Nigeria:
Between Governance and (under) Development. Analysing the Root of the Fractured Security

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Abstract

This paper analyses the problem of recurring threats to human and state security in Nigeria. It situates the problem within the context of the nexus between governance and (under)development. It notes that threats to human and state security predate Nigeria's contemporary political history, as there were cases of security challenges in the colonial era (1914-1960). However, after independence in 1960, and especially after the return to democratic governance in 1999, security challenges in the country multiplied and deepened. The paper argues that the root of the problem lies primarily in the country's prolonged crisis of development, engendered and sustained by political governance systems (colonial, military/autocratic and civilian/democratic) that offer opportunities for predatory accumulation by the elite and compromise the core elements and essence of government.

Keywords: *Governance, development crisis, insecurity, security threats.*

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Introduction

Security, both human and state, referring respectively to protection of people from social, political, economic and environmental threats/hazards (Booysen, 2002), and defence of the territory, institutions of governance and sovereignty of a state (Anum, 2010), is ruptured in Nigeria. The country's colonial history (1914-1960), for example, was marred by security-threatening crises, including threat of secession by the northern region in 1950 and 1953 (Akanji, 2015). There were also threats to human and state

security in the period between 1960 and 1999. The declaration of secession in 1966 by the Niger Delta region, the civil war from 1967 to 1970 between the government of Nigeria and the breakaway eastern region, and sectarian violence in the 1980s challenged the existence of the Nigerian state and resulted in destruction of private/public properties and death and displacement of people. Similarly, threats to peoples' physical, economic, and material safety and the country's stability have been occurring since 1999. These include ethno-religious conflicts in the communities in the middle-belt region, violent militancy in the Niger Delta, Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, among others. This raises the need to critically interrogate why threats to security are a recurring phenomenon in Nigeria.

This question is examined within the context of the nexus between governance and (under)development. This is in the light of three reasons. First is that there is an inextricable link between economics and politics. The linkage, in the Marxian perspective, is to the fact that changes in the economy act as catalysts for changes in all the institutions, including political ones, in the society. This means that the economy is the fulcrum on which all the institutions/structures in the society rest. Nonetheless, political (governance) institution in every society influences and shapes economic choices/decisions and, therefore, contributes to social and economic development or underdevelopment. The second reason is related to the debate about the nexus between development and security, in which it is, on the one hand, argued that development and security are coterminous (Sörenson & Söderbaum, 2012) and, on the other hand, that there is a lack of sufficient evidence of link between development and security (Waddell, 2006; Stern & Öjendal, 2010).

The third reason is that social and economic development in Nigeria is totally at variance with its human and natural resources endowment. Despite a population of over 166million people (UNDP, 2016: 24) and enormous proven oil (37,062 million barrels) and gas (5,284.3 billion cubic metres) reserves (OPEC, 2016), Nigeria is still largely typified by widespread poverty, high rate of unemployment, and aging and grossly inadequate social infrastructure. Poverty rate in the country, for example, was 62.6percent in 2015 (UNDP, 2016), while unemployment rate was 10.4percent in the fourth quarter of the same year (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The deplorable condition of the Lagos-Ibadan expressway, which lacked major maintenance repairs for thirty years (Olaseni & Alade, 2012), describes the state of most public infrastructure in the country. These points to Nigeria as a country in a crisis of development. This raises a number of issues that bother on the cause(s) and sustaining factor(s) of the crisis. These issues are analysed below.

Governance and crisis of development in Nigeria: historical analysis of the linkage

Nigeria's crisis of development is not unrelated to the policies of its successive governments. For example, the nature of British colonial rule in Nigeria (1914-1960), like that of other colonial powers in Africa, "channel[led] all effort into the production of primary crops required for export and encourage importation of European goods even if it means destroying local manufactures, crafts and industries" (Ade-Ajayi, 1995, pp. 39-40). As a result, British colonial development policy for Nigeria, contained in the 1945 and 1955-1960 colonial development plans, promoted import-substitution industrialisation, making Nigeria import-dependent (Olukoshi, 1993), and paid little attention to its socio-economic development (Dibua, 2006; Walker, 2003; Falola, 1996). The colonial development plans/policies were characterised by poor funding/poor allocation of funds to the major productive sectors of the economy, including education, agriculture and industrial sectors (Idang, 1980). Hence, basic social services and infrastructure were grossly inadequate during the colonial period, as shown by primary school enrolment of barely 36 percent of the population at independence in 1960 (World Bank, 1981).

The development crisis however worsened after independence in 1960 due, first, to the sudden rise of an oil economy in the 1970s, which led to increased reliance on oil as the principal source of government revenue and the neglect of other important sectors of the economy, particularly agriculture and manufacturing. The second was that the rise of oil economy transformed Nigeria into a rentier state, with increasing vulnerability to external shocks, particularly fluctuations in global oil prices. For example, the drop in the international price of oil in the early 1980s led to a fall in government revenues and "triggered an unprecedented crisis of immense dimensions in the economy" (Olukoshi, 1993, p. 58).

Besides, oil economy increased the role of the Nigerian state in the economy in the form of the use of government revenues from oil to "pursue rather exorbitant capital projects, paying expensive foreign consultancy fees, support the external commercial needs of industry and the repatriation of company profits" (Olukoshi, 1993, p. 57). This adversely affected the domestic economy, engendered and sustained a patronage system that developed around political office holders and underlined waste and corruption in government, particularly the Shehu Shagari civilian government (1979-1983). The Shagari-led federal government grossly mismanaged the economy through lack of financial discipline, corruption, patronage and embezzlement of funds by political officeholders at federal and state levels of government (Osaghae, 2002). As a result, from an annual growth rate of 6-7 percent between 1975 and 1980, GDP fell by 8.5 percent in real terms between 1981 and 1983, while consumer prices increased by over 20 percent (Osaghae, 2002). The resultant effect, which lingered into the 1990s, was a drastic fall in the standard of living of most Nigerians, and an increase in the level

of poverty and inflation rate in the country. The poverty headcount of 27.2 percent in 1980 increased to 46.3 percent by 1985 (UNDP, 2009), and the inflation rate averaged 13.4 percent, 22.6 percent and 26 percent over the periods of 1980-1983, 1984-1985 and 1986-1992 respectively (Soyibo, 1999).

The poor socio-economic condition of the people in the 1980s worsened in the 1990s, as shown by a poverty rate of 65.6 percent in 1996 (UNDP, 2009). This was due to the economic policy of the Babangida government (1985-1993), which was predicated on a structural adjustment policy (SAP), and political highhandedness of the Abacha government (1993-1998). The structural adjustment policy of the Babangida government was predicated on reducing dependency on imports, currency devaluation and withdrawal of consumer subsidies on petroleum products. However, the policy was compromised by wasteful spending, corruption and patronage that typified the government.

A pointer to wasteful spending by the Babangida government was its policy of sole financing/funding of the government-established political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC) (Oyediran, 1999). Among other things, the Babangida government singlehandedly bankrolled the construction of party secretariats in all the local government councils, state capitals and the federal capital territory. Though the actual financial implication remains unknown, the government's action, apart from being undemocratic, was a colossal waste of public funds. The cumulative effect of the economic policy and financial recklessness of the Babangida government was the fall in the standard of living of the people, as inflation rate jumped from 5.4 percent in 1986 to 49.5 percent in 1992 (Soyibo, 1999), provoking violent reactions from organised labour unions, students, artisans and professional groups (Bangura & Beckman, 1993; Jega, 1993). The country's poor economic condition continued under the Abacha regime, with inflation averaging 50-60 percent (unofficial figure suggested 150 percent). Also, real incomes declined and the costs of essential goods and services rose "far beyond the reach of most families and households" (Osaghae, 2002, p. 285). This was partly due to the highhandedness of the Abacha government, as it suppressed political opponents and violated human rights. This discouraged foreign and international investors from investing in the country.

The socio-economic condition of the country under the Babangida and Abacha governments was carried over into the fourth republic (1999 till date), shown, for example, by the fact that 54.7 percent of Nigerians lived below the national poverty line of $1 a day between 2002 and 2012 (UNDP, 2013), and a 62.6 percent poverty rate in 2015 (UNDP, 2016). This, like under previous governments, is traceable to political patronage, corruption and poor management of government revenues by the three tiers of government between 1999 and 2007 (the Obasanjo era) and 2009-2015 (the Jonathan era). Between 1999 and 2007, award and execution of government contracts were characterised and undermined by corruption and patronage. The case of the US$16billion

National Independent Power Project (NIPP), initiated by the Obasanjo administration to address the problem of insufficient electricity power production in the country is a good example. Reports suggest that the process for the award of the electricity project was politicised and corrupt-ridden, allowing contractors to handle the project with levity even after collecting the mobilisation fees (Oladimeji, 2009). It was this, and the fact that the country continued to grope in darkness that compelled the lower chamber of the federal parliament (the House of Representatives) to probe the electricity project. Evidences from the probe panel, as reported in the national dailies, including the Punch newspaper, pointed to the role of patronage in the process of the award of the contracts (Oladimeji, 2009).

Corruption was also widespread among government officials during Jonathan administration. There were cases of misappropriation and mismanagement of public funds by government officials. An example was the purchase without due process of bulletproof cars worth two hundred and fifty-five million naira (over $2 billion) by the Nigerian Aviation Civil Authority in 2013, leading some officials, including Ms. Stella Oduah, the Minister of Avaition at the time, being put under investigation by the anti-graft commission (Soriwei, Adepegba, Olokor, Ogundele, & Adesomoju, 2014). This, and similar cases, accounted for Nigeria's poor ratings on the yearly global corruption index of the Transparency International, which in 2012, 2013 and 2014 categorised Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, with a Corruption Perception Index (CPI) score of 27 out of 100 (Transparency International, 2012, 2014). As a result of the high level of patronage and corruption in government, successive administrations since 1999 have been unable to adequately provide basic social infrastructure such as good roads, quality education and health care facilities, regular electricity supply, drinkable water, among others, thus making the people to live and work in extremely precarious conditions.

Socio-economic underdevelopment and insecurity in Nigeria

The nexus between underdevelopment and insecurity in Nigeria relates first and foremost to two indicators of socio-economic underdevelopment: high rate of poverty and high level of unemployment, and how these predispose people to violence, crimes and criminality. Poverty level in Nigeria has been high since the 1980s, as a sizeable proportion of the population have been living below both international and national poverty lines of $1.25 and $1 a day respectively. The poverty headcounts in the country between 1980 and mid 1990s showed an upsurge from 27.2 percent in 1980, 46.3 percent in 1985 to 65.6 percent in 1996 (UNDP, 2009). Current statistics showed that poverty rate in the country was 62.6percent in 2015 (UNDP, 2016). High poverty rate in Nigeria is attributable to a steady decline in the country's economy since the mid-1980s, caused by poor management of public funds, patronage and widespread corruption in government.

In the same token, decline in the Nigerian economy since the 1980s has led to job losses and low creation of new employment opportunities by government. This accounts for the high rate of unemployment in the country, which was 10.4percent in the fourth quarter of 2015 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The youths are however the most affected. Reports have shown that in Nigeria 'youth unemployment rate has always surpassed the national unemployment rate' (UNDP, 2016). Consequently, some of the youth are predisposed to crimes and violence; they are often recruited and mobilised by political actors to perpetrate electoral malpractices. For example, the youth wings of political parties in the first republic (1960-1966) consisted mostly unemployed youth, whom the politicians mobilised to commit acts of arson, looting and other forms of electoral offences (Ashiru, 2010). In the fourth republic also, political gladiators capitalised on the high level of unemployment and poverty in the country to recruit willing youth as political thugs and personal guards during campaigns and rallies, and recruited some as paid voters on election days.

Similarly, socio-political exclusion and marginalisation of youth as a result of poverty and unemployment predisposed some of them to religious radicalization. Youth radicalization by religious extremists became a serious issue in Nigeria after 1960, particularly from the 1980s, which coincided with the period of economic decline in the country. The consequence of this has been cases of sectarian violence, particularly in northern Nigeria. A notable example was the *Maitasine* violence in five northern states between 1980 and 1985 (Akanji, 2009; Tamuno, 1991). The *Maitasine* violence was due to a number of factors, two of which are instructive.

First was the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in northern Nigeria in the 1980s, engendered by the presence and activities of radical Islamic clerics and movements, many of which had external funders such as Saudi Arabia and Libya (Pham, 2007). Among the radical movements were the *Izala,* the *Tijanniyya, the Maitasine,* the *Quadriyya,* the *Jama'atu Nasril Islam* (JNI), and the *Muhajirun* (the Nigerian Taliban) (Akanji, 2009; Pham, 2007). The second was the availability of a pool of vulnerable and mobilisable youth called *Almajiri*, engendered by the collapse of the traditional Quranic school system in northern Nigeria.

The collapse of traditional Quranic school system was caused by the economic policies of the Shagari government and the Babangida government, which led to withdrawal of government subsidies from the social sectors (Sule-Kano, 2010). Among other things, the policies undermined the capacity of many parents and families to cater for their children, since they engendered job losses, and of the traditional Quranic schools to provide adequately for the socio-psychological needs of their pupils and students, called the *Almajirai* (singular *Almajiri*) (Sule-Kano, 2010). This gave rise to the *Almajirai* taking to street begging, hawking and street loitering and becoming vulnerable to radicalisation by radical Islamic preachers in the Quranic schools.

It was in this context that Muhammadu Marwa, a radical Cameroonian Islamist based in northern Nigeria, indoctrinated and radicalised the pupils (the *Almajirai)* in his Quranic school and mobilised them for religious violence (called *Maitasine* violence) in Kano, Kaduna, Borno, Bauchi and former Gongola states between 1980 and 1985 (Akanji, 2009). The violence disturbed the peace of the affected states and led to several fatalities, including death of 4,000 people in Kano (Tamuno, 1991). Besides, the *Maitasine* violence threatened the age old fragile inter-ethnic relationship between the *Hausa-Fulani* northerners and people of southern ethnic extractions in the north. The violence also fractured the relatively peaceful inter-faith cohabitation of the people of northern Nigeria, as northern Christians were the main targets of the violence. However, though the *Maitasine* violence constituted a source of security threat while it lasted, the issue of underdevelopment has since engendered more sources of serious security threats in Nigeria. Two major examples, namely, Niger Delta militancy and Boko Haram insurgence, are discussed below.

Case studies: The Niger Delta and Boko Haram examples

Since 1999, Nigeria has been facing a number of internal security threats. However, Niger Delta (ND) militancy and Boko Haram (BH) insurgency stand out, because of the dimensions, scope and scale of the threats and impact on the people and the country. The militancy in the Niger Delta region, notably in the states of Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta, started as a form of popular agitation by people of the region for redistribution of state resources in the late 1950s (Akanji, 2009). Over the years, the attitudes and reactions of successive governments, including continued neglect of the region in the distribution of social and economic infrastructure, heightened the agitation (Akanji, 2009; Ajayi, 2009).

In response, successive governments employed, among other strategies, the combination of force and dialogue to address the agitations. The Obasanjo presidency (1999-2007), for example, ordered military bombardment of Odi town, a Niger Delta community, in November 1999, in response to the abduction and killing of police officers by unknown youths (Akanji, 2009; Ola, 2002). The military bombardment led to the death of many innocent people and the destruction of several properties, leading to it being tagged "genocide" (Ola, 2002). But though the abduction and murder of the police officers was condemnable, the government's action was far more condemnable because it resulted in large scale violence during which innocent women were raped, properties were destroyed and several innocent civilians lost their lives (Ajayi, 2009).

The government's action however escalated the Niger Delta crisis, transforming it into full scale militancy in which militant groups perpetrated all forms of criminal acts, including kidnapping of expatriate oil workers for ransoms, destruction of oil pipelines, illegal oil bunkering, and murder of oil workers (Akanji, 2009; Ajayi, 2009). Also, the

militants attempted to shut down oil flow stations on a number of occasions, forcing the oil companies to reduce their services, and at some points demanded multinational companies in the region to withdraw their services or face outright armed attack (Akanji, 2009). Militancy in the region has had serious impact on the Nigerian economy, albeit economic security of Nigerians, including cut in oil production and government revenues. An analyst put the loss Nigeria incurred due to ND militancy at an average of 300, 000 barrels of oil per day, translating into a sum of US$18 million daily and about US$58.3billion (N7.345 trillion) over a nine-year period (Ajayi, 2009, p. 117).

Similarly, Boko Haram insurgency that began in 2003 in the northern state of Yobe had by July 2009 escalated and extended to three other states, namely, Borno, Bauchi and Kano. Other northern states, particularly Adamawa, have also been affected by the insurgency. Given its radical Islamic philosophy that 'western education is a sin', BH ideological mission was to 'overthrow the Nigerian state and then impose strict Islamic Sharia law in the entire country', because the country is "filled with social vices" (Onuoha, 2010, p. 57). Since July 2009, however, BH has been engaging in terror activities, including abduction, kidnapping, and premeditated attacks on churches, mosques, schools and government buildings. This has necessitated government military responses, during which extrajudicial killings have been recorded (Human Rights Watch, cited in IRIN, 2013). There have equally been reports of dialogue between government and BH as well as proposal for amnesty for members of the sect (Daily Independent, 2013). The terror activities of the BH have resulted in wanton destruction of public and private properties, death and internal displacement of many people across northern Nigeria. For example, the BH was responsible for the bombing of the United Nations office building in Abuja, in 2011, during which 19 people lost their lives (CBC News, 2011). Also, BH insurgency crippled socio-economic activities in the affected northern states. In Borno states, for instance, 50 of the state's 175 schools were destroyed, while around 15,000 school children were forced to stop attending classes between February and May 2013 (IRIN, 2013). Reports by the Human Rights Watch also showed that over 3,600 people have been killed in BH-related violence since 2009, including extrajudicial killings by Nigerian security forces (cited in IRIN, 2013). In April 2014, over two hundred girls of Government Secondary School, Chibok, Borno state were abducted by members of the BH, and all efforts to rescue them by the Nigerian military have failed. This however has been due to low morale in the military (Ameh, 2014).

However, the significance of Nigeria's crisis of development in BH insurgency and ND militancy cannot be overemphasised. This is buttressed by the socio-economic condition of the people in the states that constitute the Niger Delta region and those that are the hotbeds of BH insurgency. This is revealed by the report of the World Bank and United Kingdom (UK) Department for International Development (DFID)-funded

Harmonized Nigeria Living Standard Survey (HNLSS) 2009/2010, an enlarged version of previous National Consumer Surveys and a follow-up to Nigeria Living Standard Survey 2003/2004, released in 2012 by the National Bureau of Statistics. The report, which covered all the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, and 774 local government areas in the country, provides information on the average Nigerian household's livelihood (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The welfare component of the survey was conducted in 77,400 households, with an average of one hundred households per local government area.

The results of the survey showed, among other things, the extent of poverty and lack of access to and knowledge about health care services in ND states and BH-hotbed states (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). For example, while data in Table 1 indicates poor standard of living of the people in ND and BH-hotbed states, the data in Table 2 shows poor access to and knowledge about health care services in similar states. From the survey also, Bayelsa, an ND state, with 32.6 per cent, has the highest number of very poor people in the country (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Bayelsa state, with 46.4 percent, was also the state with the lowest number of health care facilities for pre-natal services in the country, followed in the third, fourth and fifth places respectively by BH-hotbed states of Borno (36.6), Yobe (21.5) and Bauchi (20.5) (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

Table 1. Living Standards: % Distribution of Household Livelihood Based on Income

	Niger Delta (ND) States			BH-hotbed States			
	Bayelsa	*Rivers*	*Delta*	*Bauchi*	*Borno*	*Yobe*	*Adamawa*
Very Poor	32.6	12.0	13.6	7.1	3.9	11.0	10.2
Poor	35.0	45.9	43.5	42.3	41.7	35.4	46.6

Source: Extracted from HNLSS 2009/2010 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012, p. 29)

Table 2. Health Care: % Distribution of reasons given for not using pre-natal health services

	Niger Delta (ND) States			BH-hotbed States			
	Bayelsa	*Rivers*	*Delta*	*Bauchi*	*Borno*	*Yobe*	*Adamawa*
No Health Care Available	46.4	10	5.6	20.5	36.6	21.5	16.1
Health Care not Necessary	23.2	23.8	11.1	35.2	33.3	24	18.8

Source: Extracted from HNLSS 2009/2010 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012, p. 15)

However, though monocausal explanation of violence is not tenable (Goodhand, 2003) and the fact that chronic poverty and poor welfare condition, which the data in Tables 1 and 2 portray, are not peculiar to only the ND and BH-hotbed states, they nonetheless do not weaken the significance of poor socio-economic condition in the outbreak and sustenance of the two cases.

However, the role of economic incentives can also not be downplayed in the overall understanding of the ND militancy and BH insurgency, as well as other major sources of security threats in Nigeria. Records have shown that there are beneficiaries of the crisis in the Niger Delta and BH insurgency. Three groups of financial beneficiaries of the Niger Delta crisis have been identified, namely, militants, the Joint-Military Task Force (JTF) that was established by the government to combat militancy in the region, and some governors of the Niger Delta states (Agbo, 2009). In the same vein, Onuoha (2010) noted that though the BH draws its members from disaffected youths and unemployed graduates, it does also have some well-educated, wealthy and influential people as members. He cited Alhaji Buji Fai, an ex-commissioner in Borno state, and Kadiru Atiku, a former university lecturer, as members of the sect.

This explains the recurrent and protracted nature of both ND militancy and BH insurgency. This is particularly because government approaches have so far failed to recognise the need to tackle the role of the beneficiaries and the socio-economic underpinnings of the crises. For example, the administrations of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2009) and Goodluck Jonathan introduced an amnesty programme, involving vocational skill acquisition, educational and literacy training by ND militants as a way of ending militancy in the region. But while the amnesty policy brought about some relief to the region and the country in general, in the form of cessation of militant activities, it lacked adequate provision to address the issue of the poor socio-economic condition of the region.

Similarly, despite the fact that successive governments were aware of the beneficiaries of the crisis, there was no concrete action against them. The failure of the Yar'Adua and Jonathan administrations to act decisively on the list of alleged sponsors of militants in the Niger Delta, discovered by the JTF and handed over to the presidency in 2009 (Agbo, 2009), is a clear pointer to official complicity in the crisis. This also shows that the amnesty policy was an arrangement that was doomed to fail, because it lacked the capacity to address the root and sustaining factors of the militancy.

In the same vein, the Jonathan government, which imposed state of emergency on three northern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe on 5 June 2013, due to increasing BH threats to national security (Botelho, 2013), was not serious about tackling the insurgency. Though the state of emergency was a laudable approach, given BH's terrorist inclinations and the damages it caused, the fact that the Nigerian government failed to put in place tangible measures to address issues of chronic poverty, youth unemployment and the collapsed traditional Quranic school system in northern Nigeria shows that the insurgency was far from over. The military approach was only a stop-gap arrangement, because it cannot foreclose the possibility of a re-emergence of BH and/or similar groups in the future, especially if the condition(s) that underlined the emergence of the group in the first place continues to exist. This is capable of undermining efforts by the Buhari government (2015 till date) to crackdown on former government

officials and persons whose corrupt activities contributed to the failure of the efforts of the previous administrations to combat the insurgency.

Conclusion

There is no gainsaying the fact that there is a relationship between crisis of development and insecurity in Nigeria. High level of poverty and unemployment and the dysfunctional state of government institutions have contributed to insecurity, underscoring the fact that there can be no security without development. Hence, it is imperative for the Nigerian state to foster social and economic development in order to mitigate continued threats to both human and state security. Recurrent youth violence, BH insurgency and ND militancy, among others are all issues that can be mitigated through eradication of poverty and creation of jobs. In addition, democratic institutions need to be strengthened to act as defence mechanism against bad governance, which has been responsible for the country's crisis of development. Nigerian civil society and the international community need to increase pressure on the government and the governing elite to promote accountability and transparency in government. This will reduce corruption and waste in government, and encourage judicious use of public funds for public purposes, which will foster socio-economic development of the country.

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