insecurity in Nigeria because insecurity is rooted in norms or law violations perpetrated by criminals or insurgents. Even for the crime, Omotor (2009) argued that there no clear-cut theory of crime in respect to human behaviour that is uniquely exemplified in the philosophy of the social sciences.

However, Omotor (2009) agreed that, an implicit reference that links society's disfunctionality to criminal actions is the anomie theory. Anomie is knightly associated with the researches of Emile (1893, 1897, cited in Omotor, 2009) as he notes that, in a rapid social change, anomie is commonplace and deviance is inevitable. According to Emile (1897), anomie is a morally deregulated condition and breakdown in either of the rules of society or the amoral norms. As such, when there are no clear rules to guide members of the society, individuals find it difficult to adjust to the changing conditions of life.

Merton (1938) later took the argument further by arguing that, society breeds crime and deviance by placing too much expectation upon members. The work of Merton is widely celebrated. Lee and Newby

(2005) contend that, it is with Merton's work that any serious study of modern writings on anomie must begin, and the current situation of unprecedented violence due to Boko Haram insurgency is enough to dub it 'anomic'. Though Merton's (1938) anomie theory did not focus on criminality, it emphasizes the fact that the existence of inequality, due to the way society is structured, may make it anomic.

Merton (1968, cited in Lee and Newby, 2005) observes that, all societies make two general kinds of moral demand upon their members, Merton argues. First, they establish certain culturally approved goals such as economic success, which individuals are encouraged to strive towards. Second, they set out certain approved ways or 'institutionalized means' (for example, 'hard work') of achieving these goals (and by implication throw disapproval on other illegitimate forms of access; for example, cheating). In a perfectly functioning society there should be no strain or inconsistency between goals and institutionalized means. For Merton, it is the strain that make some individual members of a society to resort to illegitimacy or deviance.

*Conformity* is likely when people accept society's goals and have approved means to get there. But what if legitimate means to success are not available? As a result of the strain between cultural goals and limited means to achieve them, people may engage in what Merton calls innovation. *Innovation* is the use of unconventional means to achieve a conventional goal. Another option for people who lack legitimate means to achieve success is *ritualism*, which Merton defined as living almost obsessively by the rules. Doing this does not bring great success, but it does offer some measure of respectability. *Retreatism* is another response to lack of opportunities. It is the turning away from both approved goals and legitimate means; in effect, retreatists "drop out" of society. They include some alcoholics, drug addicts, and street people. Finally, *rebellion* involves not rejecting conventional goals and means but is also advocating some new system. Instead of dropping out of society the way retreatists do, rebels come up with a new system, playing out their ideas as religious zealots, political terrorists, or revolutionaries (Macionis, 2009).

Nigeria is currently battling insurgency perpetrated by *Boko Haram* (a radical group which deemed its movement Islamic) and the *Boko Haram* activities is a security challenge that shakes the whole country. Of

all the five modes of adaptation identified by Merton, rebellion will best suit the *Boko Haram* insurgency because the group's violent tendency is attributed to injustice, failed governance, poverty and unemployment among the teeming youth (Nyong, 2013).

Insecurity of lives and properties in Nigeria is being championed with ethnic bias by unemployed youths. Abundant supplies of valuable natural resources gives increased incentives to powerful elements of the society to seize areas or the entire state to control access to valuable resources. Such development generates civil strife. The disadvantaged segment of the society is invariably encouraged to form rebel groups and fight over abundant supplies of valuable natural resources. **Bad Governance and Insecurity in Nigeria**

Ideal democratic governance shall involve leaders and policy makers with good attitudes, motivation, disposition, and habits in a desired direction that is primarily a function of political leadership. It must be a leadership whose sincerity of purpose is so transparent as to induce people to adopt the desired pattern of behavior, and whose dedication to the cause is sufficiently total and selfless to inspire public confidence. But in Nigeria, people are demoralized because what is in theory seems to be disconnected from what they see in practice. In the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), Nigeria is ranked 41st of 52 countries, below countries such as Mali (27th) where international intervention was deemed necessary to maintain order in the country (Persson, 2014).

Leadership or governance, as argued by Mgbeke (2009) has to practice what it advocates. Thus, in the Afro barometer poll of 2012, 70% of respondents were of the opinion that Nigeria was heading in the wrong direction (Persson, 2014). The only aspect of development Nigeria can boast of is not more than rapid population growth which can be impetus for development if it is but alongside economic security or 'capital accumulation', political stability, fair play, and technological capability. Alienation, feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness and estrangement from society may predispose an individual or group of people to participate in the struggle against the state government. In situations where feelings of frustration become widespread among the population, and the feeling is that people are getting less than they deserve, the most advisable thing for political leaders

to do is to find out what the expectations of such individuals and groups are and to see ways of negotiating with them.

Poverty is widespread in Nigeria as reported in poverty indicators. The World Population Data Sheet (2005) shows that, 91% of the Nigeria's population lived below 2 Dollars per day. In a later research, USAID (2006) reported that close to 60% of the Nigerians live in extreme poverty. In 2014, World Bank Director for Nigeria, Marie-Nelly said, 100 million Nigerians were living in poverty. In the same year, the Bank's President, Dr. Kim rated the country among the world's extremely poor countries (CFR, 2014). This indicates the inability of Nigeria to mobilize its resources and transform these resources into a meaningful output for the benefit of the citizens. Research suggests that unemployed youths are disproportionately more likely to be perpetrators, as well as victims of crime and violence (Ajaegbu, 2012). The growing gap between the rich and poor affects the society through increased violence.

Things have been especially harsh for Nigerian youth, an estimated 95% of whom are without a source of livelihood. These figures only reconfirm the perception that high growth rates have failed to improve Nigeria's entrenched macro-economic deficiencies, born out of decades of failed governance, mismanagement and conflict (Adebayo, 2013). As a result, the youth are consciously or subconsciously revolting through violent agitations.

Since independence in 1960, Nigerians are gradually experiencing institutional collapse, elite disorientation, gaps in rational resource allocation, and ineffective internal control systems and administrative process in Nigeria. All these factors have exacerbated a situation that has led to corruption at every level of government because there is no effective leader to chart the course that will lead the nation to prosperity (Mgbeke, 2009). Lots of social problems; infant and maternal mortality, high illiteracy, low life expectancy, disease, squalor, hunger and starvation, violence and social unrest, to mention but a few, are attributable to corruption in developing nations, such as Nigeria (Radda, 2012).

Many military efforts are made by the government in order to get rid of the Boko Haram menace in the country, but it is obvious that, good governance, education, and well coordinated strategy for restoring peace and security in the affected places are the best

things to do. As International Crisis Group (2014) reports, bad governance, sustained economic hardship, rising inequality and social frustration are the factors that foster the growth of radical extremist groups in Nigeria.

### Policy implications

Tackling insecurity in Nigeria is a herculean task, but not impossible. First of all, good governance will certainly be a giant stride towards achieving peace in any nation. For the entire Nigerians, it should be none that insecurity, such as the current insurgency is like a disaster; everyone is a potential victim of its menace. Therefore, fight against insecurity in Nigeria is a responsibility of all Nigerians (the governing class and their subjects). This is not the same with saying that every Nigerian must act as a security or an army, but it means that every Nigerian has to be security conscious. In addition, a variety of modern formal and informal policing philosophies, such as community policing (which involves commitment of the police and the community), zero-tolerance policing, intelligence-led policing, and vigilantism should be encouraged to enhance security.

As the rule of law contains, 'nobody is above the law'. Some prominent Nigerian politicians are alleged to be involved in the *Boko Haram* activities. The criminal justice shall investigate and verify the allegations, then begin to check impunity (as one of the main *Boko Haram* demands) by completing prosecution of the police officers alleged to have extra-judicially executed Mohammed Yusuf; and investigate and prosecute crimes allegedly committed by the Commitment to maintenance of security in the country has to be the priority of government-federal, state and local-by spending more on surveillance and intelligence. The state security services, government officials as well as business men shall be concerned and work tirelessly towards achieving security in Nigeria.

Another measure that will be of help to Nigerians in the moment of insecurity situation is for them to become brothers' keepers through unity. One of the Nigerian nationalists, Obafemi Awolowo (1970) once said, "in order that our unity may endure, we must labor after objectives and ideals that are noble, elevating and capable benefitting the vast majority of our people" and the first premier of Nigeria, late Sir Ahmadu Bello, suggested that the resolution Nigeria's problems of disunity lies in "burying our differences

and that the correct approach is not to try to bury our differences but understand those differences” (quoted in Mgbeke, 2009:11).

Work with northern political, traditional and religious elites to disarm, de-radicalize and re-integrate Islamist militants; continue to build bi- and multinational security ties and networks in the region; Nigeria’s international partners shall intensify mixed patrols at Nigeria’s borders to curtail the movement of armed groups and criminals, because their ability to move freely across lines causes a lot of damages to the neighboring countries like Niger and Cameroon; share and exchange intelligence information on a more regular basis. Also, the members of all militant groups, *Boko Haram* and the likes who felt that they are not done justice shall know that, they are part of the solution. They shall adopt non-violent resolution for the sake of the country’s survival, for the sake of the innocent citizens and for the sake of their families.

## Conclusion

Insurgencies and other form of insecurities in Nigeria are, in this paper, is connected to bad leadership. But bad governance ought not to be regarded as the sole reason for insecurity in the country. Other factors that seem to assume intervening variables (e.g. religious radicalism and/or indoctrination of youth with negative ideologies, ethnicity, and unity challenges) are also attributable to these two major factors. These variables also which allow other problems to creep in. To tackle these menace, Nigerians must unite, leaders must commit themselves to the greatest good of the greatest number of the citizens. There were perennial communal clashes in the middle-belt region, the rise of *Bakassi* Boys, MOSOP, MEND, OPC, MASSOB and the religious radicalism of *Boko-Haram* are all indicating that something somewhere goes wrong.

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