



# LASU

## Journal of History & International Studies

Vol 6, No. 1, June / July 2022

ISSN: 2811-2113



SHOJ  
J  
H  
S

A publication of the  
Dept. of History & International Studies  
Faculty of Arts, Lagos State University  
Ojo, Nigeria



# **LASU**

## **Journal of History & International Studies**

Vol. 6, No. 1, June / July 2024

ISSN: 2811-2113



L  
A  
J  
O  
H  
I  
S

A publication of the  
Department of History & International Studies  
Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria

# **LASU**

## **Journal of History & International Studies**

**Volume 6, No. 1, June / July 2024**

© 2023

Department of History & International Studies,  
Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in whole or in part without the expressed permission of the Department of History & International Studies, Lagos State University.

**ISSN: 2811-2113**

Published by:

Department of History & International Studies  
Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos Nigeria.

All correspondence to:  
The Editor,

[lajohis@lasu.edu.ng](mailto:lajohis@lasu.edu.ng)  
[history.internationalstudies@lasu.edu.ng](mailto:history.internationalstudies@lasu.edu.ng)

## From the Editorial Desk

LAJOHIS is a bi-annual publication of the Department of History & International Studies, Lagos State University. The objective of the journal is to publish original articles and research findings in traditional and emerging fields of history and international relations which explore not only the various thematic dimensions and traditions of the disciplines, but also shows their relevance and applicability in different areas of human endeavour.

The Department of History & International Studies, Lagos State University retains the copyright to the articles published in the journal. However, the contributors are responsible for the views and claims expressed in their papers.

Papers for publication in the journal are accepted throughout the year. All submissions are subject to blind-review by two/three reviewers. All submissions should be sent electronically to: [lajohis@lasu.edu.ng](mailto:lajohis@lasu.edu.ng).

## Guidelines for authors

Please submit your papers following the guidelines below:

1. The recommended reference style is APA (7th Edition)
2. Abstract (not be more than 250 words); keywords (minimum of four, not more than six)
3. Run spell-check, and double check the grammar
4. Use minimal formatting (don't use built-in styles):
  - Use double line-spacing except notes, extracts, and references
  - Use justification to align text both to the right and left margins
  - Indent prose extracts (Ctl+M); add a blank line before and after
  - Use bold to indicate heading levels
  - Use hanging indents (Ctl+T) with cursor anywhere in the entry for reference entries
6. Paper must be prepared for blind-review
7. Submission should be accompanied by a separate file containing your brief bio-sketch (not more than 300 words) to include name and *current* contact information (affiliation, address, telephone number, and email address).

## Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief / Head of Department:	Adewunmi J. Falode, PhD
Editor:	Olawale I. Lawal, PhD
Managing Editor:	Sanni Habeeb, PhD
Business Editor:	Oluwatoki A. Jamiu, PhD
Associate Online Editor:	Murtala Wazeer

### EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS

1. Professor Abolade Adeniji,	Dept. of History & International Studies, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos
2. Professor Scott Romaniuk,	China Institute, University of Alberta, Canada
3. Professor Ademola Adeleke	Dept. of History & Strategic Studies, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria
4. Professor Mary Manjikian	Robertson School of Government, Regent University, United States
5. Professor Christopher Ogbogbo	Dept. of History, University of Ibadan, Oyo, Nigeria
6. Professor Toyin Falola	Distinguished Teaching Professor, Jacob and Frances Sankermesdiker Chair in Humanities, the University of Texas at Austin, United States
7. Professor Usman Tar	Centre for Defence Studies and Documentation, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, Nigeria.

## **Preface**

**T**his sixth volume of the Journal features 13 articles that talk about the nexus between good governance and social security in Nigeria, food crisis and the developmental challenge of the IDPs in Nigeria, comparative analysis of the western educational system and indigenous educational approach to national development, interrogating leadership and newspaper editorials during the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, women enslavement and sociocultural value system in Nigeria, possible models for African development, challenges for Africa's coronavirus pandemic and China's soft power dynamics, insecurity and development dilemma in Nigeria, the struggle for gender equality in Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, COVID-19 pandemic and global health policy, epistemic decentering in Achille Mbembe's philosophy and practice, formation of non-state groups in northwestern Nigeria and China's economic transition and Africa's identity crisis.

# Contents

1. Nexus between Good Governance and Social Security: Focus on Nigeria—Ameh, Emmanuel Ugbedeajo, PhD & Aliyu, Titus Aliyu, PhD .....	1
2. Food Crisis as a Developmental Challenge of the IDPs In Nigeria—Lawal, Olawale, PhD .....	22
3. Appraisal of the Western Educational System and an Inward Look for an Indigenous Educational Approach for National Development—Sule, Hasiyah Anavami & Enesi, Prince Habib, PhD .....	34
4. Interrogating Leadership: An Assessment of Selected Newspaper Editorials in Holding the Buhari Administration Accountable—Akanni, Tunde, PhD & Fatonji, Stephen, PhD .....	54
5. Women Enslavement and Eroded Sociocultural Value System in Nigeria—Okonye, Anthonia Hafunjob, Ojo, Olusola Matthew, PhD & Awomoyi, Morayo Emitha .....	72
6. The Models and Effects of Development toward the Realization of African Development—Macaulay-Adeyelure, Olawunmi C., PhD .....	91
7. The Challenges of Africa's Coronavirus Pandemic and China's Soft Power Dynamics: An Overview—Banwo, Adetoro Olaniyi, PhD & Omon, Merry Osiki, PhD .....	105
8. Insecurity and Development Dilemma in Nigeria: A Retrospection—Moshood, Abdul-Wasi B., PhD & hovoethin, Paul-Sewa, PhD .....	124
9. Comment philosophe avec Achille Mbembe? Analyse et intérêt d'un décentrement épistémique—Fofou Tchio, Armel .....	142
10. The Struggle for Gender Equality in Education: Insights from Paulo Freire's <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> —Ojomo, Philomena Aku, PhD .....	160
11. Extrapolating Insights from the COVID-19 Pandemic for the Advancement of Global Health Policy and Practice: The Imperative of an International Pandemic Treaty—Ofongo, E.M., Raji, Issa & Ofongo, T.M. ....	178
12. Formation of Non-state Groups in Northwestern Nigeria: the Ethnicization and Politicization of Vigilantism, 2010–2020—Barje, Timothy Zakimayu & Audu, Bulus Nom .....	198
13. China's Economic Transition and the Identity Crisis of being Neither Home-Grown nor Western Model-Inspired—Iweze, Daniel Olisa, PhD & Orukpe, Williams Ehizuwa, PhD .....	215

# Nexus between Good Governance and Social Security: Focus on Nigeria

*\*Ameh, Emmanuel Ugbedeajo, PhD & †Aliyu, Titus Aliyu, PhD*

## Abstract

*Good governance and social security are two critical components of development in any society. Good governance involves the effective management of resources, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law while social security is a critical aspect of social protection that ensures that all citizens have access to basic services and a minimum standard of living. Nigeria has been experiencing significant challenges in terms of governance and social security, despite being a rich country with vast natural resources. The paper, thus, seeks to examine the nexus between good governance and social security in respect to Nigeria. The methodology relied on data from secondary sources. The theoretical framework is hinged on theory of social contract. The findings reveal that the integration and adequate implementation of policies regarding social security is evidence of good governance. The study concludes by emphasizing the necessity of good governance in Nigeria, as this will transform the social security of the citizens. It recommends by that Nigerian government should prioritize transparency and accountability in the design and implementation of social security policies and programs to ensure that these initiatives are effective in reducing poverty and promoting social welfare.*

*Keywords: good governance, government, social security, development, Nigeria,*

---

\* Dept. of Peace Studies & Conflict Resolution, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria.

† Department of Religious Studies, Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria.

## Introduction

Good governance and social security are two critical components of development in any society. Good governance, which involves the effective management of resources, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, is essential for economic growth and stability. Social security, on the other hand, is a system that provides protection and support to individuals and families against risks such as poverty, illness, disability, and unemployment. It is a critical aspect of social protection that ensures that all citizens have access to basic services and a minimum standard of living. The relationship between good governance and social security has been the subject of much debate and research. Some scholars argue that good governance is a prerequisite for effective social security, while others suggest that social security can be an important tool for promoting good governance. In Nigeria, the nexus between good governance and social security has become an important topic of discussion, given the country's economic and social challenges.

Nigeria is one of the most populous countries in Africa, with a population of over 206 million people. Despite its abundant natural resources, the country has faced numerous economic and social challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and inequality. These challenges have been exacerbated by poor governance, corruption, and a weak social security system (Adedeji, Akinwunmi & Oke, 2020). Several studies have examined the relationship between good governance and social security in Nigeria. For instance, Adebayo and Akinlo (2019) conducted a study that investigated the impact of good governance on social security in Nigeria. The study found that good governance, as measured by the rule of law, control of corruption, and political stability, had a positive effect on social security outcomes in Nigeria. Similarly, Adepoju and Oyewumi (2019) examined the relationship between social security and good governance in Nigeria. The study found that social security policies and programs were more effective in countries with good governance, as they were better able to target the most vulnerable populations and ensure that resources were used efficiently and effectively. Other studies

have focused on specific aspects of the nexus between good governance and social security in Nigeria. For instance, Okolie and Omotoso (2018) examined the impact of corruption on social security in Nigeria, while Adedeji et al. (2020) investigated the role of community participation in the implementation of social security policies.

Nigeria has been experiencing significant challenges in terms of governance and social security, despite being a rich country with vast natural resources. According to the World Bank (2021), Nigeria's poverty rate increased from 35.0% in 2019 to 40.1% in 2020, while unemployment rose to 33.3% in the fourth quarter of 2020. These challenges have been attributed to a range of factors, including corruption, weak governance systems, and ineffective social security policies and programs. The Nigerian government has the primary responsibility for providing social security services to its citizens. However, the country's social security system is fragmented and lacks coherence, making it difficult for many citizens to access basic services. The system is also plagued by corruption and mismanagement, further exacerbating poverty and inequality.

In recent years, there have been efforts to reform Nigeria's social security system, with a focus on improving governance and increasing access to services. The National Social Protection Policy was launched in 2017 to provide a framework for social protection programs in the country, while the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) was launched in 2016 to provide financial and social support to vulnerable populations. Despite these efforts, challenges remain in ensuring effective governance and social security in Nigeria. For instance, there are concerns about the transparency and accountability of social security programs, as well as their effectiveness in targeting the most vulnerable populations. There are also challenges related to funding and capacity building, with many social security programs struggling to secure adequate resources and skilled personnel.

Given the challenges facing Nigeria's governance and social security systems, there is a need for further research to explore the nexus between the two and identify ways to improve outcomes. Studies have suggested

that improving governance can lead to better social security outcomes, but there is a need to explore this relationship in more detail, taking into account the specific challenges and opportunities in the Nigerian context. In as much as these studies suggest that good governance and social security are closely interlinked, and that improving governance can lead to better social security outcomes, more research is needed to fully understand the nature of this relationship, particularly in the Nigerian context. The paper is therefore segmented into five sections, beginning with the introduction. The second section clarifies the relevant concepts, while the third section explains the methodology used. The fourth section discussed the subject matter, while the fifth section concludes the paper.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

### **Good governance**

Good governance is a concept that refers to the way in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social, economic, and political resources. It encompasses principles such as transparency, accountability, participation, and rule of law, which are essential for promoting sustainable development, reducing poverty, and ensuring social justice. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016), good governance "implies efficient, effective, and equitable management of resources, including public finances, and administration of public institutions, with a view to achieving social and economic goals."

Transparency is a key element of good governance, as it enables citizens to access information about government decisions, policies, and actions. Accountability, on the other hand, ensures that public officials are held responsible for their actions and decisions, and that they are answerable to the public for their performance. Participation is also important, as it ensures that citizens have a voice in decision-making processes and that their views and concerns are taken into account. Finally, the rule of law ensures that government actions are guided by legal principles, and that citizens' rights and freedoms are protected (World Bank, 2012).

### **Good governance in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, the concept of good governance has been a topic of discussion for several decades, particularly since the country's return to democratic rule in 1999. Good governance in Nigeria is characterized by transparency, accountability, participation, and the rule of law, all of which are aimed at promoting development and reducing poverty.

Despite the efforts made by successive Nigerian governments to promote good governance, there are still significant challenges that need to be addressed. These include corruption, weak institutions, inadequate infrastructure, and poor service delivery (Aworinde, 2018). According to Ojukwu (2014), the Nigerian government has recognized the need to address these challenges and has taken steps to strengthen its governance systems, including through the establishment of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).

### **Social security in Nigeria**

The concept of social security in Nigeria is a relatively new concept that has gained increasing recognition in recent years. Social security refers to the protection of individuals and families against economic and social risks such as poverty, unemployment, and disability, among others. The Nigerian government has made several efforts towards implementing social security programs to improve the well-being of its citizens (Oyinlola & Adetula, 2020).

In Nigeria, social security programs are categorized into formal and informal programs. Formal social security programs are organized by the government, while informal programs are organized by individuals, communities, and organizations such as religious groups and NGOs (Oyinlola & Adetula, 2020). Formal social security programs in Nigeria include the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), National Pension Commission (PENCOM), National Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF),

and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) among others (Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2020).

The NHIS is a program designed to provide affordable healthcare services to Nigerians. The PENCOM is responsible for the regulation and supervision of the pension industry in Nigeria, while the NSITF provides social security protection to employees in the formal sector against employment injuries, death, and disability. The NYSC, on the other hand, provides opportunities for Nigerian youths to engage in national service and contribute to national development (Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2020). The informal sector, which constitutes a significant proportion of the Nigerian population, is not adequately covered by formal social security programs (Oyinlola & Adetula, 2020). The concept of social security in Nigeria is still evolving, and there is a need for the government to expand coverage and ensure that all citizens have access to social security protection. This will help to reduce poverty, inequality, and promote economic stability and growth.

### **Methodology**

The methodology employed for this study is content analysis. It combines conceptual evaluation, theme analysis, and theoretical presentation. The approach of this study placed a strong emphasis on qualitative information acquired from secondary sources, such as journals, government websites, and written works. Each and every bit of data acquired for this study is relevant to it.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on the theory of social contract. The theory of social contract proposes that the state and citizens enter into an agreement whereby the state provides social security and other essential services in exchange for the citizens' obedience and loyalty (Hobbes, 1651; Rousseau, 1762). According to this theory, the state has a responsibility to protect the welfare of its citizens, including providing social security measures, such as health care, education, and

social welfare programs. The social contract theory is a political and moral theory that explains the relationship between the state and its citizens. The theory asserts that individuals in a society voluntarily surrender some of their rights and freedoms to the state, in exchange for protection and security (Rousseau, 1762).

One of the main strengths of the social contract theory is that it provides a moral justification for the existence of the state and the government's authority. According to Hobbes (1651), the social contract theory is the only way to establish a legitimate authority that can maintain peace and security in society. The theory recognizes the importance of government in maintaining law and order, and providing public goods and services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

Another strength of the social contract theory is that it promotes the principle of equality among individuals. The theory proposes that individuals should be treated equally by the state, and that the government's authority should be derived from the people's consent (Locke, 1689). This principle of equality is important for the protection of individual rights and the prevention of discrimination.

Also, the theory emphasizes on individualism. It focuses on individual rights and freedoms, rather than the collective good of society. This individualistic approach may result in the neglect of the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as the poor and minorities (Young, 1990).

The social contract theory provides a suitable theoretical framework for examining the nexus between good governance and social security in Nigeria. The theory emphasizes the relationship between the state and its citizens, where individuals surrender some of their rights and freedoms to the state in exchange for protection and security (Rousseau, 1762). In Nigeria, social security is a fundamental right of every citizen, and the government is responsible for ensuring its provision. Good governance is crucial in ensuring that the government effectively fulfils this responsibility. According to Rousseau (1762), a social contract exists between the government and the citizens, where the government has an

obligation to provide social security to its citizens, and citizens have a responsibility to support the government and obey its laws.

Providing social security to citizens has been a challenge due to various factors such as corruption, mismanagement, and lack of transparency in government. According to Nwankwo and Okeke (2015), good governance is critical in ensuring that social security is provided to citizens. Good governance practices such as accountability, transparency, and the rule of law can strengthen the social contract between the government and its citizens and ensure that social security programs are accessible to all citizens.

### **Need for Good Governance in Nigeria**

Nigeria is endowed with vast resources, human and natural. However, the country has been plagued by numerous challenges, including corruption, insecurity, and poverty, among others. These challenges can be attributed to poor governance, which has been a persistent problem in the country. In order for the country to experience a turnaround, there is a need for governance, which is discussed in this section.

- *Economic development:* Good governance is essential for economic development in Nigeria. According to the World Bank, good governance is critical for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction (World Bank, 2019). The absence of good governance in Nigeria has led to a decline in economic growth and development. The country's ranking on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index dropped from 131 in 2019 to 146 in 2020, indicating a decline in the ease of doing business in the country (World Bank, 2020). This decline is partly due to poor governance, including corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and ineffective legal systems. Good governance is a necessary condition for economic growth and development. A study by Abubakar (2017) found that good governance is positively related to economic development in Nigeria. Good governance practices such as transparency, accountability, and the rule of law can improve investor confidence, attract foreign investment, and foster economic growth.

Year	Ranking on ease of doing business index	Distance to frontier score
2018	145	52.89
2019	131	56.92
2020	146	56.90
2021	169	53.5

*Source: World Bank*

- *Social development:* Good governance is necessary for social development in Nigeria. The lack of good governance in Nigeria has resulted in poor provision of basic amenities such as healthcare, education, and housing. For instance, Nigeria has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world, with 29.3 deaths per 1,000 live births (World Bank, 2021). Similarly, the literacy rate in Nigeria is low, with only 59.6% of the population aged 15 years and above able to read and write (World Bank, 2020). These statistics can be attributed to poor governance, including inadequate investment in social infrastructure and the diversion of funds meant for social development.

**Top 10 countries with the highest mortality rates.**

Rank	Country	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)
1	Afghanistan	48.6
2	Somalia	38.8
3	Central African Republic	34.4
4	Mali	30.6
5	Niger	30.2
6	South Sudan	29.8
7	Chad	29.7
8	Nigeria	29.3
9	Sierra Leone	28.9
10	Congo, Democratic Republic of	27.6

*Source: World Bank. (2021).*

- *Peace and security:* Good governance is crucial for peace and security in Nigeria. The country has been plagued by numerous security challenges, including terrorism, banditry, and communal clashes, among others. These challenges can be attributed to poor governance, including corruption and ineffective law enforcement. According to Transparency International, Nigeria ranked 149th out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perception Index in 2020 (Transparency International, 2021). Corruption has been identified as a significant factor fuelling insecurity in the country, as it undermines law enforcement and weakens institutions responsible for maintaining peace and security. Good governance practices such as rule of law, accountability, and citizen participation are necessary to address security challenges in Nigeria. A study by Onapajo and Fagbadebo (2019) found that good governance practices such as rule of law and accountability can improve security in Nigeria.
- *Corruption:* Nigeria has a high level of corruption, which has had a negative impact on the country's development. Good governance practices such as transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption measures are necessary to reduce corruption in Nigeria. A study by Lawal and Ahmad (2018) found that good governance practices such as transparency and accountability are negatively related to corruption in Nigeria.
- *Poverty reduction:* Nigeria has a high level of poverty, with over 40% of the population living below the poverty line. Good governance practices such as citizen participation, responsiveness, and transparency are necessary to reduce poverty in Nigeria. A study by Oyewumi et al. (2018) found that good governance practices such as citizen participation and responsiveness are positively related to poverty reduction in Nigeria.

### **Impact of Social Security in Nigeria**

Social security refers to programs and policies designed to provide a basic level of economic security to individuals and families, particularly in

times of need, such as old age, disability, unemployment, and poverty. In Nigeria, social security programs have played a critical role in reducing poverty, promoting social welfare, and enhancing the overall well-being of citizens. The following are some of the impacts that social welfare has had on Nigeria:

- *National social safety net project*: The Nigerian government has established various social security programs to address the needs of different segments of the population. One of the most notable programs is the National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP), which aims to provide cash transfers to the poorest households in the country (World Bank, 2020). A study by Olaniyan and Ogunlade (2019) found that the conditional cash transfer program has reduced the incidence of poverty among beneficiary households by 10.8%.
- *National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)*: The Nigerian government has established the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), which provides health insurance coverage to citizens (National Health Insurance Scheme, n.d.). The program is designed to provide affordable and accessible healthcare to the population, particularly those who may not have access to quality healthcare due to financial constraints. The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) has improved access to healthcare services for Nigerians and reduced the burden of healthcare costs on households. According to a study by Aremu and Adebawale (2018), the NHIS has contributed to the development of the healthcare sector in Nigeria, improved the quality of healthcare services, and increased healthcare expenditure in the country.
- *Social welfare*: Another impact of social security in Nigeria is the promotion of social welfare. Social security programs provide a safety net for vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, disabled, and unemployed. For example, the Pension Reform Act of 2014 introduced a contributory pension scheme for public and private sector workers, which has improved the welfare of retirees in the country (National Pension Commission, n.d.). A study by Ademola et al. (2020) found that the pension reform has improved the

financial well-being of retirees, reduced poverty levels among the elderly, and enhanced their access to healthcare services.

- *Improved educational outcomes:* Social security programs such as the Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) have improved school attendance and educational outcomes among children from vulnerable households. A study by Idris et al. (2021) found that the HGSFP has increased enrolment rates and reduced dropout rates among primary school children in Nigeria.
- *Enhanced agricultural productivity:* Social security programs such as the Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme have increased agricultural productivity among smallholder farmers in Nigeria. The GES provides subsidized inputs, such as fertilizer and seeds, to farmers to improve their yields. According to Adepoju and Adedoyin (2019) the GES has increased agricultural productivity and incomes among smallholder farmers, particularly women farmers.
- *Improved social cohesion:* Social security programs have promoted social cohesion and community development in Nigeria. For example, the Community-Based Targeting (CBT) model used in the CCT program involves community members in the identification and selection of beneficiary households, which has enhanced social trust and cooperation among community members. A study by Omonona et al. (2020) found that the CBT model has improved social cohesion and community development in Nigeria.
- *Increased financial inclusion:* Social security programs have also contributed to increasing financial inclusion in Nigeria. For instance, the Bank Verification Number (BVN) system introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria has made it easier for beneficiaries of social security programs to access financial services, such as banking and mobile money. Ezeanya et al. (2020) found that the BVN system has increased financial inclusion and reduced transaction costs for beneficiaries of social security programs.

Despite these efforts, social security coverage in Nigeria remains limited, with many citizens still lacking access to basic social protection. The government has acknowledged the need to expand and strengthen social security programs, and efforts are underway to improve coverage and increase the effectiveness of existing programs.

### **Nexus between Good Governance and Social Security**

There is a clear link between good governance and social security in Nigeria. Good governance involves the effective and efficient management of public resources, the promotion of the rule of law, and the protection of human rights. Social security, on the other hand, refers to the protection that citizens receive from the state in terms of healthcare, education, housing, and social welfare. This protection is critical to reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion.

Good governance in Nigeria is critical for promoting social security in the country. Adeyemo (2016) notes that good governance is essential for ensuring the effective implementation of social security policies and programs in Nigeria. He further argues that good governance can help to reduce poverty, which is a critical determinant of social security in the country. Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2019) notes that good governance is critical for ensuring social security, as it provides the necessary institutional and legal frameworks for promoting social protection and welfare. In addition, the Nigerian government has recognized the importance of good governance in promoting social security. The National Social Protection Policy Framework, which was adopted by the government in 2017, emphasizes the need for good governance and effective management of public resources in order to provide social security to citizens. The policy framework states that “the successful implementation of social protection programs is dependent on a conducive governance environment that ensures accountability, transparency, and participation” (Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning, 2017).

The importance of good governance in social security provision

has also been recognized by international organizations. For example, the World Bank has emphasized the need for good governance and sound public financial management in its support for social protection programs in Nigeria (World Bank, 2016). Another key aspect of the nexus between good governance and social security in Nigeria is the role of citizen participation. Citizen participation is critical for promoting social security in Nigeria, as it enables citizens to provide feedback on social security policies and programs, hold government officials accountable, and participate in decision-making processes related to social security (Ibrahim, 2018).

Furthermore, good governance can also help to promote economic growth and job creation, which are essential for promoting social security in Nigeria. According to the World Bank (2020), good governance can enhance economic growth and reduce poverty, leading to improvements in social security and welfare. In recent years, there have been efforts to address these challenges through the development of stronger institutions, improved accountability mechanisms, and increased citizen participation. For instance, the establishment of the National Social Investment Office (NSIO) in 2016 aimed to coordinate and monitor the implementation of social protection programs in Nigeria, including the NASSP (Ibrahim, 2018).

The evidence suggests a clear and positive relationship between good governance and social security provision in Nigeria. Improving governance practices, including transparency, accountability, and citizen participation, can contribute significantly to the effective provision of social security and the reduction of poverty and inequality in the country. However, despite the efforts made by the government to promote good governance and social security in Nigeria, there are still significant challenges that need to be addressed. These include corruption, weak institutions, inadequate infrastructure, and poor service delivery, which can undermine the effectiveness of social security policies and programs (Ojukwu, 2014).

### **Recommendations**

The Nigerian government and citizens can work together to build a strong and effective social security system that promotes good governance, reduces poverty, and improves the well-being of all Nigerians. Below are some recommendations that can ultimately help to attain this goal:

1. The Nigerian government should prioritize transparency and accountability in the design and implementation of social security policies and programs to ensure that these initiatives are effective in reducing poverty and promoting social welfare.
2. Citizens should be encouraged to participate in the development and implementation of social security policies and programs through consultations, town hall meetings, and other forms of engagement to ensure that their needs and priorities are taken into account.
3. The Nigerian government should invest in the development of strong and capable institutions to oversee the implementation of social security policies and programs, and to ensure that corruption and other forms of malfeasance are minimized.
4. The Nigerian government should explore opportunities to expand social security coverage to marginalized and vulnerable populations, including women, children, and persons with disabilities, to ensure that these groups are not left behind in the drive for social welfare and development.
5. Government should also prioritize the development of the economy to promote job creation and economic growth, which are essential for building a strong social security system. Citizens can also support this effort by engaging in productive economic activities and contributing to the growth of the economy.
6. Researchers can contribute to the ongoing efforts to promote good governance and social security in Nigeria by investigating the experiences of other countries in promoting the nexus between

good governance and social security, and identify best practices that can be adapted to the Nigerian context.

### **Conclusion**

Good governance is necessary for Nigeria's economic, social, and political development. The country needs to promote good governance practices such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, citizen participation, and responsiveness to address the various challenges it faces. Social security in Nigeria is an important concept that seeks to provide economic and social support to the population. It has had significant impacts on poverty reduction, social welfare, economic development, income inequality, and social inclusion in Nigeria. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of the design and implementation of social security programs to ensure that they reach more vulnerable populations and have a greater impact on the overall wellbeing of Nigerians. While progress has been made in establishing various social security programs, there is still a need for further expansion and improvement to ensure that all citizens have access to basic social protection. There is a clear link between good governance and social security in Nigeria. Good governance is essential for the effective provision of social security, and the Nigerian government has recognized this through the adoption of policies that emphasize the need for good governance in social security provision.

### **R E F E R E N C E S**

- Abubakar, Y. (2017). Good governance and economic development in Nigeria: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Accounting and Management*, 7(1), 57-64.
- Adebayo, A. S. & Akinlo, A. E. (2019). Good governance and social security outcomes in Nigeria: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Economic and Sustainable Development*, 10(2), 1-13.

- Adedeji, A. A., Akinwunmi, F. O & Oke, J. O. (2020). Community participation in the implementation of social security policies in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law*, 12, 61-74.
- Ademola, A. M., Ogunbiyi, O. T. & Alayande, J. A. (2020). The impact of pension reform on the welfare of retirees in Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 10(2), 32-40.
- Adepoju, A. A. & Adedoyin, S. F. (2019). Assessing the impact of growth enhancement support scheme on agricultural productivity in Nigeria: Evidence from rice farmers. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 10(4), 520-534. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJEMS-10-2017-0294>
- Adepoju, A. A. & Oyewumi, O. A. (2019). Social security and good governance nexus in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy*, 11(2), 1-13.
- Adeyemo, D. O. (2016). Good governance and development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 1(2), 79-86.
- African Development Bank Group (AfDB). (2015). *Governance in Nigeria*. Retrieved from [https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Nigeria\\_-\\_Governance.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Nigeria_-_Governance.pdf) March 15, 2023.
- Aremu, O. & Adebowale, A. S. (2018). National health insurance scheme and the challenges of achieving universal health coverage in Nigeria. *African Journal of Health Sciences*, 31(2), 1-12.
- Asongu, S. A. & Nwachukwu, J. C. (2016). The impact of governance on social welfare: A cross-national analysis of 101 countries. *Contemporary Social Science*, 11(3-4), 292-304.
- Aworinde, D. O. (2018). Good governance in Nigeria: Issues and challenges. *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Affairs*, 2(2), 65-72.
- Ezeanya, O., Onwumere, J. & Anichebe, A. (2020). Bank Verification Number and Financial Inclusion in Nigeria: Evidence from Social Security Beneficiaries. *Journal of Economics and Behavioural Studies*, 12(1), 28-38. <https://doi.org/10.22610/jeb.v12i1.2787>
- Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning. (2017). *National Social Protection Policy Framework*. Abuja, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning.

- Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment. (2020). *National Social Protection Policy for Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://socialprotection.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/National-Social-Protection-Policy-for-Nigeria-2020.pdf> March 09, 2023.
- Hobbes, T. (1651). *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*. Printed for Andrew Crooke.
- Ibrahim, A. (2018). Institutionalizing transparency and accountability in the National Social Safety Net Programme (NASSP) in Nigeria. *Journal of Poverty Alleviation and International Development*, 9(1), 71-92.
- Idris, A., Asaleye, A. & Adekunle, A. (2021). Home Grown School Feeding Programme and Primary School Enrolment and Attendance in Nigeria. *Journal of Social and Economic Development*, 23(1), 24-45. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40847-020-00115-1>
- Lawal, M. O. & Ahmad, A. (2018). The impact of good governance on corruption in Nigeria. *Journal of Accounting and Management*, 8(2), 21-30.
- Locke, J. (1689). *Two Treatises of Government*. London: Awnsham Churchill.
- National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2021). *Nigeria Living Standards Survey Report 2020-2021*. Retrieved from <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/nls/nigeria-living-standards-survey-report-2020-2021> on March 07, 2023.
- National Health Insurance Scheme. (n.d.). About us. Retrieved from <https://www.nhis.gov.ng/about-us/>
- National Pension Commission. (n.d.). *Overview of the Contributory Pension Scheme*. Retrieved from <https://www.pencom.gov.ng/overview-of-the-contributory-pension-scheme/>
- National Social Investment Program (NSIP). (2020). *Federal Government of Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://npower.fmhds.gov.ng/>.
- National Social Protection Policy. (2017). *Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment*. Retrieved from <https://socialprotection.gov.ng/policy> on March 09, 2023.
- Nwankwo, O. E. & Okeke, P. N. (2015). Nexus between good governance and social security in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 20(11), 34-41.
- Ojukwu, D. C. (2014). Good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria: The challenges of vision 20:2020. *European Scientific Journal*, 10(7), 222-231.

- Okolie, U. C. & Omotoso, K. (2018). Corruption and social security in Nigeria: A review. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 10(3), 20-33.
- Olaniyan, O. & Ogunlade, O. (2019). Conditional cash transfer programmes and poverty reduction in Nigeria. *African Development Review*, 31(3), 294-305.
- Omonona, B. T., Aromolaran, A. B. & Akerele, D. (2020). Determinants of social capital and its effects on household welfare in Nigeria. *Social Indicators Research*, 151(3), 1043-1073. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-020-02380-4>
- Onapajo, H. & Fagbadebo, O. M. (2019). Good governance, terrorism and development in Nigeria. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 54(4), 503-517.
- Oyewumi, O. A. & Adepaju, A. A. (2019). Social security and good governance nexus in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy*, 11(2), 1-13.
- Oyewumi, O. A., Adedeji, A. A. & Adeleke, S. A. (2018). Good governance and poverty reduction in Nigeria: The moderating effect of citizen participation. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development*, 40, 1-13.
- Oyinlola, A. F. & Ogundipe, A. A. (2020). Good governance and social protection in Nigeria: A panel data analysis. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 29(2), 107-118.
- Oyinlola, F. & Adetula, D. (2020). Social Security Systems in Nigeria: An Overview. *Social Security Review*, 1(1), 10-23.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Rousseau, J. J. (1762). *The Social Contract, Or Principles of Political Right*. Translated by G.D.H. Cole. Everyman's Library.
- Transparency International. (2021). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/nzl> March 13, 2023.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2016). *Governance for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/governance-for-sustainable-development.html>. March 15, 2023.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2016). *What is Good Governance?* Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/democratic-governance-and-peacebuilding/our-approach/what-is-good-governance.html>. March 19, 2023.

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2019). *Nigeria - Good Governance*. Retrieved from <https://www.ng.undp.org/content/nigeria/en/home/ourwork/democratic-governance-and-peacebuilding/overview.html>. March 18, 2023.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2019). *Principles of Good Governance*. Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/principles-of-good-governance.html>. March 22, 2023.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2020). *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2020 Statistical Update*. Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2020.pdf> on March 17, 2023.
- World Bank. (2012). *Good Governance: Concept and Context*. Retrieved from <https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/GoodGovernanceConceptAndContext.pdf>. March 19, 2023.
- World Bank. (2019). *Nigeria: Governance reforms for inclusive growth*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/publication/nigeria-governance-reforms-for-inclusive-growth>. March 18, 2023.
- World Bank. (2020). *Doing Business 2020: Comparing Business Regulation in 190 Economies*. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32436>. March 21, 2023.
- World Bank. (2020). *Governance and the economy in Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/brief/governance-and-the-economy-in-nigeria>. March 11, 2023.
- World Bank. (2020). *National Social Safety Nets Project*. Retrieved from <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P170224>. March 15, 2023.
- World Bank. (2021). *Nigeria Overview*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview> on March 19, 2023.
- World Bank. (2021). *World Development Indicators: Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)*. Retrieved from <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>. March 25, 2023.
- Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton University Press.

# Food Crisis as a Developmental Challenge of the IDPs In Nigeria

‡*Lawal, Olawale, PhD*

## Abstract

*The insurgency debacle has increased the awareness to the plight of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria, a phenomenon hitherto limited to either academic circles or practitioners in migration field. A number of challenges trail the IDPs but ironically the IDPs face same challenge that led to their pursuits, even in the camp. The challenge of food security or crisis has been a major one for most IDPs in developing countries because food is a developmental challenge for most third world nations even where there is no displacement. Living in a camp condition exacerbates the narrative as both the camp and the authorities in charge of managing develop a web which aggravates the conditions of the IDPs. This study highlights and explains various dimensions of food crisis hitting the IDPs in their camps. The challenges are explained around developmental concepts rather the state of being displaced. The study is based on the survey design using the exploratory method to tease out new angular explanations in food supply crisis to the IDPs. The solution to the food crisis of the IDPs lies in solving the developmental challenges facing the IDPs as they search for food.*

*Keywords: IDPs, displacement, Northeast Nigeria, food crisis*

## Introduction

The incidence of internally displaced persons herein refers to as IDPs is becoming a developmental discourse in global politics. What is developmental about it is not the occurrence since IDPs can be found anywhere whether advanced or developing societies. However, Suzan Ilcan, a Professor in Waterloo, Canada, and Marcia Oliver (2018) argue that the factors leading to the displacement of internally displaced persons

---

‡ Dept. of History & International Studies, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos.

(IDPs) can be classified into developmental categories. According to their research, political conflicts tend to produce more IDPs in less developed countries, while natural disasters lead to a higher number of IDPs in developed countries than political conflicts do. They conclude that rancorous political environment is an index of underdevelopment. They add that even when IDPs creation is taken as a given, regardless of the society where they occur, management of IDPs will ultimately reflect certain developmental challenge if the host community is not developed. The management of IDP camps is often regulated by the level of advancement of the host states. Fundamental to this management, is how food supply gets to the IDPs and the quality of their nutrition. Generally, less developed states have some challenges about taking a vast number of their population out of poverty, thus, adding catering for IDPs, is therefore, a strategic burden on the already fragile economic system.

Food crisis is a central theme in the administration of refugees and IDPs in Africa; it is a phenomenon which often defeats the objective of people who seek safety in government protected camps. In many of the camps, availability of food has created such a sleazy challenge that it eventually affects the entire fabric and health of the protection system offered in protected camps across African states. Part of what makes an individual vulnerable is lack of access to food and most often; this is what ignites the quest for protection. In 1996, the world woke up to a grotesque photo of a mother in Ethiopia who had a few meters to get to a refugee camp with her son. She was so weak but managed to direct the son to the camp, she died at the gate. The son was given some fluid to stabilize him and later he was fed, and he survived (Refwold 1998). This illustrates that when displaced people continue to be hungry while in a protected camp, they become vulnerable once again.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) has provided that 55.0 million people have been displaced by the end of 2020 globally, and as at 31 December 2020, 2.7 million are internally displaced in Nigeria as a result of conflict and violence especially in the Northeast region of the Country (<https://www.internal-displacement.org/>). Internally

displaced persons (IDPs) have been seen as development that is peculiar to developing countries (Conference on Internal Displacement in Nigeria 3-6 November 2021, Abuja) for two basic reasons, one, many of the factors propelling them are germinated under unbridled political system like the ones in the third world and two, part of development index is the ability of nations to always prepare for the unknown, therefore swift responses of developed countries to incidence of natural disasters is an indicator of development – something that is obviously missing in third world countries. Although some African theorists are wont to explain first world swift response to natural disaster from point of view of geographical expectations, stating clearly that many countries in the west expect many of the disasters and therefore are pre-ready for their occurrence (Conference on Internal Displacement in Nigeria 3-6 November 2021, Abuja). This view, notwithstanding, does not explain why third world nations are ill-prepared to handle sudden ructions which make recourse to internal displaced arrangement inevitable.

The incidence of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria is quite a recent phenomenon associated with the rise of insurgents in the Northeast part of Nigeria, hitherto, Nigeria was only aware of refugees who crossed from festering nations to seek protection in Nigeria especially during the Liberian civil war in the 1990s. The Boko Haram insurgency is the most potent singular factor which gave rise to IDPs in Borno states and other states in the region have witnessed the incursions of Boko Haram, thereby extending the prevalence of IDP camps to them. According to a UN statistic of May 2014, report showed that between 2013 and 2014, six other states had been affected by the crisis (Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe) (UNHCR, 2014). Nigeria's IDP population currently stands at 2.7 million; however, the country is still not among top three countries with the largest internally displaced population due to conflict and violence. As at December 2020, DR Congo, Syria and Ethiopia are ranked in this category. The top three countries with the largest number of IDPs due to disasters in 2020 were China, the Philippines and Bangladesh (<https://www.internal-displacement.org/>).

### **When food Scarcity leads to Malnutrition in Camp**

Food supply to the IDP camps is statutorily the responsibility of the Federal Government of Nigeria. This is coordinated by the Federal intervention programmes such as the Presidential Initiative on North East (PINE) and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) - two organisations that spearhead the relief chains. Other non-governmental organisations like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Muslim Brothers Initiatives etc join the government to provide humanitarian aid to the IDPs in Nigeria. However, in spite of various levels of interventions to ameliorate the plight of the IDPs, a larger percentage are still either malnourished or completely not feed in IDP camps in North East Nigeria. The recent United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs” (OCHA) reports show that 4.4 million IDPs are facing food crisis while 4.24 million are malnourished (OCHA, Nigeria: 2023)

The causes of food crisis in IDP camps are multifaceted especially when virtually all the causes have some human dynamics in their creation. There have been reports about how IDP camp officials engage in sharp practices to divert food supplies meant for the IDPs to personal use. More damning is the reports that suggest that some officials horde food supply only to sell same to the IDPs later. This complaint was the basis of President Buhari’s order to the nation’s head of Police, in September 2022, to arrest anyone caught in such acts. The international Center for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), in June 2022 reported that the IDPs claim that IDP camp officials connived with store keepers to steal foods meant for them and later sell to them or take to the open market to sell. The high incidence of malnutrition in IDP camps is linked, by the ICIR, to the fact that camp officials rather cook food with substandard ingredients, than give the IDPs raw foods to cook by them. This, the ICIR, explained is preferred by camp officials because it ensures surplus for them.

One IDP in Dalori camp in Bornu was reported to have told the ICIR:

the amount of food items that are donated to the camp should be enough “but they won’t bring out enough food for us to cook and eat. The women in the kitchen won’t give us the raw food items to

cook by ourselves. Instead, they would rather cook in the kitchen and then dish out portions that won't be enough for us to feed... At night they usually connive with the store officials who would sneak out the food at night and the women would go to sell them for N800 a measure in the market" (ICIR, 2022)

The issue of diversion of food meant for the IDPs, is as old as the existence of IDP camps in Nigeria where greed and avarice are assumed to be legitimate official conduct. Investigations show that most officials at every level in Nigeria who have anything to do with food supply to IDPs make money illegally from the supply and they do so to the degree of crime permissible by their desk responsibilities. In 2016, the nation woke up to the disappearance of 360 trucks of grains meant for the IDPs in Borno. After its investigation, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) reported that out of the 600 trucks of grains that left Minna in Niger state, only 240 made it to Borno ( All Africa, 2016).

In Nigeria, the major cause of food crisis in IDP camps is official corruption in varied degrees (Adeoti, 2009). More often, what the IDPs term as stealing of foods by officials, is a snippet of the actual stealing which happens at the level that they do not have access to the bedrails of the nefarious act. For instance, in May 2017, a Federal High Court in Maiduguri jailed two local government officials in Borno to one year in prison and N1m fine each for misappropriating 180 bags of rice meant for Internally Displaced Persons. The gross implication of this is that the incidence of food crisis, *a la* malnutrition, in IDPs camps is created primarily by those saddled with the responsibility of managing the camps (REUTERS, 2017).

### **Insurgents and Food Crisis in the IDP Camps**

Food supply plays an important role in warfare as it is potent in the determination of war outcomes. Maintaining steady supply of food is key to the eventual victories of war victors while a warring party that does

not have access to food supply is likely to die off of starvation than from battles. As a matter of fact, law of armed conflict, criminalises the use of starvation as tool of war and the International Criminal Court (ICC) has maintained a steady competence on cases of genocide and the methodical use of starvation to achieve mass killings. The centrality of food in conflict situation is easily discernible when one discovers that both parties in the offensive and defensive desire it. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2022, the World Food Program (WFP) sent 40 trucks load of food to the IDPs in Mobbar, Borno State but members of the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) attacked the convoy and intercepted four of them, This was a few days after the ISWAP attacked and freed insurgents in Kuje prison – a move edging in the point that the intercepted trucks meant for the IDPs were taken to the fleeing insurgents (*Sahara Reporters, 2022*). Such act sparks the observation that insurgents not only displaced victims from their homes but they also disrupt their food supply network. And the report of the interception of food is nothing compared to when insurgent actually attack IDPs in their camps with the sole aim of carting away foods that had been supplied to them for sustenance.

This event at the IDP camp in Bama in Borno state confirms the growing fear that the fight against insurgents is far from being won, if they retain such audacious venture to attack IDP camp that is assumed to be under the protection of the military. Insurgents waylaying or attacking food stores of IDPs cascades to the general food crisis hitting the IDPs in a fundamental way. The many cases of malnutrition in the IDP camps are ignited by shortage of food. The insurgents, as we have seen above, also need food to sustain their own camps too. The pressure for food supply in insurgent camps could be further heightened when they have large number of kidnapped victims. Food is a necessity for them to continue to hold on to their victims while they negotiate with authorities desirous of their release.

### **Fleeing farmers**

Insurgency in the entire Northeast of Nigeria has contributed to the rising cases of food crisis and insufficiency in the region. Both Boko Haram and the ISWAP have forced farmers to flee their farms leaving, according to 2021 OCHA report, at least 2,3 million hungry. Save the Children, an international NGO, whose country acting director is Shannon Ward, estimated that about 700,000 under the age five are among the children affected by hunger in the Northeast of Nigeria. In general, the food crisis in the region has a snowballing effect on food shortage at the IDP camps in various areas of the region. OCHA again reported that the Northeast of Nigeria is witnessing a “growing threat of catastrophic food insecurity”. And the country Coordinator Edward Kallon had maintained that the growing food crisis in a region will surely incapacitate humanitarian aid.

Related to the above is the fact that IDPs who are farmers, when faced with hardship, may forage farther from the areas of military protection coverage, in the hope to farm for the need of their families and other IDPs. In another study, this has been related to why IDPs proclaim cessation clause on themselves. This is an instance where certain measures are needed in individual choices of the IDPs, there have been reports of IDPs who are farmers who insisted on going back to their farm lands, especially during harvest or during planting season. Most often, many fall into the hands of insurgents who most likely know that the harvesting time would lure the IDPs to the farms. Some were killed summarily and some were kidnapped. The right of IDPs to make informed and voluntary decisions as to whether they want to return, or settle and integrate at the place where they found refuge or elsewhere, is one of the cornerstones of the Guiding Principles (E/CN4/1998/53/Add2).

In sum, the IDPs leave camps in search of food thus jeopardizing the protection framework of the camp. In this instance, insurgents benefit in multiple folds when they capture IDPs who are supposed to be under the protective custody of a Camp Commandant. Apart from the fact that such incidence is an indication of a porous camp, it also destroys the security

architecture of a state and forms a clog in the comprehensive fight against insurgent. But food crisis is a major culprit in this analysis.

Related to this is the influx of more IDPs into a camp, generally, this exacerbates and stretches conflicts arising from food supply to the camp. In AgiriMafa local government of Borno, the three IDPs camps have come under series of influxes of IDPs from one IDP camp to the other or from new displacements. Camps in Marte, Agiri and Shuwari have experienced multiple attacks from Boko Haram which leave the camps with lopsided populations – where the attacks are more; IDPs move to less attacked camps, thereby swelling the population there and vice versa. The uneven distribution of IDPs to camps already filled to capacity lay the foundation for food crisis in such camp. An over populated IDP camp is also prone to outbreak of diseases such as it happened in Muna Garage camp in Borno hosting about 32,000 internally displaced people (IDPs). The outbreak started in Maiduguri, and later spread to communities like Dikwa, Mafa and Monguno, before finding effective accommodation in the camp where conditions were exacerbated by over population of the IDP camp. More than 4,800 suspected cases and 61 deaths were recorded in that area.

### **Prolonged Internal Displacements and Food Crisis of IDPs**

General observations show that displacements are better managed when it is focused on addressing short term displacements challenges especially relating to IDP camps (Egbuna, (2001). The tendency for a prolonged displacement to breed varied degrees of abuses is rife especially in developing countries where officers in charge of managing camp facilities have mastered the loopholes in the administration of IDP camps. The incidence of IDPs in Northeast of Nigeria has been so prolonged with some IDPs living in a camp for close to 12 years on the average. Continued attacks by insurgents make IDPs feel safe in protected camps than in their homes. Even when towns and communities appeared to have been captured from insurgents by military authorities, palpable fears still greet the order to return home. This is partly because the IDPs doubt the durability of military assurance of safety of the towns especially when news would still

reach them of insurgents dislodging other towns or kidnapping of large number of school children.

Authorities in charge of the management of IDP camps also have some structural imbalances between their assurances of safety, propelling them to revoke a hasty cessation of protection on IDPs, on one hand, and the realities of security outside the camps, on the other hand. The controversy between claims, assurances and realities make IDPs refuse to return to their homes. But this has implication for policy and management of the IDP camps. When provisions are made for food and other amenities to the camps, they are made for those who should be in the camp, not those who are in the camp. The difference between these is that the former is captured in planning while the latter is not planned for. The reality of this vibrates in scarcity that will hit food supply and general camp facilities.

### **Insecurity and Aid Agencies**

Humanitarian assistance to IDP camps is heavily supported by international donors and relief agencies (Davies, 2012). As a matter of fact, a recent study suggests that international donor agencies contribute more to humanitarian assistance to IDPs than the governments that set them up in developing countries (UN, Deliver Humanitarian Aid). International donor agencies consist of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), all have primary roles in the delivery of relief assistance. The World Health Organization (WHO) coordinates the response to humanitarian health emergencies. There are others that are not United Nations based relief agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Red Crescent and others. But these international relief agencies have often come under severe attacks from insurgents when trying to render humanitarian services. In Nigeria, humanitarian agencies have been attacked so often that in March 2021 alone there were multiple attacks of UN facilities in Damasak and Dikwa areas of Borno where operational vehicles, including

ambulances were taken away, properties were looted and the UN hub was set ablaze. (GOV.UK, 2021)

All these attacks have implication on the supply of relief materials from these agencies. Many of them do not make it to their designated dispatch locations, others have their vehicles already vandalized and goods looted, when insurgents raid. The relief materials such as foods and drinks, meant for IDPs, end up in untargeted hands while the IDPs groan in hunger when reliefs would not get to them.

International relief agencies have often complained that two major factors hampered their operations in Nigeria, one is funding and the other is attacks on their operations by insurgents. Invariably the inhibitions on the relief operations of the international aid agencies is a very strong factor causing food crisis in IDP camps in Nigeria. Understanding the first-tier level of humanitarian intervention of these agencies will help to locate one of the fundamentals of food conflict in IDP study.

Environmental factor has its impact on food crisis bedeviling the IDPs in Nigeria. The effect of climate change on the food crisis of IDPs in Nigeria used to be a mere academic contention until the devastation that rocked the IDP camps in Yobe sometime in September 2022. Internally-displaced persons in Gujba and Damaturu, the state capital became victims of flooding which occurred as a result of a heavy downpour leading to overflow of water channels. This disaster left many of IDPs homeless and due to the destructions to their food stuffs, they became victims of starvation. There have been other instances where the environment contributes its quota to the despondent state of IDPs; there was a report in the same Damaturu area in 2021 when flood submerged a bridge leading to IDP camp. This prevented vehicular movement to the camp leaving the camp management to resort to human portage to transport relief materials to the IDP camp. Other human factor crept into the event, when those who offered to render assistance helped themselves with some sacks of grains which they took for personal use.

## Conclusion

Internally displaced persons face myriad challenges, partly because IDPs have no international convention guiding its operations, unlike refugees and migrants who have well established legal frameworks and customary international law interpretations. IDPs are under the municipal framework of their states. For a state like Nigeria where effectiveness of law is to the extent of who is applying them, degrees of abuse are likely. Food crisis in IDP camps in Nigeria should not be treated as part of general challenges confronting IDPs everywhere. In Nigeria, this has its peculiarity as in most third world nations. In the entire frame of the argument in this study, there is a bent toward an underlying developmental challenge which acts as the foundation of food crisis in IDP camps in Nigeria.

## R E F E R E N C E S

- Adeoti, J. (1989). Economic crisis in developing countries: the food dimension. *Ilorin Journal of Business and Social Sciences* 1, 115-134.
- Cessation of status*. UNHCR. (n.d.). <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/cessation-status>
- Davies, A. (2012). IDPs in host families and host communities: Assistance for ... - refworld. <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4fe8732c2.pdf>
- Egbuna, E. N. (2001). Food security in Nigeria; The challenges and way forward: in Natural Resources use, the Environmental and Sustainable Development. Selected papers presented in the 2001: National Economic Society Annual Conference. Ibadan: 307-325.
- ICC - ICC holds workshop for IDP Camp Leaders from Uganda's Amuria District*. International Criminal Court. (2007). <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-icc-holds-workshop-idp-camp-leaders-ugandas-amuria-district>
- International standards | OHCHR - UN human rights office.  
OHCHR. (n.d.). <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-internally-displaced-persons/international-standards>

- ISWAP terrorists hijack UN food trucks meant for internally displaced persons in Borno. *Sahara Reporters*. (2022). <https://saharareporters.com/2022/07/09/iswap-terrorists-hijack-un-food-trucks-meant-internally-displaced-persons-borno>
- Marama, N. (2016). Nigeria: Contractor diverts 60 trucks of grains meant ... - *allafrica.com*. All Africa. <https://allafrica.com/stories/201608090230.html>
- Nigeria. Situation Reports. (2023.). <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/nigeria/>
- Ola, L. (2017, May 5). *Nigerian officials jailed for selling food aid in famine-hit district*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/nigeria-security-idINKBN1802HK>
- Oliver, M. & Ilcan, S. (2018). The politics of protection: The right to food in protracted ... - JSTOR. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48503374>
- Sloven, N., Fitzmaurice, G., Williams, D. R. & Gilman, S. E. (2010). Poverty, food insecurity, and the behavior for childhood internalizing and externalizing disorders. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 49(5), 444–452. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-201005000-00005>
- Terrorism - Nigeria Travel Advice*. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nigeria/terrorism>
- UNHCR supplementary appeal - emergency response for the nigeria situation (September 2014). UNHCR. (n.d.-b). <https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-supplementary-appeal-emergency-response-nigeria-situation-september-2014>
- United Nations. (n.d.-a). *Commission on human rights*: United Nations. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/226603>
- United Nations. (n.d.). *Deliver humanitarian aid*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/our-work/deliver-humanitarian-aid>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (1999) *U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1998 - Cambodia*. Refworld. <https://www.refworld.org/country-USDOS-KHM-3ae6aa5f0,0.html>

# Appraisal of the Western Educational System and an Inward Look for an Indigenous Educational Approach for National Development

§Sule, Hasiyah Anavami & ¶Enesi, Prince Habib, PhD

## Abstract

*This paper makes the case that the introduction of contemporary, western-style education has diminished the value of indigenous forms of knowledge in Africa that adopting an indigenous educational approach is essential for a country's growth. Any society's destiny depends on how well its culture and worldview are passed on to subsequent generations. Africa's indigenous educational systems have been alienated and impacted by the western educational system. literacy, post-colonialism, and modernization paradigms served as the basis for arguing that during the race for Africa, the continent's indigenous knowledge was unfortunately invaded and distorted. Most of what is African has been lost as the continent has been assimilated into the western economic world and academia. Africa is currently struggling to stay up with its own innovations. Asking the West to provide its innovations to Africa out of pure altruism is much more challenging. But because all information, whether indigenous or western, has some utilitarian values, it is crucial to solve the socioeconomic difficulties of the continent's national development through a knowledge-driven economy. Industrialization of Africa is necessary. Japanese and Chinese models, which merged an indigenous educational system with Western scientific advancements, are advised by this study for national growth.*

*Keywords: education, western educational system, indigenous educational system, national development, Nigeria*

---

§ Dept. of History & International Studies, Federal University, Lokoja, Nigeria.

¶ Dept. of History & International Studies, Federal University, Lokoja, Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

Education equips people with the information and abilities they need to progress both personally and politically, economically, and socially. The quality and accessibility of education as well as the capacity of education to enhance living situations are all influenced by socioeconomic variables, such as family income level, parents' educational attainment, race, and gender (Ahmad, Shehu & Mahmoud, 2019). It is believed that Western learning would cure all of Africa's educational issues. Scholars who are ignorant of the conflict between Western education and the necessities of African society have this perspective (Ukwuoma, 2014). For instance, in schools in former British colonies, English is preferred as the medium of teaching (Ukwuoma, 2015).

Early in the history of man, there was education. It was around for a very long period when African groups of people began to form communities. Indigenous knowledge education is the name given to this type of instruction. We discover proof of knowledge, skills, and a way of life through indigenous tribes' oral traditions. The Christian church missionaries, who believed that Africans lacked any form of education, were responsible for introducing western education to the continent. According to Ranasinghe (2015), education is necessary for human existence. It is also a mechanism by which one generation passes on the information, skills, and experience that equip the following generation for the responsibilities and difficulties of life. Indigenous knowledge or indigenous education existed in Africa prior to the arrival of western education.

Indigenous knowledge (IK), according to Makinde et al. (2013), is also known as "traditional knowledge" (TK), "traditional environmental knowledge" (TEK), and "local knowledge" (LK). Local knowledge and indigenous education (IE) are terms used to describe knowledge systems that are based on the cultural practices of local, indigenous, or regional populations. Traditional communities possess knowledge about traditional practices in subsistence agriculture, animal husbandry and ethnic veterinary medicine, use and management of natural resources, primary health care (PHC), preventive medicine and psychosocial care, saving and

lending, community development, poverty alleviation midwifery, and The existence of different local societies depends on these sorts of knowledge, which are often accumulated by empirical observation and contact with the environment. (Edsand & Broich, 2019; Ukwuoma, 2015).

The claim made in this essay is that schools, colleges, and universities in Nigeria and other African countries ought to foster the development of citizens, youths, and adults who are obedient to, and responsible for upholding, the laws, rules, customs, and traditions of their societies. This can only be accomplished by using an indigenous educational approach and ethno-veterinary medicine. The existence of different local societies depends on these sorts of knowledge, which are often accumulated by empirical observation and contact with the environment. (Edsand & Broich, 2019; Ukwuoma, 2015).

The claim made in this essay is that schools, colleges, and universities in Nigeria and other African countries ought to foster the development of citizens, youths, and adults who are obedient to, and responsible for upholding, the laws, rules, customs, and traditions of their societies. This can only be accomplished by using an indigenous educational approach. While others who favour a western educational system do so because they believe that using English would boost academic performance and make learners more employable in a globalized environment, which has not been the case in the present global economy (Ukwuoma, 2015). According to Mahoso (2013), the majority of people believe that civic education would foster patriotism, submission to legitimate authority, and respect for other citizens' opinions on a range of social, economic, and political concerns. However, the recent uptick in xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals in the Republic of South Africa has demonstrated that it only instructs children and adults in Africa to understand the roles, functions, and responsibilities of members of parliament, government ministers, governmental institutions, civil servants, local authorities, and communities but not the rights and privileges of citizens of other nations residing in their country (Chivaura, 2014). Africans are now more likely to lead individualistic lifestyles than the communal once for which the

continent is famed because of the success of the western educational system.

Indigenous knowledge is information that has been verbally transmitted from one individual to another and from one generation to another. In contrast to the western educational system, the majority of Indigenous knowledge is represented through tales, legends, folklore, rituals, songs, and even laws (Zuckermann, 2015). Other types of conventional knowledge are expressed in various ways. Indigenous communities are frequently distant and secluded from one another, and because of the relative independence with which they developed, their identities are far more diverse than those of modern knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is scientific in the sense that it comes from years of practice and offers rational answers to issues that affect communities (Shehu, 2020).

A nation's capacity to create and mobilize knowledge capital is as important for sustainable growth in the growing global knowledge economy as the availability of physical and financial capital. According World Bank (2007) native knowledge is the fundamental element of each nation's knowledge system. It includes all of the knowledge, expertise, and understanding that individuals have and use to sustain or advance their way of life. Indigenous people have made significant contributions to global knowledge, such as in the fields of medicine and other related professions thanks to their in-depth awareness of their surroundings. IK is created, passed down from generation to generation, continually modified to settings that are gradually changing, and closely linked to cultural values. The majority of indigenous systems are in danger of going extinct due to modern challenges and technology, which have accelerated the worldwide pace of economic, political, and cultural change as well as the natural environment's rapid changes.

However, many traditions only cease to exist as a result of the introduction of foreign technologies or development paradigms that promise quick wins or fixes to issues but are unable to sustain them. IK's sad imminent non-advocacy is most apparent to individuals who have developed it, hence this study is necessary. In order to press for the

adoption of an indigenous education method for national development, this study analyzes western education. As a result of modernization and the continual globalization processes that the western educational system has imposed on us, indigenous education is being lost. Therefore, it is crucial to safeguard and advance the knowledge created and passed down by local communities via purposeful institutional and policy reform initiatives. Furthermore, using the language and conventions that people are familiar with and find most effective for expressing themselves allows for quick development.

### **Methodology**

This research work is aimed to study the limitations of western educational system and the alternative of indigenous educational approach for national development where the secondary source of data is used. The secondary source of data are materials containing an account of an event or phenomenon by someone who did not actually witness the scene phenomenon. Examples, of secondary source of data used in this research work, are books, journals, projects, and other related documents.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study's theoretical approach incorporates postcolonial, modernization, and critical literacy ideas. Education is not neutral; it has many facets and a political component, which educational policymakers should be aware of when they create school curricula. It is obvious that "it is impossible to even think about education without considering the question of power" (Freire, 1987). By drawing attention to the concept that schools are occasionally utilized as platforms for sustaining relics of colonial legacies in Africa, critical literacy and post-colonialism seek to spark change (Freire, 1987; Macedo, Dendrinis & Gounari, 2003; Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Thus, critical literacy and post-colonialism investigate sources that enable discussions about current circumstances in order to inspire change (Ukwuoma, 2015). It is crucial for those who determine

educational policy to comprehend the cultural worldview that is supported by the information they have created.

In order to explain how the industrial societies of North America and Western Europe evolved, the modernization paradigm, which will serve as the lens for this paper's discussion, first appeared in the 1950s (Crossman, 2012). According to the hypothesis, societies advance through a series of largely predictable stages as they become more complex. The importation of technology, along with a variety of other political and social developments that are thought to follow, are what development depends on most. Due to cultural dispersion from the center to the periphery of the world (Ukwuoma, 2015), traditional behaviors and values in prehistoric cultures become outdated when modernity settles in.

Finally, the dominant method of exchanging commodities and services shifts to marketplaces that are cash-driven. (Ntalaga 2005) asserts that for many Africans, notions like progress, modernization, and globalization entail embracing western cultural norms, which demotes African culture to a supporting role. Thus, he views modernization as a process that will enable Africans to catch up to the levels of development attained by western countries (Ntalaga, 2005). In this sense, the idea that modernity, globalization, and progress are synonymous with westernization reflects a Eurocentric mindset that subjugates African culture and fuels the desire for a westernized culture in children and even adults from Africa. By elevating western educational systems (modernity) to a superior position, it denigrates traditional African knowledge systems. The focus of the next section is on how implementing a strong language strategy for education may promote the value addition of indigenous knowledge systems and support an afrocentric educational philosophy. The modernization paradigm, when applied to the topic of indigenous knowledge systems, causes some Africans to believe that indigenous Knowledge Systems are incompatible with education (Maila & Loubser, 2003). This point of view is supported by the "absolutization" of indigenous knowledge systems held by indigenous peoples in Africa and the belief that western modes of knowledge are superior (Ntuli, 2009).

The presumption that Africa was a tabula rasa (i.e., a continent without civilization) prior to the colonial era and that western cultural systems of knowledge were regarded as the only means to be used in determining the value of Africa's ideas, beliefs, and general way of life are coupled with the aforementioned idea (Ntuli, 2009). Therefore, it is essential that Africa builds on all of its historical indigenous achievements and renounces everything that would be detrimental to her development, progress, and sustainability. An inclusive system and process of traditional knowledge should be consciously sought out and vigorously implemented in the education system of the nation rather than developing an ecologically coded African society that excludes the traditions of knowing of other peoples (Maila & Loubser, 2003). Such a strategy will not only be enlightening but will also make sure that past errors in exalting one knowledge system above another are never made again. A holistic knowledge framework for humanity is critical if Africa wishes to respond swiftly and appropriately to an educational crisis facing its people as a consequence of cultural imperialism (Vilakazi, 1999).

### **Indigenous Education Approach**

According to Jacob, Cheng, and Porter (2015), indigenous education pays attention to educational conceptions that are native to certain territories and locations as well as the manner in which people learn about and make sense of their indigenous heritages. The goal of Indigenous education is to holistically develop future leaders who will be able to speak and act on behalf of their people. There are as many different Indigenous educational models as there are different Indigenous cultures throughout the world. It is a continuation of Indigenous knowledge's in a modern setting, but it also requires creating reciprocal, moral relationships between Indigenous and other knowledge systems (Ermine, 2007). To "indigenize" education, one must return to the ontological and epistemological frameworks of the Indigenous peoples of a nation to influence its educational institutions or systems. Indigenous education is a body of knowledge that develops through the prolonged habitation of a particular location across time.

Such knowledge comprises established societal norms and values as well as conceptual frameworks that direct, coordinate, and control how individuals live and interpret their surroundings (Dei, Hall & Goldin Rosenberg, 2000). These understandings are the result of a people's collective experiences and understandings.

Indigenous educational approaches are defined in detail by Emeagwali (2014, p. 1) as “the cumulative body of strategies, practices, techniques, tools, intellectual resources, explanations, beliefs and values accumulated over time in a particular locality, without the interference and impositions of external hegemonic forces” (p. To describe common knowledge and how it relates to contemporary science, terms like ethno-science and citizen science have also been employed within the context of indigenous knowledge (Leach & Fairhead, 2002). Indigenous knowledge has also been referred to as traditional wisdom and local, folk, or people's knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is transmitted orally from one generation to the next through ceremonies and word-of-mouth. The World Bank (1997) asserts that a group's capacity to expand its indigenous knowledge is just as significant as its financial resources since indigenous knowledge embodies a people's history, skills, and experiences and may lead to better livelihoods.

### **Education and National Development**

One of the key elements of progress is education in many senses. Without significant investments in human capital, no nation can have sustainable economic growth. People's understanding of the world and themselves are improved via education. It raises their standard of living and has a significant positive social impact on both people and society (Taiwo & Tunde, 2016). Education increases productivity and creativity, encourages entrepreneurship, and advances technology. Additionally, it is essential for ensuring social and economic advancement as well as for enhancing revenue distribution.

Development is a multifaceted and complicated process that involves activities in the social, economic, cultural, and other spheres of

existence. Men have worked to improve their environment-conquering skills throughout human history in an effort to raise their level of living. Development involves both qualitative and quantitative improvements in a person's ability, talents, creativity, and overall material well-being. The lack of qualified employees or sufficient financial resources is not the primary cause of Nigeria's development challenges; rather, dishonesty and the desire for personal gain on the side of the Programme's policy makers and implementers also have share of the blame. Inequality, unemployment, and poverty are the three main problems that development commonly addresses and which then translate into national development.

Investment in human capital development, political sanity and survival, health and healthy living, economic advancement, sociocultural development, environmental protection, and industrialization all result from investments in people and community-oriented education. The aforementioned definitions make it clear that education is the driving force behind all development and nation-building, and as a result, any type of government—military, civilian, or mixed—that fails to consider the pace of educational advancement in its nation will inevitably lead to crisis and/or disaster (Ogueri, 2004). Additionally, some industrialized countries “readjusted” their educational policies to reflect local conditions and increased funding for education growth shortly following World War II in order to meet the current needs of development. This resulted in increased economic growth (Ogueri, 2004).

### **Challenges of Western Education to National Development**

Indigenous peoples from throughout the world have similar experiences with literacy programs, such as general underperformance in formal educational institutions and high dropout rates (Ketsitlile, 2011). For instance, African and Native American families in the U.S. confront challenges in the areas of education, society, and politics. Indigenous peoples were brutally silenced by colonists through formal schooling in many different parts of the world. Thus, poverty and misunderstanding have been attributed to literacy habits that differ from those of dominant

communities. (Shujaa, 1996) urges all African Americans and Africans to take ownership of their literacy by establishing a pedagogy that considers the distinctive culture and traditions of African people. According to research, these challenges combined with increased mobility led to inferior academic success, greater dropout rates, and other issues with education, such as cultural misunderstandings (Ketsitlile, 2011). While in popular Western culture, modern science—as promoted by western education is seen as the sole legitimate route to knowledge acquisition (Ketsitlile, 2011).

Young people in Africa are turning away from African music and adopting music from other cultures, completely oblivious to the fact that African music and dance are not just for amusement but also a spiritual and cultural legacy that should not be disregarded. Indigenous methods of knowing are critically endangered by knowledge of mainstream people in nations like Australia, Brazil, Peru, and India. The West ignored the suffering and torment that this “mission” causes to indigenous peoples in its blatant attempt to eradicate indigenous knowledge and establish a “new order” that would permanently silence the voice of the indigenous person. Some current notable areas in which western education is having disservice to national development in Nigeria and other indigenous societies are:

There is no denying that morals in Nigeria have declined significantly. Adultery, abortions, and wearing clothes that is overly provocative are now more commonplace than they ever were. The traditional African societies were not known with the aforementioned deviances. In certain households, it's possible to identify a split among the family members who favour and oppose western values. For instance, while the parents would like that their child grow up familiar with the best national traditions, a youngster may strive to become familiar with new trends. Such disputes could also have an impact on a couple's love. African customs and culture are receiving less focus. Prior to colonization, regional customs were taken extremely seriously. These civilizations are being lost over time as a result of the popularity of western culture and education. Our predecessors'

administrative practices were far more trustworthy than those in use now. Less anarchy prevailed, and rigorous order was upheld.

### **Relevance of Indigenous Education to National Development**

Any society's destiny depends on how well its culture and worldview are passed on to subsequent generations. Instilling knowledge of the group's language, history, customs, conduct, and spiritual beliefs into young people via education changes all facets of identity (Ketsitlile, 2011). Many European travelers to Africa had the impression that the continent was uninhabited. This impression was, to put it mildly, highly misguided and improper. Thus, Europe demonstrated a lack of understanding of African knowledge systems, which helps to explain why formal established European schools never gave any thought to the informal educational system that pervaded the entire continent and served as a means of passing knowledge from one community to another and from one generation to another (Richard, 2017). The main argument was that the Europeans had brought in something completely fresh to help her forward the imperialist goal. It became clear at that point that the western educational system serves to accelerate the contemporary West's development at the expense of the indigenous societies that are being colonized.

Disparaging African native educational systems indicates that there is no interaction or socialization amongst African groups and that there is no system in place to nurture students in accordance with African requirements and customs. The impression is depressing. As evidenced by the historical accomplishments of indigenous tribes in Nigeria that extend back to the colonial era, there were other groups that saw reading and writing as the primary foundation of education. Reading and writing are equated with Western culture in the eyes of these communities. The purposeful goal of the Western mentality was to obliterate anything and anything African, including the way that continent taught its children. African modes of life were undercut by the introduction of Western institutions, which undoubtedly cleared the path for their replacement.

African names were changed to European ones in order to carry out the

colonial objective, and English substituted native languages in the states of Anglo-speaking Africa as the medium of instruction. Africans were raised to imitate European Christians' moral standards. The need that every African be baptized and indoctrinated into western principles led some Africans, like Mbonu Ojike, to denounce his father's faith as "heathen" and obviously "inferior to the white man's" (Richard, 2017).

School in Africa typically serves as a microcosm of the greater culture. Children and adults tend to think that everything from the West is the greatest and that anything from Africa is inferior or *fong kong*, a Chinese term for the cheap, phony Chinese items that are commonly seen in Africa. It is not unusual for kids to recite lengthy portions from foreign literature like Shakespeare without realizing what they are saying. Children are trained to turn away from their communities when seeking solutions to life's questions. A curriculum that mainly relies on Western methods of knowing serves to further support this. When former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere asserts that the conflict between indigenous and western methods of learning is a major factor in the issues in African schools, he is speaking for all indigenous peoples.

Beyond the aforementioned problems, there is a pressing need for indigenous African educational approaches to be included in school, college, and university curricula. However, it is crucial to remember that regardless of how important the latter objective may be, there are social, psychological, anthropological, intellectual, economic, and other reasons that primarily result from the way in which the continent's history has developed, as well as the intellectual dominance and dependence structures connected to colonial and postcolonial hierarchies and power elites (Christie, 2008). Sadly, the same Africa created the classical bronzes of Igbo Ukwu in the ninth century, those of Ife (from the eleventh to the twelfth centuries AD), and Benin (from the fourteenth century AD). Did these achievements not take place while Europe was still mired in the Middle Ages? It is still conceivable that Egypt's historical records were sent to Greece, the birthplace of Western academia, after Alexander the Great captured Alexandria.

## **Why Indigenous Education Approach should be considered above Western Education System**

Traditional education's influence was lessened by colonization, which also brought western culture, civilization, and Christianity. Reading, Arithmetic, and Writing were introduced at a basic level with the goal of eliminating illiteracy, ignorance, and superstition while also creating messengers and individuals with a limited education who are terrified by authoritative leaders. The repercussions of this educational disarray brought about by western education were buried behind tribalism, nepotism, ethnocentrism, statism, and religious fanaticism. Numerous Asian nations have well-known growth and development patterns that are admirable. Japan and the rapidly industrializing economies of Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and others were first to achieve this feat, making East Asia the only area in the world to do so across a number of decades (Richard, 2017).

These cultures' homogeneity was only one of several elements that contributed to their development. These include the development of the agricultural sector, a system of mass education, the growth of indigenous industries, an export-oriented strategy, the Spartan discipline of their leadership, and the presence of an effective bureaucracy. If we want to better develop and sustain this peasant culture, we should take a cue from these close neighbours. Lesson from a close-knit community of peasants the experiences of the Japanese and Chinese. We must recognize that the people had a significant impact on the sort of growth that occurred in Japanese society. America destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II, leaving the Japanese civilization defenseless to the point that they were compelled to surrender. Japan closed its economy, never engaged in trade with the outside world, and turned inside for its supply and development, which is where the narrative of Japan's impact began. They refined and updated their traditional and indigenous ways of doing things and getting work done while managing their resources within their own setting. This suggests that Japanese society utilized an inward-looking approach to progress. They were able to modernize in accordance with

their technological capabilities, and they never imagined technological breakthroughs, innovations, or development for which they were not prepared or mature. This significantly aided in the advancement of civilization. It is true that growth that is focused on and driven by people takes time and effort.

China had comparable experiences and turned inside in search of change. After the Second World War, the focus moved from full production and accumulation to raising the standard of life of the populace and consumption as the society realized the importance of the population to a sustainable development. They preserved their native tongue, used indigenous knowledge to construct their primitive technology, valued their culture, and instilled the value of hard labor in their people on the same platform. China is one of the most developed and technologically sophisticated countries in the world today, producing more than 70% of the electronics used in Nigeria.

Nigeria should take a lesson from China and Japan's experiences, and we should realize that adopting Western values, as we did during the colonial era and are still doing today, hasn't benefited and probably won't benefit us. Our leaders should start people-centered development initiatives, we should focus on our own internal growth, and let's update our own native methods of doing things. The difficulties of underdevelopment can be stopped in their tracks by taking prompt action to address the following problems: poverty, inequality, unemployment, economic crises, and insecurity issues. Therefore, developing effective strategies for reducing poverty, particularly in rural regions, is a top priority for governments, international institutions, and policymakers worldwide. The paper ends with questions regarding the following as a possible course of action: if the equitable distribution of income, an increase in employment opportunities, improved social services, and an efficient allocation of resources to eliminate waste with proper planning and inquiries as blueprints for development, as has previously been advocated, will work, then the populace and the implementer should be properly checked.

## **Conclusion**

There is no question that indigenous peoples over the world confront several obstacles to their children's education, and in Africa, there is a never-ending battle for national development. It is crucial for indigenous children to have a decent education in order to compete effectively with mainstream students in the competitive world of today. However, obstacles like foreign languages, foreign teaching methods, poverty, and distance between home and school prevent them from succeeding in school. The current paper's numerous illustrative examples show that the main obstacle to these kids' educational success is forced instruction in a foreign language or languages.

The discussion's conclusion is that, in order to promote national development, the incorporation of indigenous educational approaches into all curricula must be done carefully and correctly in almost every setting for instruction. To make indigenous education a required component of all teaching and learning situations consistent with the sociological view that all knowledge, whether indigenous or western, is spawned within a particular segment of society based on power and class, the Western educational mindset that tends to view indigenous knowledge system as an integral part of the Arts and Culture Learning curriculum needs to be revisited. The hierarchically organized bodies of school knowledge are cited by (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2005) as evidence for how crucial a role learning institution play in legitimizing and developing hegemonic cultural capital. The discussion concluded that while dominant western forms of knowledge continue to have a prominent place in school curricula, they are not always the answer to Africa's social, economic, and political ills. The study came to the additional conclusion that placing too much emphasis on the superiority of western hegemonic forms of knowledge leads to denigrate indigenous educational approaches, discouraging many Africans from pursuing them. Even if it is advised that curriculum designers incorporate indigenous knowledge, it can be required for colleges to provide such courses as electives. In fact, if students are not interested in studying African indigenous knowledge

systems, they should not be forced to do so. Only when the subject matter is interesting to the students can learning flourish.

## R E F E R E N C E S

- Ahmad, A., Shehu, S. and Mahmoud, Z. (2019). Factors affecting development of education in Nigeria. In: T. Umar, ed., *Multifarious Issues in Nigeria Today: Multidisciplinary Approaches*, 1st ed. Akure: Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria, pp.70-80.
- Aronowitz, S. & Giroux, H.A. (2005). *Education under siege: The conservative, liberal and radical debate over schooling*. London: Routledge & Kegan
- Arua, A. & Lederer, M. (2003). What are students in Botswana high schools reading? In A. Arua (Ed.). *Reading for all in Africa*. (pp. 26- 31). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Chivaura, V. G. (2014). Progress on meeting SADC education targets. *Zimbabwean*, 4, 19-25.
- Christie, P. (2008). *Changing schools in South Africa: Opening the doors of learning*. Johannesburg: Heinemann.
- Christie, P. & Collins, C. (1990). Bantu education: Apartheid ideology or labour reproduction? *Comparative Education*, 18, 59-75. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305006820180107>
- Christie, P. (1992). Reforming the racial curriculum: Curriculum change in desegregated schools in South Africa. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 11, 37-48. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0142569900110103>
- Crossman, A. (2012). *Sociological theories*. London: Methuen.
- Dei, George J. Sefa, Hall Budd L. and Goldin Rosenberg, Dorothy (eds.) (2000). *Indigenous knowledges in global contexts: Multiple readings of our world*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Edsand., H & Broich., T (2019). The Impact of Environmental Education on Environmental and Renewable Energy Technology Awareness: Empirical Evidence from Colombia. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*, 18, 611–634.

- Emeagwali, G. (2014). Intersections between Africa's indigenous knowledge systems and history. In G. Emeagwali & G. SefaDei (Eds.), *African indigenous knowledge and the disciplines* (pp. 1-17). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Ermine, W. (2007). The ethical space of engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal*, 6(1)
- Fries, J. (1987) *The American Indian in higher education, 1975 – 76 to 1984 – 85*. Washington DC: Center for Education Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.
- Gboyega, A. (2003). Democracy and development: The imperative of local governance. An Inaugural Lecture, University of Ibadan, pp. 6-7.
- Jacob, W. J., Cheng, S. Y. & Porter, M. K. (2015). Global review of indigenous education: Issues of identity, culture, and language. In W. J. Jacob, S. Y. Cheng & M. K. Porter (Eds.), *Indigenous education: Language, culture and identity* (pp. 1–35). New York: Springer Science+Business Media
- Joseph, O.A (2014). National Development strategies: Challenges and options. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 3 (4), 51-58.
- Ketsitlile, L.E. (2011). An overview of indigenous peoples in education systems worldwide: Challenges, barriers and successes. *LWATI: A Journal of Contemporary Research*, 8(3), 213-229.
- Leach, M. & Fairhead, J. (2002). Manners of contestation: “citizen science” and “indigenous knowledge” in West Africa and the Caribbean. *International Social Science Journal*, 173, 299-311
- Macedo, D., Dendrinis, B. & Gounari, P. (2003). *The hegemony of English*. Boulder CO: Paradigm.
- Makinde, O. O. & Shorunke, O. A., (2013). Exploiting the values of indigenous knowledge in attaining sustainable development in Nigeria:*The place of the Library. Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal). Paper 908
- Meriton, V. (2009). Speech of Minister Vincent Meriton at the opening of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) workshop on 22nd June 2009. Retrieved August 29, 2015, from [http://www.mcdysc.sc/Documents/SPEECH IKS WORKSHOP colour.pdf](http://www.mcdysc.sc/Documents/SPEECH%20IKS%20WORKSHOP%20colour.pdf)
- Maila, M. & Loubser, C. (2003). Emancipatory indigenous knowledge systems: Implications for environmental education in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 23, 276-280.

- Moahi, K. (2010, February 18-19). Promoting African indigenous knowledge in the knowledge economy: Exploring the role of higher education and libraries. In symposium Knowing is not enough: Engaging in the knowledge economy. Conducted at the Stellenbosch University Library / IFLA Presidential Meeting, Stellenbosch South Africa. Retrieved from <http://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/395>.
- Naomi, O. (1995). Towards an integrated view of human rights. *Hunger Teach Net*, 6(3), 6-7.
- Ogueri, A. C. (2004). The need for environmental education in secondary education level in Nigeria: Problems and Challenges. International Master's Degree Thesis on Environmental Policy submitted to the Department of Environment, Technology and Social Studies Roskilde University, Denmark. {<https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:114447850>}
- Ohagwu, C.A. (2010). *Rural development in Nigeria: Issues, concepts and practice*. Enugu, John Jacobs Classic Publishers Ltd
- Mavhunga, P. (2009). Africanizing the curriculum: A case of Zimbabwe. *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research*, 2, 31-37.
- Mutekwe, E. (2015). Towards an Africa philosophy of education for indigenous knowledge systems in Africa. *Creative Education*, 2015, 6, 1294-1305
- Ntalaga, N. (2005). Interrogating the notion of development from a modernization paradigm. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 12, 311-323.
- Ntuli, P. (2009). The missing link between culture and education: Are we still chasing gods that are not our own? In M. W. Makgoba (Ed.), *African renaissance* (pp. 67-72). Cape Town: Mafube-Tafelberg.
- Ntuli, P. (2002). Indigenous knowledge systems & the African renaissance. *Indicator South Africa* 15(2):15-18.
- Odora-Hoppers, C. (2002). Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems: towards a conceptual and methodological framework. In C. Odora Hoppers (Ed.), *Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems: Towards a philosophy of articulation* (pp.139-143). Claremont, South Africa: New Africa Books.
- Richard, A.E. (2017). African indigenous knowledge: The challenges of industrialization. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, 5(5), 76-84.

- Shehu, A. (2020). Western education versus indigenous knowledge of the Tarok in Plateau State, Nigeria. *Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 11(4), 59-68,
- Shujaa, (1996). *Beyond desegregation: The politics of quality in African American schooling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Taiwo, R.O & Tunde, A. (2016). Impact of education on national development. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research | Social Sciences and Education*, 2 (1), 1-8.
- Tracy, D. H. & Morrow, L. M. (2006). *Lenses on reading: An introduction to theories and models*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Ukwuoma. (2014). College lecturer's perspectives on the role of Nigerian creole in teacher education. Doctoral dissertation. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations. (UMI No. 3580948). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED557024>
- Ukwuoma, U. (2015). Educational development of Africa: Changing perspectives on the role of indigenous knowledge. Original scientific paper Botswana International University of Science and Technology UDK: 371.217.46 Palapye – Botswana DOI: 10.17810/2015.28
- UNEP. (2008). Indigenous knowledge in disaster management in Africa. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme. [https://www.scrip.org/\(S\(czeh2tfqw2orz553k1wor45\)\)/reference/referencespapers.aspx?referenceid=2091374](https://www.scrip.org/(S(czeh2tfqw2orz553k1wor45))/reference/referencespapers.aspx?referenceid=2091374)
- Vilakazi, H. (1999). The problem of African universities. In M. W. Makgoba (Ed.), *African Renaissance* (pp. 127-132). Cape Town: Mafube-Tafelberg.
- Webster, A. (2008). *The sociology of development*. New York: Routledge
- Worldbank. (2015). What is indigenous knowledge? Retrieved August 29, 2015, from <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/basic.htm>.
- Zaruwa, M. Z. & Kwaghe, Z. E. (2014). Traditional tannery and dyeing (Yirie) methods: A science par excellence in Northeastern Nigeria. In G, Emeagwali & G. SefaDei (Eds.), *African indigenous knowledge and the disciplines*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Zaruwa, M. Z., Ibok, N. U. & Ibok, I. U. (2014). Traditional brewing technique in northern Nigeria. An indigenous approach to the exploitation of enzymes (Tsiro). In G, Emeagwali & G. SefaDei (Eds.), *African indigenous knowledge and the disciplines*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers

Zuckermann, Ghil'ad; et al. (2015), ENGAGING - A Guide to Interacting Respectfully and Reciprocally with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, and their Arts Practices and Intellectual Property, Australian Government: Indigenous Culture Support, p. 7.

## **Interrogating Leadership: An Assessment of Selected Newspaper Editorials in Holding the Buhari Administration Accountable**

*\*Akanni, Tunde, PhD & †Fatonji, Stephen, PhD*

### **Abstract**

*The Buhari-led administration came to power with repeated promises to focus on insecurity, corruption and economy. This study therefore investigated how a regular newspaper, The Punch and an online newspaper, Premium Times, consciously made efforts to hold the said administration accountable. Adopting the Development Media theory, this scholarly intervention therefore resorted to examining editorials from the selected newspapers as vital contents to investigate the extent to which the said newspapers attempted to hold the federal government accountable in the eight years of President Buhari's administration. Deploying the research method of both qualitative and quantitative content analyses, it was found that editorials focusing on economic issues were preponderant in the two publications. Most of the editorials, 64% of them, published by the two newspapers during the said period focused on the three major promises between 2020 and 2022, being the second term of the Buhari-led administration. Premium Times had more editorials (52%) on security, economy and corruption than The Punch newspaper (48%). The study also revealed that majority of the editorials on the three major promises followed constructive criticism and investigative approach (76%) while about a quarter of the editorials followed commendation and opinion-based approach (24%).*

*Keywords: leadership, Buhari, media accountability, newspapers, editorials*

---

\* Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos. .

† Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos.

## **Introduction**

One of the roles of the mass media in a democratic society is to hold the government accountable. This is why the media are often described as the watchdog of a nation, a term allegorically used to imply the need for the media to constantly and effectively monitor, evaluate, investigate and report every aspect of the society. The media are expected to serve as platforms for informing and educating people on problems affecting the environment in which they operate (McQuail, 2010). Oso (2012, p.27) affirms that “the mass media...should act as the public watchdog overseeing the activities of the government and its institutions”. The onus therefore rests on the media to ensure that the society within which they operate are monitored and reported in such a way that will promote peace and development of the society. Some of the challenges confronting Nigeria (and many developing nations) include hunger, abject poverty, insecurity, poor healthcare, communal conflicts, weak economy, huge infrastructural deficit, collapsing educational system, among others.

Insecurity, weak economy and corruption are long time challenges in Nigeria. The problems intensify with the arrival of each successive administration, whether military or civilian. However, the challenges became aggravated towards the end of the Goodluck-Jonathan administration. Thus, the former opposition party, the All Progressives Congress took advantage of the problems and decided to focus their campaign on insecurity, economy and corruption in 2015. At the time, Nigeria, especially, the North East was at the mercy of terrorists while the economy was fast collapsing and corruption was a household name. Taking advantage of the situation, the former Military Head of State, General Buhari and the then opposition All Progressives Congress mounted an aggressive media campaign to deliver Nigeria from the mess and enthrone an ideal government. Like a magic ounce, the opposition party defeated the ruling People’s Democratic Party who had been in power for 16 years. That became the first time an opposition party would defeat a ruling party in the history of Africa’s largest democracy, Nigeria. Ironically, seven years into the administration, the three promises remain

a mirage, with worsening insecurity, economy and growing corruption. This study therefore investigates the efforts of the media to hold the Buhari-led administration accountable and responsible for the promises made during the electioneering campaigns.

The media served as the triumphant horses on which the Buhari-led APC rode to gain power both in the first and second tenures. The study therefore interrogated the media visibility of the three promises made and how the media carried out its constitutional mandate of holding the government accountable. To achieve that, the researchers carried content analysis of the editorials of major newspaper publications in Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on development media theory. Propounded in 1987 by Dennis McQuail, the theory assumes that the media should be used for economic, social, cultural and political development. The theory therefore, seeks to explain the normative behaviour of the press in countries that are classified as developing countries (McQuail, 2010). According to McQuail, (2010), the media in developing countries should pay attention to developmental challenges such as absence of communication infrastructure, professional skills, production and cultural resources, dependence on the developed nations for technological needs, skills and cultural products; the economy and other issues. According to McQuail (2010), the media under development press theory must participate in development tasks as designed by the state. Thus, the development plan of the Buhari-led administration was expected to be given adequate attention by the media.

### **Methodology**

The research design adopted a descriptive approach that enables clear presentation of the issues focused on for clear understanding. The population of this study comprises all the newspapers published in Nigeria. The Nigerian Press Council lists 28 newspapers as national newspapers in the country as of June, 2022 when this information was

retrieved (<http://new.presscouncil.gov.ng>). However, *The Punch* and *Premium Times* newspapers were selected based on online availability and national coverage. This study employed the use of content analysis research method. Editorials on governance issues bothering on security, economy and corruption in selected newspapers constituting the data were carefully examined, coded and analysed. Estimating inter-coder reliability with Cohen's Kappa statistics on SPSS, the result was approximately 0.83. According to Fleiss Guidelines for Kappa interpretation, 0.75 and above is rated excellent; 0.4-0.75 fair or good, while less than 0.4 is considered poor. Relying therefore on this interpretation guideline, the inter-coder reliability for the study was adjudged excellent. Data were presented using descriptive statistics comprising frequency tables.

### **Roles of Mass Media in Society**

The main functions of communication in society, according to Lasswell (1948) include surveillance of the environment, correlation of the parts of the society in responding to its environment, and the transmission of the cultural heritage. Wright (1960) as cited by McQuail, (2010) added entertainment as a fourth key media function. This may be part of the transmitted culture but it has another aspect - that of providing individual reward, relaxation and reduction of tension, which makes it easier for people to cope with real-life problems and for societies to avoid breakdown. With the addition of a fifth item, mobilization - designed to reflect the widespread application of mass communication to political and commercial propaganda, McQuail (2010) explains that the mass media should provide information about events and conditions in society and the world. They should also explain, interpret and comment on the meaning of events and information. This includes providing support for established authority and norms, socializing and uniting the diverse groups and ensuring consensus building. To ensure continuity, McQuail (2010) says the media should regularly express the society's traditions, customs and culture and its norms and recognize subcultures and new cultural

developments. This includes forging and maintaining commonality of values.

In addition, McQuail (2010) says the media are expected to entertainment in form of amusement, diversion, relaxation and reduction of social tension. Lastly, McQuail (2010) advocates that mass media should constantly campaign for societal objectives in the sphere of politics, war, economic development, work and sometimes morality and ethical values. Similarly, Akepe and Oyedokun (2014) classify media roles into traditional and developmental roles. The traditional roles include information dissemination, educating the general public, serving as watchdog of the society and provision of entertainment as well as promotion of culture. The developmental roles include the need to set agenda by determining what people read, shaping of public opinion by influencing the thinking and mindset of people and influencing public policy by setting the agenda.

It should however be noted that the classification of media roles is not mutually exclusive. The traditional roles may overlap into the developmental roles. For instance, as the media play the watchdog role by holding the government accountable, they are indirectly contributing to the development of the nation as funds are put to judicious use and resources are distributed across all strata of the society. According to Kayode (2017), whatever the roles generally ascribed to the media it is acknowledged that the media play a very important role in the promotion of good governance and in minimizing corruption. It raises awareness of the key issues and explain how they can be addressed. It also scrutinizes the efforts of the government towards addressing the challenges. The media can play its role in addressing the issues of corruption, economy and insecurity at every stage of the functions identified above. At the surveillance or information stage, the media can monitor the problems and report them as they are without embellishment. At the correlation stage, the media is expected to engage in robust interpretation of the problems without taking sides. Balanced and fair analysis of issues will enlighten the public, educate them on the real issues and enable them to make informed decisions on governance. At the continuity or cultural

stage, the media can promote cultures related to honesty, selflessness and community life as opposed to individualism. This can be achieved through effective cultural programming. The media can also educate the people on the key issues through its entertainment programmes. This is known as edutainment, a concept associated with behaviour change communication.

The extent of media freedom and democracy determines the extent of accountability and transparency in a country. If the media are given the requisite freedom to perform their roles, corruption will be exposed, accountability will be promoted and there will be less corruption. Ahrend (2002) supports that press freedom is associated with lower levels of corruption. Unfortunately, genuine free press is rare to find anywhere in the world. Even the most liberal media systems are not entirely free as owners still parley with powerful business magnates and the political class, thereby rubbing off negatively on the degree of their neutrality in framing issues. According to Pasek (2006, p.3), “literature suggests that as countries become more democratic, mass media come to assume a critical role and as media become freer, their role increases”. Yet, there is less clarity on how this interaction occurs due to lack of consistent model that predicts the relationship between media liberalization and democratization (Pasek 2006, p.4).

Camaj (2013) asserts that the growing literature on the role of mass media for governmental accountability suggests that a free press is among the most effective mechanism of external controls on bureaucratic corruption and promotion of good governance. The media have the potential to curb corruption and to provide a platform for voicing complaints. Suphachalasai (2005, p. 3–4) argues that the incentives of exposing corruption lie in opportunities of investigative journalists and media institutions to achieve fame and larger audiences, which help to increase patronage. Besley and Burgess (2002) corroborate that governments are more responsive in climes favourably disposed to unhindered public access to information, especially information that are in public interest and such that do not undermine the security and

sovereignty of the nation. According to Camaj (2013), studies that examine the attributes of the media system as an influencing variable between mass media and corruption suggest that media ownership, distribution, and competition have important consequences for the reportage of corruption and enactment of policies that promote transparency and accountability.

Diamond et al. (1999) note that often time, accountability scholars assume that competitive, free and fair elections are the main process through which the accountability is guaranteed. However, Dubnick (2002, p. 10) says accountability has also come to feature various institutional checks and balances by which democracies seek to control the actions of governments. Hence, Schedler (1999) argues that governmental accountability encompasses a combination of vertical and horizontal institutions. Vertical accountability describes a relationship between unequals, and it “refers to some powerful superior actors holding some less powerful inferior actors accountable or vice versa” (Schedler 1999, p. 23). In this category, according to Schedler (1999), fall electoral accountability, civil society, and mass media. Horizontal accountability implies the power checks and balances exercised by equals (O’Donnell 1999). Here, it is referred to the interstate relations between the executive, legislative, and judiciary (Camaj, 2013). While the vertical-horizontal accountability thesis is plausible, it should be noted that mass media in most African countries are nowhere close to being described as “superior” to political office holders and business elites. In Nigeria for instance, some newspapers are owned by politicians who maintain allegiance to the political class. Some major private television stations are also owned by politicians and business executives who have close links to corridors of power. To hold the political class accountable in such system of media ownership is an empty dream. Camaj (2013) says electoral accountability approach considers voter participation as an influential factor on checking corruption. Camaj (2013) explains that voters can discipline the government by using their ability to replace the incumbent by electing a new government. However, given that voters’ power is limited by their inability to monitor

governmental action directly, they rely on mass media to perform this task (Camaj, 2013). Mass media contribute to voter learning in a pre-electoral process (Weaver and Drew 2001) and they may influence the outcome of the elections by influencing the weight voters put on different issues in their voting choice.

Furthermore, civil society represents another channel through which accountability is exercised. Civil society actors indirectly influence governmental accountability by “strengthening the institutions of vertical accountability that underpin them, such as electoral democracy and an independent media” (Fox 2000, p. 1). In Nigeria for instance, civil society organizations like the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), Human Development Initiative (HDI), Budget, MacArthur Foundation and Human and Environmental Development Agency (HEDA) play major roles in checkmating corruption through advocacy, citizen education, research, media partnership and constructive criticism of corrupt practices and systems. As Stapenhurst (2000) claims, “Civil-society organizations often work hand-in-hand with news reporters, who broadcast and reinforce these groups” demands, sharpen their lines of inquiry and disseminate their findings to a broader public” (p. 9). Empirical studies suggest that media liberalization fosters democracy only when coupled with emerging civic society (Hall and O’Neil, 1998). The relationship between media professionals and policymakers is a symbiotic one because mass media depend on sources of information (Camaj, 2013), while policymakers rely on the media to publicize their goals (Berkowitz, 1992). Yet, research suggests that the media have power to set policy agendas in general (Dearing and Rogers 1996, p. 73) and the agenda of the legislative in particular. Policymakers and legislators tend to use media reports as a measure of public opinion when prioritizing their policies.

### **Power of Newspaper Editorials**

Editorials are media voices. They act as the position of media owners on the issues being examined. Through editorials, newspapers can commend,

condemn, crystalize or criticize the government, its policies, actions and inactions. Editorials are not just opinions; they are highly informed opinions. They should not just be the voices of the newspapers but also the voices of majority of the citizens. An editorial should ideally reveal the hypocrisy of the ruling class, their weaknesses, mis-governance, wrong decisions, and implications of their actions/inactions on the citizens. It should tell the truth to power without mincing words, call the government to order when it is going wrong and wake them up to their responsibilities in case they are sleeping. Editorials should not just condemn; they should also commend where necessary. They should be used to address current issues in the society. They are not just about the government; they can also be used to address citizens, policy makers, professional bodies, government of other nations and any other issue worth public attention. Editorials, like news, should be sacred, free from sentiments and other colorations. Editorials should make the parties addressed feel sober and motivated to make corrections or improve good deeds. Public interest must always govern editorials.

Newspaper editorials according to Michael (2013, p.4) “have served a purpose of informing and persuading the public for generations.” He narrates that the editorial has grown from its beginning forms in 10th century England as newsletters to the public, to now, as fixtures in major daily newspapers across this country, either in print or online formats. Generally, Meltzer (2007, p. 84) says “journalism strives to be objective in reporting and covering the news of the day”. A newspaper’s editorial page exists both as an extension of objectivity and an acknowledgment that including varying views on issues is one specific way to control bias and promote a stronger idea of objectivity. Meltzer (2007) adds that historically, the editorial page is the only place in which pure opinion exists in newspapers. Writing on the power of editorials, Michael (2013, p.4) says:

Since the beginning of formal research in the areas of persuasion, researchers have examined the effect that political communication has had on readers. Editorials are often filled with political

commentary. The grandest goal of editorials is to persuade the audience in some manner... the goal is also to inform or explain and stimulate insight. The growing intricacy of current events requires effective editorial writers to explain more than pontificate.

The job of the editorial board is to meet, deliberate and agree on an issue before publishing such view as the official voice of the newspaper (Meltzer, 2007, p. 85). Therefore, Michael (2013, p.5) says “in essence, the final editorial may not be the voice of a sole individual, but a harnessed opinion of more than one person; a written embodiment of the group’s overall consensus”.

### **Findings**

This study set out to identify and examine the extent to which the Buhari-led administration was held accountable in the three areas of promise for the entire duration of the administration. The said three are corruption, security and economy. Herewith the results of the study.

**RQ1:** What are the issues of concern in the editorials of the newspapers selected for the study? It turned out that the two newspapers appeared to focus more on economic (including corruption and security issues nonresolution of which could ground the entire Nigerian system. On March 8 2016, *The Punch* editorial was titled: Saraki’s Indefensible Cars. Bukola Saraki, a two-term former governor of Kwara State, was the Senate president and he had ordered for exotic cars not minding the state of the nation’s economy. *The Punch* notes

Nothing can explain away the impunity and insensitivity of the Saraki-led Senate. The economic implications of this action are glaring, including more pressure on the naira with the importation of these needless luxury items. The national currency exchanged at N330 to a dollar on Friday, while the foreign reserves have plunged to \$27.8 billion from a high of \$47 billion in 2007. It is inexplicable

that Saraki and his colleagues are not bothered by factory closures, job losses, poor infrastructure and lack of social services.

Unamused, the paper remarks that: "...This confirms the notoriety of Saraki and his colleagues, and their disdain for *public opinion* (emphasis ours).

Still on the National Assembly, *The Punch* on April 20, 2016, titled its editorial thus: "2016 Budget Gridlock Harmful to the Economy". Apparently meticulously taking stock of the Assembly's illegal conduct, the paper did not hesitate to register boldly that "the budget impasse, triggered by lawmakers" distortions (sic) of the document for their selfish interests is yet another blotch on our Eighth National Assembly." As if the government institutions were competing to say that there was no succor anywhere, *Premium Times* in its reckoning with the affairs of the Central Bank of Nigeria had lost all hope in the Bank since 2017. On October 18 2017 its editorial was titled "The Central Bank and Mismanagement of the Nigerian Economy. The paper concluded in the editorial with an unequivocally definite demand stating that "...We are constrained therefore, to call on the governor of the Central Bank to resign, and for the appropriate law enforcement agencies to seek to apply penalties as provided by the law for this gravitous infringement"

Against the nation's ceaseless struggle with insecurity, Premium Time chose to address the issue of the preponderance of arms in its June 21, 2022 editorial. It was titled "President Buhari, Mop Up Arms from Terrorists and Non-State Actors." The paper recounts that:

Since a 2016 United Nations Office on Drug and Crime report indicated that 350 million (70 per cent) of the 500 million illicit small and light weapons (SALW) circulating in West Africa, are in Nigeria. Equally petrifying is the country's abysmally porous land borders. An official tally unfurled by a former Minister of Internal Affairs, Abba Moro, indicated that 1,497 illicit routes exist through which contrabands flow into Nigeria, which, of course, include arms and ammunition. Officials of the Nigerian Customs Service had intercepted 13 containers laden with illegal arms at a Lagos port in

2013, a scenario that strongly suggests that an incredible quantum of illegal arms routinely enter the country with the connivance of corrupt security personnel.

Though coming a little late, *Premium Times* charges the government to enable the newly established Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons function as actively it needs to, to serve its long pending purpose.

RQ 2: To what extent was the Buhari-led administration held accountable on security, economy and corruption by each of the selected media?

**Table 1: Frequency of editorials on security, economy and corruption**

Newspaper	Frequency	Percent
<i>Premium Times</i>	117	52.0
<i>The Punch</i>	108	48.0
Total	225	100.0

Table 1 shows the extent to which newspapers wrote editorials on security, economy and corruption during the Buhari-led administration. Results indicate that *Premium Times* newspaper (52%) had slightly had more editorials on security, economy and corruption than Punch newspaper (48%). It also revealed that the two newspapers extensively wrote editorials on the promises made by the Buhari-led administration, with over two hundred editorials on the three cardinal promises.

**Table 2: Year of editorial**

Year	Frequency	Percent
2016	18	8.0
2017	27	12.0
2018	36	16.0
2020	54	24.0
2021	45	20.0

Year	Frequency	Percent
2022	45	20.0
Total	225	100.0

Table 2 shows that most of the editorials (64%) on the three major promises made by the Buhari-led administration were between 2020 and 2022.

**Table 2: Promise addressed**

Promise	Frequency	Percent
Corruption	108	48.0
Economy	54	24.0
Security	45	20.0
The three issues	18	8.0
Total	225	100.0

Table 3 shows the specific promise or issue addressed in the editorials. Results reveal that newspapers focused more on corruption with nearly half of all the editorials (48%), followed by editorials on the economy (24%) while security had the least attention with 8% coverage.

- RQ 3: What were the techniques deployed by newspaper editorials in holding the Buhari-led administration responsible for its promises? The second research question examined the techniques deployed in newspaper editorials to hold the Buhari-led administration responsible.

**Table 4: Approach of editorial**

Position	Frequency	Percent
Condemnation	171	76.0
Commendation	54	24.0
Total	225	100.0

Table 4 shows the position of editorials on the promises made by the

Buhari-led administration. Results reveal that majority of the editorials on the three major promises were followed condemnation approach (76%) while about quarter of the editorials followed commendation approach (24%).

**Table 5: Techniques used**

Technique	Frequency	Percent
Investigation	171	76.0
Opinion	54	24.0
Total	225	100.0

Table 5 shows that most of the editorials on the three major promises made by the Buhari-led administration used investigative technique (76%) while about quarter (24%) were opinion-based.

It was found that most of the editorials (64%) on the three major promises made by the Buhari-led administration were between 2020 and 2022, being the second term of the Buhari-led administration. Although there were substantial editorials on the three major promises made in the first tenure (36%), majority of the editorials (64%) were in the second tenure. This shows that the newspapers got quite sensitive during the second term of the administration. They exercised adequate patience before using their editorials to assess the performance of the government in the three major areas. While this is commendable, it should be noted that the media do not have to wait too long before providing fair assessment of an administration's performance. Key indices of development can be used as yardstick for editorial writing each month.

Results further indicate that the two newspapers extensively wrote editorials on the promises made by the Buhari-led administration, with over two hundred editorials on the three cardinal promises. If calculated cumulatively, editorials on the three issues constitute about 10% of all editorials written within the eight years of the Buhari-led government. Given the fact that the media have several issues to equally address, it will be fair to say that the media gave adequate attention to the promises

made by the government. *Premium Times* newspaper had slightly more editorials (52%) on security, economy and corruption than Punch newspaper (48%). This shows that the two newspapers gave the needed attention to the promises considering that they had almost equal share of editorials. Results revealed that newspapers focused more on corruption with nearly half of all the editorials (48%), followed by editorials on the economy (24%) while security had the least attention with 8% coverage. Several studies (e.g Camaj, 2013; Kayode, 2017; Fatonji, 2021) affirm that corruption is at the centre of several developmental efforts in Nigeria. It affects the economy and the fight against security. Thus, it was not out of place to focus more on issues related to corruption in the Buhari-led administration. However, the media should have also prioritized other major promises in their editorials.

The study also revealed that majority of the editorials on the three major promises followed constructive criticism and investigative approach (76%) while about quarter of the editorials followed commendation and opinion-based approach (24%). The newspapers were very critical in their editorials as they blatantly condemned ineffective policies and their implementations. Yet, they were very constructive. On another positive note, the newspapers did not just condemn government activities, they also commended the government where necessary. This shows a balanced perspective on governance. Most of the issues in the editorials were also investigated as verifiable data and facts were often used. On the negative side, about quarter of the editorials were mere opinions. Ideally, editorials should be a blend of investigations and opinions, especially public opinion. Theoretically, the findings agree with the postulations development media theory as adequate attention was given to the three major promises made by the Buhari-led government. The three issues-corruption, economy and security are core aspects of Nigeria's developmental challenges.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the media gave adequate attention to the Buhari-led government as newspaper editorials were focused on the three

major promises made by the government. The newspapers were very constructive in their criticisms and they followed investigative approach to a large extent. There was however more focus on corruption issues. Thus, it is recommended that the media should endeavor to give fair attention to all major developmental challenges in their editorials.

## R E F E R E N C E S

- Ahrend, R. (2002). Press Freedom, Human Capital and Corruption. DELTA Working Paper Series No. 2002-11, Delta, Paris, February.
- Akepe, L. & Oyedokun, G. (2014). Exploring the media's role in fighting fraud and corruption. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272321230>. accessed on 19-07-2017
- Berkowitz, D. (1992). Who sets the media agenda? The ability of policymakers to determine news decisions." *In Public opinion, the press, and public policy* , ed. David J. Kennamer, 81-102. Westport, CT: Praeger
- Besley, T. & Burgess, R. (2002). The political economy of government responsiveness: theory and evidence from India. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117 (4): 1415-51
- Camaj, L. (2013). Media freedom and corruption: Media effects on government accountability in 133 countries. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, The Denver Sheraton, Denver, CO, Aug 04, 2013*. Retrieved online from: [http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p432762\\_index.html](http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p432762_index.html)
- Dearing, W. & Rogers, M. (1996). *Agenda-Setting*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Diamond, L., Marc, F. & Schedler, A. (1999). Introduction. In *The self-restraining state*, ed. Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner, 1-12. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Dubnick, M. (2002). Seeking salvation for accountability. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, August 29-September 1.
- Hall, R. & O'Neil, P. (1998). Institutions, transitions, and the media: A comparison of Hungary and Romania. In O'Neil, P. (ed.) *Communicating democracy: The media and political transitions* (pp. 125-46). London: Lynne Rienne

- Fox, J. (2000). *Civil Society and Political Accountability: Propositions for Discussion*. Presented at Institutions, Accountability and Democratic Governance in Latin America meeting of The Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame, Ma.
- Kayode, O. & Bello, M. (eds.) (2017). *Effects of corruption on the Nigerian society*. Lagos: Alamori Eda Publications Ltd.
- Lasswell, H. (1948). The structure and function of communication in society. In L. Bryson (ed.). *The communication of ideas* (pp. 32-51). New York: Harper & Row.
- Meltzer, L. (2007). *Executive function in education: From theory to practice*. The Guilford Press: New York London
- McQuail D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory*, 6th edition. London: Sage
- Michael, D. (2013). *Editorial Personality: Factors That Make Editorial Writers Successful*. A Thesis Presented to The Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of Missouri-Columbia in Partial Fulfilment Of The Requirements For The Degree Master of Arts
- O'Donnell, G. (1999). Horizontal accountability in new democracies. In *The self-restraining state*, ed. Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plantter, 29–52. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner.
- Oso, L. (2012). *Press and politics in Nigeria: On whose side? Being 47<sup>th</sup> Edition of Lagos State University Inaugural Lecture series delivered on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2012*. Ojo, Lagos: Lagos State University Press.
- Pasek, J. (2006). *Fueling or Following Democracy? Analyzing the Role of Media Liberalization in Democratic Transition*. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, August 30–September 3
- Schedler, A. (1999). Conceptualizing accountability. In *The self-restraining state*, ed. Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plantter, 13–28. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner.
- Suphachalasai, S. (2005). *Bureaucratic corruption and mass media*. Research Paper No. 05, *Environmental Economy and Policy*.
- Stapenhurst, R. (2000). *The media's role in curbing corruption*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Institute.

## Women Enslavement and Eroded Sociocultural Value System in Nigeria

\*Okonye, Anthonia Hafunjoh, †Ojo, Olusola  
Matthew, PhD & ‡Awomoyi, Morayo Emitha

### Abstract

*Despite international consensus on equal rights of humans to life without gender discrimination, enslavement of women through forced marriage and related sharp practices have constituted aspects of customs and traditions in Nigeria in time perspective. Using comparative analysis of Nigeria's regional composition, this article examines the devastating implications of women enslavement for national socio-cultural value system. Employing primary and secondary sources of data collection, the treatise explores the synergy between the historical antecedent and contemporary context of obnoxious cultural practices and institutions that condone sharp practices in various socio-cultural settings in Nigeria. Findings revealed that plurality of the legal framework along religious and regional dichotomy has constituted a major hindrance to the eradication of the obnoxious cultural practices against women in Nigeria. Hence, there is need for the harmonization of Nigeria's legal framework towards ensuring the prohibition of all forms of women enslavement across the country.*

*Keywords: women, enslavement, equal rights, gender discrimination Nigeria, cultural practices*

---

\* Dept. of Peace Studies & Conflict Resolution, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja.

† Dept. of Peace Studies & Conflict Resolution, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja.

‡ The American University, Washington, DC.

## **Introduction**

Gender-Based cultural discrimination against women has remained subsistence in human practices in many parts of the globe, despite the wide condemnation it has continued to receive as a crime against humanity (Rome Statute, 1998). In its September 2001 declaration, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance lent credence to extant legal framework against human enslavement and considered the obnoxious practices as crime against humanity. Despite the fact that these uncivilized sharp practices have mostly affected women and the girl child over the years, it is still among the least understood form of human inhumanity against humans in time perspectives. Marriage-slavery, which is an integral component of women enslavement derives legitimacy from religious, cultural and traditional institutions. Thus, its long practice within the socio-cultural terrains has made it to be considered as a “norm’. In Africa particularly, this aberration has been generally left unaddressed as they are viewed as sensitive social order that bothers on custom. In its pre-colonial epoch, Nigeria’s cultural milieu was beclouded by variety of gender-based discriminatory practices in various communities across the nation. It is unfortunate to note that in the contemporary times, some of the practices remain part of the social norm embedded in customary marriage code especially at the grassroots and rural settings where ignorance and illiteracy are more prevalent. These cut across various regions in the country, including the so-called majority groups, namely Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo.

McQuade (2017) considered slavery as a political issue, which is essentially about exerting power by certain individuals or groups to enslave, or the exclusion of certain people from power so as to get them enslaved. McQuade further stated that marriage-slavery has actually continued to attract cultural embracement in modern times particularly when it is not actually tagged slavery. This is more so especially in Africa where patriarchal social order in which men predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property is well-entrenched in their cultural value systems. Thus, the central focus

of this treatise is to examine the different forms of women enslavement with emphasis on the three predominant regions in Nigeria and how some of these practices from historical and contemporary perspectives. Furthermore, the article analyzes the definition and legal nuances as it applies to them with a view to illustrating the complexities and difficulties in prosecuting various forms of women enslavement in contemporary Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

Given historical differences, obligatory customs and practices across the country still have some variations from one ethnic group to another, and most specifically from one town to another (Ewelukwa, 2002). The three different kinds of marriages are discussed below:

- *Statutory marriage* is a marriage that is accepted by federal legislation, this kind of marriage is known as a monogamous marriage because it is between a man and a woman. Often, there are requirements from the marriage registrar that need to be met before this marriage can take place. (a) The parties involved need to be ready to declare their age (b) Parties involved need to get the consent and approval of their parents if they are both below twenty-one years of age. In a case where both parties are above the slated age, they don't need to undergo this process. Moreover, the consent of both parties is also an important requirement, this consent must be obtained in a legitimate way which should not involve any form of pressure or fraudulent act. (c) Parties involved will not be allowed to perform a statutory marriage if either of them has been married at one point in time to another person in the court and the marriage has not been officially dissolved in the court. (d) There should be an agreement between the distant and close relations of both parties, for example, do they want the marriage to be performed in the registrar's office or do they want to have it in a licensed place of worship. Weddings done in the registrar's office can only be dissolve in the court.
  
- *Customary marriage*: in practice, customary marriage tends to

differ based on the ethnic community in consideration. Given the complexity of its heterogeneous composition, various ethnic groups in Nigeria have their peculiar marriage rites and customs. Nevertheless, almost all marriage practices in various parts of the country usually reinforce cemented relationship between or among the families of the couple, thereby promoting enduring inter-group peace, harmony and unity. In other words, marriage under customary law creates cordial ties not only between the couple but also between/among the families involved. Marriage under Customary Law also recognizes polygamous practices, in which a man can marry more than one wife. As Nwogugu (2004) rightly observes, there is no limit to the number of wives a man can marry under customary law.

- *Islamic marriage* is known to be a polygamous marriage where the man is permitted to have more than one wife. The consent of the intended couple and that of their parent is also required, payment of the *sadukat* or dower and solemnization. Islamic law marriage requires that both parties must freely consent to the union before the rite is performed. However, under the Maliki Islamic injunctions, a father reserves the right to conclude a marriage on behalf of his infant sons and virgin girls. The ceremony is called *Ijbar*. Nevertheless, this practice is flexible in that as the damsel grows into the age of puberty, she has the option to reject the marriage contract between her parents and the would-be husband.

### Theoretical Thrust

This treatise employs the analytical perspective of social death and community identity and lifestyle as theoretical underpinning. Social death theory depicts the condition of people not fully accepted by the wider society within the context of their identity as humans. It is used by sociologists such as Zygmunt Bauman and historians of slavery and Holocaust (Card, 2003). The chief proponent of the relationship between social death and slavery is Orlando Patterson. Patterson defines slavery as one of the most thrilling dimensions of master-

slavery relations whereby the former exerts outrageously domineering influence over the latter (Patterson, 1985). Kralov (2015) identified three characteristics associated with defining social death, each of which suggests that the concept represents compromised well-being and human inhumanity against humans. These are: loss of social identity; loss of social connectedness; and losses associated with disintegration of the body. With regards to marriage slavery, manifestation of social death is reflected when the male spouse exerts extreme domineering influence over the female spouse and the latter seems grossly helpless. Power plays an essential role in the relationship between a master and a slave, and violence is often deemed a necessary component of slavery. According to Patterson (1985), “a slave was considered as having no worth as humans; and compromised identity.

The second theory is based largely on community lifestyle. A community is a social unit that contains the co-habitation of a group of humans with shared characteristics and identities, including norms, religion, values and language. Communities often share a sense of place that is situated in a given geographical area such as country, village, town, or any other forms of neighborhood. People tend to define those social ties as important to their identity, practice, and roles in social institutions such as family, home, work, government, society, or humanity at-large (James, Nadarajah, Haive, and Stead, 2012). McMillan and Chavis (1986) identify four elements of “sense of community”. They are membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and shared emotional connection. According to James et al, “Life-style community relations involves giving primacy to communities coming together around particular chosen ways of life, such as morally charged or interest-based relations or just living or working in the same location.”

### **Methodology**

This analysis employs both historical and survey methods for data collection and interpretation. The historical method is employed to determine, evaluate and explain past events especially for the purpose of

gaining a better understanding about marriage slavery within the context of Nigerian social formation. The survey method is adopted to compliment secondary data. Data collected are analyzed using descriptive method.

### **Marriage slavery practices in precolonial Nigeria**

The contemporary geographic entity of Nigeria can be described as a melting-pot of culture and religion. The country comprises of over 300 ethnic groups with diverse customs and marriage practices. Before the advent of Islam and Christianity, marriages were contracted based on native laws and customs some of which subjugate young girls and women in a society largely dominated by male power and influence. It was not uncommon to have marriage relationships tainted by slavery like practices such as in child marriage, bride wealth, concubinage, levirate, sororate, marriage by exchange, woman-woman marriage, male daughters, marriage through pawning, marriage by adoption, etc. cut across all the regions. In the traditional Igbo social setting, marriage was not essentially conducted with the intent to tie the couple on the basis of exchange of mutual affection, but primarily to establish a legal basis for procreation.

Different forms of marriage practices existed among the Igbos during the period under review. They included normal marriage contract involving two exogamous families; marriage through pawning, which allowed fathers to use their daughters as collateral for loans or related financial commitment; concubinage; and marriage by abduction (Uchendu, 2002). In marriage by abduction, financially constrained young suitors abducted girls of their choice for marriage. Within the context of woman-to-woman marriage practice, the female husband has the conjugal obligation to pay the bride wealth of their wives just as done by men while marrying their wives. A female husband finds a man to meet the sexual needs of her wives and in return claims her services from which she increases her wealth and affluence. The exploitative tendency in this practice explains why the people of Nnobi regarded it as a form of human enslavement, known as “igba ohu” (Uchendu, 2006).

Another typical form of a female husband among the Igbos is a

situation in which a wealthy woman without male husband and children marries a woman to begat children for her with the intention to inherit her property and preserve her ancestral ties and family lineage. In some parts of Nigeria, a prosperous and influential woman who was not married but covet having a family of her own, could “marry” another woman who would have sexual intercourse with a man in secret. The man in question usually has the understanding that the children the woman would have do not belong to him. Traditionally, the Igbo society is patrilineal, and emphasis is placed on the community rather than the individual. Thus, moral obligations were regulated by the demands of the moral codes, tradition, and custom of the people and not by the exercise of individual judgment and conscience (Ilogu, 1974). The woman-to-woman marriage was an improvised approach towards sustaining patriarchy with a view to preserving the tradition of patriarch. However, foreign influences on African traditional cultures and institutions have place significant setbacks certain traditions and practices that are inherent in African culture. For instance, woman to woman marriage suffered a setback arising from colonialism and Christianity in Igboland. In the process of propagating Christianity and Christian values and worldview, Igbo converts to Christianity were encouraged to distance themselves from local marriage customs that had no parallel either in Christendom or in the British family system (Mba 1982).

Levirate Marriage or Widow Inheritance is another marriage practice in Igbo society, which is not sensitive to equal rights of spouse. By virtue of that practice, family members are entitled to inherit a woman like property on account of her husband's demise (Bamgbose, 2002). In other words, a woman's husband's death did not mark the end of her marriage, which would continue according to the levirate system with a junior member of his descent group. A brother or son of the deceased husband, (other than the biological son of the woman) was traditionally obliged to inherit the widow as a wife. In the colonial and post-colonial Nigeria, this obnoxious practice has prevailed and continues to be practiced under various customary law systems in Nigeria (Amnesty International (AI)

Report 2005; Center for Reproductive Rights 2003). Under Igbo customary law, wives do not have inheritance rights as they are considered “property” of the late husband’s estate, which derogatorily reduce them to an “object of inheritance by the relations of the diseased husband (WACOL, 2005). In Yoruba culture, the marriage union between a man and a woman is considered as a point of cemented relationship between the relations of the couple. In other words, marriage is not considered to be only a union of the husband and wife but an avenue through which the extended families on both sides are united. According to Afonja (1990), the Yoruba ideology of kinship and marriage operates to the disadvantage of the women because the wife has limited rights and privileges compared the husband. The women are largely subordinate to men (Lloyd, 1974). Thus, women have restricted autonomy, which give men greater seniority and control than women in many aspects of the social system.

Before the advent of colonialism, Hausa-Fulani traditional marriage was based mostly on Islamic injunction in a society pervaded by slavery and slave trade. State slavery was historically central to the stability and growth of individual emirates in the Sokoto caliphate of northern Nigeria, an area overlapping much of the linguistic sub-region known as Hausaland (Nast, 1994). During the period under review, sexual exploitation of women and girls was a common practice in the society as concubinage was deeply embedded in the institutions of slavery and girl child betrothal and marriage an acceptable norm in the society. This is so because it is believed that the practice is condoned by Islam which supporters say allows a man four wives and unlimited concubines according to his wealth (Khan 2009).

### **Child marriage**

Although, the pattern and trend of age at marriage vary geographically and socioeconomically among various ethnic groupings in Nigeria, albeit, the tradition of betrothing a female child (including minor) to an adult male for marriage is an age-long common practice across the country most especially among the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group. This is a form of

forced conjugal union at the instance of the parents of the female child before the child grows into full maturity. According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2016), 43% of girls are married off before their 18th birthday, 17% are married before they turn 15. The prevalence of child marriage varies widely from one region to another, with figures as high as 76% in the North West region and as low as 10% in the South East. As Gulnara (2014) opines, forced early marriages result in servile marriages in which other forms of slavery such as domestic servitude, rape and sexual enslavement manifest. For quite long, the Nigeria legal document was blind to the mature age of marriage. However, the passage of the Child Right Act into law in the year 2003 sets the age of marriage at 18 years old. Moreover, in November 2016, Nigeria became the 17<sup>th</sup> country in Africa to launch the African Union campaign to end child marriage. Despite the foregoing policy initiatives against child marriage, it is disheartening to note that the practice still subsists in the country. Up till date, northern Nigeria has some of the highest rates of child marriage in the world with an estimated 65 percent among children below the age of 18 years.

### **Cases of forced marriages in contemporary Nigeria**

Cases of marriage slavery still continue to be pervasive in Nigeria despite the subsistence of policy frameworks and international conventions and protocols invalidating the obnoxious phenomenon. Given the insecurity challenge in Nigeria arising from the scourge of internal terrorism, banditry activities and other forms of internal crisis ravaging the country, marriage enslavement and related sexual criminality have assumed new waves in Nigeria in terms of dimensions, magnitude and intensity. Heartbreaking instances abound, among which are the following:

- *Chibok, Borno State:* On April, 2014, a total of 276 female students were kidnapped from the Government Girls Secondary School in the town of Chibok in Borno State, Nigeria. Boko Haram terrorist group claimed responsibility for the dastardly act with contempt. The girls were forced into marriage and sexual enslavement with members of Boko Haram with a reputed «bride price” of N2,000 (The Rainbow, 2014). Four years later, approximately a third of the

abductees remained in the hands of Boko Haram, with those girls who have been released, for the most part having been released via ransom payments. It is unfortunate that almost a decade down the lane, government of Nigeria has yet to apprehend the perpetrators of this terrible act for prosecution despite the efforts the security apparatuses are claiming to have made in the process of rescuing the innocent children (Akwagyiram and Pomeroy, 2018).

- *Leah Sharibu*: On February 19, 2018, 110 schoolgirls were abducted by Boko Haram terrorists in Dapchi, Yobe State, Northeast Nigeria with no government intervention towards intercepting the abductors (Bolaji, 2018). Among the 110 girls is Leah Sharibu, a 14-year-old innocent girl as at the time of the abduction by Boko Haram terrorists. While the other abductees were released after sometime, Leah Sharibu was detained in the custody of those destructive elements as the innocent girl refused to renounce her faith and embrace Islam. It is quite unfortunate that since 2018, government of Nigeria has not ensured the release of Lea from the clutches of those wicked criminals called Boko Haram.
- *Ese Oruru*: The abduction of Ese Oruru is another disheartening case in point. On August 12, 2015, this 13-year-old girl from Delta State of Nigeria was abducted by one Yunusa Dahiru. The innocent girl was abducted at her mother's shop in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State and taken to Kano, where she was raped, forcibly converted into Islam and subjected into forced marriage against her consent nor her parents'. The conversion and marriage allegedly took place in the palace of a first-class Emir in northern Nigeria. On a sad note, although Ese Oruru was rescued 6 months later after public outcry, she was already five months pregnant (Utebor, 2018).
- *Patience Paul*: On March 6, 2016, 15- year-old Primary school Pupil, Patience Paul narrated her ordeal on how she was abducted and her predators turned her into a sex slave at the Sarki Baki House for 7 months. Although she was released from the custody of her abductors on March 4, 2016, the innocent girl had faced untold

sexual enslavement and other forms of torture and inhumane treatments (*Herald*, 2016).

- *Blessing (Nyinjir) Siman*: A junior Secondary School pupil of Federal Housing Authority Junior Secondary School, Lugbe, Abuja, was kidnapped in 2010 at age 14. She was forcefully converted to Islam and renamed Kadijat. Narrating his ordeal, Blessing's father, Mr. Siman Guje said that as soon as he got to know, he reported the matter to the police at Lugbe Police Station but could not get help. He said that his daughter's abductors even had the courage to summon him at the Kuje Upper Area Court where their kinsman was allegedly a top judicial officer. Eventually, Blessing's abductors took her to Kaduna. It was discovered that the arrest order by the court was to clear the way for Blessing's abductors to spirit her out of Abuja unchallenged. The innocent girl still remains in captivity (Nwannekanma, 2016).
- *Linda Christopher*: Linda Christopher was kidnapped in November, 2015 at a tender age of 16 in Bauchi, Bauchi State, Nigeria. In the process of forcing Islamic religion on her, Linda was named Aisha against her consent. Her parents got a letter from the Shari'a commission, notifying them of their daughter's custody and her conversion to Islam. Such cases are not uncommon happenings especially in northern Nigeria only that they go largely unreported and are all distinguished by several disturbing features.
- *Ifeoma Nicodemus*: According to Woman.NG report of 2016, Ifeoma Nicodemus, was kidnapped in 2014 by their neighbor, called Abdullahi in the Hausa community in Zaria, Kaduna State. According to Ifeoma's father, Abdullahi allegedly took her to Zaria and converted her to Islam against her consent and named her, after being married off to a Muslim. Ifeoma was 14 years at the time of her abduction.
- *Other abductees*: Another 14-year-old Ifesinachi Ani was abducted in Abuja. She was taken to Maiduguri at first time, and later transferred to Zaria in Kaduna State where she has been married

off. Also, a 13-Year-Old Progress Jacobs was kidnapped by abductors led by one Musa. Progress Jacobs was kidnapped on her way back from church in January 2016 and is being held in Bauchi by Shari'ah Commission. Her name has been changed to Aishat. Her parents got a letter from the Shari'a commission, notifying them of their daughter's custody and her conversion to Islam. Another innocent child, a 13-Year-Old Blessing Gopep also fell victim of being kidnapped at age 12 in 2015 by a two-man crime gang, namely Iliyu and Umaru from Bauchi motor park. Her name has been changed to Mariam. Also, Lucy Ejeh, was kidnapped at age 15 in October, 2009 by abductors led by one Awaisu in Zamfara, Zamfara State. While in their custody, Lucy's abductors forced her to convert to Islam, and n changed her name to Lewusa. It is sad to assert that many of these innocent children still remain in the clutches of their kidnappers with their sense of identity undermined against their wishes especially in terms of their religious worldviews and their marital status.

### **Findings**

Nigeria is a heterogenous society composed of multicultural formations in which traditional forms of marriage are concealed behind a veneer of normative cultural practice. Despite international conventions, protocols, resolutions as well as national laws legislated against human slavery and enslavement within the context of fundamental human rights, marriage slavery has continued to thrive in Nigeria. Various legal frameworks have established without equivocation that marriage should flow from free consent of both parties. Hence, any forms of marital enslavement are considered a violation of human rights, which should be condemned in absolute terms. Considering the availability of extant legal and conventional provisions, it suffices, therefore, to argue that marriage slavery and related sharp practices have continued to persist in Nigeria on account of weak political will on the part of the custodians of state power to bring perpetrators to prosecution through adequate enforcement of subsisting legislation. Moreso, the challenge of legal pluralism where traditional and

religious legal systems are being observed alongside national laws that outlaw human slavery has also remained problematic. Legal pluralism is perhaps the most prominent feature of law in Nigeria (Oba 2011) in which legality becomes a moveable target when legal systems exist in parallel and view certain actions, such as marriage, in different ways.

In contemporary Igboland, the growing incidents of woman-woman marriage suggest a resuscitation of one dimension of marriage slavery. Although the practice seems to have been downplayed as a result of external influences on Nigeria's traditional life, the fact remains that the practice has continued to subsist because it has always enjoyed the nods of traditional institutions across that part of the country (Ekejiuba, 1967). Thus, given the subsistence of traditions and customs, Levirate marriage is considered a custom of the Igbo, the Yoruba, and the Hausa-Fulani and continues to be practiced in rural communities. Given the secular characteristic of Nigeria's federal system, the sharia is considered as "political sharia." This could account for the lethargic attitudes of law enforcement agents to prosecuting cases of girls' abduction into forced conversion and marriage cases particularly in northern Nigeria despite the provision within section 361 of the Criminal Code Act. This makes it a crime that attracts seven years' imprisonment if the person intends to marry a female person of any age against her will.

The exposure of several cases of child-abduction, forced conversion and coerced marriage has revealed the fault lines of religion and ethnicity that continue to bedevil Nigeria. The Ese Oruru's abduction brought this abhorrent practice in modern Nigeria into limelight and national consciousness and the victims in similar enslavement suddenly received a voice because a national newspaper carried Ese's story on their front page which generated public outcry and engendered campaigns from civil right organizations, women right advocacy groups and NGOs for their release. This voice brought with it revelations that many girls and women are in captivity of sexual slavery in Nigeria and they have been let down and forgotten by the system and for some of them their story may never be told. Daihiru Yunusa, Ese Oruru's abductor is the only person currently

known to be standing trial on charges of criminal abduction and sexual exploitation of a minor. He was accompanied to court by a very robust legal team of 7 lawyers including a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) as his defense attorneys. This for the writer raises a lot of ethical questions having in mind that the cost of taking up a SAN as defense lawyer is beyond the reach of most ordinary Nigerians and marvel at the strong defense a child sexual predator is getting. The logical consequence of this kind of “celebrity treatment” accorded Yunusa is that it signals the wrong message to would be abductors that there are covers and protection for them in case they ever get into trouble. Yunusa is currently on bail and has moved back to his city in Kano while the case adjourned to June 2, 2016. On the set trial date, the trial Judge was not on sit for the case to continue in court and currently the case appears to have lost steam as it has not been reconvened for trial since June 2016 till the time of writing this analysis.

Although the Child Rights Act 2003 is considered as a good step in the right direction to stemming the tide of Child Marriage practices, the implementation of the law across the country remains a Herculean task. This is because each state of the federation has to enact the Act under its own state laws before it is enforceable. This makes some critics to best describe the act as mere statute of a bulldog, which having sharp teeth but cannot bite. At the moment only 23 of Nigeria’s 36 states have endorsed the implementation of the law. This simply implies that some states are technically endorsing the subsistence of marriage slavery by failure to demonstrate the political courage towards enacting the Child Rights Law in their respective states. A human right report on wahaya holds that female children of slave status sold as an additional wife apart from the four wives permitted by Islam is a demonstration of slave concubinage (Abdelkader, and Zangaou, 2011). Whenever women are forced into marriage, their enslavement is concealed by both their legal status as a “wife” and by a great fog of cultural practice and pronouncement describing this subjugation as “normal.” Those who are supportive of and benefit from forced marriage always describe it simply as a form of cultural expression, arguing that it is just an aspect of the custom within

the great diversity of human activity (Sarich, Olivier and Bales,2016). The coming together of the national legislation and the three major practices; cultural, traditional and religious practices have the power to exert extra-legal control over the lives of young women and girls and the rationale that it is simply a form of marriage reflecting valid cultural norms, diverts attention from the key point, that of status, and the use of legal status to subjugate another human being.

### **Recommendations**

Considering the negative implications of marriage slavery, and given the fact that deprivation of women's rights is antithesis to international best practices, the following recommendations are made:

1. A woman's right to choose, and willingly consent to proposal of a would-be suitor should be protected and enforced under law. This will require legal and institutional reforms across the country in view of the rights of women in marriage and related social relationships.
2. Governments and other stakeholders should propagate awareness on the need to resist outdated practices that encourage women's enslavement in the country.
3. Domestication of international conventions and protocols women's rights and protection should be embraced by the government.
4. Custodians of cultural heritage in various ethnic settings should combat practices that are opposed to fundamental women's rights to life and freedom of choice.
5. All cases of alleged abduction should be reviewed and perpetrators of criminality should be brought to book regardless of ethnicity, religion or social status to serve as deterrents.
6. Government should legislate against all forms cultural and religious practices that deprive the child's rights to life education on equal proportion with their male's counterparts.

## Conclusion

This treatise has evaluated the continued subsistence of marriage slavery and related dimensions of sharp practices in Nigeria in view of the devastating implications for the right of women to life and societal wellbeing. It has been argued that the right of women to choose spouse and freely enter into marriage remains part of their fundamental reservation to human dignity, equity and equality. Unfortunately, certain traditional, cultural and religious practices that prevent women from exercising that aspect of human freedom have subjected them to marriage slavery and other forms of human enslavement of fellow humans simply on account of gender discrimination. The fact that those customs and traditions have been inherent in African cultural heritage does not make the practice of marriage slavery fashionable in time perspectives. Obnoxious practices of marriage slavery hold the girl child captive as mere commodities to be used to solidify family links and preserve honour, in addition to financial assets that can improve the family's economic status.

## R E F E R E N C E S

- Abdelkader, G.K. & Zangaou, M. (2011). *Wahaya: Domestic and sexual slavery in Niger. Anti-Slavery International and Association*. Timidria.
- Afonja, S. (1990). Changing patterns of gender stratification in West Africa. In A. Tinker (E.d), *Persistent inequalities: Women and world development*. Oxford University Press.
- Akwagyiram, A. & Pomeroy, R. (2018). First person convicted for Nigeria's Boko Haram school girl kidnap. *World News*.
- Amadiume, I. (1987). *Male daughters and female husbands*. Zed Press.
- Bamgbose, O. (2002). *Customary law practices and violence against women: The position under the Nigerian legal system*. (Paper presentation). 8th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women. Department of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University.

- Bolaji, S. (2018). Department of English, University of Lagos. *The Punch*. <https://punchng.com/dapchi-girl-abduction-some-unanswered-questions/>
- Braimah, T. (2014). *Child marriage in Northern Nigeria: Section 61 of Part I of the 1999 Constitution and the Protection of Children against Child Marriage*. AHRLJ. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2309374>.
- Boko Haram kidnapped the 230 school girls as wives for its insurgents. (2014). *The Rainbow*
- Card, C. (2003). Genocide and social death: Hypatia. *Center for Reproductive Rights*, 18, (1), 83. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3811037>
- Chukwuemeka, K.N. 2012. Female husbands in Igbo Land: Southeast Nigeria. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 5(1).
- Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. (1981). Art. 16, 1249 UNTS 13, 20.
- Country reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004. (2005, February 28). United States Department of State. Nigeria. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41620.htm>
- Different heartbreaking cases of teenage girls abducted, forcefully converted to Islam & sexually abused. (2016). *Woman. NG*. <http://woman.ng/2016/03/8-different-heartbreaking-cases-of-teenage-girls-abducted-forcefully-converted-to-islam-sexually-abused/>
- Eades, J.S. (1980). *The Yoruba today*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ekejiuba, F. (1967). Omuokwei, the Merchant Queen of Ossomari: A biographical sketch. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*. 3(4).
- Ewelukwa, U. U. (2002). Post-colonialism, gender, customary injustice: Widows in African societies. *Human Rights Quarterly*. 24(2).
- Gulnara, S. (2014). *The UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery*. Herald NG. (2016). <https://www.herald.ng/how-my-abductors-turned-me-to-sex-slave-in-sokoto-15-year-old-patience-paul/>
- Ilogun, E. (1974). *Christianity and Igbo culture: A study of the interaction of Christianity and Igbo culture*. NOK.
- James, P., Nadarajah, Y., Haive, K. & Stead, V. (2012). *Sustainable communities, sustainable development: Other paths for Papua New Guinea*. University of Hawaii Press.

- Khan, M.A. (2009). *Sex-slavery & concubinage in chapter VII "Islamic Jihad: Legacy of forced conversion, imperialism, and slavery*. Felibri.
- Kolawole, O. A. (2020). *An Overview of the Celebration of Statutory Marriage in Nigeria*. ABUAD Law Review.
- Kralov, A.J. (2015). What is social death?. *Contemporary Social Science*, 10, 35–48.
- Lloyd, P.C. (1972). *Africa in social change*. Penguin.
- Lovejoy, P. E. (1988). Concubinage and the status of women slaves in early colonial Northern Nigeria. *The Journal of African History*, 29(2), 245-266
- Mba, N. (1982). *Nigerian women mobilized*. University of California Press.
- McElroy, D. (2013). Extremist attack in Nigeria kills 42 at boarding school. *The Daily Telegraph*.
- McMillan, D.W. and Chavis, D.M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and theory. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 14(1), 6–23.
- McQuade. (2017). Anti-slavery director. *Aidan*. <https://www.antislavery.org/charter-end-slavery/>.
- Nast, H. J. (1994). The impact of British imperialism on the landscape of female slavery in the Kano Palace, Northern Nigeria. *Journal of the International African Institute*, 64(1), 34-73.
- Nwannekanma, B. (2016). <https://guardian.ng/news/six-years-after-father-demands-to-see-abducted-blessing/>
- Nwogugu, E. I. & Aderibigbe. M. (2004). *Family law*. Godas publishing consult.
- Oba, A. (2011). University of Ilorin religious and customary laws in Nigeria Emory. *International Law Review*.
- Otakpor, N. (2005). A woman who is a husband and a father: An essay in customary law. *Faculty of Law, University of Benin. Lecture series*.
- Oyedotun, M. T. (2016). Legal Implications of Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act, 2013 on Customary: Female husband marriage or woman-to-woman marriage. Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Legal Studies and Governance*, 6(1).
- Patterson, O. (1985). *Slavery and social death: A comparative study*.
- Prosecutor v. Brima and Others, Elements of Crimes Published by the International Criminal Court ISBN No. 92-9227-232-2 ICC-PIOS-LT-03-002/15\_Eng136 Jain, supra note 16, 1029.137 Appeals Chamber Judgment, supra note 2, 61 & 64, paras. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/Documents/ElementsOfCrimesEng.pdf>

Report on Human Rights Issues in Nigeria: Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria. (2005). *Danish Immigration Service*.

Rome Statute Article. 7c (1998). Rome Statute of The International Criminal Court done at Rome, on 17th day of July 1998. [http://legal.un.org/icc/statute/99\\_corr/cstatute.htm](http://legal.un.org/icc/statute/99_corr/cstatute.htm). Accessed July 27 2018

Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act, 2014.

Sarich, J., Olivier, M. & Bales, K. (2016). *Human Rights Quarterly* 450–476, Johns Hopkins University Press.

State of the World's Children. (2016). *UNICEF*

Talbot, P. A. (1967). Tribes of the Niger Delta. *London: Frank Cass. Journal of Advanced Legal Studies and Governance*, 6(1) on the position of law on practices of female husband marriage in Nigeria.

The state of the world's human right. (2005). *Amnesty International Publications International Secretariat*.

Tijani, N. (2007). *Matrimonial causes in Nigeria- law and Practice (Renaissance Law)*. Publishers Limited

Uchendu, E. (2002). Anioma women and the Nigerian civil war, 1966 – 1979, *Ph.D. Thesis*, University of Nigeria.

Uchendu, E. (2006). Woman-woman marriage in Igboland. *Researchgate* [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273122433\\_Woman-Woman\\_Marriage\\_In\\_Igboland](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273122433_Woman-Woman_Marriage_In_Igboland)

Utebor, S. (2018). We have been abandoned, says Ese Oruru father. *The Punch*. <https://punchng.com/weve-been-abandoned-says-ese-orurus-father/>

Uwogugu, E. I. (1990). *Family Law in Nigeria*. Ibadan.

Women's Aid Collective. (2005). *WACOL*.

## **The Models and Effects of Development toward the Realization of African Development**

§*Macaulay-Adeyelure, Olawunmi C., PhD*

### **Abstract**

*The aim of this essay is to take a crucial look into some of the ways that African countries have strived to overcome or even emerge from the limitations that beset them as a result of the challenges of economic underdevelopment. Following the quest toward the attainment of not only economic development but political independence too, most African countries have attempted toward evaluating the development ideals that is most feasible for them. This research uses the method of philosophical analysis to argue the thesis that the effort toward development in sub-Saharan Africa has not yielded the much-desired aftermath. As a way of making its claim lucid, this discourse argues that both the dependency and modernization theories have yet to provide a commanding outlook for allowing Africa overcome the hurdles of development. On the other hand, authentic efforts by Africans themselves have been frustrated following the influence of the West over such theories such as The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Lagos Plan for Action (LPA). In recent times, the influences of Singapore and China in African economic and political space have pushed the development quest further into oblivion. With massive debt burdens and over dependence on technological partnerships. If there are no concerted efforts towards self-sustenance and good leadership, the hope for placements of the continent and in deed Nigeria on a path of true development might just be far off. It is on this basis that this research submits that the realization of African development is still far off.*

*Keywords: Africa, development, LPA, NEPAD, western development theories*

## Introduction

The idea of development is one to the topmost issues that has concerned several African states (Bienefeld, 1988). This is due to the fact that development has eluded several African countries (Fisman and Miguel, 2008). Several independent studies have been carried over individual African countries as indicated in the studies of Christopher Clapham (2018) over Ethiopia; Ellen Hillbom (2012) over Botswana. The underlying convergence over each of these individual studies can be summed up in the words of Ian Taylor (2016: 11)

that in almost all the spheres of her economy, there is a serious disorder or disarticulation in terms of structure and consumption. In the long run, the development of the continent has been the first casualty. It is therefore important to revisit the subject of African development closely and reflect over the models or strategies provided and the impact these have had on the political economy of Africa.

So, in this study, the meaning and nature of development will be discussed in order to understand how it has eluded the African continent or misapplied. This is the focus of the next section, which is the first. In the second section, some of the various economic theories that have been suggested for Africa to develop by Western social science theorists will be considered. The problems that these theories have faced will be discussed and engaged in that section too. In the third section, some of the development theories adopted by Africans for African development, as well as their outcomes or achievements will be assessed. In the last section, this study brings the discourse to a close with justifications concerning why development continues to elude Africa.

## The Question of African Development

Before going too far, it is important to first provide a conceptual analysis for what this essay means by the terms: “development” and “Africa.” First, there are various ways of seeing development. It could be human, educational,

economic, social and political. However, in most instances, when the term is used, it is in the economic sense and it is in this sense that this research uses it (see Rodney, 1972). So, this essay takes development to mean “an increase, propagation, expansion, improvement or change for the better” (Babalola, 1998:4). Even when development has often been perceived to be similar or synonymous to economic growth, it is helpful to add that economic growth gives priority to “increases in labour productivity and in total output, with technological progress and industrialization” (Babalola, 1998:4).

The term Africa is also a technical one. We begin with the etymology of the word where we find that “Afri” was a Latin name used to refer to the inhabitants of Africa, which in its widest sense referred to all lands south of the Mediterranean (Ancient Libya) (Charlton & Short, 2015). The term “Afri” appears to have originally referred to a group of native Libyan tribe. The name is usually connected with Hebrew or Phoenician “afar” “dust”, but a 1981 hypothesis has asserted that it stems from the Berber “ifri” (plural “ifran”) “cave,” in reference to cave dwellers. However, for the aim of this study, we shall consider it to refer to the sub-Saharan region of the continent.

Two reasons have been adduced for Africa’s underdevelopment: First, it does not require so much elaboration, the notion that Africa is underdeveloped is tied to the advent of colonialism which penetrated the African economy, turning it into a capitalist economy for the purpose of exploitation. Michael Parenti (1989: 12) explains what is characteristic of the capitalist economy since they infiltrate any market in the world and make that market tune to their interests, even if this means poverty or spells doom for the infiltrated market.

This penetration of the African economy becomes pertinent as a result of the inner contradiction in Capitalism itself. Karl Marx in a similar intonation, had already expressed that capital is a similar to a vampire that seeks blood only that in this case natural resources in far off geography (Heilbroner, 2000: 155). In the process of penetrating the African pre-colonial economy, Capitalism also created its own dialectical negation in the African petite bourgeoisie. It must be stated that both have the same

ideological leaning – Capitalism. Hence, the second reason Africa remains underdeveloped can be ascribed to the role of the indigenous Africans themselves who unrepentantly, play the role of accomplices in the continuous denigration of human and natural resources of Africa. This is in concord with the statement of Walter Rodney (1972: 34) who blurts that the lack of development is an issue related to Western involvement in Africa via colonialism as well as the indigenous Africans who are parties to the success of this encounter for the West.

Regrettably, the scheme to conquer this obvious dilemma comes from the intellectuals of the North. They play the role of the “bigger brother” who has gone through the present ugly experiences of the “younger one”, and now possess the antidote to the African situation. But a critical examination of this scholarship reveals that Africans do not have anyone to exploit as is the case with the North. Inversely, it is Africa that is being continuously exploited. What can be deduced from this line of argument is that the remedy given by the North is merely superficial. Furthermore, one will also realize that the therapy coming from Western Scholarship on development is merely goaled towards strengthening the ties of exploitation with enormous benefits to the North. So, in the next section, some of the recommendations from the West toward the development of Africa will now be examined.

### **Western Economic Theories and the Question of African Development**

The modernization theory was provided as a paradigm to assist Africa’s quest toward development in the middle of the last century, shortly after political independence [see Hussain & Tribe (1981); Lenin (1964)]. Modernization theory simply refers to a body of theory that became prominent in the 1950s and 1960s in relation to understanding issues of economic and social transitions in poorer countries (Gwynne, 2009: para 1). Whilst talking about the theory, John Matunhu (2011: 66), sees modernization as tool recommended to Africa that in order to attain development in the concrete sense, the continent needs to be modernized. And to be modernized is to be in the image of the West.

It is to the credit of Bienefeld (1988) that one is able to deduce how and why modernist scholars take to the understanding that nations or countries of the world experience growth and progress not at the same level. It is therefore up to these other counties in Africa to look out for assistance from their former colonial administrators who stood as umpires between development and underdevelopment (Sen, 1999: 1). This is why the study of Matunhu (2011) has also been able to show that mainly, the modernization theory for Africa's development is supposed to allow for foreign influence and culture to replace local influence and culture. What this amounts to is that a subtle form of colonization or cultural assimilation is seen as the basis for development to be realized.

Coatzee *et al* (2007: 101) are among those who argue that “the modernization approach has faced serious backlash because of its failure to recognize the have-nots as the center of influence, whose critical or dire situations demand serious attention.” In short, thanks to the use of modernization theory, marginalization along class and ethnic lines developed in countries such as Nigeria. This is because it is not possible for all the citizens to emerge as peoples who are capable of imitating Western lifestyle and culture. As a result, the elites who were able to “modernize” were seen as demi-gods and this in the long run compromised authentic efforts toward authentic development – the main reason why the modernization approach emerged in the first place.

More so, it has been noted that “the other intriguing weaknesses of the modernization theory is that it is based on deterministic reason which states that within the linear model of socio-economic development, changes are initiated externally” (Matunhu, 2011: 70). The determinist proximately provides not much mutual connection between causation from the inner part of the developing region and the outer part of the developing region. Hence, Matunhu avers that:

Therefore, antecedents motivate the foreign powers to specify the path to Africa's development. For example, Africa happened to be victim of the failed IMF-imposed Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in the 1980s. The project by the ESAP was not

successful because it was developed by not paying attention or care about the cultural, social, political and traditional values of the recipient nations. Broadly expressed, the ESAP project was a “Eurocentric” experiment which failed to pull the continent out of poverty and underdevelopment (2011: 69).

It is now time to turn to the dependency theory. This theory seeks to contribute to an understanding of underdevelopment, an analysis of its causes, and to a lesser extent, paths toward overcoming it (Sonntag, 2001: para 1). The dependency theory simply identifies the unusual situation of impoverishing the developing states to the gain of the developed states apparently embedded in the world economic system. It is because of the failings or inability of the modernization theory to deliver that the dependency theory soon came in. As Bienefeld (1988) notes, “the theory came as a critical reaction to the conventional approaches to economic development that emerged in the aftermath of World War II.” Andre Gunder Frank (1967: 88) has argued in his analysis of the post-colonial society that “classical development theories such as modernity are deceptive because they fail to express the true connection or association between the developed world and the poor regions of the world.” For Frank, modernity distorts the truth about the motive of the developed countries on their former colonies (Frank, 1967: 89). Another study has made it clearer in the study of Reid (1995: 47-48) that even when the modernization theory presented itself as a paradigm of hope, it did not have a direct impact in the lives of the common people and rather than assisting, their poor living conditions escalated more. Perhaps it is a consequence of this that the dependency theory emerged as a solution.

Interestingly, several scholars have also found the dependency theory to not only be problematic but possessing distrustful and structural issues. For instance, Frank (1967: 89) has argued that at the macro level, the primary reason for the exploration of the dependency theory for Africa is that Africa can only be properly comprehended economically via the lens

of Western development paradigms. Rodney asserted it is also important that:

from a dependency perspective repatriation of profits represents a systematic expatriation of the surplus values that was created by African labour using African resources. Therefore, having been witnessed the development of Europe as part of the identical dialectical processes that underdeveloped Africa. In other words, the domination of Europe over Africa retarded the economic development of the continent (1972: 65).

For five running centuries, Europe capitalized on its encounter with Africa (Matunhu, 2011: 71). From the above excerpt, it is true that;

while Europe and America are busy exploiting Africa; the urban areas are also busy exploiting their rural areas. Inside these rural regions, there are rich people exploiting poor individuals and the chain goes on ad infinitum. For that, dependency may loosely be seen as linear and multi-staged. The economic development of rural regions indicates the establishment of metropolitan-satellite relationship at different stages in the socio-economic structure of the economy. The relationship is based upon regional control of economic and political resources between regions, sectors of the economy and different social groups (Parenti, 1988: 79).

Some scholars have seen the failure as calculated intention on the part of the West. And this is associated with what Claude Ake (1982: 174) calls “technicism” which is a “particular useful tool of imperialism and capitalism because it discourages revolution, it re-enforces the dependence of the satellite states.” It is also noteworthy to discern that “technicism also serves imperialism by concealing the fact that imperialism is the major cause of underdevelopment” (Ake, 1982: 176). Following this understanding, the next section now turns to some of the proposals from Africans themselves toward realizing the development ideal.

## **African Alternative Development Theories and the Drive for Development**

In this section, two main alternative development patterns developed by Africans to develop Africa will be considered. These will be Lagos Action Plan of 1980 and New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). These two will be used as instances of attempts by Africans themselves toward establishing models of development for Africa, commencing with the former.

As Bernard Cayne (1992) reveals,

The Lagos Plan for Action stemmed primarily from the disappointment of African leaders with the continent's economic progress and their conviction that incompetency of exogenous development strategies contributed importantly to Africa's poor development record, a view that they expressed in their report. The Organization of African Unity report of 1980 explains that: "The effect of unfulfilled promises of global development strategies has been more sharply felt in Africa than in the other continents of the world...we resolved to adopt a far-reaching regional approach based primarily on collective self-reliance.

The above excerpt clearly explains how the OAU perceived the issue and their resolution culminated into what became the Lagos Plan for Action which today is alien to the ears of many. The plan "was designed for restructuring African economies on two principles: self-reliance (national and collective) and self-sustaining development" (Cayne, 1992). At this point we may be wont to ask what the problem was with the plan.

Some African governors at the World Bank and the IMF made a request to study the economic problem in sub-Saharan Africa as it was prophesied by the World Bank Development report of 1972 that the continent would soon plunge into an economic downturn. This inquiry led to the famous World Bank's Accelerated Development in sub-Saharan Africa: An

Agenda for Action, 1981. When we examine this idea philosophically, we shall realize that the prophecy about the state of African development came from the West whose “calculations” springs from their erroneous discipline of economics. Of course, it played the role of ideology perfectly in this sense. This report, against the LPA, singles out three areas for improvement: trade and exchange rate policies; reform of input supply and marketing services and more effective use of resources in the public sector. African leaders however saw this against their interest and the LPA, thereby birthing struggle. Claude Ake (2001: 25) once again explains that:

The Bretton Woods institutions and the West would not accept the approach of the Lagos Plan, although they refrain from opposing it openly. Instead they expressed this rejection of the Plan by ignoring it and refusing to reorient their economic relation with Africa so as not to connect with and address the program and policies of the Plan...In the end African leaders found that they were too dependent and too weak to have their way, and they started to retreat.

The above is a disclosure of how colonial administrations in Africa have disarticulated the African economy to the extent that, apart from financial dependence, we have intellectual dependence. For they are the ones who now think for us, and if we have better thoughts, they frown at it. The lack of any manner of coercion on the part of African leaders led to the abandonment of the Plan in 1985. This implies the intellectual victory of the West and Africa's continuous dependence on the Metropoles for the economic, social and political ideas. And the West gladly do this service with the intention of keeping us subjected. This analysis shows that Africa is now suffering from mental colonization. And Frantz Fanon notes that “even more terrible than the colonization of a country is the colonization of the mind. The equation “white” and “civilization” in the minds of the Africans implies that the equation's opposite is also true; to be black is to be uncivilized” (Fanon, 1963: 219). It must as well be stated that the causes of the failure of the LPA, cannot be put solely on the West. Some African

petite-bourgeoisies and their economic analysts played prominent roles leading to the failure of the project. We must realize that the LPA relied on the dependency economic theories. The first thing to realize here is that none of the theories to be used came originally from Africa. They were all “imported” in to provide solutions to the African problem of development. Speaking on the failure of the LPA, Rawia M. Tawfik (2008: 60-61) expatiates that: the LPA experienced difficulty because it seems to align with Western interests in Africa and the African leaders do not have enough influence to make it work themselves.

New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD, hereafter) is an improved aspect of effort by Africans to solicit for ways to overcome the problems of underdevelopment. The need for a proper answer to the seemingly insurmountable question of development in Africa is one of the factors that engendered the resolution culminating into NEPAD. The proposal reflects consequences of the post Washington Consensus which had rejected state intervention in economic activities. NEPAD in the view of Rawia M. Tawfik (2008: 64), seeks to “However this orientation reflects the post-Washington consensus; it does not explicitly aim at eroding the role of the state, as claimed by some African analysts, but instead advocates a partnership between state, market and civil society, with the main emphasis on the first two actors.”

NEPAD is seen as “the visionary and strategic framework adopted by African leaders to address poverty and underdevelopment throughout the African continent. It was at the 37<sup>th</sup> Summit of the OAU held in Lusaka, Zambia in July 2001 that formally endorsed the program” (Cayne, 1992). Among the issues that NEPAD intends to achieve are: eradication of poverty; policy reforms and increased investment in the different sectors of the economy; mobilizing resources for the use and benefits of Africa; democracy et al. It is from this background that we begin to see the intrusion of the theories of economics at work again. Firstly, there was no opposition from the West because deep down, this programme will definitely benefit them. To make matters worse, NEPAD relied on the Neoliberal mode of development with all the flaws and ideological

assumptions therein. Recognizing this fact, Salam Issa Kahinde raises some questions which are fundamental in our assessment of NEPAD. He questions thus:

Can our dear country Nigeria attain any development with NEPAD assistance? What does NEPAD stand for? Who are the advocates of NEPAD? What is their aim? What are the credentials of the movers of NEPAD? There are millions about this new phenomenon of recolonizing and exploiting Africa... (Kahinde, 2010: 29)

In response to the question posed above, this programme was with the intellectual assistance of the Neoliberal economic theories, the reflections on three predominant “rulers” in Africa who are undemocratic in practice and thoroughly anti-working class. NEPAD was drawn up by South Africa’s champion of the GEAR strategy at South Africa, the Algerian dictator, Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Nigerian strong man Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. No ordinary people, no trade unions, no community structures, no popular movements were involved (Kahinde, 2010). These leaders it must be said are hypocrites. Let us consider the case of the Algerian Bouteflika who was a dictator drawing up an agenda that will address the proper practice of democracy in Africa. NEPAD has achieved the privatization of state owned firms. Let us consider section 166 of NEPAD. This section explicitly states that: “African governments must create a sound and conducive environment for private sector activities, promote foreign direct investment, trade and exports, and local business must be fostered.” It needs to be rehashed that NEPAD has achieved all these. There are many foreign companies in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. How would the ordinary African not consider NEPAD merely as an abstraction?

We once again hold the position that NEPAD was merely inaugurated to keep capitalism in place. Unlike the LPA that placed so much emphasis on government participation and therefore faced neglect and rejection from the World Bank, NEPAD was a joint venture between the colonizer and the bad leaders of the colonized. Hence, “It is nothing more and nothing less than a neo-liberal plan by Africa’s elite to join with multinational

companies, the IMF and World Bank to plunder Africa's labor force and resources. It is a consolidation of a range of neo-liberal shifts by Africa's dictators, military chiefs and capitalists" (Clapham, 2018). So, it is not an error to suppose that all efforts toward development for Africa has had one or more problems such that underdevelopment has almost become a norm for the continent.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, a critical reflection and investigation has been undertaken over the efforts of Africans to liberate themselves from the almost never-ending debacle of underdevelopment. It is the case that in spite of the several efforts, both within and without Africa, underdevelopment continues to linger. From the analysis undertaken thus far, one important point is countries in Africa and other part of the global south are underdeveloped and economically dependent on the West in a relationship that is parasitic. The deduction of Michael Parenti (1989) is explicit enough as he drives home the point that Africa cannot have any substantial benefit from the economic programmes organized by the West. The proper development ideal from within Africa may be frustrated but within the framework of a salient political will and willingness to implement policies, Africa still has the chance to overcome the hurdles of underdevelopment and emerge as a global economic force.

### **R E F E R E N C E S**

- Ake, C. (2001). *Democracy and development*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books
- Ake, C. (1982). *Social science as imperialism: The theory of political development*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books
- Babalola, C., (1998) *Making development work for people*. Paper presented at the Distinguished Lecture Organised by the Nigerian Society of Law, Lagos.
- Bienefeld, M. (1988). "Dependency theory and the political economy of Africa's Crisis." *Review of African political economy* 43: 68-87

- Cayne, B.S. (1992). *The new webster's dictionary of the English language*. New York: Lexicon
- Charlton, L. & Short, C. (2015). *Afri: A latin dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Coetzee, K.J, Graaf J, Heindricks F & Wood G (2007). *Development: Theory, policy and practice*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press
- Clapham, C. (2018). "The Ethiopian developmental state." *Third world quarterly* 39(6): 1151-1165
- Ellis, F. & Biggs, S (2001). "Development policy." *Review*. 19(4): 437-448
- Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Grove Press
- Fisman, R. and Miguel, E. (2008). *Economic gangsters: Corruption, violence and the poverty of nations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Frank, A.G. (1967). *Crisis in the Third World*. New York. Holmes and Meier
- Gwynne, R.N., (2009). "Modernization Theory." in *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* 164-168
- Heilbroner, R. (2000). *The worldly philosophers*. London: Penguin Books
- Hillbom, E. (2012). "Botswana: A development-oriented gate-keeping state." *African affairs* 111(442): 67-89
- Hussain, A. & Tribe, K. (1981). *Marxism and the agrarian question: German social democracy and the peasantry 1890-1907*. Hong Kong: Macmillan Press Ltd
- Kahinde, S.I. (2010). "Nigeria and development: Role of NEPAD." Available at <http://m.simplynigeria.com/content/nigeria-and-development-role-nepad> (Accessed 25 September 2021)
- Lenin, V. (1964). *The development of capitalism in Russia*. Moscow: Progress Publishers
- Matunhu, J. (2011). "A critique of modernization and dependency theories in Africa: Critical assessment." *African journal of history and culture*. 3(5) 65-72
- Organization of African Unity (OAU) (1980). *Lagos plan of action for the economic development of Africa* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Geneva: Institute for Labour Studies
- Reid, D. (1995). *Sustainable Development: An introductory Guide*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd
- Rodney, W. (1972). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. Dar-es Salaam: B'ogle Overture
- Samir, A., Chitala, D. & Mandaza, I (1987). *SADCC prospectus for disengagement and development in southern africa: Studies in African political economy-united nations university*. London: ZED Books Ltd

- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. New York: Anchor Books
- Sonntag, H.R., (2001). "Dependency Theory." in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Science* 3501-3505
- Tawfik R. M, (2008). "NEPAD and African development: Towards a new partnership between development actors in Africa." *African journal of international affairs*, Vol. 11(1).
- Taylor, I. (2016). "Dependency redux: Why Africa is not rising." *Review of political economy* 43(147): 8-25

## The Challenges of Africa's Coronavirus Pandemic and China's Soft Power Dynamics: An Overview

¶*Banwo, Adetoro Olaniyi, PhD* & \*\**Omon, Merry Osiki, PhD*

### Abstract

*This study examines Chinese soft power dynamics in Africa with respect to how the continent approached the challenges posed by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It should be stressed that China's soft power politics stems from its ability to champion globalization and economic integration from Asia to the rest of the world. China has used its soft power elements such as culture, ideology, legitimacy and ability to attract others to project its power on the African continent and this came to play during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data for this research work were obtained through critical case sampling and the content analysis style was used for the interpretation of data in the study. Certain factors such as diplomacy, aid, medical assistance, international relations and status were selected for the study. This study adopts Todd Hall's theory of institutional power, reputation power and presentational power to underscore the relevance of China's soft power intervention in Africa. Hall ascertains that certain States use their power to influence and advance state interests while pushing for public diplomacy and information control. Therefore, this work argues that China's intervention in Africa's COVID-19 pandemic effort was a way to enhance Sino Africa relationship while exhibiting and improving its international image and status. It concludes on the note that China's positive attraction and agenda for Africa has a lot of benefits and consequences which will affect Africa's foreign policy and approach in the nearest future.*

*Keywords: soft power, diplomacy, aid, pandemic, China, Africa*

---

¶ Dept. of Linguistics, African and Asian Studies, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos.

\*\* Dept. of History & Strategic Studies, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos.

## Introduction

Sino-African relations have been a contentious issue since the beginning of the twenty-first century (Osiki, 2017). It is an effervescent, two-way vigorous engagement in which both sides modify their policy initiatives due to popular perceptions emanating from each other and the international community. China is both a long-established diplomatic partner and investor in Africa. Chinese trade has been a major source of economic rejuvenation for most economies in Africa (Banwo, 2021). Sino-African relationship has a historical trend and over the years, we have witnessed the exchange of ideologies, philosophies, expertise, skills, education and cultural support from these diplomatic ties (Banwo, 2022). China is a major aid donor, but the scope, scale, and mode of Chinese aid practices are poorly understood and often misquoted in the press. Most analyses of Chinese engagement with African nations focus on what China gets out of these partnerships which is primarily natural resources and export markets. On the other hand, some studies have described the impact, positive and negative, that China's aid and investment policies have had on African countries. However, sinologists have approached Sino-African relation from a pulsating approach in which both players act in a dynamic manner in adjusting to perceptions that emanate from the public and initiatives that are ignited through its national policies. Similarly, many scholarly works have failed to understand that both China and Africa have a lot to gain from their engagements and interactions (Rotberg, 2009).

It should be stressed that Chinese aid and investment in Africa are not new, but scholars of international relations have questioned the rationale behind China's investment in Africa. Why are the Chinese in Africa? And most especially why do the Chinese provide conditional and unconditional aid and assistance to African countries? Undeniably, China has four overarching strategic interests in Africa. Firstly, it wants access to natural resources, particularly oil and gas (Osiki, 2020). It is estimated that, by 2040, China will import more oil worldwide than the United States (Osiki, 2020). To guarantee future supply, China is heavily investing in the oil sectors in countries such as Sudan, Angola, and Nigeria. Secondly,

investments in Africa are a huge market for Chinese exported goods and it might facilitate China's efforts to restructure its own economy away from labor-intensive industries, especially as labor costs in China increase. Thirdly and most importantly, China wants political legitimacy in Africa and in the international arena. The Chinese government believes that strengthening Sino-African relations helps raise China's own international influence. Most African governments express support for Beijing's "One China" policy, a prerequisite for attracting Chinese aid and investment. Finally, China has sought a more constructive role as a contributor to stability in the region, partly to mitigate security related threats to China's economic interests (Brautigam, 2011).

With the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping around the globe, Africa became a victim to this pneumonia disease and as such it recorded its first case in Egypt. Most African countries have a crippled health care system with inadequate medical resources and incapacitated health workers who lack thorough training. Thus, Africa was in a precarious state and China who seeks political legitimacy and international recognition was able to respond to the teething challenges of most African States. Likewise, the Chinese sees themselves as a superior race and unique race who intends to influence other races positively (Banwo, 2019).

While this might be one reason for China's rapid response to the chronic healthcare problems of Africa, scholars have posited that China's economy is knitted together and closely intertwined and as such trade or finance shocks from Africa can have rippling effects on China and the rest of the world (Osiki, 2013). China's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been dubbed "mask diplomacy and COVID-19 diplomacy" across the globe. Despite these assertions, one can say that China has contributed humanitarian aid to many African countries to support their ailing healthcare institutions. This study therefore attempts to fill the gap in knowledge by showing that soft power has both negative and positive implications on state actors. Hence, it finds a meeting point between the notion of soft power and bilateral relationship. The aim of this study is to identify Chinese soft power approach and strategies during the COVID-19

pandemic in Africa and discuss the implications for these states. This study examines the notion of soft power, bilateral relations between China and Africa and Chinese mode of engagements with Africa.

### Literature Review

This research work is located within the precinct of soft power diplomacy. Soft power itself was derived from the works of great scholars such as Joseph Nye Jr., Hans. J Morgenthau, Klaus Knorr and Ray Cline in the nineteenth century. Nye Jr, formulated and coined it in his book: *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (1990) He developed the concept further in: *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). Joseph Nye Jr (2009: 160) was one of the scholars who engaged critics who tried to undermine US power during the Cold War era. He was of the opinion that they were unable to deal with the changes of US power through the new international system. In his view, they focused solely on what he defined as “hard power,” (e.g. economic and military capabilities) and thus not recognizing the second characteristics of US power (e.g. its soft power). He contended that whereas power resources can be effective in the military and economic sphere, only soft power can work at the transnational level. He then argued that soft power is based on three resources:

1. Culture in places where it is attractive to others
2. Political values, where it lives up to them at home and abroad, and
3. The legitimacy and moral authorities disseminated through foreign policies.

He measures their capability to the extent as they are able to attract or repel other actors to “want what you want.” Thus, he defined soft power as the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes.

The concept of soft power as a co-optive means to obtain preferred

outcomes comes from the notion of power itself. Power, according to Hans Morgenthau (1966: 61) who was one of the major representatives of the realist school, was seen as when a person has control over other people's ideas and actions. The liberalists see power as the ability of an actor to get things the other cannot do under normal circumstances or to have control over the results (Keohane and Nye, 1989). In this regard, power has the same effect either in the west or the east; nevertheless, some scholars viewed the notion of soft power as a Western coined phrase. Maria Weyshen Siow (2010: 1) defines soft power as a Western concept that has only found acceptance within Chinese policy making circles and Chinese analysts agree with Nye's definition of soft power. However, Chinese scholars modified Nye's conceptualization of soft power; they opined that the Chinese soft power definition should add economic development, diplomatic cooperation and investment agreements that were formerly excluded from Nye's definition (Heng, 2010). It is based on this conviction that Stephan Chan (2013: 154) describes soft power in form of a soft appeal as seen in the case of China. It aims to strengthen and reinforce a moral argument and the right moral standing in the relationship between states. Youling Liu (2011: 22) identifies soft power as a significant and effective factor that drives a country towards achieving its national goals. He identifies culture, ideology and diplomacy as common examples of soft power while he categorizes specific goals that could be historical, economic, political and social. Likewise, Yan Xuetong and Xu Jin (2008: 28) both defined soft power as an international appeal and its external and internal mobilization capabilities. They identified cultural allure, as well as the ability to establish international rules, mobilize domestic elite, and mobilize the domestic grassroots, as the most important quantifiable indicators for measuring soft power. Lastly, Youling (2011: 22) depicts education, the psychological and physical conditions of the people, technological advancement, superiority of national culture, human resources and strategy, social cohesion and unity, and the sustainability of socio-economic development as the basic features of soft power.

One inherent fact from the above literature is that both Western and

Eastern scholars have agreed that the concept of soft power is the ability to affect and influence others through different institutions of the state to achieve the desired outcome of the actor. It is a way to mobilize state resources to impact other nations in the international arena.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This work adopts the theories of Todd Hall (2010: 149) in conceptualizing the notion of soft power as propagated by Nye Jr (2009: 160) and some other scholars. Hall was of the opinion that it is difficult to associate just the idea of attraction as the primary mechanism behind the effects to soft power. To him, Nye Jr notion of soft power as seen in the culture, political ideas and policies with necessity can produce an attraction that will help a country in the pursuit of its foreign policy. Hall asserts that the implications of culture is vague and whether political ideas are bound to be attractive to those they are supposed to influence is an amorphous term in culture. Hall then proposed theories that discuss soft power outside these contexts. To him, they should be seen in institutional power, reputational power and representational power. Hall sees institutional power as the options available to state actors according to their membership and relative position within specific international organizations which enable those states to exercise influence within them. Barnett and Duvall (2005: 39) also contributed to the literature on institutional power; they see it as per-constituted actors exercising control over others indirectly through institutions.

Likewise, Hall sees reputational power as portraying an economically successful action. For instance, it might give a State more of a say in the creation of development models. Being known as a neutral broker could qualify a State to intercede as arbitrator in a conflict. A reputation for giving aid might dispel suspicions that a State has exploitative intentions. He added that reputations develop in complex ways and may not be simply a reflection of past behavior of international actors. Nevertheless, the images others have of a State, influence the importance they attach to its statements, the manner in which they interpret its actions and

the predictions they make about future behavior. Reputational power, therefore highlights the manner in which particular reputations provide States with issue-specific forms of influence. Furthermore, he sees representational power as the abilities of States to frame issues in a more limited and concrete fashion or advance their own interpretations, and consciously seek to shape the beliefs of others. Propaganda, public diplomacy and the control of information remains some of the tools and sources of representational power (Hall, 2010). Janice Bially Mattern (2005: 602) posits that representational force is aimed at the victims' subjectivity rather than physicality and is communicated not in reference to material capabilities but through the way the author structures her narrative.

These theories are applicable to understanding Chinese soft power approach in Africa because it will enlighten us of how China is indirectly using institutions and power to assert its authority in Africa. Halls reputation and representative power is applicable to this research. It shows that China is using its aid in Africa to build its reputation power as an economically successful nation to the global community. Likewise, its constant propaganda of aiding and assisting Africa fortifies its representational power. Lastly, China's engagement during the pandemic period in Africa sets African regimes within a framework of subjectivity. During trades agreements and conflicts, they might have to surrender their rights and powers to China.

### **Methodology**

In this study, the data were collected from three major sources, Western, Asian and African databases. The data are mostly secondary sources from relevant books and journal articles. Soft power and Chinese engagements in African COVID-19 pandemic as depicted in primary and secondary materials were downloaded from Western, Asian and African databases through the internet. Relevant information related to the subject matter was selected through critical case sampling method and the content analysis style was used in the study. Soft power, COVID-19, diplomacy, aid, medical assistance, international relations and status resource materials

were downloaded from the internet specifically on how they influence and facilitate bilateral relationship between China and Africa. Hence, the data for this work were considered representative of how Chinese soft power approach engaged African countries in their COVID-19 pandemic. The data used for this work were analyzed to understand the influence of Chinese soft power on eradication, treatment and the health measures used by African countries to combat COVID-19.

### **The Spread of COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa**

On December 31st 2019, Chinese authorities in Wuhan announced a cluster of pneumonia cases of etiology, most of which included patients who reported exposure to Wuhan's Hunan Seafood wholesale market. Consequently, on February 10, 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) named the disease, caused by the new virus, COVID-19. Accordingly, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic because of the manner in which verified cases of it was evolving and spreading rapidly (WHO, 2020). The COVID-19 disease was reported to have symptoms similar to influenza. Others included mild diseases, severe lung injuries and multi-organ failure which eventually resulted in death especially in older patients (Guan et al., 2020). One inherent setback at tackling COVID-19 is that there was no vaccine discovered for the prevention of it. The best prevention was to avoid being exposed to the virus. Airborne precautions and other protective measures were adopted in mainland China. It included the use of face masks, covering coughs and sneezes with tissues that are then safely disposed, use of a flexed elbow to cover the cough or sneeze, regular hand washing with soap or disinfection with hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, avoidance of contact with infected people and maintaining an appropriate distance as much as possible and refraining from touching the eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands (WHO, 2020).

Africa over the years has been faced with its own fair share of epidemics and pandemics and they are still a natural phenomenon in most countries. Many contagious diseases such as HIV, Tuberculosis, Ebola and Lassa fever already threaten the lives of people in Africa. COVID-19 brought greater

doom for most African states. It was first reported in Africa on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, barely two months after it broke out in China. It spread to over 30 countries in Africa in less than a month and over 47 other countries on the continent (Musiitwa and Li, 2020).

COVID-19 found its way to Africa through several channels. Firstly, most African governments did not have adequate information about COVID-19 and in certain instances where the information was available; the leaders had a lackadaisical attitude to it. Secondly, there were conflicting news and speculations that COVID-19 could not survive in hot regions and as such all guards were let down in Africa. Also, there was news circulating from many scientists such as those from Beihang and Tsinghua universities which had researched the spread of the COVID-19 in 100 cities. They concluded that high temperature and high relative humidity significantly reduced the transmission of COVID-19 (Cookson, 2020). This false information led to a wild spread of COVID-19 in most African countries despite their high temperature and humidity. Thirdly, Africa lacked the testing technology to detect COVID-19 at its borders and as such foreigners came in undetectably with the virus and invariably contaminated the people. Fourthly, health institutions in charge of pandemics in many African countries lacked the resources to handle such outbreak. Fifthly, sensitization and enlightenment on how to prevent COVID-19 in most African countries came late or perhaps in most cases were not available. The resultant effect was that people's lives were exposed to imminent danger. Sixthly, health institutions and quarantine centers in most African countries were undermined by the lack of facilities such as ventilators, sanitizers and testing kits (van Staden, 2022).

Therefore, the spread of COVID-19 was already premeditated unintentionally by the authorities and governments of several African states. Seventhly, most African countries are poverty stricken and densely populated with high rate of illiteracy. Therefore, maintaining the right hygiene or accessing the desired information to combat or prevent the spread of COVID-19 was a major challenge and hurdle for them to achieve (Itugbu, 2021). These were some of the reasons why COVID-19 found

access to many African countries that lacked the capacity to deal with it. Nevertheless, as the world struggled from the claws of the COVID-19 pandemic, certain institutions or nations came to the aid and assistance of African countries.

### **Discussion**

China is a major donor of aid to Africa, but the scale and mode of Chinese aid practices appear poorly misunderstood and often misrepresented. China is a long-established diplomatic partner and not a new investor in Africa. Its interests on the continent encompass not only natural resources but also issues of trade, security, diplomacy and soft power. China portrays the principle of non-interference and friendly relations as the new positive model for engagements with Africa. It promotes its presence in Africa based on equality, mutual respect and mutual benefits. It sees the fundamental needs of food, security and economic development as forms of human rights that it helps to promote through robust economic development and trade with Africa (Taylor, 2009). Chinese support for Africa in its fight for the COVID-19 aligns with its diplomacy of soft power.

Nye Jr asserts that soft power is the ability to affect others through a co-optive means of an agenda and eliciting positive attraction to obtain preferred outcomes. A school of thought argues that China's engagement in Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic reveals that it aims to affect and influence Africans for its own agenda which at the moment is unknown. Another school of thought propounds the idea that China is helping Africa on humanitarian grounds and nothing more. Despite these two schools of thoughts, certain things are obvious from Chinese aid to Africa and it would be discussed below. China is assisting Africa as a central part of its impressive strategy and tactful policy in Africa; it aims to exert its soft power across the globe. This is obvious because first it aligns its actions with the postulation of Todd Halls who stated that countries can use their soft power in the form of institutional power to indirectly control others. The bulk of the aid that came to Africa came from the Chinese State

sponsored companies, embassies and Chinese State sponsored charitable organizations.

Jack Ma through his Alibaba Foundation donated 500 ventilators, 260,000 protective suits with masks, 2,100,000 test kits, and 6,000,000 face masks to 54 African countries. Huawei, a telecommunication giant from China donated R1 million to South Africa and the Huajian Group (the Chinese shoemaker) donated over face masks and other anti-epidemic supplies to eight African countries. Chinese embassies in Kenya and Uganda also donated 250,000 masks, medical goggles and thermometers to these African nations. Local Chinese within their communities were also centrally mobilized to offer assistance to African communities in which they lived and operated their businesses respectively (Engelberth and Sági, 2021). Chinese medical doctors were dispatched to African countries such as Nigeria, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Rwanda, and Burkina Faso to fight against COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

Secondly, China is adopting the reputational power model as seen in its soft power approach by giving aid to African countries. China intends to create a new image for itself. When the virus broke out in Wuhan, China, the country was blamed for the pandemic outbreak across the globe. It was called “Chinese virus” and as such scholars have called Beijing’s COVID-19 diplomacy and humanitarian effort as a part of its broader strategy to deflate some of its blame and divert attention from it. China is therefore creating an image for itself as being able to control the virus within its own country and then going out to regions like Africa to assist in the pandemic effort. Likewise, this model also sees China as building its reputation at home to stir up national pride as the country would be seen as a high-profile provider of humanitarian aid and assistance in Africa and other parts of the world. Chinese reputation has soared high since it started offering aid to Africa. This is evident through some scholarly comments such as Eric Olander that asserts there is a desperate need for the medical protective equipment and gear to support public health workers in Africa and China’s donation fills a part of that need at a time when not many other people have been stepping up to help (Asiedu, 2020).

Thirdly, China is invoking its representational power and shaping its beliefs for others about its intervention in the pandemic plight of African countries. China is creating a narrative of being the number one humanitarian partner that is replacing the Americans in times of need. Chinese officials have stated that when lives are at stake, nothing matters more than saving lives. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Zhao Lijian remarked during the period that it was useless to argue over the merits of different social systems. He also said that the whole world should jointly come together and safeguard the health and safety of mankind (Crawford and Martin, 2020). Likewise, China's representative power became obvious when America suspended its funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) because President Trump accused the health institution for being too cozy with China. The Beijing led government immediately pledged millions of dollars in additional support to the organization. This gave China even more influence in the global health agency and allowing the country to portray itself as the new champion of multilateralism (Ward, 2020). It is also pushing for the narratives that China and Africa are closely tied together in several situations and it is obligatory for it to respond to the needs of most African countries. These notions are obvious that China has adopted its soft power in form of institutional, reputational and representational in its aid relief efforts in Africa.

Despite Chinese aid to Africa, scholars have perceived Chinese engagement with Africa in different notions. Phillipe Rogers (2007: 22) asserts that it comes with a mix of approval, apathy and contempt. For instance, Chinese doctors were sent to Nigeria to assist in COVID-19 pandemic fight and it was met with great uproar as reported in the news and the social media. The medical doctors' association in Nigeria immediately threatened to review their activities and participation in the pandemic fight if government decision to invite the Chinese medical team was not rescinded. The invitation was perceived as a national disgrace and demeaning image for the millions of Nigerian doctors who had engaged themselves in the fight [see Adewole, (2020); Adejuwon, (2021)].

Another school of thought claims that Chinese aid to Africa is

economically driven. This is because the pandemic has calamitous effects on world global economies. China is Africa's largest trading partner and exports from Africa slowed by 17.5% since the COVID-19 hit the two regions. With Africa under lockdown due to the pandemic, there would be a downward trend in the trade volumes between China and Africa. African countries, like Angola and South Sudan, exported 95% of their resources to China and there was a slow-down in demand from Africa thus heavily affecting prices and invariably the economies (Asiedu, 2020). Similarly, another school of thought argues that Chinese aid in Africa is based on its strengthening its bilateral ties with the continent and nothing more. Stephen Chen of the London School of Oriental and African studies posit that China supplies masks, ventilators and testing equipment which most African countries lacked. The aid from China can be seen as a sign of goodwill and a way to strengthen China Africa relations (Schwikowski, 2020). Kurlantzick et. al. (2006: 1) asserts that China assists Africa because it claims it knows Africa's development challenges and comprehends the plights of developing nations. Its overarching goal is seen as win-win diplomacy through reinforcing its bilateral ties through aids and loans in the continent.

Protagonists of Chinese aid in Africa have asserted that the Chinese response to the pandemic in the continent came in a timely manner and fashion. Africa lacked all the necessary equipment and China came to the rescue of most African nations. Most African nations could protect the lives of its citizenry with Chinese aid.

Furthermore, scholars have argued that China's aid efforts in Africa leaves the continent on another dependent model in which it has to always rely on China for assistance in times of crisis. Africa should be able to combat the pandemic crisis by itself. They argued that China worked and fought the virus by itself. Why should Africa not be left alone to combat the pandemic by itself? These scholars have argued that Africa has always been on the receiving end and as such it cannot attain the international reputation it needs despite all the resources it has. It cannot handle its own affairs but has to rely on China for aid and assistance. In conclusion,

therefore, China's aid in Africa comes with mix feelings, reactions and statements.

### **Conclusion**

China's investment in Africa has increased up to billions of dollars through its diplomatic and economic engagements in recent years. Its central thrust of engagement has been China's commitment to support most of the developing countries of Africa without enforcing the stringent measures and requirements by the West and most especially the United States of America. Hua Chunying, Director of China's Foreign Ministry Information Department, has argued that "China-Africa traditional friendship will not be disturbed by instigation of some forces," (Crawford and Martin, 2020). China was not the only country that assisted Africa in its pandemic fight, Africa received a lot of COVID-19 commitments from bilateral partners such as the United States (\$274m), multilateral institutions such as the World Bank (\$14bn program to sustain economies), African Development Bank (\$10bn COVID-19 response plan) (Bone and Cinotto, 2020). However, these aids and funding were not condemned like Chinese aid because scholars have posited that China has an agenda in Africa, its method of operation is not transparent and that China's action does not conform to the standards of international institutions.

Despite all these rhetoric, Chinese diplomatic effort in fighting COVID-19 in Africa was remarkable despite all the schools of thought postulated by scholars. The fact remains that Africa was incapacitated by poor health infrastructure to fight the pandemic; however, having China come to their rescue seems laudable. Nevertheless, some have seen Chinese soft power in the form of China hiding behind or instigating non-profit organizations and its embassies around the globe to support the fight in their respective African regions with aid in form of materials and relief efforts. Secondly, scholars have also seen China as trying to create a new reputation for itself, one different from the Western perspective. The West believes China should be held responsible for the COVID-19 outbreak around the globe due to certain issues that arose at the initial outbreak

of the virus in China. They opined that Chinese censored and withdrew certain information from the public and the WHO, as such it lacked the moral right to act. China was therefore trying to remove such perception from the international scene by acting as the noble and modest country, who after conquering the virus in its own country was going around the globe helping those in need.

Thirdly, China pushed itself to be the world global leader by trying to oust the Americans that presumably have held the position since the new world order was established. It has pumped its finances into international institutions like the WHO and rallied round the globe supporting the pandemic relief efforts. Fourthly, one of China's foreign policies is the notion of win-win strategy. China needs a ground to exert its power as an international and global leader, and it has found Africa as the terrain to act. China's true intention for investing so much around Africa has been very contentious and scholars have posited that most African countries will be compelled to bow to Chinese economic demands and overtures in the future. Scholars have argued that most African countries will lack the bargaining power and right to favorably discuss trade issues with the Asian giant.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a lot of havoc on the African continent and globally. Many lives were lost, economies crippled and it affected and reshaped human lives greatly. A global response and approach were put in place by nations that felt morally obligated to act and to ensure the sustenance and protection of humanity.

## R E F E R E N C E S

- Adejuwon, I. (2021). The economic impact of COVIDs-19 pandemic in Lagos, Nigeria: The case of female alcohol sellers. *INFRA-Nigeria Working Papers Series* 79.
- Adewole, M. (2020). "The impact of COVID-19 on resident living conditions in Lagos, Nigeria. Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference, The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, 10th-11th November, 2020.

- Asiedu, K. G. (2020). China wants to help Africa fight coronavirus but not everyone is welcoming. *QZ News*. <https://qz.com/africa/1834670/chinese-medical-aid-for-covid-19-in-africa-gets-mixed-support/>.
- Asiedu, K. G. (2020). Trade between China and Africa dropped 14% in the first quarter and could get worse. *QZ News*. <https://qz.com/africa/1844049/trade-between-china-and-africa-dropped-14-percent-in-the-first-quarter/amp/>.
- Brautigam, D. (2011). *The dragon's gift: The real story of China in Africa*. OUP Oxford
- Barnett, M. & Duvall, R. (2005). Power in international politics. *International Organization*, (59)1: 39–75.
- Banwo, A. O. (2019). Distant Africa: Chinese cultural juxtapositions of an African culture. *Interdisciplinary Journal of African and Asian Studies (IJAAS)*. *African and Asian Studies* 5(1):32-53.
- Banwo, A. O. (2021). From protectionism to globalization: The one belt, one road dynamics in Africa. *Wukari International Studies Journal* 5(1).
- Banwo, A. O. (2022). Covid-19 impacts on China-Nigeria education and cultural exchanges, Africa & Diaspora Discourse. *A Journal of the Institute of African and Diaspora Studies, University of Lagos* 4(1).
- Bone, M. & Cinotto, F. (2020). China's multifaceted COVID-19 diplomacy across Africa. *TheDiplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/chinas-multifaceted-covid-19-diplomacy-across-africa/>.
- Cookson, C. (2020). Scientists hopeful warmer weather can slow spread of coronavirus. *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/c8ed3692-6db3-11ea-9bca-bf503995cd6f>.
- Crawford, A. & Martin, P. (2020). Politics: China's coronavirus diplomacy has finally pushed Europe too far. *Bloomberg*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-21/china-s-coronavirus-diplomacy-has-finally-pushed-europe-too-far>.
- Chan, S. (2013). *The morality of China in Africa: The middle kingdom and the dark continent*. London: Zed Books.
- Engelberth, I. & Sági, J. (2021). Mask Diplomacy-China Africa Relations in Light of the Corronavirus Pandemic. *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations* 7(1): 3-14.

- Guan, W.J., Ni, Z.Y., Hu, Y., Liang, W.H., Ou, C.Q., He, J.X., Liu, L., Shan, H., Lei, C.L., Hui, D.S.C., et al. (2020). Clinical characteristics of coronavirus disease 2019 in China. *N Engl J Med*.
- Hall, T. (2010). An unclear attraction: A critical examination of soft power as an analytical category." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3: 149-111`.
- Heng, Y. (2010). Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the softest of them all? Evaluating Japanese and Chinese strategies in the soft power competition era. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 10(2): 275-304.
- Itugbu, S. (2021). The politics of China's vaccine diplomacy in Africa. *International Affairs*. <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-politics-of-chinas-vaccine-diplomacy-in-africa/>.
- Keohane, R.O. & Nye, J.S. (1989). *Power and interdependence: World politics in transition*. 3rd ed. Boston: Little-Brown
- Kurlantzick, Joshua et al., (2006). China's Africa strategy: A new approach to development and diplomacy? *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 1-2.
- Mattern, B. J. (2005). Why "soft power" isn't so soft: Representational force and the sociolinguistic construction of attraction in world politics. *Millennium*33(3): 602.
- Morgenthau, H. J. (1966). A realist theory of international politics. In *The Puritan Ethic in United States Foreign Policy*, 61-76.D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc.
- Musiitwa, J. & Li, H. (2020). Medical diplomacy-'coronavirus diplomacy': China's opportune time to aid Africa. *The Africa Report*. <https://www.theafricareport.com/26750/coronavirus-diplomacy-chinas-opportune-time-to-aid-africa/>.
- Nye, J. S. (2009). Get Smart Combining Hard and Soft Power Response. *Foreign Affairs*, 88(4) :160-163.
- Osiki, O. M. (2017). China in Africa. In R.T. Akinyele (Ed.), *History & Diplomacy: Essays in Honour of Ade Adefuye*, pp.271-290. New Jersey: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing.
- Osiki, O.M. (2020). Contemporary China-Nigeria Diplomatic and Economic Relations. In Akinjide Osuntokun (Ed.), *Nigeria's Foreign Policy Unbound: Essays Presented to General Ike O.S. Nwachukwu at 80*, pp.221-248. Enugu: Alliance Publications Nig. Ltd.

- Osiki, O. M. (2020). A Trajectory of Asia-Nigeria Relations: A Case of China. In Akin Alao and Adetunji O. Ogunyemi (Eds.), *Contending Issues on Nigeria's Development Trajectory since 1914*, pp.583-603. Ile-Ife: OAU Press.
- Osiki, O. M. (2013). Storm in a tea cup: US-China relations in the first decade of the Twenty-First century," *Journal of Defence Studies* 1: 191-211.
- Rogers, P. D. (2007). Dragon with a heart of darkness? Countering Chinese influence in Africa. *Joint Forces Quarterly* 47: 22-27.
- Rotberg, R. I. (Ed.). (2009). *China into Africa: Trade, aid, and influence*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Siow, M. W. (2010). Chinese domestic debates on soft power and public diplomacy. *Asia Pacific Bulletin* 86: 1-2.
- Schwikowski, M. (2020). Coronavirus pandemic helps China expand its influence in Africa. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.dw.com/en/coronavirus-pandemic0helps-china-expand-its-influence-in-africa/a-53241254>.
- Taylor, I. (2009). *China's new role in Africa*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Van Staden, C. (2022). Chinese vaccine diplomacy in Africa. *Asia Policy* 29(3), 5-17.
- Ward, A. (2020). How China is ruthlessly exploiting the coronavirus pandemic it helped caused.
- Vox. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.vox.com/platform/amp/2020/4/28/21234598/coronavirus-china-xi-jinping-foreign-policy>.
- WHO (2020). Advice on the use of masks in the community, during home care and in health care settings in the context of the novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV outbreak (Interim guidance). [https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)-outbreak](https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)-outbreak)
- Youling, L. (2011). External communication as a vehicle for disseminating soft power: A study of China's efforts to strengthen its cultural soft power in the era of globalization, PhD diss., University of Buffalo, New York, p. 22.
- Yan, X. & Jin, X. (2008). Sino-US Comparisons of Soft Power". *Contemporary International Relations* 18(2).
- Yu, X. (2008). Soft Power Enhancement and China's External Strategy. *China Int'l Studies* 12, (20).

## Insecurity and Development Dilemma in Nigeria: A Retrospection

††*Moshood, Abdul-Wasi B., PhD & hovoethin, Paul-Sewa, PhD*

### Abstract

*The negative impacts of insecurity on development are obvious across Africa. Despite the enormous financial, material and human resources spent to enhance security in Africa most countries especially in the Sahel region still suffer various forms of insecurity. In recent time, Nigeria remains one of the most affected countries on the issue of insecurity. The fact that insecurity continues to stare the country in the face, makes the search for a resolution a noble one. On Wednesday 27 of December, 2023 suspected herdsmen killed almost two hundred people in Plateau state and destroyed properties worth several millions of naira. Insecurity has become like a circuit in the country, starting with the militancy in the Niger Delta in the Fourth Republic to Boko Haram and Banditry in the North-East, the North-West respectively. Through qualitative method, the study attempts to answer questions such as: what are the causes and consequences of insecurity in Nigeria? To what extent is insecurity an albatross to national development? What are the options available to enhance security in Nigeria? The study recommends a multisectorial approach to addressing the complex security situation in country.*

*Keywords: insecurity, development, insurgency, Boko Haram, banditry*

### Introduction

Security is an essential component in the life of a nation that desires to develop. It should be noted that one of the cardinal functions of a state is to provide security of lives and properties. The failure of the state to perform this important function results in insecurity which hampers other areas

---

†† The authors are lecturers in the Dept. of Political Science, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria.

of human existence. Thus, insecurity has continued to affect national development in Africa at large and Nigeria in particular. Over several decades, there have been a recurrent and sustained argument that the Nigerian state, like its counterparts in Africa and other developing world, is underperforming due to lack of state capacity to deal with the complex security situation. At the moment a number of countries on the continent of Africa are having development challenges as a result of insecurity which also became worsen with the global covid-19 pandemic. There is no gainsaying that Nigeria was under worse situation before COVID-19 pandemic, this among others includes: reduced incomes, disrupted supply chains, and acute hunger as farmers–herders crisis has worsened insecurity and prevented farming activity in some parts of the country. This portends great danger for the country as Okoli (2022) reported that there is no part of the country that is spared with insecurity. He argues that as Boko Haram terrorist is winding down in the north-east, banditry is famous in the north-west, separatist in the eastern part of Nigeria, farmers herder's crisis continues in the north-central, while the western part of the country is not spared of the gang court and ritual violence.

Piracy and oil theft still continue in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. There is therefore, no controversy about the fact that security situation is at the tipping point. Causes of insecurity in every country could either be endogenous or exogenous. The exogenous security challenges come from outside the country. Countries like Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso and other in the Sahel have suffered continued infiltration of foreign influence in their countries which have occasioned coups in recent times (Muhammad & Onapajo, 2022). Nigeria as a country is not also exonerated from foreign infiltration in her polity. The interest on oil on the one hand and the location of multinational oil companies have always represented the interest of foreign influence. Watts and Ibaba (2011) argue that oil theft in the Niger Delta is aided with the exchange of oil for arm. In fact, one of these researchers argues elsewhere that it was the level of arms in circulation occasioned by oil for arm in the Niger Delta and the desperation of political class in Nigeria prior to the 2015 election that made

the United State foreign mission to predict Nigeria's disintegration by 2015 (Moshood 2023, *The Cable*, 2015). The significance of Nigeria is also seen in the interest shown by the foreign powers in the election monitoring and clandestine support they often offer to various political parties. The Bakassi peninsula saga between the Nigeria and Cameroon is another high point in the foreign influence triggers of conflict in Nigeria. While it could be argued that the impact of foreign influence on Nigeria's insecurity situation is minimal compared to countries like Mali and others. Also, the level of insecurity in the country falls substantially on the internal drivers and mismanagement of the leaders. Therefore, attention in this paper will be devoted to causes of internally induced form of insecurity in Nigeria. Other causes of insecurity as it affects Nigeria that have been exhaustively discussed in the literature include: crisis of leadership, lack of institutional capacity, porous border, ethno-religious crisis, weak security architecture, climate change among others. The study attempts to evaluate the extent of insecurity on national development in Nigeria and how the challenges posed by this could be mitigated.

Through qualitative method, the paper undertakes a study of the security dilemma in Nigeria and the extent it has impacted on national development in the country. This is divided into five sections beginning with introduction, followed by, the theoretical anchor of the study, the third section takes an overview of security situation in the country. The fourth section looks at insecurity and development nexus in the country, and concludes with some recommendations. The next segment focuses on the leadership dilemma theory.

### **Leadership Dilemma Theory**

The predetermined set of assumptions on how leadership works and how to exercise it is often the focus of leadership theory. These assumptions are firmly bolted to our DNA, expecting that there is one unique theory to solve the leadership challenges of a country or an organization. It is exceedingly difficult to pry us loose from these deeply entrenched beliefs. However, we must be willing to let go. Why? Because many of

the challenges that confront a nation today are enormously complex and varied, and existing leadership theory doesn't always work in solving them. Souba (2006) submits that contemporary leadership challenges require modern approaches for their resolution. The continuous usage of old approaches for modern day challenges have remained an albatross for leadership success. But not infrequently the obstacles are not clear or we are not aware of them and we are left not knowing how to tackle a leadership challenge that we are occasionally faced as a country (Souba 2006).

In specific term, dilemmas are complex, tension-fraught problems that arise when a leader is challenged to achieve more than one objective. Faced with such daunting problems, leaders typically adopt a stance associated with the common belief related to resolving dilemmas: that they are irresolvable (Cardno 2007). A leadership dilemma can occur when there is a discrepancy between varying choices of equal alternatives that are available for decision making. Irrespective of ways a leader acts there is likely to be an uncomfortable situation for one of the parties involved. This can create indecisiveness on the part of a leader until they act definitely to resolve the situation which will not go away unless it is dealt with thoroughly.

When a leader is faced with a dilemma, he/she is expected to choose between two equally unattractive options, it is not surprising to surmise that dilemma cannot be resolved. "Dilemmas are exceedingly complex problems, the very idea that they can be managed is unthinkable. Dimmock" (1999 cited in Cardno 2007). Cardono further explains that "whilst problems may be solved, dilemmas are distinguishable from problems in that they are taken to be irresolvable because in attending to one element or horn of a dilemma, others are left unresolved" (Cardno 2007, p.4). In Cuban's view, dilemmas are messy, complicated, a conflict-filled situations that requires undesirable choices between competing and, highly-prized values that cannot be simultaneously or fully satisfied. He further said that "dilemmas arise when: people compete for limited resources, hold conflicting values, and wrestle with diverse expectations

held by others” (Cuban 2001, p.10). Both Dimmock and Cuban believe that dilemma cannot be resolved. Dimmock asserts that to “manage dilemma begins with the ability to conceptualize, reconceptualize, and redefine the situation, and then identify its elements and other values underlying it” (Dimmock 1999, p. 110). Cuban while arguing that dilemmas cannot be solved but managed, avers that “management of dilemma is like satisficing, which requires compromise and helps one to cope with the debris of disappointment” (Cuban 2001, p.16). If this position is agreeable, the best one can conclude is the understanding that problems are solved but dilemmas recur. The best a leader or country can do in this instance of leadership dilemma is to continue to create compromises in managing it array of challenges. Developing a more robust meaning system for the word leadership is essential. For example, Cuban (2001) argues that one must be clear that there is a difference between a leader and leadership. One refers to a person, the other to an activity or a capacity. Some leaders exercise good leadership, some exercise bad leadership and others don’t lead at all. To tackle the challenge of leadership dilemma, the starting point is getting the right type leadership.

In the context of Nigeria, Achebe (1982), noted that the country is blessed with the best flora and fauna. The problem of Nigeria, is not in its climate, or dearth of resources but in who to manage the abundant resources. While it has been established that dilemma itself is a complex problem that cannot be solved but at best managed, it becomes more complicating when a country is bereft with quality leadership that will manage the country’s complex situations. When this is the case, the identity crisis widens, political upheaval becomes a regular issue, and neighbours who once lived together at one point become enemies. The conflict in the country took different dimension because the leadership allowed it to fester, and at times deliberately orchestrate conflict in other to advance and perpetuate selfish interest. Examples of these are given in the next section. So, the leadership dilemma in Nigeria’s context is not about leadership being faced with arrays of complex choices alone but also the inability to choose the right type of leadership at a time to

manage the Nigeria's complex situation, hence, the choice of this theory. The next section overviews the insecurity situations in Nigeria.

### **Overview of Insecurity in Nigeria**

The insecurity in the country has become a recurring decima. This climaxed with the invasion of the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) in the early hours of 24 August, 2021 where two officers were killed and another officer abducted. This kind of attack is quite instructive, because if the insecurity is already getting to the national defence fabric, it means that no one is safe in the country anymore. Nigeria did not find herself under this type of situation overnight. The level of insecurity as it is today started gradually and is getting out of control. Thus, we shall try as much as possible to take a historical overview of the progression of insecurity in Nigeria, especially from the advent of democratic rule in 1999 up to the present moment. In doing this, attempt would be made to link some of the different forms of insecurity to the causal factors of insecurity that have been highlighted in the introductory part.

We begin with the Niger Delta Crisis which the ember was sown with the discovery of oil in Oloibiri in the present day Bayelsa state. The activities of the oil multinationals have great impact on the environment and several peaceful protest to draw the attention of the government to the plight of the people in the region fell on deaf ears, it became aggravated in the 1990s and the first in the fourth republic (Moshood 2016; Obi 2014). With the advent of the fourth republic, the democratic space gave the opportunity for the bottled-up anger which the military has repressed to resurface and in a more devastating form. Commenting on the activities of the oil multinationals, Obi (2014) argues that the Niger Delta conflict arose in the 1990s due to tensions between international oil companies (IOCs) and some representatives of Niger Delta minority ethnic groups who felt they were being exploited without due compensation from the oil exploited in the region. Thus, ethnic and political unrest continued in the region throughout the 1990s and persisted for more than a decade. As Nwagboso (2012) notes, the inability of the government to address the

root causes of the agitation including environmental problems, poverty, unemployment, lack of basic amenities, and the others in the Niger Delta region, resulted in the spawning of ethnic militias and subsequent militarisation of the entire region.

From the outset of the conflict, government has instituted several palliatives aimed at addressing the challenges such as environmental degradation and the absolute poverty in the region. Government established some institutions or agencies to douse the tension in the area such as the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Ministry of Niger Delta (MND); this intervention, notwithstanding, the conflicts and insecurity in the Niger Delta region persisted. In fact, the region witnessed severe security threats and the emergence of other agitating groups affiliated to the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) controlled by Mujahid Dokubo-Asari and the Niger Delta vigilante (NDV) led by Ateke Tom. The introduction of these groups gave the struggle the violent phase it later assumed (Moshood, 2016; Nwagboso, 2012).

In other to find lasting solution to the conflict, the federal government employed discreet, but subtle military approach, what in other word is known as carrot-and-stick approach to cower the militants into accepting its proposal for amnesty. This happened under the leadership of the late President Umaru Yar'Adua, who announced the granting of Amnesty and unconditional pardon to militants in the region (Moshood, 2016). Therefore, due to this federal government's amnesty offer the militants led their groups to surrender their weapons which included rocket-propelled grenades, guns, explosives, ammunition, gunboats, among others. Although the federal governments' Amnesty Programme reduced the rate of militancy in the region, yet, the conflict has created a contagion effect where the use of kidnapping, ransom taking and other criminal activities have snowballed into other region in the country.

It is therefore not wrong to observe that kidnapping in the South-East Zone of Nigeria could be traced to hostilities, conflicts and violence in

the Niger-Delta region (Nwagboso, 2012). Kidnapping, which is the act of abducting somebody and keeping the person within the enclave of the kidnapers in order to get a ransom for his/her release, suddenly took on a whole new economic attraction in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. This new source of making quick huge money thrived in the southeast zone, especially in Abia and Imo states, where prominent indigenes and residents of the states were easy targets. Furthermore, following the 2007 general elections in Nigeria, this social problem became virulent in the South-East as youth that were used as political thugs by politicians during the 2007 general elections subsequently diverted their guns, skills and energy into the ugly trade as a new means of survival after the elections. Thus, from 2007 to the present moment, several prominent residents in the South-East have been kidnapped for ransom. In fact, these kidnapers went as far as abducting school children, traditional rulers, and innocent citizens at various locations. (Okoro, 2019; Onifade *et al*, 2013).

Just about the same time militancy was receding in the Niger Delta region, secessionist conflict in the southeast was rearing its ugly head, the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East Nigeria became another very important form of insecurity which has given the Nigerian state the greatest security challenge. This remains a major security nightmare in Nigeria which has adversely affected every aspect of the Nigerian state. According to Agbiboa (2013) he explains that the word “Boko” meaning book or western civilization and the Arabic word “Haram” figuratively means “sin” or literally something “forbidden.” Which connotatively means western civilization is forbidden. The Boko Haram is a controversial Nigerian militant terrorist group that has sought to impose its radical aspect of Islam in the north-eastern state. The ambiguous goal of the group and its radical ideological leaning is noticed in its indiscriminate killings of both Muslims and Christians in the country. Since its inception, the group has killed over 98.906 thousand of people, and destroyed both government and private facilities worth several millions of naira (Nigeria Security Tracker, 2023).

The conflict situation has become hydra-headed, because the country

is faced with multiple levels of insecurity. While the government is consolidating on the little gains made so far in fighting Boko Haram terrorist group, banditry has surfaced in the northwestern part of the country. The methodology and mode of operations of the bandits have warranted the claim that bandits equally have the renegade of Boko Haram in their midst. The issue of banditry initially started as local disputes between herders and farmers over access to land which overtime developed into issue of national significance. The level of rural banditry escalated between 2014 and 2021 and affected population living In Zamfara and part of its neighbouring states like Kastina, Kaduna, Kebbi, Sokoto, Niger, Benue, Nassarawa and Plateau in North-Central Nigeria. These rampaging gangs of armed bandits which engaged in violent act like attacking, abducting, killing, and robbing villagers and travellers and engaging in cattle rustling have remained one of the major security challenges to the Nigerian state (Alfakoro, 2021). The bandits have been operating in the North-Western region for over a decade, but have grown in strength and sophistication in the last few years. These criminal gangs are without any central leadership (Arvin, 2021), this explains why negotiating the group out of conflict may be difficult.

Recently, the bandits have resorted to increasing kidnap of school children for ransom. Families also have withheld their children from attending classes due to this wave of kidnapping. Since December 2020, the bandits have emulated Boko Haram tactics who abducted 276 Chibok girls in 2014 by committing mass abduction. Over 1,000 school children have been abducted by bandits to extort ransom across the Northern Nigeria. The bandits have involved in committing small scale kidnapping of highway travellers, and have recently employed political pressure through school kidnappings to force more lucrative deal (Iwara, 2021).

From the foregoing, it is clear that the major security challenges facing the country is endogenous. This cannot be divorced from the leadership dilemma that has bedevilled the country for several decades. There have been occasions where the leadership deliberately left the conflict to fester due to their inactivity or dilemma of taking the right decision, not knowing

what to do, being complicit or a combination of all these reasons. President Olusegun Obasanjo was alleged to deliberately allowed the Odua People's Congress (O.P.C) conflict with the Hausa in Shagamu 1999 to fester for political reason. Goodluck Jonathan at the initial stage did not take the issue of the Boko Haram and the kidnapping of the Chibok girls seriously until it went out of hand. The same gesture explains inactivity and the lackluster of the Buhari's Administration over the Fulani/herder's conflict. In spite of These challenges, government have made security a pivotal issue that has culminated in the allocation of country's huge resources to the protection of lives and properties. It has also forced government to channel resources meant for developmental purposes to security. Also, the frightening rate at which the economic, political, social and religious affairs of the nation are deteriorating at present is a real indication of insecurity. Similarly, insecurity has threatened the desperate attempt to industrialize, the existing socio-cultural tranquillity and sustainable development. The implication is that Nigeria symbolises unsafe place of abode and has also been included among one of the terrorist countries of the world. Therefore, investors, foreigners, expatriate and even indigenes of Nigeria are scared about investing and committing their resources in lucrative businesses in Nigeria (Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu, 2019). In subsequent section, we will be discussing insecurity and national development nexus.

### **Insecurity and National Development Nexus**

It has been established in this paper that insecurity has impacted greatly on the country socio-development fabric. In view of this, attempt under this section is to establish the correlation between insecurity and national development. According to Denney (2013) the relationship between insecurity and underdevelopment is much stronger than the relationship between peace and development. That is, where there is conflict there is often development challenges. This view is shared by Dike (2008) when he asserts that lack of security of lives and property of citizens is a major hindrance to meaningful development. According to

him, climate of fear frightens domestic and foreign agencies interested in carrying out development programmes or investment and it also limits people's ability to develop economically. Similarly, Ugwu (2013) noted that many communities cannot benefit from any development project because of unresolved protracted conflicts. This is because it is difficult to mobilise members of such community to get involved in development process since workers cannot enter conflict prone communities for fear of hostility. Imobighein in Ugwu (2013) further buttresses this by asserting that in conflict prone areas, unemployment rises, financial and banking systems become in-operative as investors have no confidence anymore and move to more secure areas.

In trying to link insecurity and community development, Ugwu (2013) holds that during conflicts there is inadequate cooperation among community members, absence of outside support, destruction of completed projects, among others will retard community development. These far-reaching effects of insecurity in most cases put a halt on development in affected communities. In this instance, children and youth are more vulnerable to conflict through the indirect impact of a weak state and social system. He however, noted that breakdown of social structures can be detrimental to the development of children and youth in their most important years.

Insecurity also has impact on the level of poverty in a country. During severe conflicts, there is always wanton destruction of lives and property which makes life insecure. According to the World Bank Data on poverty (2020) it is noted that almost half of poor people in Sub-Saharan Africa live in just five countries: Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Madagascar. According to the report more than 40 percent of the global poor live in economies affected by fragility, conflict and violence, and the number is expected to rise to 67 percent in the next decade (*The World Bank*, 2020). It is therefore not surprising that Nigeria is one of the few countries with a high poverty rate.

It is also imperative to note that countries which are struggling with the challenges of development are also prone to experience higher rate

of insecurity. There is the wise saying that a hungry person is an angry person. Therefore, when the populace is hungry, they are prone to engage in act of criminality which are quite antithetical to development. It is therefore surprising that the security-development convergence explains the reason every successive government, since Nigeria's independence has reiterated the importance of security as the core goal of government (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019) and have struggled to entrenched it in the country. The next segment focuses on the national development options.

### **National Development Options**

It has been established in the course of the paper that national development is not realistic where insecurity is at the alarming rate. As a Siamese twin that share a contradictory identity, insecurity inhibits development, where national development is also expected to foster peace and security in the country. The security situation facing the entire globe in the 21st century has remained a dilemma. While insecurity is found everywhere in the world, the security situation in the sub-Saharan Africa has remained an enigma. Nigeria has been mostly affected by problem of insecurity, therefore, the need to find a lasting solution to the security dilemma is not a matter of chance but a necessity. In this segment we will attempt to give some options that may improve security situation in the country as follows:

**Military intelligence:** The security situation in contemporary time required sophistication in gathering intelligence. To achieve this, there is the need to build the capacity of the Nigerian military and intelligent agencies in this regard. It is tough to avoid violence against groups committing massacres of students and civilians every week or taking mass of people for ransom, but the need for a coordinated intelligence gathering will be useful. While effort is made to improve the intelligence gathering of the military and the police alike, the need to train and improve the capacity of Nigerian Police Force is equally important. This should be done alongside building the capacity of leadership in the police and the military. The need for total reorganization of the military is more daunting

now. This will allow the provision of necessary equipment of operation when the right type of leaders is in place.

Coordinated/compact military operation: There is also the need for coordinated policy among security agencies and governors of affected states. Experience over the years shows that there is no central body for coordinating these security agencies that are responsible for curtailing increase in insecurity. In some cases, there is rivalry between the police and the military. Thus, security architecture in the country is in complete disarray because there is no coordinated/compact operation among security agencies or governors in affected states. This weakness is exploited by criminal gangs. Therefore, attempt at ending the crisis requires leadership from the federal government, which means developing a clear policy to coordinate the activities of the security personnel. As Omole, Adejumo and Adejumo (2019) suggest, the governors of the affected state should be on the same page and ensure a cooperative operation exist among the security unit operating in their states.

Getting to the root cause: There is the need to raise the caveat that security efforts as suggested in the above paragraphs can help curtail the situation, but they will not solve the underlying causes of insecurity. This caveat is premised on the fact that there are deeply-seated socioeconomic and political grievances pushing young people to criminality and violent extremism in Nigeria. It is known that the overwhelming majority of these criminal gangs, if not all, have never gone to school. So, they have never had the opportunity to get education and that is one of the grievances they have expressed in their messages. Without proper education, many of these groups cannot find employment in the Nigerian system, so they resort to crime. Therefore, investing in quality education is one of the ways to get at the root causes. When education is guaranteed for all, the possibility of being easily sway into criminality is less feasible.

Besides quality education, the Nigerian government also need to invest in the economy and develop infrastructure in rural areas, including in the remotest areas. Building essential access roads will stop many of these criminals because security forces can then pursue them into the forest.

Investing in infrastructure can help create good-paying jobs that will take people away from criminality and extremism. Another important thing that must be done is to add other initiatives to reinforce the bond between ordinary Nigerians and the state. The average Nigerian does not see the worth of democracy in the country because it has not worked for them. The believe of most Nigerians is that democracy works for the few in government, so there is this widespread frustration with democracy. One of the conditions of reducing insecurity is to address the problem of the lack of good governance through investment in the economy, infrastructure, and other initiatives to take people out of abject poverty and strengthen the social bond (Iwara, 2021; Omole et al, 2019).

The security situation becomes more dire because some people have seen crime as lucrative and easy way to get money. This make it more worrisome because some of those people who have been exposed to this lifestyle will actually find it difficult to go back to farming or pastoralism. What the government need to do in this instance is to ensure any other alternative to peace will be a costly venture. This means while government is improving the economy and providing requisite development and education in the affected areas, it also ensures the security formations are well mobilised and properly motivated to curb subsequent criminality. Once the lineage of recruitment into criminality is blocked and crime is made less lucrative and enterprising, it is just a matter of time before a few bad elements are pushed out of relevance. This also means the government should seek necessary help from global partners who could help in the area of training the military in the area of intelligence gathering, production of military arsenal and facilities to develop an independent and robust military structure. The Nigerian university and the academe have important role to play here, and it is the government that will drive it.

In order to enhance security and engender national development there is the need for commitment to achieve development and the capacity to do so by the Nigerian political class. Empirical findings confirm that development is dictated by the ability of the political elite to pursue collective goods instead of private ones. The implication of this position

is that resource abundance may not lead to development when state policies effectively serve private interests rather than collective good (Thovoethin & Avosetinyen, 2015). The Nigerian political elite as presently constituted are dominated by people who are self-serving, hence often strive to protect their interest instead of collective interests. In this process, policies formulated and implemented by them are meant to protect the interest of the existing political and economic class. Therefore, to achieve national development the Nigerian political class must be committed to development and increase state capacity for development (Thovoethin, 2016).

### **Conclusion**

We have demonstrated in this paper that the problem of insecurity in Nigeria is increasing at alarming rate. This is especially worrisome in the Northern part of Nigeria as a result of the activities of the Boko Haram sect, and increase in banditry and kidnapping for ransom that have almost enveloped the country. There is no country around the world that can achieve any meaningful development in the face of this disastrous level of insecurity as presently witnessed in Nigeria. Thus, having established the nexus between insecurity and national development which has constituted a 21st century dilemma for Nigeria, this paper has suggested structural changes in the security architecture of the country, the need to address the deficiencies in the Nigerian education system, an improved infrastructural development and the formulation of economic policies as necessary conditions for moving Nigeria out of challenges of insecurity especially in relation to national development. The contribution of the international community in the task of ending or reducing insecurity in Nigeria was also captured. Emphasis is therefore placed in building local capacity, while no country can be an island on its own, the need to invest in the Nigerian academe to ensure necessary capacity is built in armoury will be a good direction for the future. The role of leadership is key to advancing a stable system, that is the reason the leadership dilemma explains why lack of political will or deficient of it has always been at

the core of security situation in the country. It is envisaged that adopting this multi-sectoral approach could help improve security situation in the country.

## R E F E R E N C E S

- Abubakar, S. A. (2021). The outgrowing nature of insecurity amidst covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria: Issues, challenges and way forward. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 11(56) 002.
- Achebe, C. (1983). The trouble with Nigeria. Heineman.
- Agbibo, D. E. (2013). The Nigerian burden: Boko Haram and religious terrorism in Nigeria. Conflict, security and development. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 13 (1), pp. 1–29.
- Arvin, J. (2021). How kidnap-for-ransom became the “most lucrative industry in Nigeria”, *Vox Today*.
- Cardno, C. (2007). Leadership learning-the praxis of dilemma management, *ISEA*, 35(2) p.33-50.
- Charles, O. (2020). Ten economic consequences of growing insecurity. *Political Financial Management*. <https://www.financialnigeria.com/ten-economic-consequences-of-growing-insecurity-in-nigeria-blog-512.html>.
- Cuban, L. (2001). How can I fix it? Finding solutions and managing dilemmas: An educator’s road map. Columbia University, Teachers College Press.
- Denney, L. (2013). Insecurity disrupts development, but peace doesn’t drive it, *The Broker*, <https://www.thebrokeronline.eu/insecurity-disrupts-development-but-peace-doesn-t-drive-it/> (Accessed Nov. 2023).
- Dike, A. B. (2010). On the measurement of income inequality. *Journal of Economic theory*, 2, 244- 263.
- Dimmock, C. (1999). The management of dilemmas in school restructuring. *School Leadership & Management*, 19(1) pp. 97-113.
- Iwara, M. (2021). How mass kidnappings of students hinder Nigeria’s future. USIP work in Nigeria. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/07/how-mass-kidnappings-students-hinder-nigerias-future>. (Accessed 24 November, 2023)

- Michael J. Watts & Ibaba Samuel Ibaba (2011): Turbulent Oil: Conflict and Insecurity in the Niger Delta. *African Security*, 4(1) pp.1-19 : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2011.56318>.
- Muhammad, D.S. & Onapajo, H., (2022). Why West Africa has had so many coups and how to prevent them, *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/why-west-africa-has-had-so-many-coups-and-how-to-prevent-more-176577> (Accessed 15 Feb. 2022).
- Moshood, B.A. (2023). Amnesty and violent culture in Nigeria: A critical review of amnesty as a conflict management tool, *The Constitution*, 23(1), 33-54.
- Moshood, B. A. (2016). *Amnesty as a Mechanism for Conflict Resolution: A study of the Niger Delta Conflict in Nigeria*, A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Peace and Conflict Transformation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
- Ndubuisi-Okolo, U. T. & Anigbuogu, T. (2019). Insecurity in Nigeria: The implications for industrialization and sustainable development. *International Journal of Research in Business Studies and Management*, 6 (5).
- Nigeria Security Tracker (2023). <https://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483>.
- Nwagboso, I. (2012). Security challenges and economy of the Nigerian state (2007 – 2011). *American International Journal of Contemporary*, 2 (6).
- Obi, C. (2014). Oil and the post-amnesty programme (PAP): What prospects for sustainable development and peace in the Niger Delta. *Review of African Political Economy*, 41(140) 249- 263.
- Okoli, C. (2022). Nigeria security: 2022 was a bad year and points to need for major reform, *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/nigeria-insecurity-2022-was-a-bad-year-and-points-to-need-for-major-reforms-194554> (Accessed 15 Feb. 2022).
- Okoro, C. B. (2019). Effect of Insecurity Management on the Nigerian Economy and Development: International Conference on Managing Nigeria Economic Diversification from other clime, June 13-15, Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Nigeria.
- Onifade, C; Imhonopi, D. & Urim, U. (2013). Addressing the insecurity challenge in Nigeria: The imperative of moral values and virtue ethics. *Global Journal of Human Social Science Political Science*, 13 (2).

- Omole, O. A., Adejumo, A. O. & Adejumo, G. O. (2019). The role of intelligence in combating insurgency in Nigeria: The Boko Haram experience. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, 7(1), 31-44.
- Souba, W.W. (2007). The leadership dilemma. *Journal of Surgical Research*, (138) p1-7.
- The Cable (2015). Did CIA predict Nigeria would collapse in 2015 as Jega said? <https://www.thecable.ng/fact-check-did-cia-predict-nigeria-would-collapse-as-jega-said>.
- Thovoethin, P. & Avosetinyen, M. (2015). *Techno-bureaucratic governance and development under the Nigeria fourth republic*. Lagos: Raytel Communication.
- Thovoethin, P. (2016). Techno-bureaucratic governance in a neo-patrimonial society: One-party dominance and the developmental state in Nigeria (1999-2014). PhD Thesis, University of the Western Cape, South Africa.
- The World Bank (2020). Fragility and conflict: On the frontlines against poverty, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/publication/fragility-conflict-on-the-front-lines- fight-against-poverty> (Accessed Nov. 2023).
- Ugwu, A. N. (2013). Conflict management for sustainable community development in Nigeria in the 21st Century. In B. A, Eheazu, C. N. Barikor, and I.S., Nzeneri, (Eds.), *Readings in adult and non-formal education*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Watts, M. and Ibaba, I.S. (2011). Turbulent oil: Conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta. *in African Security*, 4 (1).
- Yagboyaju, D. & Akinola, A. (2019). Nigerian state and the crisis of governance: A Critical exposition. *SAGE Open*, July-September 2019.

## Comment philosopher avec Achille Mbembe? Analyse et intérêt d'un décentrement épistémique

‡‡ Fofou Tchio, Armel

### Résumé

*Aussi bien dans l'opinion commune, et même dans le milieu des philosophes, l'activité philosophique et le statut du « philosophe » ne vont pas de soi. En même temps qu'elle semble jouir d'un statut épistémologique originaire et prépondérant, la philosophie se veut une activité rebutante par la force de l'intellection qu'elle exige pour penser la totalité de l'Être, de façon systématique et systémique. Dans la pensée occidentale, depuis Platon jusqu'à Hegel, elle se veut l'expression de la pensée sous sa forme la plus absolue, un pouvoir qu'exercerait une élite. Dès lors, la difficulté devient de la décoloniser, en d'autres termes, démocratiser l'accès à son trône épistémique. Considérant que l'histoire de la philosophie cite moins les non-initiés en cette discipline, classer l'historien et politologue africain Achille Mbembe « philosophe », devient discutable. Toutefois, la recherche suivante contribue à déterritorialiser la philosophie pour mieux la territorialiser, à la situer dans d'autres espaces et d'autres corps. Cette initiative consiste à montrer la possibilité de la philosophie de se retrouver, et de s'enrichir hors d'elle-même. Dans ce décentrement épistémique, il est probant et vital de parcourir les avenues de la philosophie dans la pensée d'Achille Mbembe. Ce faisant, il en découle un double intérêt. Cet enjeu constitue l'engagement socio-politique et l'interdisciplinarité.*

*Mots clés:* Achille Mbembe, philosophie, décentrement épistémique, l'engagement socio-politique, interdisciplinarité.

---

‡‡ Université de Dschang (Cameroun), Thinking Africa (Institut de Recherche et d'Enseignement sur la Paix).

## Abstract

*In common sense, even within the philosophical domain, the activities and status of common sense philosophy are not always evident. Simultaneously, while appearing to hold a prominent epistemological position due to its importance, philosophy is ostensibly a challenging endeavor, bestowed with the power to reflect the totality of Being in a systematic and systemic manner. In Western thought, from Plato to Hegel, philosophy is considered the absolute expression of the mind. This assertion underscores the need to democratize the epistemological throne. Acknowledging that the history of philosophy often neglects thinkers not initiated in the subject, as argued by Achille Mbembe, a historian and political figure labeled as a 'philosopher' becomes a matter of questioning. However, this research endeavors to delocalize philosophy, aiming to localize and situate it in alternative spaces or bodies. It reveals the possibility to perceive, engage, and enrich oneself beyond conventional boundaries. Within this epistemic shift, it becomes both possible and intriguing to dwell in Mbembe's thought-space. By doing so, we find a dual interest: sociopolitical engagement and interdisciplinarity*

*Keywords: Achille Mbembe, philosophy, epistemic shift, sociopolitical engagement, interdisciplinarity*

## Introduction

L'actualité récente prouve à plus d'un titre que l'Occident devient peu à peu le centre du monde. Son influence, son commandement et sa domination s'amenuisent sous la pression des puissances montantes et face au réveil des peuples africains jetés aux oubliettes de l'histoire coloniale. En effet, les BRICS (Brésil, Inde, Chine, Russie, Afrique du sud) ne cessent de prendre les devants de la scène internationale par leur extension à d'autres nouveaux pays membres (Argentine, Ethiopie, Egypte) et par leur influence grandissante. Ce détachement d'un centre monolithique occidental-centré (Fofou, 2022) s'ajoute aujourd'hui même, aux coups de forces politiques multiples en Afrique occidentale francophone (Mali, Burkina Faso et Niger), un pari militaire, certes, mais bénéficiant d'une

adhésion populaire. Toute cette tension décoloniale a des allures de la mise en place d'une philosophie de la libération.

Définir la philosophie est une tâche ardue. Ce terrain est glissant et nul n'a pu s'y maintenir pour longtemps les pieds fermes. Malgré cette équivocité de la philosophie et l'hétérogénéité des philosophes (Sartre, 1960), ceux-ci reconnaissent pour le moins, l'ancienneté socratique de la philosophie en tant que quête de la vérité et sagesse recherchée. Ce qui n'est pas sans rappeler le baptême de cette activité dont le mathématicien et astronome grec Pythagore est l'auteur du nom. À l'aune de cette origine occidentale, il est loisible de penser que la philosophie démontre un réel souci porté par le désir d'interpréter l'être de le problématiser et de postuler le devoir être, valeur majeure sensée restaurer le vivant et améliorer la condition humaine. La philosophie serait une spéculation, une critique, une axiologie et une éthique dont l'ambition est de redonner à l'homme ses lettres de noblesses. Ainsi, Mikel Dufrenne, d'une certaine manière reconnaît que le vestimentaire philosophique est taillé à la mesure de l'homme (Dufrenne, 1968). Sans doute voulait-il entendre par-là, chaque homme détient en puissance l'aptitude à philosopher. S'il faut se ranger à la suite du cartésianisme pour démocratiser la raison (Descartes, 1981), par extension, la mission philosophique serait par essence humaine. L'homme s'y adonnerait indissociablement à son âge (Épicure), à son sexe (Simone De Beauvoir), à sa classe sociale (Karl Marx), et à sa couleur de peau (Cheikh Anta Diop).

Toutefois, l'histoire de la philosophie semble se réserver jusqu'aujourd'hui de son potentat épistémique à deux niveaux de critère: narcissique et racial. Le royaume de la philosophie serait académique et aristocratique, seulement réservé aux monuments humains dont ses impressionnants jalons en constitueraient des « immortels » (Nkumah, 1976), des intouchables, universellement convoqués, invoqués et traités avec des soins particuliers: des points cardinaux auxquels, on ne saurait ni les soustraire, ni en rajouter. En plus que la langue parlée dans ce royaume serait retournée sur elle-même, fermée aux non initiés. À partir de sa grammaire technique et spécifique, on chasserait de ses temples

tous ceux et celles n'ayant pas la race pur (hellénique et prométhéenne), appartenant à des géographies privilégiées, c'est-à-dire européennes. Dans cette perspective, comment peut-on, sans hyperbole, actualiser le philosophe en le retrouvant chez Achille Mbembe, historien et politologue africain ? Son corpus épistémique, ne peut-il pas avoir un apport favorable dans l'histoire de la philosophie et être une plus-value pour la philosophie africaine ?

### **Achille Mbembe et la redoutable épreuve de la philosophie**

La difficulté du philosophe chez Achille Mbembe peut se trouver à deux niveaux. D'abord, la colonisation de la philosophie par des présupposés théorico-conceptuels racisés et occidental-centrés. Ensuite, le territoire naturel du penseur, domaine annexé par les sciences sociales, à savoir l'histoire et la science politique qui excluraient au premier degré un enracinement philosophique.

### **Colonisation et Colonialité de la philosophie**

Les sociétés humaines ne sont ni figées, ni renfermées sur elles-mêmes. Ces espaces vitaux sont éminemment dynamiques. Elles changent en fonction du temps, suivant l'accroissement de la population et la diminution des ressources. Ainsi, les sociétés sont en interaction, les peuples s'interfèrent, se rencontrent, et se compénètrent (Egoue & Chatué, 2015). Mais ce contact est loin d'être paisible. Il aboutit difficilement à des rapports bénéfiques pour les parties prenantes. Cela témoigne parfois d'un darwinisme social, d'une lutte pour la vie, d'une opposition violente et tragique entre nations ou États, menaçant de désagréger le pôle qui s'avère moins outillé et peu énergique. Chaque société, luttant pour sa survie, en arrive à instrumentaliser l'autre. Par-là, certains nations, pays, ou États, annexent, dominent, exploitent et conquièrent de nouveaux territoires pour s'affirmer et augmenter leur possibilité: c'est la colonisation.

Pour Achille Mbembe, l'intelligentsia occidentale a fait son auto-défense. Elle s'est constituée comme son propre avocat. L'Occident s'est pris comme le nombril du monde. Lui seul pouvait prétendre à l'existence.

Il s'est façonnée dans son imaginaire l'idée que les autres peuples étaient des infrahumains (Marx & Engels, 1968). D'où l'entreprise coloniale que connut l'Afrique, l'Asie et l'Amérique: « [...] la pensée européenne a eu tendance de saisir l'identité non pas tant en termes d'existence mutuelle (co-appartenance) à un même monde qu'en termes du même au même, de surgissement de l'être dans sa manifestation dans son être d'abord ou encore dans son propre miroir. » (Mbembe, 2013).

La tendance à dominer, à exclure culturellement et politiquement les autres peuples témoignent d'un racisme. Cette doctrine fait office d'idéologie impérialiste, hiérarchisant et divisant l'humanité en deux camps: « Civilisés » et « Barbares » (Césaire, 1955). Ce terreau est cultivé par des idéologues de multiples sphères (Friedrich Hegel, Victor Hugo, Arthur Gobineau, Lévy-Bruhl etc.) dont la fin ultime était la justification de l'inégalité des peuples, de la pureté et de la grandeur de la race blanche. Ainsi, en vertu de son prestige, tout naturellement, sa mission consistait à apporter les lumières, aux peuples non européens, à les annoncer la bonne nouvelle, à partager les fruits de la civilisation à ceux qui n'ont inventé ni la poudre à canon, ni la boussole, ni caravelle ; à ceux qui n'ont explorés ni Ciel, ni Terre. L'Afrique, « sauvage », « ignorante » et « inculte », fut considérée pour s'aligner derrière Césaire pareillement à une « terre de soleil et de sommeil », puisque, partout, « la page africaine est vide » (Césaire, 1998).

L'Africain serait inférieur dans le sens où il a une inaptitude congénitale à la pensée rationnelle et à la rationalité philosophique. Ainsi, les vies noires étant relatives, Nadia Yala Kusikidi pense et ironise que l'idée même qu'un corps noir puisse être pensant doit encore faire du chemin. Et aux dires de Séverine Kodjo Grandvaux, le fait de citer un Africain est un sacrilège épistémologique. À ce sujet, la remarque de Delphine Abadie est éloquent par rapport à la colonisation occidentale de la philosophie axée sur la marginalisation du discours philosophique produit des géographies non-occidentales (Abadie, 2018). C'est que la matière philosophique se déploie en s'ontologisant, elle semble occidental-centrée. En l'entrevoyant régulièrement comme

activité conceptuelle la plus fine, la plus tenue et la plus absolue, au sens hégélien du terme, elle est la science par excellence. « En outre, puisque la philosophie est essentiellement dans l'élément de l'universalité qui inclut en soi le particulier, il peut sembler qu'en elle plus que dans les autres sciences, dans le but et dans les derniers résultats se trouve exprimée la chose même dans son essence parfaite. » (Hegel, 1807) La philosophie n'a nullement une caractéristique essentielle des gens à la « peau noire » (Ngoue, 1997). Puisse qu'à ces yeux, l'Africain caractérise l'homme à demi, inachevé, enfermé dans le particulier et la naturalité. Dans cette perspective, l'expression « philosophie africaine » serait un oxymoron et son opposée « philosophie européenne », la plus belle des tautologies, selon que Martin Heidegger atteste fièrement que la philosophie parle et s'entend en grecque seule. Du coup, Hellène est supposé son unique chantre. En excluant les Africains de la sphère de la rationalité, les idéologues de l'impérialisme ont jeté le discrédit sur la capacité philosophique de tout un peuple et ses ressortissants.

### **Préséance d'une œuvre historico-politique: intelligibilité des sociétés africaines coloniales et postcoloniales**

La deuxième difficulté c'est la surestimation propre de la discipline philosophique davantage suprématiste et élitiste. Non démocrate et presque géométrisante, la philosophie se considère comme le royaume de la pensée la plus haute dont les métaphores, « pensée pensante », « science de la science », ne cessent d'évoquer un savoir particulier, hors du commun, clos, paradigmatique, voire une « connaissance de la connaissance » comme dirait Edgar Morin. Celui qui n'a pas reçu de formation à la base est *persona non grata*. Son envolée conceptuelle et son vocabulaire technique et critique font que la philosophie soit une discipline réservée aux seuls initiés (Eboussi, 1977). Suggère Platon: nul n'entre ici s'il n'est géomètre. La géométrie ne suppose pas ici l'étude des rouages de l'espace ou des solides. Il s'agit plutôt d'une initiation aux outils de base et aux rudiments de la philosophie, une acclimatation au long cours de son cursus. E. Kant rappelle les matières qui structurent la philosophie: « L'ancienne

philosophie grecque se divisait en trois sciences: la Physique, l'Éthique et la Logique. Cette division est parfaitement conforme à la nature des choses, et l'on n'a guère d'autre perfectionnement à y apporter » (Platon, 1957). Dans cette subdivision qui fait l'apprentissage de la discipline, la première désigne la Philosophie de la nature et partant, la connaissance des lois qui déterminent la nature ; la deuxième, la Philosophie morale qui consiste à la connaissance des lois de la liberté humaine ; la troisième, la logique qui détermine la connaissance des lois de la pensée. Le passage obligatoire dans ce cursus semble conditionner la fabrication des maîtres de la discipline, dont jouirait le titre de philosophe.

Or, étant savant des sciences sociales, Achille Mbembe appartient à la classe des historiens et des politologues. La contribution majeure du penseur est d'avoir étudié les sociétés coloniales. Ces sociétés sont régies par un régime de domination et démolition, c'est pour lui, des espaces d'instruction d'un pouvoir d'exclusion et d'une politique inhumaine. Dans les faits, la colonisation ne correspondait pas au vivre-ensemble.

Les institutions dont elle se dote, les procédures qu'elle invente, les techniques qu'elle utilise et le savoir sur lequel elle repose ne sont pas déployés en vue d'atteindre un quelconque bien public. Leur première finalité est la soumission absolue. L'objectif que cette espèce de souveraineté se propose d'atteindre est que les gens lui obéissent. (Mbembe, 2000)

Que ce soit dans l'administration indirecte britannique (*indirect rule*) et pis encore dans l'administration directe française (*direct rule*) cette politique imposait un ordre extérieur à l'indigène, un ordre toujours oppressif dont l'intention consistait continument à l'aphasie de ce dernier, le privant de sa langue, capacité de parler et de sa volonté d'agir. Il s'agit d'un rapport de subordination. Les paroles du maître étaient sacrées. Elles devaient s'exécuter sans contestation et sans toute forme de rébellion. Les décisions à prendre étaient irrévocables et les formes de contestations çà et là étaient comme une vraie preuve de mutinerie et méritait la sanction. Le statut de personne (du colonisé) est fragilisé. Le colo-

nisé est blessé dans son ego propre. C'est un être autre. Ayant perdu toute force, toute vitalité et virilité, la colonisation le réduit à son ombre, à son apparence et le dépossède de son essence, forme achevée de ce processus de dénaturation. Dans la colonisation, il n'y a aucune considération pour le vis-à-vis. Le colonat exclut les Africains, puisque le potentat colonial est du type narcissique. En souhaitant que le colonisé lui ressemble le potentat fait donc de la colonie la figure même de l'anti-communauté. Dans ce qui est susceptible d'être considéré comme un lieu de rassemblement, l'Africain est donc mis hors-jeu, désapproprié de ce qui lui appartiendrait et apparenterait. Cela était plus explicite avec Um Nyobe, révolutionnaire et nationaliste du mouvement UPC, assassiné le 13 septembre 1958, deux ans avant l'indépendance du Cameroun dans le département de la Sanaga Maritime, au Sud-Cameroun Um Nyobe voulut corriger la marche du monde et instaurer une discontinuité du pouvoir colonial. Mais, cette tentative courageuse fut rompue. Il n'échappa pas au même sort que Douala Manga Bell et Martin Paul Samba qui furent également tués par l'administration coloniale française. Um Nyobe, fut enterré avec le visage défiguré, déchiré sans rites coutumières décernés à un défunt. Rapidement, on l'ensevelit dans l'oubli, sans référence, sans nom propre, sans identité, sans mérite, sans médaille, sans le mettre dans un quelconque panthéon: « En jouant sur les images de l'ordre et du désordre à travers la manière même de l'enterrer, l'on cherchait à retirer à cette mort ce qui la rendait parlante. L'État colonial voulut donc faire taire le mort. » (Mbembe, 2000)

De la colonialité à la postcolonialité, la différence est foncièrement invisible. La colonialité a maintenu son atmosphère et n'a pas cessé de générer des avatars tels que l'autoritarisme et la violence. Ainsi, les conditions d'existence des autochtones sont sans cesse problématisées en postcolonie. Il en est de même que la nature et la fonction du commandement dont le mode d'être s'écarte essentiellement, de ce qui est susceptible de conférer aux bénéficiaires du pouvoir un réel épanouissement. Comment expliquer l'irrationalité ? Catherine Coquery Vidrovitch voit que le potentat postcolonial possède une rationalité propre reposant sur un triptyque imbriqué: la violence, l'allocation et

le transfert. L'allocation type (le salaire) légitime la sujétion, le salarié devenant un dépendant de l'État dominateur. Selon l'historienne de nationalité française, le processus rend compte de tous les détournements: « corruption », encaissements parallèles, etc., qui convertissent les choses économiques en choses sociales et politiques par le biais des liens sociaux communautaires (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2000). Ainsi, une dette sociale multiforme lie tous les éléments du système, prisonniers les uns des autres. Subséquemment, la thématique de Mbembe s'inscrit d'évidence dans la suite de la « politique du ventre » et de la « criminalisation de l'État » proposées par Jean-François Bayart (Bayart, 2006).

Nous venons de voir les impasses liées à la possibilité du philosophé chez Achille Mbembe. Ces apories théorético-conceptuelles sont définies par la colonialité de la philosophie dépendante de son noyau occidentale raciste, excluant toute possibilité de la philosophie africaine et de la capacité du noir à philosopher. À cela s'ajoute la prédominance du pan historique et politique de son œuvre dans l'effort de l'intelligibilité des sociétés coloniales et postcoloniales. Toutefois, ne serait-ce pas, un angle de vision relatif, qui occulte le caractère d'une pensée réflexive, complexe et partant philosophique ?

### **Le décentrement épistémique, un parcours des avenues de la philosophie chez Achille Mbembe**

Le rejet du rapport d'Achille Mbembe à la philosophie est peu défendable face à l'observation de ces multiples facettes, un rapport diapré de la pensée de cet auteur permet de parcourir les avenues de la philosophie, quête exigeante et désirante de la vérité et de la sagesse. L'autre déplacement que nous faisons ici permet d'envisager un angle autre qu'historiciste et politiste.

### **L'exigence architectonique: un legs pluriel à l'aune d'une sensibilité philosophique**

Si la fécondité de la science aboutit à la collaboration entre les chercheurs (scientifiques), il est loisible de constater que l'activité philosophique est le

résultat d'une pensée qui s'appuie sur la lecture des textes philosophiques et même la rencontre des philosophes attestés<sup>§§</sup> via des colloques ou conférences. Qu'il soit dit ou écrit, la pensée philosophique se constitue à partir d'une discussion sur des problématiques plus ou moins communes à un espace-temps donné.

L'architecture théorique de ce penseur est impressionnante et laisse quiconque stupéfait. On parlera comme Freud à l'égard du psychisme humain, en faisant d'elle une maison à plusieurs étages. Il lit et cite les immortels de l'histoire de la philosophie, se l'approprie et se laisse plus ou moins influencer. On note ainsi plusieurs références qui nourrissent son œuvre.

Avec René Descartes, il est question de la conception de l'homme-machine en tant qu'une prémonition de la techno-médecine. Ces allusions au cartésianisme lui permettent de penser la situation du sujet contemporain en proie au « brutalisme ». La nature humaine et même le corps tendent à être refaçonnés. Les implants qu'on envisage introduire dans le corps humain font de celui-ci un simple objet à l'ère de la profanation qu'est le néolibéralisme. Il en va de même pour la pollution de la planète qui suffoque sur le poids des activités humaines entropiques. D'où son rapport à Emmanuel Kant sur la question de l'universalisme. L'universalisme prodigués durant les Lumières est un « universalisme de surplomb » (Mbembe, 2023). En effet, le rapport du discours occidental à l'humain est relatif puisque la notion d'humanité semble être une catégorie à géométrie variable. Ce à quoi, il s'insurge de manière frontale à Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel qui soutient l'ethnocentrisme occidental, la vacuité de l'Afrique et le mépris des Noirs qu'il récuse par le concept de « raison nègre ». Ce qui n'est pas loin d'une forme de « Volonté de puissance » que mobilisait naguère Friedrich Nietzsche qu'il connaît, puisqu'à la vérité, il y a le « centre » et la « périphérie ». Le centre est constitué des peuples occidentaux et la périphérie, les autres peuples

---

§§ Les philosophes se constituent par la lecture et la référence à d'autres philosophes. Par exemple, on a dans l'histoire de la philosophie les rapports suivants: Anaximandre/Thalès, Socrate/Héraclite, Aristote/Platon, Saint Thomas d'Aquin/Aristote, Kant/Descartes, Marx/Hegel, etc.

renvoyés à la soute de l'histoire. Dans ce contexte, ses accointances à la pensée de Karl Marx qui critiquent les affres du capitalisme et son accentuation néolibérale qui structure le monde en dominants et dominés deviennent évidentes.

Les lectures de Martin Heidegger, allusion faite à la poésie et la recherche de l'harmonie du monde, les références à Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gille Deleuze, Max Horkheimer et Habermas, tous pour une relecture de la Modernité aux fins d'une contribution à la reconnaissance des différences et de la prise en compte de l'égalité des peuples, ou encore à Hannah Arendt au sujet du totalitarisme et son avatar colonial, et même Ernst Bloch martelant la primauté existentielle de l'espoir lui permettent de renouer avec le vœux kantien de la recherche « paix perpétuelle » avec la quête d'une politique du commun. Cet élan n'est pas dissociable de ceux de ses pairs que sont Éboussi Boulaga, Marcien Towa et Yves Vincent Mudimbé en philosophie africaine qu'il lit et passe au peigne fin, la recherche de l'émancipation des peuples noirs.

Au-delà de tout ceci, construire un socle épistémique au cœur duquel la critériologie philosophique audible et tangible que nous avons campée plus haut s'y retrouverait, suffirait semblerait-il, à prêter le flanc à une initiative philosophique en acte. Dans le même sillage, se justifie d'autres exigences: l'esprit critique et axiologique dominants en philosophie.

### **L'exigence critique et axiologique: l'indocilité et le sens des valeurs**

Faudrait-il rappeler, la défense acharnée de l'esprit critique, de la liberté de penser, le fait d'être et de penser dans la marge ; telle est la vie et le métier des philosophes: qu'on s'en souvienne d'un Pyrrhon d'Elis ou d'un Diogène le Cynique. Le sacrilège est philosophique parce que le philosophe est inclassable et non conformiste. Jamais la pensée critique n'a été une servante ; que le chameau s'accroupisse pour supporter des lourdes charges (Nietzsche, 1958, p. 25), qu'il s'agenouille et demande à bien être chargé, qu'il patiente et soit habité par le respect, il en va de sa nature, entendons cela de Nietzsche, mais non du philosophe. Écrire, pour Achille

Mbembe, c'est manifester un cri, s'il affirme n'appartenir à aucun camp, s'il refuse d'être dévot, il a pour crédo l'indocilité (Boulbina & Achille Mbembe, 2016). Achille Mbembe joue sur le même terrain en jugeant l'esprit de notre époque, peu sérieux et moins rigoureux, limité à la paresse et mu par toutes sortes de pulsions (il s'agit des passions religieuses et nationalistes). Pour lui, les idées d'autonomie et de raison critique ne sont pas seulement en recul. Elles sont en passe de perdre de leur allure et de leur aura. L'autorité n'est plus à la capacité de penser dans le sens critique. La fascination est ailleurs. Dans le cadre de l'Afrique, il envisage travailler au-delà des canons habituels, des catégories d'emprunts, des concepts dominants et préfère penser le continent à travers la marge, via l'indocilité. Voilà pourquoi, il vitupère la politique, la culture, la religion, et les sciences sociales, non pour les exclure ou les abolir, mais, aux fins de mieux cerner leur déploiement et leur finalité. En cela, si Towa pensait que le sacrilège fait preuve de philosophie (Towa, 1971), Achille Mbembe en commet, il ne connaît point d'Absolu limitatif. C'est dans ce sentiment de doute, de vérification, d'introspection, d'épochè (de suspension du jugement sur la réalité), comme l'introduit si bien Husserl en phénoménologie, que la philosophie a un reflet axiologique.

Affirmer que la philosophie est axiologique revient à penser qu'elle est soucieuse des valeurs vraies. La philosophie et les philosophes ne sont jamais ni neutres ni désintéressés, ils sont choqués par le problème du mal: sitôt que des cloisons étanches soient établies comme chez Platon, entre le Juste et l'injuste, le Vrai et le faux, le Beau et le laid, la place est faite en toute nécessité au semblable de la vertu. Achille Mbembe a pour ambition d'instaurer ce qu'il pense être le mieux, ce qui doit être, lorsqu'il écrit toujours contre la bêtise humaine et le devenir misanthropique du monde contemporain. Sa pensée « métamorphique », est une théorie de la transgression, de la transformation dans le monde contemporain pour faire place à la valorisation du semblable et à transfiguration des sociétés humaines entières. Qu'il s'agisse du Cameroun (son pays natal), de l'Afrique ou du monde: « cette réflexion, *argue-t-il à l'égard de son œuvre*, a continué de s'interroger sur les conditions de formation d'un monde

proprement humain » (Mbembe, 2014). Ainsi, conformément au vœu de Marx et de Nkrumah, jamais le philosophe ne doit être éthéré. Il est donc une théorie et une pratique. Son versant axiologique fait du philosophe une antichambre de l'éthique: « Dès ses débuts, *constate Husserl*, la philosophie a toujours eu l'ambition d'être une science rigoureuse, et même d'être la science qui satisfait aux exigences théorético-religieuse, qu'on puisse mener une vie obéissant aux normes pures de la raison » (Husserl, 1989). Cela est le dessein de l'éthique, but originaire et originale de la philosophie, une science qui a pour couronnement la morale. C'est ce à quoi aboutit Achille Mbembe lorsqu'il forge l'« éthique du passant » pour le sujet de notre temps. L'humanisme qui déborde en philosophie ne s'est jamais soustrait de son œuvre, basé sur l'« en commun », l'humanisme qu'il charrie se veut ouvert, non pas vertical, mais latéral.

Plusieurs raisons nous poussent à penser qu'il semble que ce spécialiste des sciences sociales soit un philosophe. Ne convient-il pas, pour le débat philosophique contemporain, de s'intéresser à l'œuvre d'Achille Mbembe afin de mieux se prolonger et s'élargir ?

### **Du double intérêt philosophique de la pensée d'Achille Mbembe: l'engagement socio-politique et l'interdisciplinarité**

Philosopher avec Achille Mbembe, c'est regarder l'autre face de son œuvre, la lecture, la référence et la discussion s'engage avec les philosophes modernes et contemporains. Aussi, sa pensée enracine tant l'engagement sociopolitique que l'interdisciplinarité féconde à la philosophie.

#### **L'engagement socio-politique**

Une philosophie éthérée, sortie de terre comme des champignons semble être plus dangereuse puisqu'elle absorbe l'homme dans un univers dogmatique, un monde inexistant qui s'astreint à l'ouverture et à la dialectique qui définissent le réel. Ce qui semble dommageable, du point de vue de l'œuvre d'Achille Mbembe paraît plus un atout. Les événements socio-historiques sur lesquels son œuvre s'articule permettent au discours de s'accorder avec le contexte ambiant. Car selon Fabien Eboussi Boulaga,

La validité, au moins plénière, du discours à la prétention philosophique dépend du déroulement de l'histoire. Sa vérité ne réside pas entièrement dans l'exercice correct d'un entendement pur, mais aussi dans son insertion dans la configuration socio-historique. Des conditions temporelles, spatiales, etc., ne sont donc pas négligeables, à cet égard, et relativisent l'autonomie de la *philosophie en soi*. (Eboussi, 1977)

Si Achille Mbembe tire à partir de son imagination fulgurante, des concepts comme, « afropolitanisme », « Tout-monde », « politique du dissemblable », « politique du semblable », « politiques de l'inimitié », « en-commun », « brutalisme », etc., c'est que, jusqu'à l'avènement du COVID-19, le monde contemporain est en crise. Le savant devient philosophe et aspire à un autre monde lorsqu'il comprend, puis s'arme de la critique pour crier contre des vicissitudes de notre temps: le repli identitaire, le racisme, la crise migratoire, la frontiérisation du monde, les affres du capitalisme, le triomphe de la virtualisation par le numérique, la dépravation de l'essence humaine à la lumière de la techno-médecine, y compris la crise écologique. De ce point de vue, pense-il, la pandémie de COVID-19 et ses effets ne constituent ni un simple accident, ni une simple parenthèse. « Ils nous offrent en tout cas, *pense-t-il*, une occasion unique de réfléchir sur les conditions futures de la coexistence des espèces, et ce faisant, sur les conditions de maintien de la vie sur Terre. Quels changements sommes-nous prêts à opérer ? » (Mbembe, 2017) Au vrai, cette interrogation nous semble moins anodine. Elle renforce des brèches pour ce que Delphine Abadie appelle « philosophie sociale », et sort le débat philosophique en Afrique des impasses théoriques dans lesquelles l'ethnophilosophie plombait la philosophie africaine.

Trouver des solutions pour le développement intégral de l'homme en général et de l'émancipation de la société africaine en particulier devient la tâche du philosophe. Comme on le sait, depuis Aristote et Epicure, la philosophie est « pharmakon ». Contre les vicissitudes de l'existence, le renouvellement des concepts à partir de la prise en compte de la mobilité

incessante du réel, n'a de sens véritable que le salut de l'homme, lui-même étant la fin des fins.

### **L'interdisciplinarité: une symbiose épistémique**

Achille Mbembe devient pour ainsi dire un philosophe et nous dirons volontiers un « philosophe peu orthodoxe ». Le caractère philosophique de la diversité de son œuvre viendrait au moment où, bien que recentrée sur l'histoire et les faits humains, celle-ci est hautement spéculative. Il recherche la rationalité, la cohérence de ce que naguère le fétichisme occidental à propos de l'Afrique appela « irrationalité ». Il conteste la volonté de l'ignorance, explique l'Afrique au passé, au présent et esquisse les pas de son future<sup>¶</sup>. Cette œuvre est théorique au regard de son érudition qui féconde l'ingénierie du concept. Le concept subsume la chose pour mieux faire sens, puisque philosopher c'est savoir dire. Spéculatif, voilà bien le terme approprié pour qualifier la diversité des savoirs qu'il convoque régulièrement, successivement, concomitamment, ni au hasard, ni par pure fantaisie: la littérature, les arts, la musique, la psychanalyse, la sociologie, l'anthropologie, l'ethnologie, le droit, l'histoire, la science politique, l'informatique, la médecine, l'écologie et la philosophie elle-même. Or, vu que la philosophie, remarque le philosophe congolais Théophile Obenga, est une « pensée systématique et réflexive sur la vie » (Obenga, 2004), le platonisme, l'aristotélisme, le thomisme, le cartésianisme, le kantisme et l'hégélianisme ont le même principe: l'exigence encyclopédique. C'est cette flexibilité que Leibniz et Wolf avaient incarné à l'époque des Lumières où rien n'était indétachable de Tout et du Tout. Dans leur propos liminaire, Guy Rossatanga-Rignault et Flavien Enongoue disent: « L'homme jadis décrit par Kant sous le nom de *philosophe* est en fait connu aujourd'hui sous la désignation générique d'*intellectuel*. Originaire d'aucun lieu spécifique » (Rossatanga-Rignault & F. Enongoue, 2004). Telle est la patience à la diversité qui caractérise la

---

¶ Au plan méthodologique, il utilise l'induction, en ce qu'il par des faits (historique, et socio-politique) pour tirer des conclusions ou énoncer des vérités, vérités qu'il relaie dans sa pensée et dissémine dans son œuvre.

réflexivité au cœur du philosophe, une complexité que l'on retrouve sur ce site de la relance épistémologique qu'incarne l'œuvre d'Achille Mbembe.

### **Conclusion**

L'épine dorsale de cette recherche était la philosophicité de la pensée d'Achille Mbembe. Nous l'avons fait à partir du décentrement épistémologique. Cette entreprise s'est heurtée à maintes difficultés: la colonialité de la philosophie et la présence d'une œuvre historico-politique. Ainsi, la redoutable épreuve de la philosophie se justifie chez le penseur africain via l'enracinement occidental-centrique de la philosophie faussée par l'idéologie impérialiste et raciale ainsi que l'analyse historique et politique des sociétés africaines coloniales et postcoloniales. Ce qui est aporétique au premier degré ne voile en aucune façon le philosophe dans la pensée de l'intellectuel africain. L'observation de ses multiples figures, témoigne un rapport diapré de la pensée de cet auteur qui permet de parcourir les avenues de la philosophie. Le déplacement théorique envisage un angle autre qu'historiciste et politiste. On voit le trait de caractère architectonique, critique et axiologique. Héritier de la tradition de la pensée complexe qui fait de l'interdisciplinarité un principe, l'intellectuel lit et dialogue avec les philosophes des temps passés et ceux contemporains notamment, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Lévinas, etc. Les questions de la valeur de la science, de l'ethnocentrisme, de l'universalisme, de la paix, de l'altérité... qui sont parfois au cœur de la philosophie sont passées en revue. La critique des institutions, des modes d'être et des faits contemporains aboutissent la plupart de temps à l'en-commun, quête d'une humanité élargie, d'un monde ouvert à tous et partagé.

### **B I B L I O G R A P H I E**

Abadie, D. (2018). *Reconstruire la philosophie à partir de l'Afrique. Une utopie postcoloniale*, Thèse présentée en vue de l'obtention du grade de PhD ès Arts en Philosophie, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Janvier,

- Bayart, J.-F. (2006). *L'État en Afrique. La politique du ventre*, France, Arthème Fayard, coll. L'espace du politique,
- Bikoi, F., N. (1998). « Léopold Sédar Senghor, la jeunesse africaine: une conjonction de coordination ? », *Nkà, Revue interdisciplinaire de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines*, Numéro I, Décembre, pp. 9-18.
- Boulbina, S., L. & Mbembe, A. « Penser par éclairs et par la foudre », *Entretiens, Parole*, pp. 98-116.
- Césaire, A. (1955). *Discours sur le colonialisme*, Paris, Présence africaine.
- Chatué, J & Egoué, C., J. (2015). « Edgar Morin et Le traitement de la question écologique: une originalité aporétique ? » *in Nkà, Revue interdisciplinaire de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Dschang*, No 13, pp.87-103.
- Coquery-Vidrovitch, C. (2000). « Mbembe Achille. – De la postcolonie. Essai sur l'imagination politique dans l'Afrique contemporaine. Paris, Karthala, index (« Les Afriques »). », *Cahiers d'études africaines*, URL: <http://etudesafricaines.revues.org/1504>
- Descartes, R. (1981). *Discours de la méthode*, France, Fernand Nathan.
- Dufrenne, M. (1968). *Pour l'Homme*, Paris, Editions du Seuil.
- Éboussi Boulaga, F. (1977). *Crise du Muntu, authenticité africaine et philosophie*, Paris, Présence africaine.
- Fofou Tchio, A. (2021). « Achille Mbembe et le sommet Afrique-France de Montpellier pour une voie africaine autocentrée », *Institut de Recherche et Enseignement sur la Paix, Note D'Analyse Politique*, N° 95, pp. 1-15.
- Hegel, G., W., F. (1807). *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, tome 1, Trad. Jean Hyppolite, Paris, Aubier, Editions Montaigne.
- Husserl, E. (1989). *La philosophie comme science rigoureuse*, trad. Marc B. De Launay, Paris, PUF, Mai.
- Kant, E. (1957). *Fondements de la métaphysique des mœurs*, Paris, Delagrave,
- Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1968). *L'Idéologie allemande*, Paris, préface, Sociales,
- Mbembe, A., Bayart J.-F. Abass, S. A., Banegas, R. (2008), « Comment penser l'Afrique à partir du continent ? », *Groupe d'initiative et de recherche sur l'Afrique, Amphithéâtre Bachelard (Université de Sorbonne, France)*, URL: <http://www.youtube.org>, consulté le 04/03/2017.
- Mbembe, A. (2023). *La Communauté terrestre*, Paris, La Découverte,

- (2013) *Critique de la raison nègre*, Paris, La découverte.
- Mbembe, A. (2000) *De la postcolonie, Essai sur l'imagination politique dans l'Afrique contemporaine*, Paris, Karthala.
- Mbembe, A. *La naissance du maquis dans le sud-Cameroun (1920-1960). Histoire des usages de la raison en colonie*, Paris, Karthala.
- Mbembe, A. (2017) « Penser le monde à partir de l'Afrique. Questions pour aujourd'hui et demain » *in*, Les Ateliers de la pensée, Dir. Achille Mbembe et Felwine Sarr, Philippe Rey / Jimsaan, Dakar, pp. 291-303.
- Mbembe, A. (2014) « Afrofuturisme et devenir-nègre du monde », *Politique Africaine* n° 136, pp. 121-133.
- Nkrumah, K. (1976). *Le Consciencisme*, Trad., Starr et Mathieu Howlett, Paris, Présence africaine.
- Ngoue, J. (1997). *La Croix du sud*, (Théâtre), France, Les classiques africains.
- Nietzsche F. (1958). *Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra*, trad. Marthe Robert, France, Le club français du livre,
- Obenga, T. (2004). « Egypt: Ancient History of African Philosophy », *in A Companion to African Philosophy*, Edited by Kwasi Wiredu, Blackwell Publishing, pp. 1-49.
- Rosatanga-Rignault, G. et Enongoue, F. (2004). *L'Afrique existe-t-elle ? À propos d'un malentendu persistant sur l'identité*, Préface de Bonaventure Mvé Ondo, Editions Raponda-Walker.
- Sartre, J.-P. (1960). *Critique de la raison dialectique*, (précédé de *Questions de méthode*), *Tome 1, Théories des ensembles pratiques*, Paris, Gallimard,
- Towa M. (1971). *Essai sur la problématique philosophique dans l'Afrique actuelle*, Yaoundé, Clé.

## **The Struggle for Gender Equality in Education: Insights from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed***

**\*Ojomo, Philomena Aku, PhD**

### **Abstract**

*Despite the growing momentum for gender equality in the world, we still observe that this plight is yet to receive proper attention in certain places and areas of life. In societies that are still predominantly patriarchal, the education of women is undermined. This attitude hinders women from attaining their self-development, fulfillment, and ability to harness their innate potentials to meaningfully and maximally impact their environment. However, there is no justification to support this stereotype that has hindered the educational development of women because under the same conditions, women have demonstrated similar intellectual capacities as men. This becomes evident when one considers the contribution of women to education in the course of history. Considering these facts, Paulo Freire insightfully designates education as a political tool that cannot be neutral-it can either be used to oppress or liberate. According to Freire, the education of women is one of the important ingredients of initiating liberation in a society that has been oppressed. To achieve equal access to education, Freire suggests strategic processes that involve dialogue, revolution, political action, and social organization. Thinking along the liberationist philosophy of Paulo Freire, this paper looks into the undermining of women education, their contribution and potentials if given equal opportunities for education, and the effect that equal educational opportunities for women will bear on the well-being of families and national development.*

*Keywords: education, development, women, Paulo Freire, gender equality*

---

\* Philomena Aku Ojomo is with the Dept. of Philosophy, Lagos State University, Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

High levels of illiteracy and lack of proper education has been one of the major setbacks of underdeveloped and developing countries. For some, the only crime they committed that hindered their education and rendered them illiterates was because they were born as a female. While education remains a fundamental human right, gender inequality in education has hindered millions of women and girls over the world from maximally harnessing their innate potentials. As a result, many women are unable to enjoy personal fulfillment and contribute meaningfully to national development. This paper will investigate into the nature and extent of the suppression of female education, the reasons for this gender marginalization, the contributions and potentials of women towards the development of the human society if given equal chances be educated and to educate; and insights from Paulo Freire on how to engender equal access to education.

## **The Suppression of Women Education**

It was recorded by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) that women embody about two-thirds of the world's illiterates (2010). Another release by UNESCO (2014) revealed the following shocking statistics:

- Girls are more likely to never have the opportunity of accessing primary education than boys; fewer than 40% of the nations in the world allow for some relative gender equality in education.
- About 54 million of 76 million uneducated young women are domiciled in 9 countries.
- Despite International and national efforts, about half of the children who are out of school are girls.
- In over 20 years, the percentage of illiterate women has not changed; with women constituting about two-thirds of the world's 800 million illiterate adults; and women.

- Among the world's over 120 million uneducated youths, about 75 million are women.
- In over 12 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, female literacy rate is below 50%, and in several severe cases, below 20%.

In Nigeria for example, it has been observed that the literacy level of boys is higher than that of girls. According to UNESCO reports, the statistics of male literacy in Nigeria reads 71.26% while that of the females reads 52.66%; revealing a big difference between both genders (Country Economy, 2018). Another report shows that in urban areas of Nigeria, the percentage of literate men is 86.4% while that of women is 74%. While in the rural areas, the percentage of literate men is 59.5% while that of women is 35.4% (Varrella, 2020). Looking at these figures, the gap is rather unfair and reveals the depth of gender inequality in the area of education that has eaten into the fabrics of the nation.

### Reasons for Undermining Women Education

There are several interrelated reasons responsible for the inequality in the education of women today. According to Ojobo (2008), some of these reasons include:

- **Economic barriers:** In an instance where the family is facing some economic challenges, most families prefer training the boys rather than the girls since they believe the girls will sooner or later get married into another family, leaving only the men to take care of their parents.
- **Male machismo:** This expresses a rather malicious consideration of the females by certain males as inferior beings. As such, they feel it is a waste to educate their wives or daughters since they are only suitable for the kitchen and for making babies. Some men even consider marrying an educated woman as a threat to their assertive ego and so would rather marry an illiterate.
- **Religious challenges:** In the world today, the three major

Abrahamic religions- Judaism, Christianity, and Islam believe that God has put men in a place of leadership and authority over women. However, while the true definition of this leadership is for service and partnership with an equal, many have twisted the idea to mean one of domination and suppression.

- Traditional and cultural constraints: in some cultures and traditions, the major role of women is to grow up to get married, become devoted housewives, and bear children. As such, the education of women is an extravagance that many families consider unnecessary.
- Stereotypes regarding women and unequal job opportunities: in some countries, women are considered as second-class citizens. As such, men are always better placed than women in terms of employment opportunities. As a result of this, many families now believe it is better to pay more attention to the educational development of boys than girls since the women are less likely to get jobs eventually.
- Early marriages: in some societies, girls are given to marriages at the early ages of even twelve and thirteen. In most instances, this results in serious health complications and other social deprivations such as their education.

### **Contribution of Women to Education and Development**

In order to buttress the need to undo gender inequality in terms of education, it is necessary consider the contribution of women who broke the jinx of societal limitations in the field of education and national development. These evidences are proofs that women can do just as good as their male counterpart, if not better, in any area of life. Hence women should be allowed equal opportunities in the society. Experience and research findings reveal that women have contributed to education and development in the areas of the advancement of viable philosophies of education; in academic scholarship to drive educational sustainability;

as efficient educators both formally and informally; towards quality and standard education; and in good leadership and management.

### **Contributions of Women through Advancing Scholarship and Philosophies of Education**

Every educational system or policy that is operative in a place is driven by a particular ideology or philosophy. Overtime, women have made significant contributions towards the development of viable philosophies of education and the corpus of scholarly materials (articles, books, associations, etc.) that has formed the driving force behind educational policies for some nations. But before discussing the contributions of women to education properly, let us consider a word or two about what a philosophy of education means.

According to Hirst and Peters (1980):

Philosophy of education... is simply the application of philosophical tools to educational problems such as educational imbalance, unequal educational opportunities, depletion of quantitative and qualitative education, inefficient curriculum and failure in achieving set goals, aims and objectives of education (Quoted in Iorvaa & James, 2009, p. 25).

Considering the importance of a good philosophy of education, and a lack of it, particularly in Nigeria, Fadahunsi bemoans that “not until Nigeria has fashioned for herself a stable and sound ideology, which other sectors of National life will be patterned after, the future probability of sustainable educational development in Nigeria might be dwindled” (Akpochafo, 2002).

Maria Montessori is reputed for her courage in defying the gender limitations of her time that only gave room for male ideologies to flourish by coming up with a unique theory of education. Her ideology of education was one that was child-centered, paying particular attention to handicapped children. This unique legacy which represented her novel contribution to the world is captured in the philosophy that:

In order to educate, it is essential to know those who are to be educated. If education is to profoundly touch the heart and mind of a child, he/she must be involved in continuous learning; not because he/she is interested in merely earning the highest grade; but simply because he/she is simply curious and interested in learning (In Uzomah & Isanbor, 2017, p. 276).

Montessori's fundamental concern was the natural development of children. Thus, she recommended that education ought to be completely free for children. She saw freedom as the single most important factor in allowing children to develop as spontaneous and creative individuals. Hence, she saw the role of education as providing environments in which children could be free to follow their natural impulses to become the wonderful and dynamic natural learners they were designed to be (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2017).

Another woman contributor to education in this regard is Malala Yousafzai, a renowned social activist. Malala broke the jinx of Pakistani extremism and violence by daring to go to school. In turn, she came to represent a global symbol signifying the importance of educating girls. Because of her heroic agitation for women education in word and deed, she earned the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2014. She interestingly remarked that, "I don't want to be thought of as the 'girl who was shot by the Taliban' but the 'girl who fought for education... This is the cause to which I want to devote my life'" (GPE Secretariat, 2015). She is the founder of the Malala Fund, which promotes intercontinental, national, local policies, and systems that give girls opportunities to high quality education.

Worthy of mention is the contribution of Michelle Obama, former First Lady of the United States, to the development of girl education. In 2015, she organized a campaign themed, "Let Girls Learn," to encourage and support the education of girls in communities across the globe. This involved about 7000 Peace Corps volunteers who were committed to supporting girls to go to school and remain in school. According to Michelle Obama, "Girls are our change-makers - our future doctors and

teachers and entrepreneurs... They're our dreamers and our visionaries who could change the world as we know it" (GPE Secretariat, 2015).

Similarly, Emma Watson- a Hollywood actress, who doubles as a Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women, became dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. In her *HeForShe* advocacy, she sought to encourage boys and men to join in the fight to remove cultural and social barriers hindering the full participation of girls and women in the life of the society. She is noted to have said at the UN women event in September of 2014 that, "We don't often talk about men being imprisoned by gender stereotypes but I can see that they are and that when they are free, things will change for women as a natural consequence." She hilariously noted, "Hey guys, if you want to give the best Christmas present ever - sponsor a girl so she can get an education" (GPE Secretariat, 2015).

Simone Weil was consistent in her works in drawing attention to the manifold instrumentality of education in engendering women integration into the active life of the society. According to her, education not only prepares women to be able to solve their personal existential challenges with greater ease, but also puts them in a better position to contribute meaningfully in their immediate communities and society at large (Ann & Maughn, 2020).

### **The Contributions of Women as Efficient Educators both Informally and Formally**

Considering the intricate connection between mothers and their children and the fact that the first educators of children are mothers, it is in the best interest of the society to ensure the literacy of women (who are all potential mothers), since these children will grow up to be the leaders of tomorrow (Anka, 2006).

It has also been observed that most male teachers have backed out of primary and secondary schools because of the poor remuneration, while most female teachers have remained. In such instances where most of these women are largely uneducated or poorly educated, their influence

will mirror in the educational capacity of the children. Hence, the need for proper training of women because in most instances where men cannot endure the stress or poor remuneration, they have that enduring capacity to remain in the system so that their children- by extension can have access to quality education. Besides, women excel better than men in elementary education because sustaining the attention of children require a great deal of patience and creativity which most men find laborious and unattractive. Yunita Mazia notes, "Female teachers are more active when it comes to bonding with the students. I think maybe it's our motherly instincts that make us feel more connected to them." (Cahya, 2020).

The statistics from Imo state in Nigeria reveal that at both the primary and secondary level of education, female teachers are more than male teachers by more than 80%. Thus, in spite of the dwindling in the number of male teachers over time due to poor salaries, the number of female teachers kept increasing. What this reveal is that without this sacrifice on the part of women, Nigeria's educational system would have crumbled during that time (Ezeh et al., 2014).

In Nigeria, gender inequality in terms of women education tends to be more predominant in the northern parts. The 19th century jihad however led to the institution of the Sokoto Caliphate and produced great scholars that included women. Before this time, scholars such as Boyd (1989) noted that the situation of women was appalling because they were basically confined to enslavement, marriage and concubinage. Bugaje (2015) noted that Shehu became empathetic to the plight of these women who were intentionally left ignorant and regarded as possessions. And so, the jihad saw the emergence of women scholars that became well versed in Islamic sciences and wrote many works. Worthy of note is Nana Asmau whose efforts laid the solid edifice of women education in Northern Nigeria (Kaura, 1990).

Nana Asmau was a teacher to both men and women during the jihad. She influenced and encouraged other women to get enlightened through education. She founded the *Yan Taru* organization in 1830 in order to engender female education. This organization consisted of women from

several communities, and after they became educated, they were charged to go back to their respective communities to educate their fellow women. They were directed by well-informed women known as *jajis*. The effect of the massive education of women led to the production of sound and literate women known as the *Modibbo* (the learned). Asma'u delineated education as women's political space and employed education as an instrument for state-building (Ezeh et al., 2014).

### **Contribution of Women towards the Quality and Standard of Education**

Experience has shown that women have the capacity to provide alternative solutions to challenges that could lead to higher standards, quality, and innovation in education (Ezeh & Chukwudebe, 2006). In times past, Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) was introduced in order to replace individual examinations into Nigerian universities so as to curb situations of duplicate admissions that hindered others from securing a place. However, it was later observed that some of those who came in through JAMB performed poorly and threatened the educational integrity of several tertiary institutions. It took the initiative of Mrs. Chinwe Nora Obaji, who was Minister of Education at the time to bring the process of Post-Jamb examinations in universities to aid the screening of those who were unprepared for higher education (Ezeh et al., 2014).

After Mrs. Obaji, another female minister of education- Mrs. Obiageli Ezekwesili gave remarkable recommendations that aided in improving the quality and standard of education in Nigeria so that Nigerian graduates can compete internationally. One of her notable recommendations prompted the conversion of some polytechnics to degree-awarding institutions in order to meet the needs of Nigeria's teeming youths (Ezeh et al., 2014).

### **Contribution of Women to Leadership and Management in Education**

Experience reveals marked differences in the management and leadership styles of men and women. Research findings reveal that women are apt to be more democratic and interactive when leading in the corporate world

(Ezeh & Chukwudebe, 2006). It was also observed in another research that women are wont to employ “transformational leadership” which entails motivating others by converting their personal self-interest into the objectives of the group. This collaborative style of leadership frequently observed with women is in contrast with the authoritative style of leadership often employed by men. This interactive style of management and leadership creates opportunity for various insights and perspectives (Rosener, 1990).

This was exemplified by Dr. Omanhe Phillipa Idogho, the first female rector of Federal Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State. She ensured the swift issuance of certificates to those who had graduated for years without their diploma certificates; she ensured swift processing and release of results for students; and efficiently tackled cultism to the barest minimum through frequent seminars on the dangers of cultism and by sending union leaders abroad for security and leadership training (Ezeh et al., 2014).

### **Insights from Paulo Freire: An Intervention**

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian educator and philosopher, highly influential in the field of education. He is renowned for his work on critical pedagogy, which aims to transform the educational process into a means of creating a more equitable and just society. Freire’s approach encourages critical thinking and the questioning of societal norms, particularly those related to oppression. His most famous work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, explores these themes in depth. Throughout his career, Freire focused on literacy programs designed to empower the poor and marginalized, using education as a tool for social change. His methods have been adopted worldwide, making a significant impact on educational theory and practice (Collins, 1997).

Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has been instrumental in shedding light on the political dimension of education. Freire (1970) argues that education cannot remain neutral with respect to the socio-political structures and dynamics of society. According to him, education is a two-edged sword, which can either be used to perpetuate oppression or

as a tool for social change and emancipation (Freire, 1985). In the first instance, education can be used by the oppressor to maintain the status quo and prevent the oppressed from seeking liberation. The oppressor can use education to blind the oppressed to the reality of their situation or paralyze them with fear if they ever try to challenge the status quo. On the other hand, education can also be a tool for liberation and social change. When used in this way, education can empower the oppressed to challenge the status quo, promote social justice, and work towards a more equitable society.

Freire's ideas have significant implications for the delivery of education. It underscores the need for educators to be sensitive to sociopolitical issues in their instruction. Education should not be limited to the transfer of knowledge and skills but should also incorporate an understanding of social structures and dynamics. This way, education can be used as a tool for promoting social justice and empowering individuals to be active citizens in society. Paulo Freire was a renowned advocate for the role of education in promoting social justice and combating oppression, power imbalances, and dominant ideologies. According to Freire, silence in the face of oppression is tantamount to being an accomplice to it. Therefore, it is essential to break the silence and speak out against the marginalization of women in education.

Women's educational marginalization has been a longstanding issue that has far-reaching implications for their social integration and quality of life. Many women are unaware of the dangers of illiteracy and how it can perpetuate gender inequality. Therefore, there is a need for concerted efforts to raise awareness of the importance of education for women's empowerment and the eradication of gender disparity in education. Conferences, organizations, and individual initiatives can play a crucial role in this regard by providing a platform for dialogue and collaboration towards seeking redress. They can help to highlight the malice of gender inequality in education and encourage collective action towards promoting social justice and gender equity (Stromquist, 2014).

Freire's insights on the liberating role of education in promoting

social justice remain relevant today, particularly in the context of women's educational marginalization. Breaking the silence and raising awareness can go a long way in promoting gender equity and empowering women to realize their full potential. Through his literary works, Freire has consistently emphasized the importance of equality and its role in enabling individuals to realize their full potential. One of Freire's most famous quotes is, "Nobody is superior to anyone else" (Freire,1998: 108). This assertion, highlights the need for societies to embrace and practice equality in all aspects of life. According to Freire, true equality can only be achieved when individuals recognize and respect each other's inherent worth and dignity.

In the same vein, Freire (1998) also stresses the crucial role that teachers play in promoting equality. He asserts that effective teaching requires active listening skills and a commitment to cultivating a range of virtues, including generosity, love, respect for others, tolerance, humility, joy, a love of life, openness to new experiences, a willingness to accept change, tenacity in the face of adversity, a refusal of determinism, a spirit of hope, and a commitment to justice. Only by embodying these virtues can teachers create an environment that fosters genuine and attentive listening and allows all students to thrive.

Freire (1998) also notes that accepting and respecting differences is a crucial prerequisite to effectively listening to others. This underscores the need for societies to embrace diversity and practice equality in all areas, including education. In particular, it is essential to ensure that marginalized groups, such as women, are provided with equal opportunities to compete fairly for education and employment opportunities, and to contribute to the greater good of society. Paulo Freire's message of equality remains as relevant today as it was when he first articulated it. His insights into the importance of equality and effective teaching continue to inspire educators and students worldwide, providing a roadmap for creating a more just and equitable society.

In addition, Paulo Freire, proposed an approach to teaching that goes beyond the traditional question-and-answer format. Instead, his

approach involved posing problems to students, which requires them to think critically and come up with solutions. This method is particularly relevant in addressing the issue of women's educational marginalization, especially in African societies where patriarchal structures still hold a significant amount of influence. In these societies, women often face significant barriers to accessing education, including limited resources, gender-based discrimination, and cultural norms that prioritize male education over female education. However, by adopting Freire's approach to teaching, educators can help students develop a deeper understanding of the causes and effects of educational marginalization and encourage them to challenge these norms (Stromquist, 2014).

Through consciousness-raising and critical thinking, students and educators can work together to identify and implement practical solutions to this problem. This may involve advocating for policy changes, providing additional resources to support female education, or challenging gender-based stereotypes and discrimination. Overall, Freire's approach to teaching provides a powerful tool for addressing the issue of women's educational marginalization in African societies and beyond. By empowering students to think critically and question the status quo, educators can help pave the way for a more just and equitable future.

Freire also talked on the drawbacks resulting from racial, class, or gender disparities. He stressed the importance of recognizing the harmful effects of these differences and the need for concerted efforts to eliminate them. He argued that individuals who support such cruel distinctions are not distinct from those who oppress, and it is therefore incumbent upon all members of society to work together to address this issue (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2007). Freire believed that those who suffer from these disparities, including women who are denied equal access to education, must take an active role in advocating for change. He contended that it is essential to alter the laws, beliefs, and customs that are responsible for perpetuating these inequalities. This will require a balanced understanding of male and female identities, regardless of any biological, emotional, or physiological differences, to ensure that women have equal opportunities

for education, employment, leadership, and management in all spheres of private and public life.

In his book on empowerment, Freire emphasized that achieving freedom and liberation from oppression entails more than just acquiring literacy. While literacy can help the oppressed understand how they are being oppressed, it is not enough to guarantee their liberation. In addition to literacy, it is necessary to acquire specific tactics and abilities that will enable individuals to participate in political action. These skills and strategies are crucial in ensuring that the oppressed are able to engage in meaningful political action that will guarantee their liberty. Therefore, the acquisition of these skills and strategies is essential in the journey towards true freedom and liberation. In this light, Stromquist (2014) noted that:

Irrespective of whether or not the programme content and processes raise one's awareness of exploitation, literacy perse does not empower students, although it does provide women with a greater sense of self-efficacy, which can be taken as a precursor to empowerment. Women advocating for social change realize the need for specific targets of action, in which the "oppressor" attains a concrete embodiment while intersecting with such factors as social class, ethnicity and religion (among other social markers) (p. 7).

The importance of taking action in situations of oppression cannot be overstated, as emphasized by Freire. According to him, even though enlightenment may be attained, it is not enough to attain liberation from oppression. Both individual and collective action are necessary for this purpose. Freire explained that a mere perception of reality is not enough to transform objective reality. He noted that, "the oppressed must confront reality critically, simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality", adding that "a mere perception of reality not followed by this critical intervention will not lead to a transformation of objective reality – precisely because it is not a true perception" (Freire, 1970, p. 37).

The issue of gender parity in education is a complex and multifaceted

topic, and it is heartening to see women taking an active role in addressing it. Women have identified various approaches to achieving gender parity in education, including debate, revolution, political action, and social organization - all of which are core principles of liberty. These methods empower women to voice their concerns and advocate for their rights, as well as to challenge the status quo and effect meaningful change (Staudt, 2002). In addition to these grassroots efforts, women-led non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged as a powerful force in advancing the cause of female education. These organizations have a specific focus on breaking down patriarchal barriers to education and promoting gender equality. They work to improve access to education for girls, provide training and resources to teachers and communities, and advocate for policy changes that support girls' education.

One notable example of such an NGO is the Malala Fund, founded by Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai. The Malala Fund works to ensure that every girl has access to 12 years of free, safe, and quality education. The organization invests in local education leaders and advocates for increased public investment in education. Through these efforts, the Malala Fund has helped thousands of girls around the world to access education and achieve their full potential. Overall, the pursuit of gender parity in education requires a multifaceted approach that includes both grassroots activism and institutional change. Women have identified numerous strategies for achieving this goal, and NGOs like the Malala Fund play a critical role in advancing the cause of female education. By working together and supporting one another, we can create a more equitable and just world for all.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing discourse, what is eminent is the fact that women have been unjustly marginalized in their access to education due to several reasons as discussed in the body of the text. But when we look at the salient contributions of women to the growth and development of education in all its facets, it becomes clear that the reasons for an unequal access to

education based on gender bias do not hold water because women also have the potential to do just as much, or even better in certain areas, if given equal opportunities. Unfortunately, their efforts seldom come to the limelight, unlike their male counterparts. The recommendation therefore, according to Paulo Freire is that education, dialogue, revolution, political action, and social organization should be employed as an emancipatory tool in order to fight for gender parity so that women can be given equal opportunities to both be educated and to educate.

## R E F E R E N C E S

- Akpochafo, W.P. (2002). Refocusing education in Nigeria: Making More Sense out of the Report. In S.O. Oriofo, P.O.E. Nwaokoto, & G.C. Igbongbor (Eds). *Refocusing education in Nigeria*. Da Silva Influence.
- Anka, M. A. (2006). Remarks of executive chairman. Universal Basic Education Board, Zamfara State in Kallabi. *A Maiden Magazine* of Girls Focal Primary School, Gusau, Zamfara State,1.
- Ann, S. & Maughn, G. (2020). Towards a feminist philosophy of education. *The Journal of Philosophy for Children*; 19.2 (3), pp. 87-96.
- Boyd, J. (1989). *The Caliph's sister: Nana Asmau 1793-1865, teacher, poet, and Islamic leader*. Frank Cass.
- Bugaje, U. (2015). *The past as future: Some preliminary thoughts on the Sokoto Caliphate*. Books and Libraries.
- Cahya, G. (2020). Women's contributions to education not reflected in leadership roles. The Jakarta Post. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/amp/news/2020/05/14/womens-contributions-to-education-not-reflected-in-leadership-roles.html>
- Collins, D. (1997). *Paulo Freire: His life, works & thought*. Paulist Press.
- Country Economy, (2018). Nigeria Literacy Rate. <https://countryeconomy.com/demography/literacy-rate/nigeria>

- Ezeh, G. & Chukwudebe, G. (2006). The crucial role of women engineers in the national reforms for economic development. *Presented at Association of Professional Women Engineers of Nigeria Conference.*
- Ezeh, G. et al. (2014). The impact of the role of women in education. *Educational Research International*, 3(4), pp. 55-64.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Translated by M. Bergman Ramos. Herder and Herde.
- Freire, P. (1985). *Politics of education: Culture, power and liberation*. Translated by D. Macedo. Bergin & Garvey.
- Freire, P. (1987). *A pedagogy for liberation: Dialogues on transforming education*. Bergin & Garvey, 1987.
- GPE Secretariat. (2015). 15 women leading the way for girls' education. Global Partnership <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/15-women-leading-way-girls-education>.
- Iorvaa, T. & Musa, A. (2009). *Introduction to Philosophy of Education*. Selfers Academic Press Ltd.
- Kaura, J. M. (1990). Emancipation of women in the Sokoto Caliphate. In Kani, A. M. & Gandi, A. (Eds.) *State and Society in the Sokoto Caliphate*. Gaskiya Corporation Limited.
- Kincheloe, J. & Steinberg, S. (2007). Cutting class in a dangerous era: A critical pedagogy of class awareness. In J. Kincheloe & S. Steinberg (Eds.), *Cutting class: Socioeconomic status and education* (pp. 3–69). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Ojobo, James (2008). Education: A catalyst for women empowerment in Nigeria. *Ethiopian Journal of Education and Science*, 4(1), pp. 93-108.
- Rosener, J. B. (1995). *America's competitive secret utilizing women as a management strategy*. Oxford University Press.
- Staudt, K. (2002). Engaging politics: Beyond official empowerment discourse. In J. Parpart, S. Rai, & K. Staudt (Eds.), *Rethinking empowerment: Gender and development in a global/local World* (pp. 97–111). Routledge.
- Stromquist, N. (2014). Freire literacy and emancipatory gender learning. *International Review of Education Journal of Lifelong Learning*. DOI 10.1007/s11159-014-9424-2.
- UNESCO, (2010). *Study on the effectiveness and feasibility of the literacy method*. UNESCO Executive Board.

- UNESCO, (2014). *International women's day: Equality for women is progress for all*. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizesand-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/international-womens-day-2014/women-ed-facts-and-figure/>
- Uzomah, M. & Isanbor, P. (2017). *Fundamental principles of philosophy and education*. E-mesh Printing Press.
- Varrella, S. (2020). Literacy rate in Nigeria 2018 by area and gender. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1124741/literacy-rate-in-nigeria-by-area-and-gender/>

## Extrapolating Insights from the COVID-19 Pandemic for the Advancement of Global Health Policy and Practice: The Imperative of an International Pandemic Treaty

†Ofongo, E.M., ‡Raji, Issa & §Ofongo, T.M.

### Abstract

*The advent of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in Wuhan, China, in 2019 sparked a coordinated global response, which was spearheaded by the World Health Organization and many nation-states. Surprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has permanently changed the landscape of global health governance. Whether this changing worldview can promote world unity in the face of escalating populist nationalism and the rise of statism is still an open question. It also calls for a nuanced assessment of the structural constraints that must be overcome in order to address the complex issues at hand, including the pressing need to improve global health institutions and governance frameworks in light of the pandemic's extensive societal, economic, and human disruptions. Relatedly, to outline the broad implications of COVID-19 on global health policy and practice, this paper conducts a thorough analysis of the relevant primary and secondary literature. It also argues that institutional interventions supported by the World Health Organization could improve results for people all across the world. However, it is crucial to stress that, in contrast to what is discussed in this study, the results of recent research suggest that the effectiveness of these measures may not be inescapably dependent on the creation of a formal pandemic treaty.*

**Keywords:** COVID-19, pandemic, global health, WHO, populist nationalism, statism, pandemic treaty

---

† E.M. Ofongo, Dept. of History & International Studies, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

‡ Issa Raji, School of Social & Political Science, Lincoln University, United Kingdom.

§ T.M. Ofongo, Dept. of Political Science, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

## Introduction

In May 2023, World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declared the end of COVID-19 as a public health emergency of global concern (WHO, 2023). While this declaration might have been seen as a cause for celebration, it carried a sobering message, reflecting upon the stark absence of cooperation, equity, and solidarity among nations. These factors exacerbated the severity of the epidemic and resulted in the unnecessary loss of numerous lives. In a resounding call to action, Ghebreyesus cautioned against interpreting this development as a justification for relaxing security measures or undermining the meticulously constructed global health infrastructure (WHO, 2023).

This pivotal moment not only brought into sharp focus the glaring deficiencies in the international response to the pandemic but also bolstered the argument put forth by Gostin et al. (2020, 1615) that the pandemic laid bare a fundamental truth: no nation, regardless of its level of development, possesses the capacity to effectively combat global health threats in isolation. Given the rapid transnational spread of infectious diseases and the interdependence of our global society, ensuring global health security demands collective efforts.

Similarly, the scholarly discourse surrounding global health governance and pandemic preparedness has experienced a significant surge in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the objective of this article is to illuminate the multifaceted challenges confronting global health governance and underscore the imperative of proactive pandemic preparedness, by traversing the expanding body of scholarly work. Furthermore, it conducts a critical examination of the ongoing discussions pertaining to a prospective pandemic treaty, assessing their applicability in light of the insights derived from the COVID-19 experience.

That been said, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the systemic shortcomings within the current framework of global health governance. Ineffective coordination, unequal access to resources, and a dearth of international cooperation have impeded an efficacious response to the crisis. Consequently, it becomes evident that global health governance

requires substantive reform. A comprehensive re-evaluation and restructuring of the mechanisms through which nations collaborate on matters of global health concern are imperative to effectively address these challenges.

Nonetheless, recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about lasting changes in international health policy and practice is pivotal. The proposed pandemic treaty represents a positive step toward enhancing global pandemic preparedness. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that these wounds cannot be healed solely through the introduction of a treaty. Rather, they necessitate a more thorough and profound strategy for overhauling the global health system. Therefore, the lessons gleaned from the COVID-19 pandemic should serve as a guiding force for substantial reforms in global health governance, resource allocation, and international cooperation. In summary, the pandemic treaty, while a significant milestone, forms just one piece of a broader puzzle that calls upon the international community to collaborate concertedly in safeguarding the health and well-being of all individuals.

### **What is Global Health?**

Scholars and professionals recognize the difficulty in reaching an agreement on the precise meaning of “global health” in the fields of international relations and global health. Currently, there are many different interpretations and conceptualizations of global health, which contributes to a widespread feeling of ambiguity and doubt among both the general public and healthcare professionals. It is crucial to understand that this definitional variation is partially explained by the fact that the idea of “global health” is a relatively new development in the field of medical research and allied fields. Koplán et al. (2009), speaking on behalf of the Executive Board of the Consortium of Universities for Global Health, skilfully highlighted the difficulties that this lack of agreement presents. The challenges presented by this lack of unanimity were expertly emphasized by Koplán et al. (2009). Since tropical medicine has a close relationship to international health, their definition distinguishes global

health from similar terms like international health and public health (MacFarlane, Jacobs, & Kaaya, 2008, 383–384). Nevertheless, these phrases are commonly used in conversation in overlapping ways.

Therefore, global health is described by Koplan et al. (2009) as an area that prioritizes improving health and achieving health equity for all individuals worldwide. One of the earliest attempts to capture the essence of global health may be seen in this definition. It is seen as being verbose and lacking in emphasis on the inherent essence of global health, focusing instead on its overall aims, despite being academically relevant. As a result, academics and industry professionals have looked for alternate definitions to complete and deepen their grasp of global health.

For Marusic (2013), global health revolves around transnational health issues, their determinants, and potential solutions. It encompasses a wide array of disciplines both within and beyond the health sciences, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration. It represents a synthesis of population-based preventive strategies and individual-level clinical care.

Kickbush (2006) offers another perspective, characterizing global health as addressing health issues that transcend national boundaries and governments, necessitating actions on the global forces that influence people's health.

Furthermore, it is essential to distinguish between global health and international health. Their goals are fundamentally different: while international health primarily focuses on the health of participating nations with a specific aim to affect non-participating states, global health explicitly aims to promote health, prevent diseases, and provide treatment for all individuals across the globe, regardless of their national affiliation. Understanding the subtle distinctions between these two closely related but different notions in the fields of global health and international relations depends on this separation.

### **History of Global Health Practice and Governance**

While pandemics have left an indelible impact on governments throughout history, a widely agreed and effective plan to address this

multidimensional threat is notably lacking. Similarly, historical medical records spanning two millennia reveal the occurrence of seven major plagues that have afflicted humanity, a couple of which have erupted into full-fledged pandemics. The table that follows provides an examination of the seven most lethal plagues in terms of human lives lost over the last two thousand years (Huremović, 2019).

	Plague/pandemic/disease	Timeline	No. deaths recorded (millions)
1	Justinian Plague	541–549 AD	30-50
2	Black Death	1353 AD	200
3	New World Small Pox	Early 17th century	25-55
4	The Third Plague	1959	12
5	1918 Flu	1918–1920	50-100
6	HIV/AIDS	Till date	48
7	COVID-19	2019 till date	5-17

*Source: (Huremović, 2019)*

The four waves of global health governance instituted by states include the following:

- Unilateral quarantine regulations (1377–1850)
- International Sanitary/Cholera Conferences (1851–1902)
- Early international organizations (1903–1947)
- World Health Organization (1948+) (Huremović, 2019)

In specific terms, governments initiated measures to prevent disease epidemics as early as the mid-fourteenth century. During this era, the city-state of Venice, a major hub of international trade, is credited with being the first to employ quarantine procedures to safeguard its inhabitants and territory from the plague. Nonetheless, it was not until the Second Cholera Pandemic in 1829 that European governments began dispatching medical teams to explore epidemic causes. For instance, the Royal Academy of Medicine of Paris dispatched experts such as Auguste Gérardin and Paul

Gaimard on a medical mission to Russia, Prussia, and Austria in June 1831, marking a watershed event (Howard-Jones, 1974, 8).

P. de Ségur-Dupeyron, Secretary of the Conseil supérieur de la santé, was charged by the Minister of Commerce in 1834 with compiling a report on the hygiene legislation of Mediterranean nations. This analysis identified major differences in quarantine legislation between countries, causing unneeded uncertainty. As a result, from 1851 to 1938, the International Sanitary Conferences were held to standardize quarantine practices for exotic illnesses, partly as a result of the French government's relentless efforts over more than 15 years (Howard-Jones, 1974, 9).

As fears of global disease outbreaks grew, a series of 14 international conferences known as the International Sanitary Conferences were held. The French government called the first Sanitary Conference in 1851 with the goal of codifying worldwide quarantine regulations to curb the spread of illnesses such as cholera, plague, and yellow fever. These conferences, conducted between 1851 and 1938, were crucial in the founding of WHO in 1948 and the *Office international d'hygiène publique* prior to WWII (Markel, 2014).

The World Health Organization acts as the main global health coordinating agency within the framework of the United Nations. The group assumes leadership roles in addressing global health concerns, establishing norms and standards, developing evidence-based policy recommendations, offering member states technical support, and tracking and analyzing health trends (WHO, 2023b, para 3).

However, in a world growing more interconnected by the day, a new international health scene is being formed, one that includes many different global health stakeholders. Numerous new entities have joined the WHO, such as non-governmental organizations and multinational pharmaceutical corporations; some of them have primarily financial investment functions, while others have mixed positions including operations, policy, and finance (Markel, 2014).

Global health has improved significantly with the advent of these new financing sources, initiatives, and players. But as a result of this growth,

international health organizations have become more fragmented, and the global health agenda has become more disorganized, haphazard, and inconsistent. This has left a leadership void for thorough convening and coordination. WHO is still carrying out the coordination function that is required by the constitution in this multilateral setting. It continues to be the only body with the power to set and carry out worldwide health rules and standards as well as to encourage continuous dialogue among member nations about priorities. Although cooperative supranational action on global health issues has many benefits, these benefits may be limited if WHO budgetary and policy priorities are shifted from global normative development to country-level operational activities (Burci, 2004; NG & Ruger, 2011).

### **Global Health Governance Infrastructure and Challenges**

WHO traditionally acknowledged as the leading multilateral body responsible for offering both political and technical leadership in the realm of global health, has seen its dominant role in global health governance eroded. This transformation can be attributed to the increasing involvement of other multilateral entities such as the World Bank, the emergence of novel public-private partnership organizations exemplified by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria (GFATM), and the ascendancy of philanthro-capitalism in the form of foundations, notably the substantial Bill and Mellon Foundation (Ruger & Yach, 2009).

Simultaneously, the ability of WHO to effectively confront global health challenges remains uncertain for several reasons. First and foremost, the recognition of health as a concept encompassing more than just the absence of disease signifies a normative perspective. Many contend that the attainment of optimal health represents a fundamental human right and is inherently aligned with principles of societal justice and human dignity. Consequently, there exists a moral imperative to rectify health disparities, as delineated by WHO as “unjust and avoidable variations in health status observed within and between nations” (Baker & Fidler, 2006, 1060).

When considering the amalgamation of health threats, social determinants of health, and the normative imperatives of social equity and human dignity, the current landscape of global health governance appears both formidable and expansive (Baker & Fidler, 2006, 1060). However, this extensive scope concurrently complicates effective collaboration. The mechanisms for collective action at the disposal of nation-states, intergovernmental organizations, and non-state actors are not well-suited to achieving health-centered, coordinated governance across all pivotal policy domains. Consequently, the landscape of contemporary global health governance is marked by gaps, inconsistencies, and shifting dynamics (Baker & Fidler, 2006, 1061).

On the other hand, closely intertwined with the complexities of global health governance is the issue of vaccine nationalism and diplomacy. This facet significantly impacted global health policy and operations throughout the pandemic, serving as a stark illustration of the substantial inequities in international relations. In a broader context, diplomacy encompasses strategic tools that states employ to advance their foreign policy objectives. According to Kickbusch & Liu (2022, 2156), diplomacy constitutes an integral element of global health governance. When the global community grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic, the concept of “global health diplomacy” took center stage in international forums and high-level bilateral and multilateral gatherings, even in instances involving nations with strained relationships.

As the world confronted the repercussions of the pandemic, it became evident that COVID-19 vaccinations represented the sole path to recovery. The production and distribution of these vaccines presented nations with a unique opportunity to showcase their scientific capabilities and the values they uphold on the global arena. It also served as a platform to reward longstanding allies and forge new partnerships, thereby underscoring the relative merits of their political systems, markets, and ideologies (Aspinall, 2021).

To put it in a nutshell, the four primary challenges of financing, issues associated with state-centric approaches and populism, frail healthcare

systems, and the implementation of vaccine diplomacy collectively pose substantial threats to the effective functioning of WHO. Moreover, the contemporary requirements of preserving global health in the twenty-first century necessitate both collective responses to global threats and the equitable provision of fundamental services, which is a complex feat to achieve.

### **COVID 19 and the Global Health Policy and Practice**

With major health and economic implications, the COVID-19 pandemic is by far the worst worldwide public health disaster of the twenty-first century. According to UNFPA (2020), the UN Secretary-General stated that this “is the greatest test that we have confronted since the formation of the United Nations”. To stop the virus’s spread, governments are acting in a way never seen before, bolstering the infrastructure for healthcare and imposing travel restrictions on millions of people. The epidemic has significantly impeded access to life-saving sexual and reproductive health care already. It increases prejudice against other marginalized groups and exacerbates the existing disparities for women and girls. A serious public health issue that requires immediate, ongoing attention and funding is sexual and reproductive health and rights (UNFPA, 2020).

Global health governance (GHG) was among the first fatalities of the COVID-19 pandemic as well. Tensions between the United States and China caused WHO, the international body in charge of managing pandemic illness, to fade into the background after a brief period of prominence during the Wuhan epidemic. There was a virtual “collapse of global cooperation” as nations adopted haphazard, disorganized, and even competing efforts to contain COVID-19 (Taylor & Habibi, 2020; Lee & Piper, 2020; Kavanagh, Singh, & Pillinger, 2021a; Gostin, Halabi, & Klock, 2021, 1258). The WHO’s 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR) were intended to prevent just this, but they proved inadequate and rapidly became obsolete when faced with the first real global crisis. States often ignored WHO warnings against travel restrictions and border closures, resorted to preventative measures like lockdowns that were never part of

WHO (or their own) pandemic preparedness, and regularly omitted the process of reporting deviations from the IHR to WHO as required by rules. While the WHO did encourage some technical cooperation and data sharing, its scientific advice was often highly contentious, and its major efforts to improve access to diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines were impeded by wealthy states' lack of commitment and "vaccine nationalism" (Kavanagh, Singh, & Pillinger, 2021a; Kavanagh, Singh, & Pillinger, 2021b).

Why did GHG not succeed? Currently, two primary theories exist. In the first, the activities of powerful nations are highlighted. When US President Trump and others accused China of being hesitant to declare a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), the WHO's image took a hit (Parker & Stern, 2022). Others saw this as an attempt to blame the WHO for domestic failings and blamed Trump's antipathy towards multilateralism and the US's lack of leadership for the GHG issue (Harman, 2020, 374). According to Busby (2020), there is a second and more common view that the WHO "failed by design" because governments refused to give up their sovereignty, leaving it unable to enforce conformity with the IHR. Thus, according to Fidler (2020), COVID-19 was a "Westphalian illness". Many observers are now skeptical about the prospect of genuine, "globalist" transformation as "statist" security objectives trump international collaboration (Wenham, 2022).

Both viewpoints fault GHG for not being what they want it to be: an authoritative pandemic management system run by an independent, competent WHO that also enforces its regulations in governments that refuse to cooperate. This causes a debate rather than assessing GHG as it truly is (Jones & Hameiri, 2022). This ideal condition is reflected in WHO reform proposals, which often call for governments to give the WHO more enforcement authority (Wenham et al., 2022, 470; Wenham & Eccleston-Turner, 2022, 2169). However, neither imposing laws on member states nor routinely granting supranational organizations direct authority over matters are the primary functions of global governance (Jones & Hameiri, 2022).

Additionally, a weakness in the World Health Organization's operations

was exposed by the emergence of the new corona virus. As seen by the organization's response to the COVID epidemic, the organization is susceptible due to its clear financing issues, populism and statism, and inadequate health systems.

Since so many countries turned to WHO for leadership and direction, the organization was once again in the focus as countries attempted to respond to COVID-19 epidemics (Kuznetsova, 2020, 470). Throughout the process, it has faced unavoidable criticism from many parties. According to Hassan et al. (2020, 398), this criticism has uncovered a number of organizational and legal instrument limitations that have impacted pandemic preparedness and response. It has also exposed certain misinterpretations of the WHO's mission and its authority—or lack thereof—over its member states.

The WHO did, in fact, initiate a number of institutional solutions in reaction to the aforementioned, the most prominent of which is the proposed pandemic treaty, the first draft of which was completed on February 7, 2023. In order to prevent the severe divisions that happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, this proposed treaty would provide legally enforceable guidelines for the distribution of medications, vaccinations, and diagnostics around the world in the event of a pandemic. As usual, member states are the only thing standing in the way of the treaty's signing and execution, therefore the eventual result is already known.

### **The Imperative of an International Pandemic Treaty**

The need for an international pandemic treaty on COVID-19 has grown more pressing as the globe struggles to contain the epidemic's unexpected and protracted spread. The lessons from the pandemic highlight the necessity of a unified and well-coordinated worldwide response to health emergencies like as COVID-19. The lack of a legally enforceable international agreement has impeded attempts to provide fair and equal access to medical supplies, treatments, and immunizations. The World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has stressed the importance of such a treaty, emphasizing

that “the world needs an international treaty for pandemic preparedness and response, to ensure that we learn the lessons of COVID-19 and build a safer future” (UNFPA, 2020).

In the lack of a worldwide agreement, disparities in access to healthcare have been made worse by disorganized national reactions, export prohibitions on necessary medical supplies, and vaccination stockpiling by certain countries. The need for a worldwide pandemic treaty is demonstrated by the differences in vaccine distribution, where high-income countries get and deliver vaccinations more quickly than low- and middle-income countries. In addition to extending the pandemic, this inequality puts the security of the world health at risk since newly emerging variations may be able to elude current vaccinations by emerging in areas with low vaccination rates.

Furthermore, a global pandemic treaty can create a precise framework for international collaboration, openness, and information exchange. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought attention to the difficulties in promptly and accurately exchanging information, since several nations first played down the virus's severity or withheld vital information. In order to avoid the spread of false information and the weakening of public health initiatives, a treaty that addresses these problems might guarantee that governments make a commitment to provide timely and correct information to the international community. Although the notion of an international treaty on pandemics is not new—calls for such accords date back to earlier health crises—the COVID-19 pandemic's urgency has given the proposal considerable weight.

Before there is another pandemic, it is only a matter of time. Realizing that no member state can fully protect itself from the detrimental impacts of other areas' economies, ecosystems, and health would need the development of truly global governance, led by WHO, in order to battle pandemics in the future. If WHO abandons its tendency to blame “others” and adopts the viewpoint that developing cooperative solutions with member states going ahead is the only way to put an end to shared

suffering across borders, it may harness a feeling of global togetherness and unity (Anderson, 2022).

Reimagining the organization's readiness and response to possible or actual pandemic scenarios was one of the perks of the COVID-19 pandemic for WHO and other global health stakeholders. Its delayed response to the virus's initial appearance in Wuhan, China, was the cause of this. In order to prevent the virus's fast spread, the organization should have accurately classified it as a pandemic and kept member nations alert, in addition to offering medical and logistical support (Sebastian, 2022; Gostin, 2020).

A well-known quote frequently ascribed to Lao-Tzu, states "If you don't alter course, you'll get where you're going," could be applied to the global health ecosystem, which is still working to come together and defeat COVID-19. It also begs the question of whether we ought to behave differently. 194 countries agreed in May 2021 to call a special session of the World Health Assembly (WHA) to explore drafting a global pandemic accord. In order to enhance pandemic preparedness, prevention, and response, the World Health Assembly (WHA) resolved at this session to draft and negotiate a new World Health Organization (WHO) convention, which will go into effect on December 1, 2021 (Sebastian, 2022).

The WHO's proposed pandemic treaty is an excellent choice for a strategy that would address the present COVID issue as well as any potential pandemic scenarios in the near future. Member states alone have the authority to contest its approval and signage. In an attempt to claim the governance space for such a policy development in the middle of their COVID-19 legitimacy crisis, the WHO and a small group of heads of state have added to these proposals that "such a treaty should lead to more mutual accountability and shared responsibility, transparency and cooperation within the international system and with its rules and norms" (Wenham, Ecclesten-Turner & Voss, 2022). Despite these suggestions from international organizations, nations will ultimately choose the terms of any treaty (Wenham, Ecclesten-Turner, & Voss, 2022).

If governments are prepared to sign the treaty's final draft, it may be the solution to the present COVID dilemma. However, the focus of the treaty's

globalist supporters has been on the establishment of a legally-binding framework to ensure state compliance with its obligations. But the World Health Assembly (WHASS) amended the wording from “a legally binding instrument to be adopted under Article 19 of the WHO Constitution” to “WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument...with a view to adoption under Article 19, or under other provisions of the WHO Constitution as may be deemed appropriate by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body” (INB) (Wenham, Ecclesten-Turner & Voss, 2022). This implies that the ensuing “pandemic treaty” may be some other document with no legal standing instead of a treaty at all. Nevertheless, this sudden change in direction shows that the decision to join the pandemic pact will eventually be made by globalist and statist forces.

Ultimately, considering the difficulties and injustices that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light, it is evident that an international pandemic treaty is necessary. A treaty like this could improve the world’s capacity to respond to pandemics in the future, foster international cooperation and information sharing, and ensure that everyone has equal access to healthcare resources. The pandemic has highlighted the need for a coordinated and cooperative approach to pandemic preparedness and response by highlighting the interdependence of nations with regard to the security of the global health system.

### **Conclusion**

The COVID-19 experience has sparked important changes in global health governance, resource allocation, and international collaboration. Although the pandemic treaty is an important part of this developing story, it is important to understand that it is only one aspect of a larger picture that calls for coordinated measures to protect the health and welfare of the whole international community.

Likewise, examining the notion and developmental trajectory of global health reveals its complex character, including several fields that necessitate international cooperation. The evolution of global health governance from unilateral actions to the creation of the World Health

Organization (WHO) is highlighted by the historical context, which also highlights the continued complexity of resolving global health issues.

Furthermore, there are several obstacles that global health governance must overcome, including changing stakeholder dynamics, budgetary limitations, state-centric approaches, and the rise of vaccine nationalism. The WHO's once-dominant role in the management of global health has been undermined by these problems. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for a coordinated response to health emergencies and shown the shortcomings of the current global health governance frameworks. The purpose of the proposed pandemic treaty is to address concerns such as equal access to medical resources and to strengthen international collaboration and information exchange. The member countries' dedication to putting the deal into effect will determine its success, though.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical need for significant changes in the governance of global health as well as the creation of a worldwide pandemic treaty. It acts as a loud cry for countries to band together, take on global health issues, and guarantee fair access to medical treatment. The knowledge gained from this catastrophe ought to act as a blueprint for developing a more secure and cooperative future for world health.

## R E F E R E N C E S

- Aspinall, E. (2021). *The Rise of Vaccine Diplomacy*. London: British Foreign Policy Group. <https://bfp.g.co.uk/2021/07/the-rise-of-vaccine-diplomacy/>.
- Baker, M. G., & Fidler, D. P. (2006). Global public health surveillance under new international health regulations. *Emerging infectious diseases*, 12(7). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3291053/>.
- Burci, L. (2004). Gian/Claude-Henri Vignes. *World Health Organization, The Hague, London/New York*.

- Busby, J. W. (2020). Understanding the anemic global response to COVID-19. *Journal of health politics, policy and law*, 45(6). <https://doi.org/10.1215/03616878-8641542>.
- Gostin, L. O., Halabi, S. F., & Klock, K. A. (2021). An international agreement on pandemic prevention and preparedness. *JAMA*, 326(13), 1257-1258. *JAMA*. 326(13). doi:10.1001/jama.2021.16104.
- Gostin, L.O., Moon, S. & Meier, B.M. (2020). Reimagining Global Health Governance in the Age of COVID-19. *American Journal of Public Health*, 110 (11). <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305933>.
- Harman, S. (2020). COVID-19, the UN, and dispersed global health security. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 34(3). <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ethics-and-international-affairs/article/covid19-the-un-and-dispersed-global-health-security/DFCFC9DEF8A8838D7F2D36ACC7EA7F62>.
- Hassan, I., Mukaigawara, M., King, L., Fernandes, G., & Sridhar, D. (2021). Hindsight is 2020? Lessons in global health governance one year into the pandemic. *Nature Medicine*, 27(3). <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-021-01272-2>.
- Hirsch, L.A. (2021). Is it possible to decolonise global health institutions? *The Lancet*, 397 (10270). 10.1016/s0140-6736(20)32763-x.
- Howard-Jones, N. (1974). The scientific background of the International Sanitary Conferences, 1851-1938. 2. *WHO Chronicle 1974*; 28 (5). <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/365172/WHO-Chronicle-28-n5-p229-247-eng.pdf?sequence=1>.
- Huremović, D. (2019). Brief history of pandemics (pandemics throughout history). *Psychiatry of pandemics: a mental health response to infection outbreak*, 7-35. [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-15346-5\\_2](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-15346-5_2).
- Jones, L., & Hameiri, S. (2022). Explaining the failure of global health governance during COVID-19. *International Affairs*, 98(6).
- Kavanagh, M. M., Pillinger, M., & Singh, R. (2021b). To Democratize Vaccine Access, Democratize Production. *Foreign Policy*.

- Kavanagh, M. M., Singh, R., & Pillinger, M. (2021a). Playing politics: The World Health Organization's response to COVID-19. *GREER, SL et al.* [https://books.google.com.ng/books?hl=en&lr=&id=jnZWEEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA34&dq=Kavanagh,+M.+M.,+Singh,+R.,+%26+Pillinger,+M.++\(2021a\).+Playing+politics:+the+World+Health+Organization%E2%80%99s+response+to+COVID-19.+GREER,+SL+et+al.&ots=u8r\\_-I-mE&sig=o9xmX7xG2\\_GyAnCVPQEbJRBbS-0&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com.ng/books?hl=en&lr=&id=jnZWEEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA34&dq=Kavanagh,+M.+M.,+Singh,+R.,+%26+Pillinger,+M.++(2021a).+Playing+politics:+the+World+Health+Organization%E2%80%99s+response+to+COVID-19.+GREER,+SL+et+al.&ots=u8r_-I-mE&sig=o9xmX7xG2_GyAnCVPQEbJRBbS-0&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- Kickbusch, I. & Liu, A. (2022). Global health diplomacy—reconstructing power and governance. *The Lancet*, 399(10341). 10.1016/s0140-6736(22)00583-9.
- Koplan, J. P., Bond, T. C., Merson, M. H., Reddy, K. S., Rodriguez, M. H., Sewankambo, N. K., & Wasserheit, J. N. (2009). Towards a common definition of global health. *The Lancet*, 373(9679) 5. DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(09\)60332-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(09)60332-9).
- Kuznetsova, L. (2020). Covid-19: The world community expects the World Health Organization to play a stronger leadership and coordination role in pandemics control. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2020.00470/full>.
- Lee, K., & Piper, J. (2020). The WHO and the Covid-19 pandemic: less reform, more innovation. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 26(4). [https://brill.com/view/journals/gg/26/4/article-p523\\_1.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/gg/26/4/article-p523_1.xml).
- Macfarlane, S. B., Jacobs, M., & Kaaya, E. E. (2008). In the name of global health: trends in academic institutions. *Journal of public health policy*, 29. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/jphp.2008.25>.
- Markel, H. (2014). Worldly approaches to global health: 1851 to the present. *Public Health*, 128(2). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2013.08.004>Get rights and content
- Marušić, A. (2013). Global health-multiple definitions, single goal. *Annali dell'Istituto superiore di sanita*, 49. <https://www.scielosp.org/article/aiss/2013.v49n1/2-3/>.
- Ng, N. Y., & Ruger, J. P. (2011). Global health governance at a crossroads. *Global health governance: the scholarly journal for the new health security paradigm*, 3(2). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3983705/>

- Parker, C.F. and Stern, E.K., 2022. The trump administration and the COVID-19 crisis: exploring the warning-response problems and missed opportunities of a public health emergency. *Public Administration*, 100(3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12843>.
- Ruger, J. P., & Yach, D. (2009). The global role of the World Health Organization. *Global health governance: the scholarly journal for the new health security paradigm*, 2(2). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3981564/>.
- Taylor, A. L., & Habibi, R. (2020). The collapse of global cooperation under the WHO International Health Regulations at the outset of COVID-19: sculpting the future of global health governance. *ASIL Insights*, 24(15). [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Allyn-Taylor/publication/341946747\\_The\\_Collapse\\_of\\_Global\\_Cooperation\\_under\\_the\\_International\\_Health\\_Regulations\\_at\\_the\\_Outset\\_of\\_COVID-19/links/5edae37845851529453bf3e5/The-Collapse-of-Global-Cooperation-under-the-International-Health-Regulations-at-the-Outset-of-COVID-19.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Allyn-Taylor/publication/341946747_The_Collapse_of_Global_Cooperation_under_the_International_Health_Regulations_at_the_Outset_of_COVID-19/links/5edae37845851529453bf3e5/The-Collapse-of-Global-Cooperation-under-the-International-Health-Regulations-at-the-Outset-of-COVID-19.pdf).
- UNFPA West and Central Africa. (2020). António Guterres, UN Secretary General – message on World Population Day. <https://wcaro.unfpa.org/en/news/ant%C3%B3nio-guterres-un-secretary-general-message-world-population-day>.
- Wenham, C. (2021) What went wrong in the global governance of covid-19? *BMJ*, 372(303). <https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n303>.
- Wenham, C., & Eccleston-Turner, M. (2022). Monkeypox as a PHEIC: implications for global health governance. *The Lancet*, 400(10369). DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(22\)01437-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(22)01437-4).
- Wenham, C., Eccleston-Turner, M., & Voss, M. (2022). The futility of the pandemic treaty: caught between globalism and statism. *International Affairs*, 98(3).
- WHO. (2023a). *WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing – 5 May 2023*. Geneva: World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing---5-may-2023>.
- WHO (2023b) *WHO COVID-19 dashboard*. Geneva: World Health Organization. <https://covid19.who.int/>.

## **Formation of Non-state Groups in Northwestern Nigeria: the Ethnicization and Politicization of Vigilantism, 2010–2020**

*Barje, Timothy Zakimayu & Audu, Bulus Nom*

### **Abstract**

*This article examined the formation of non-state groups in northwestern region of Nigeria, which has been enmeshed with the banditry crisis. The emergence of two dominant vigilante groups along ethnic lines have raised serious concerns amidst claims of complicity among observers and stakeholders. The yansakai and the Fulani militia are both perceived to represent ethnic interests. The research dissects how ethnicity and politics are intertwined in the formation and activities of these non-state armed groups. The research scope is from 2010 to 2020, a period that witnessed the rise, growth and unprecedented escalation of violence in the northwestern region of the country. The research uses both primary and secondary sources, comprising published books, journals and news materials. Extrapolating from the historical antecedence of the Hausa and Fulani from the jihad of 1804, the research argued that the emergence of both groups is deeply connected with conflicting political relations in their histories which only resurfaced as agro-pastoral clashes.*

*Keywords: ethnicity, ethnicization, banditry, Fulani militia, yansakai*

### **Introduction**

Ethnicity and vigilantism are two relative terms that are difficult to extricate when discussing vigilantes within the African context. This is because many self-help groups and vigilantes emerged as community initiatives

---

¶ Timothy Zakimayu Barje & Bulus Nom Audu are both in the Dept. of History & International Studies, Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil, Kano State.

aimed at tackling insecurity and other forms of physical threats where government's security agencies are not adequate in terms of number or weapons, to provide the security needed to protect the citizens (Kanton and Persson, 2010, pp.5 & 11). These non-state actors became expedient to complement the state security apparatus. Again, in most African settings, communities were established along ethnic and cultural affiliations especially in the rural areas where the groups, by reason of ancestral origin, clustered together in several hamlets and villages. Even the cities sometimes were no exception, as it is common especially in some Nigerian cities to find sections of a city that are predominantly occupied or dominated by members of the same ethnic group. Colonial policies in emerging cosmopolitan urban areas, had encouraged settlements in the urban areas along ethnic lines, and had since become a common feature in some Nigerian cities (See Lugard, 1911; Lugard, 1929). For instance, southerners are known to occupy settlements or "strangers" quarters known as *sabon gari* in the northern part of the country, and in the southern part of the country northerners also lived in separate quarters known as *sabo*, *abakpa*, *gbogobiri*, etc (Nnoli, 1978; Mangut & Wuam, 2011, Chapters 18 – 20).

African experience from the past indicated that vigilantes formed along ethnic lines had been a constant feature in many post-independence African states that once grappled with internal crisis and wars. It is easy to see minor skirmishes, given ethnic interpretation and eventually metamorphosing to major crisis. A report on peoples' perceptions and priorities on safety, security and informal policing in some focal states conducted in Nigeria in 2003, identified "ethnic vigilantism" among the four typologies of vigilantes patronized by Nigerians (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004, p.12). Such groups were considered as being organized along ethnic or tribal lines to defend narrow interests and sometimes carry out crime control functions. Baker described such groups as "ethnic or clan militias: who are acting to protect a whole cultural web that makes a clan or whole ethnic group distinct" (Baker, 2010).

Most of these ethnic-based vigilante groups can easily be

identified by their composition, and often times their target are members of another ethnic group or the government if they perceived that some policies of the government was unfavourable to their group or survival as a nation (Barje, 2021, p.129). In Nigeria, the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) founded in 1994 started as an armed wing of a pro-democracy movement whose objectives were clearly spelt out along ethnic lines (Harnischefeger, 2008, p.6). However, when the group split in 1999, one faction embarked on vigilante services and their activities went beyond crime fighting as they became known for carrying out vigilante services, providing security in several towns and city by checking the activities of criminals and cultists (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004).

The International Crisis Group (ICG) report on Africa noted that where vigilantes were mobilized in response to an uprising, they eventually “end up as powerful ethnic militias or outright insurgents” who “can undermine local authorities, widen conflict by targeting ethnic or political rivals or threaten longer-term stability by continuing as an autonomous armed force” (International Crisis Group, 2017). In Sierra Leone during the civil wars of the 1990s, Civil Defence Forces that emerged to fight alongside government forces were ethnically distinct (tribal militias) operating largely independent of each other. The Kamajors from Mendeland considered as the numerically dominant were known for being brutal especially when operating outside their ethnic domain (International Crisis Group, 2017, pp.4-5).

### **Rationale and Delineation**

Nigeria's northwest is one of the country's six geopolitical zones and it consist of seven states, namely: Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto and Kaduna States. The states that are least affected by banditry are Kano and Jigawa where the activities of bandits have been curtailed appreciably, except few instances of banditry operations in Falgore forest in Kano. Kaduna state is excluded in this research because of the religious interpretation that is usually associated with the conflict in the state, where the crisis is often seen from the perspective of Hausa/

Fulani and religious groups which provoke violent conflicts mostly in the Southern part of the state. The focus is on Zamfara, Katsina and Sokoto States where the most dominant groups are the Hausa and the Fulani, and predominantly Moslems.

Activities of armed bandits and vigilantes in the last ten years had thrown northwestern Nigeria into a calamitous stage. More worrisome is the renewed influence of jihadist groups and a spike in their activities in the northwest. There are fears that the region could soon become a link connecting Islamic insurgencies in the central Sahel with decade-old Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. Security sources pointed the resurgence of the long-dormant Boko Haram splinter group, Jama'atu Ansarul Musulmina Fi Biladis Sudan (Group of Partisans for Muslims in Black Africa), better known as Ansaru, which was active in northwestern Nigeria between 2011 and 2014 (International Crisis Group, 2020, p.i). "A poorly secured international boundary, meanwhile enables the influx of arms and facilitates the movement of jihadists to and from the Sahel where the Islamic State has been expanding its influence" (Barje, 2022, 563; International Crisis Group, 2020, p.19).

Farmers and herders" clashes which had been an ordinary feature over the last fifty years, suddenly degenerated into violent clashes culminating into the emergence of armed bandits who continued to wreak havoc over the region. The violence in Nigeria's northwest killed over 8,000 people from 2011 to around May 2020 (International Crisis Group, 2020). UNHCR and Government (Commission Nationale d'Eligibilite) of Niger Republic had individually registered and biometrically registered 35,499 refugees (9,728 households) in Maradi region of Niger Republic as of 29 February 2020 and within the northwest region there were some 210,000 internally displaced people (UNHCR, 2020). Amnesty International estimated that at least 1,126 people had been killed as a result of violence in the north of the country between January – June 2020, and mostly by rampaging gunmen (Amnesty International, 2020). Factors responsible for the current situation in the northwest requires a holistic approach, however farmers/herders" clashes over access to land resources had been considered as

the stimulating factor. While ecological changes and climate-induced pressures have increased conflicts in the agro-pastoral sector, the crisis also had linkages to governance crises that drive banditry in the region such as cattle rustling, illicit artisanal gold mining, proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), youth unemployment, etc, which indicate weak governance and security capacity across the affected states (WARN, 2020). This clearly indicates that the situation is more complex and comprises of other components of crime, which adds fuel to the entire crisis.

### **Emergence of the Yansakai and Fulani Militia**

The yansakai are an armed militia group, consist of largely Hausa youths and adults. The yansakai emerged in response to the constant violent attacks by bandits on their communities, and the adopted a method of response that many considered disturbing and responsible for igniting the violence. The yansakai had been accused of being responsible for the escalation of the crisis in the northwest. The yansakai were implicated in acts of criminality including human right abuses, armed robbery, extortion, appropriation of livestock and other properties from the Fulani (WARN, 2020). They were accused of targeting their victims along ethnic line and their excesses in profiling and killing ethnic Fulani men and women, was often blamed for the bandits' savage "reprisal attacks" (*Daily Trust*, 2020, "Failed peace pact with bandits'). While negotiating for peace with "armed bandits," some state governors issued proclamation outlawing the activities of the yansakai in their states whom they blamed for the escalation of the crisis. In July 2019, the governor of Zamfara state, Bello Mutawalle, was the first to enter a negotiation with the "armed bandits" followed by Governor Aminu Masari of Katsina State. Each proscribed the yansakai amidst disquiet from concern citizens who felt that it was wrong for the government to go into agreement with the bandits and feared that outlawing the yansakai would make rural communities vulnerable and defenseless since they had relatively inadequate police protection (Barje, 2020, p.131).

While the yansakai were identified as predominantly Hausa/farmers,

the bandits were only identified by the government as armed bandits or criminals. In identifying the different category of actors involved in the northwest crisis, the recent ICG report aligned with the government's position by separating the bandits whom it referred as "criminal gangs" from Fulani ethnic militia whom it referred as "herder-allied groups" (International Crisis Group, 2020, p.5).

The questions that many often avoid to tackle is whether there is a difference between the armed bandits and the Fulani ethnic militia or herder allied groups? Fulani ethnic militia is a term use to describe members of the Fulani ethnic armed vigilante group who rise up to defend the interest of the Fulani people. Such question is pertinent because the composition of the bandits terrorizing the Northwestern part of the country are predominantly Fulani. Moreover, where reprisal attacks were carried out as a result of the activities of the yansakai, it is often the leaders of the bandit group that claim responsibility (Barje, 2020). Often times, when the bandits kidnap people, part of their demands from the government were made on behalf of the Fulani people or herders, who they feel have been neglected by the government.

There is no doubt that Fulani militia group exists, but many have been skeptical of linking the existence of the Fulani vigilant group with the activities of the armed bandits. The Fulani militia variegated appearance made them vigilantes or ethnic militia by "day" and bandits by "night", with the formers' appearance remaining invincible. The Fulani militia were not invincible and the failure to track, identify and link their activities with the armed bandits by the government and security agencies created a problem that stalled the path to restoration. It is "tit for tat" kind of situation between the yansakai and the Fulani militia, attacks on communities are selective especially in the rural areas. While the yansakai target suspected Fulani rural settlements known as *ruga*, harbouring bandits, the militia in response go after Hausa communities where the yansakai operate (Barje, 2020, p.135). For the yansakai, the so called "bandits" are actually the Fulani reason why they go after them.

This article attempts to present an ethnic dimension to the northwest

crisis, surrounding the activities of the yansakai, seen as the creation of mostly Hausa communities, and the Fulani ethnic militia whose activities are intertwined with banditry. Extrapolating from the historical antecedence of the Hausa and Fulani from the jihad of 1804, the research argued that the emergence of both groups is deeply connected with conflicting relations in their histories which only resurfaced as agro-pastoral clashes. Both groups emerged in response to a need to protect their ethnic communities from perceived domination by the other. They target members of the other ethnic group with a savagery that carries a disturbing mark of ethnic cleansing.

Several researches on the Northwest security situation are explained from agro-pastoral occupational perspective of the major actors i.e., Hausa farmers and Fulani herders. This research deviates from this popular approach and tackles the much covert and obnoxious topic of ethnic animosity between the Hausa and the Fulani.

### **Historical Dynamics of the Hausa and Fulani Relation in Perspective**

For two centuries now the pastoral Fulani found in the forests and the transhumance Fulani found in northern Nigeria have succeeded in maintaining their cultural identities intact, attributable to their refrainment to intermingle either through marriage or culture with the Hausa. Similarly, the rural dwelling Hausa had also maintained segregated settlements from the Fulani and hardly intermarried with them. These two categories consist the larger population of the poor people *talakawa* in the northwest who are presently worst affected by the crisis. Contrarily, in the towns and cities for over two centuries now, the Fulani elites who form the larger bulk of sedentary Fulani had successfully intermixed with the urban Hausa dwellers making it difficult to differentiate between Fulani and Hausa in the cities. In these urban areas and in political circle, Hausa-Fulani is the new appellation used to identify the new urban class that is a mixture of both races. According to Maiangwa (2017, p.283):

After the conquests of these kingdoms, many of the Fulani jihadists integrated into Hausa land; they took on certain Hausa

cultural attributes and lifestyle, and became known as the urban Fulani. Although the two groups (urban Fulani and Hausa) are distinguishable, both groups are often regarded as one (and are commonly referred to as Hausa-Fulani). The urban Fulani, who are mostly Muslims, are often contrasted with the Fulbe or nomadic Fulani. While the majority of Fulani herders are also Muslims, it is not clear to what extent most of them practice the religion. Many of them, however, are perceived to share similar cultural traits as the urban Fulani, including the ability to speak Fulfude (the language of Fulani people).

Notwithstanding, the urban Fulani had managed to extricate themselves from being completely intermeshed with the Hausa by maintaining cultural ties with the rural Fulani, through various Fulani cultural organizations and political interest groups.

Historically, no one is certain when precisely the Fulani began to establish settlements all over Hausa land though their arrival had been linked with itinerant preachers among them from Mali and Senegal from the fourteenth century. However, according to Kano Chronicle in the reign of Rumfa (1463–1499 CE) the Fulani were numerous all over Hausa land and Kano (Kirk-Greene, 1972, p.10). But in the reign of his father Yakubu, it was recorded that there was considerable number of Fulani and Wangara influx from Mali Empire who brought religious books (Hogben & Kirk-Greene, 1966, p.190). The Fulani were subject to the Hausa rulers and the “less-nomadic” ones amongst them began to intermarry with the Hausa (Hogben & Kirk-Greene, 1966).

However, the major catalyst in the relations of these two groups was the jihad. Spearheaded by a Fulani cleric Othman dan Fodio, the jihad was considered as a movement for the reformation of Islam from superstitious customs and practices encouraged by the ruling Hausa class, which garnered support from both Hausa *talakawa* and Fulani supporters (NAK, Kano Prof., 2568 II). Though many had established that the jihad was not in any way a conquest of the Hausa race by the Fulani, because the

Hausa adherents of Fodio were probably more numerous than his Fulani followers (Kirk-Greene, 1972; Chafe, 1999, pp.53-58). Notwithstanding, the nepotistic grasp of power after the Fulani succeeded in overthrowing the Hausa ruling class, made the Fulani completely take over the entire Hausa ruling class and administrative system (Kirk-Greene, 1972). The Fulani began to breed a new generation by intermarrying with the finest amongst the wealthy Hausa populace. The famous explorer Henry Barth (1857, p.146) observed that:

The Fulbe marry the handsome daughters of the subjugated tribe, but would not condescend to give their own daughters to the men of that tribe as wives. As far as I saw, their original type has been well preserved as yet, though by obtaining possession of wealth and comfort, their war-like character has been greatly impaired.

Over time, the composition of the newly emerged urban Fulani class successfully intermixed with the Hausa and both races became moulded into a social life and environment fashioned along Islamic fundamentals (NAK, Kano Prof., p.28). Hausa language continued to be the lingua franca throughout Hausa land, and even among the ruling Fulani dynasty, Fulfulde is rarely spoken. It is exceptionally difficult to find a Fulani who cannot not speak Hausa and it is uncommon in the urban centres to hear Fulfulde language spoken except among the cattle nomads. Meanwhile in the rural areas the situation has not changed for the Hausa *talakawa* who supported the jihad, and in the forests and bushes the pastoral Fulani were soon forgotten by their urban dwelling relatives who embraced totally new identity and hardly associate with them. Since the post jihad era, the pastoral Fulani in the bushes and forests have not enjoyed full assimilation into the mainstream social cohesion and this had been their major source of bitterness. Despite that the Fulani elite class had been greatly favoured by the British colonial government to retain considerable influence in the north above any other ethnic group (see Lugard, 1965), they failed to evolve a social plan that will civilize their rural pastoral relatives. Maiangwa agrees with those who problematize the colonial

heritage of the farmer-herder conflicts, arguing that the “the policy of restricting the mobility of pastoralists and confirming them to designated locations in order to collect taxes and demarcate fixed boundaries for purposes of state creation and economic exploitation” (Maiangwa, 2017, pp.282-3), is a significant in understanding the crisis between farmers and nomadic groups.

The plight of these poor classes who succeeded in maintaining their separate and unique cultural identities continued over the centuries as they both became dissatisfied with their new ruling and elite class. While the poor rural Hausa (whose traditional occupation was farming) feel neglected by a “foreign” ruling class who did not take active step to address the constant destruction of farmlands by the pastoralists, the Fulani on the other hand felt their brothers who hold power had done nothing to change their situation and allowed the gradual encroachment and decimation of grazing lands by an ever-growing Hausa population. In the 1960s the northern regional government established about 415 grazing reserves for the herders but most of it had been lost over the years (International Crisis Group, 2019, p.4). Out of these number only 114 had been formally demarcated and documented, but these too were not backed by legislation to guarantee exclusive usage by the herders and to deter other land users from encroachment. Gradually these reserves were lost to population growth, expanding agro-farming communities and appropriation for political reasons (Garba, 2020). Presently, the poor are estimated to consist about 80 per cent of the region’s population made up of farmers, pastoralists, agro-pastoralist and small-scale entrepreneurs (International Crisis Group, 2020). The northwest has the highest poverty rate in Nigeria, and as at 2019 all the seven states in the region had poverty index above the national average of 40.1 per cent (International Crisis Group, 2020).

### **Conceptualizing Ethnicity and Ethnicization**

Many conflicts and publications about conflicts have often been linked with either race or ethnicity. Within the African context, history has shown

that most of the violent conflicts experienced in the past have been linked with ethnic related issue. According to Holst (2012), violent conflicts are often traced back to violent contestations between ethnic groups with seemingly homogenous interest, but also in scholarly analyses where they remain as analytical framework, determined also in the area of conflict. However, ethnicity alone cannot be sufficient to explain some conflicts and is not sufficiently coherent enough to be applied in every context.

This article takes an alternative approach by looking at the concept of “ethnicization” as a processual framework of analysis” as used by Holst. This approach takes into account the power that the notion of race and ethnicity has in real life, while trying to avoid the reinforcement of the notion of homogeneity, but instead underline the processual nature of group and identity formation. It is not always easy to divert from the usual and much easier terms used in analyzing group dynamics and relations, an attempt to embrace a different approach exposes the underlying issues which are more often easily overlooked when focusing on popular categories of ethnicity (Holst, 2012, p.40).

Though the definition of ethnicity may seem blurred sometimes but Holst summarize some of the central aspects of defining ethnicity based on some scholars approach such that it is often portray as the essence of an ethnic group, to the feeling of belonging to such a group, to the marker of difference from other ethnic groups; a shared culture, a common ancestry/kinship (real or imagined) and some form of group membership (Holst, 2012, p.42).

The inclusion of all these basic factors that explains ethnicity earmarks a process which according to Eder (2002, p.17) “advance the creation of collective identities known as “ethnicization” which is seen as “the chain of events through which objective conditions of economic or political grievances become the basis of political claims justified by reference to a collective identity.” According to Holst the process leading to engendered ethnicization can often be observed from a top-down perspective, in this case the powerful elites belonging to a particular group became the centre of activism and influence. This is a clear indication that the elites

are actively able to control the processes of ethnicization while ordinary people are unaware of their manipulation. It is therefore noteworthy to point out that there are aspects of ethnicization that have become so engrained in everyday life that are difficult to identify as such, even for elite actors (Holst, 2012, pp.50-51). Other aspects may have been initiated by actors in the center of power, but may not develop along the lines of a typical instrumentalist perspective. Ironically and sometimes unknown to the silent initiators, it might even backfire and harm their interests, because of the possibility of the process being hijacked and reinforced by actors outside the typical realms of powers, who then develop their own, uncontrolled dynamics.

### **Ethnicizing and Politicizing Insecurity in Northwest Nigeria**

The flaw in the nation's security structure had left the majority of the Nigeria populace unsecured and threatened. Slow response from security agencies even when they are informed of impending attacks only compounds the woes of communities that were badly affected by the crisis. Security forces were known to respond late and arrive hours after the attacks have ended (Amnesty International, 2018). In spite of the attacks and killings that have been going for several years, many agreed that the government had been reluctant in investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of the killings which triggered the cycle of bloody violence (Amnesty International, 2018, p.7). successive Nigeria governments are fond of issuing statement after statement condemning each attack, and in most cases even when the victims recognized their attackers, the authorities have always delayed to act accordingly (Amnesty International, 2018, p.41). As much as some communities also blamed the yansakai for being responsible for the problem, notwithstanding, they felt some sense of insecurity without the yansakai.

The growing violence occasioned by the activities of the yansakai made the state governors in the northwest to outlaw their activities and operations especially in Zamfara and Katsina States. The ban placed on the activities of the yansakai followed a peace/amnesty deal initiated by

the concerned state governments with the commanders of the various units of Fulani militia who ironically are leaders of bandit groups. While the yansakai were outlawed, the Fulani militia were allowed “to continue with their normal activities” in these states, a situation that led to the breakdown of the peace deal because the militia continued with their attacks (*Daily Trust*, Failed peace pact with bandits). The Muhammadu Buhari led government was slow in taking action against the Fulani militia and the idea of negotiating deals with militia commanders of the Fulani, was condemned by government critics and ordinary citizens. Banning the yansakai without providing alternative security arrangements or improving the security structure, made several civil society groups to protest the ban of the yansakai and called for the lifting of the ban (Barje, 2020, p.136). Despite the ban, the yansakai continued to operate in several parts of the northwest.

In an attempt to stem the tide of the clashes the federal government proposed to establish cattle ranches for the Fulani across the states of the federation. But in a country widely divided by ethnic sentiments, the government’s decision drew lots of criticisms, as the action was seen to favour the Fulani. On 3 May 2019, a federal government delegation led by former Minister of Interior, Abdulrahman Dambazau and the Inspector General of Police negotiated a deal with the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) to provide N100 billion naira over a two-year period for the establishment of cattle ranches for the Fulani in various parts of the country. According to Dambazau, “the gathering is part of steps we have taken to tackle insecurity and clashes between herdsmen and farmers... That is the main reason we have come to Kebbi State, to dialogue with leaders of herdsmen as part of the process” (*Vanguard*, 2020, Killings kidnappings: Ohanaeze fumes...). Many see the action as a means to appease the Fulani militia through MACBAN, who had been accused of sponsoring and shielding the Fulani militia.

Though the IG of police denied the allegations, the National Secretary of MACBAN, Saleh Alhassan admitted that the federal government offered the Fulani N100 billion (*Punch Newspaper*, 2020, Miyeti Allah admits

clarifies N100 bn demand...). Eight weeks after that incident the federal government launched the Rural Grazing Area (RUGA). It was intended to establish ranches and settlements fully developed with dairies for milk production, houses for herders, mini-markets, schools, hospitals, vet clinics, abattoirs, mosques, road networks and dams to cater for the needs of the herdsmen. Under the planned programme the federal government would develop pasture paddocks and employ agro-rangers to oversee the RUGA.

Eleven states were identified to pilot the scheme. These are Sokoto, Adamawa, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Kogi, Taraba, Katsina, Plateau, Kebbi, Zamfara and Niger. Prior to RUGA, the National Economic Council (NEC) chaired by the Vice President in June 2018, initiated the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) with an estimated budget of N179 billion and a 10-year plan to develop ranching in Nigeria. It was the same plan that was transformed into the RUGA project contrary to denial by the Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo, who through the NEC was directed to suspend the programme on 3 July 2019 following the outrage it created in the country (*Vanguard Newspaper*, 2020, Why we're suspending RUGA policy...).

Labelling the Fulani militia as armed bandits, in order to distract critics that most of the crimes were perpetrated by criminals along with Fulani elements, did not justify the actions exhibited by them. Their attacks had the marks of ethnic battle often in response to an injury and casualty on their side. The government was quick to blame the yansakai for the escalation of the conflict but acted lethargically in addressing the violent militia. The governors of northwest states had shown reluctance to prosecute known militia commanders but would rather negotiate with them. Compared to other ethnic militia commanders, who were summarily executed given the slightest opportunity, many believed the government showed more consideration to the commanders of the Fulani militia.

Many believed that if the state governors in the northwest can support the yansakai who are familiar with the terrain than the security forces,

against the so called “bandits” the issue of banditry would have been the thing of the past. But their reluctance betrayed their fears that supporting an armed yansakai against the “bandits” was inimical to raising up arms against the Fulani ethnic group.

To buttress this point, in Zuru Emirate of Kebbi State, the yansakai with the support of the elites of the state have been killing bandits who disguised as Fulani militias. Zuru is an ethnic group that is found and dominant in Kebbi State. However, MACBAN issued a statement that the yansakai in Kebbi killed 68 Fulani people in three LGAs of Kebbi state from 29 April to 11 August 2020 (*Leadership*, 2020, Miyeti Allah condemns alleged killings...). In a swift reaction to stop the killing of Fulani in Kebbi, the president sent a powerful delegation led by the Inspector General of Police Mohammed Adamu and Director General of the State Security Services (DSS) Yusuf Magaji-Bichi to bring the yansakai in Kebbi State to order in order to avoid mass reprisal killings like that of Zamfara and Katsina States which was blamed on the yansakai (*Vanguard*, 2020, Banditry in Nigeria has international dimension...).

MACBAN as an association had been accused of being linked with the Fulani militia. Many top Fulani elites in the country belong to the association. Negotiations between commanders of Fulani militias and governments had mostly been mediated through MACBAN chairmen at the various state chapters. The Fulani militia were perceived to be the militant wing of MACBAN, the position that has been betrayed by statements credited to their leaders. Attacks carried out by Fulani militia in 3 LGAs of Plateau State in June 2018 leading to loss of lives was explained as reprisal attack for the loss of 300 cows, according to chairman of MACBAN North Central Zone (*Vanguard Newspaper*, 2018, Plateau massacre retaliation for loss of 300 cows). Likewise, earlier in that year the chairman of MACBAN Benue state chapter said the attacks on Benue communities that killed 11 people was a reprisal for the stealing of 1,000 cows (BBC News Pidgin, 2018). On both occasions the national body of MACBAN disassociate itself and the entire body with the statements issued by these leaders of

the association. Notwithstanding, no arrest had been made in respect to statement that clearly implicated the branches of the MACBAN.

### **Conclusion**

The nation's ethnic divide had been the subject of debate and research considering the alacrity with which every phenomenon unveils deep seated animosity. The problem of ethnic vigilantism is not common to only the Fulani militia or the yansakai in the northwest alone. However, the emergence of many militia groups spread around the central Nigeria and northeastern part of the country is attributed to the activities of ethnic militias. Establishment of state sponsored vigilantes are gradually taking the form or gravitating towards ethnic lines. The southeast governors are also thinking of establishing a similar outfit. The idea of decentralizing the police force by creating state equivalents had been jettisoned on several occasions and some critics of the initiative often express fear that state police might be exploited along ethnic lines in many states. The government still has a long way to go in resolving conflicts associated with ethnic sentiments. Balance and unbiased policies will go a long way in solving most of these problems, the lack of political will to go after those that are known to be linked with banditry had continuously forestalled meaningful progress in the fight against banditry in the country.

### **R E F E R E N C E S**

- Alemika, E. E. and Chukwuma I. (2004). *The poor and informal policing in Nigeria*. Lagos, CLEEN Foundation.
- Amnesty International. (2018, 17 December). Nigeria: harvest of death - three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria. [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/9503/2018/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/9503/2018/en/)
- Amnesty International. (2020, 23 August). Nigeria government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/08/nigeria-government-failings-leave-rural-communities-at-the-mercy-of-gunmen>

- Baker, B. (2010). The future is non-state. In Mark Sedra (Ed). *The future of Security Sector Reform* (pp. 208 – 228). Ontario, CIGI.
- Barje, T. Z. (2021). Redefining the Roles of Armed Bandits and Yansakai as Ethnic Vigilantes (Militia) in Nigeria's Northwest Crisis. *POLAC International Journal of Humanities and Security Studies*, Vol. 6 (1), 129 – 138.
- Barje, T. Z. (2022). Cross-border dimension of Nigeria's armed banditry: an examination of porous borders, arms smuggling and its implications on Nigeria's military operations in the north-west. In Okpeh O. Okpeh, Patrick I. Ukase and Bem J. Audu (Eds.) *Military Leadership, Service and National Development* (pp.561 – 596). Kaduna, Pyla-Mak Publishers.
- Barth, H. (1857). *Travels and discoveries in north and central Africa 1849 – 1855*. London, Longman.
- BBC News Pidgin (2018, 4 January). Fulani herdsmen: why we attack Benue people. [www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-42555276](http://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-42555276)
- Chafe, K. S. (1999). *State and economy in the Sokoto caliphate*. Zaria, ABU Press.
- Daily Trust*. (2020, 20 June). Failed peace pact with bandits <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/failed-peace-pact-with-bandits.html>
- Garba, S. (2020). New vista of discussion and recommendations to farmers/pastoralists" conflicts in northern Nigeria. *POLAC International Journal of Humanities and Security Studies*, Vol. 5(1), 142 – 157.
- Harnischfeger, J. (2008). Balance of terror – rival militias and vigilantes in Nigeria, *Afrikanistik online*. <http://www.afrikanistik-online.de/archive/2008/1756>
- Hogben, S.J. and Kirk-Greene A.H.M. (1966). *The emirates of northern Nigeria*. London, Oxford University Press.
- Holst, F. (2012). *Ethnicization and Identity Construction in Malaysia*. London: Routledge.
- International Crisis Group. (2017, 7 September). Double-edged sword: Vigilantes in African counter-insurgencies. *Africa Report* No 251.
- International Crisis Group. (2019). Herders against farmers: Nigeria's expanding deadly conflict *Africa Report* No 252. Sept. 19.
- International Crisis Group. (2020,). Violence in Nigeria's northwest: rolling back the mayhem. *Africa Report* No 288, May 18.
- Kantor, A. & Persson, M. (2010). *Understanding vigilantism*. Folke Bernadotte Academy, Stockholm.

- Kirk-Greene, A.H.M. (1972). *Gazetteers of the northern provinces of Nigeria vol. I: the Hausa emirates*. London, Frank Cass.
- Klaus, E. (2002). *Collective Identities in action: a sociological approach to ethnicity*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.
- Leadership* (2020,). Miyetti Allah condemns alleged killings of pastoralists. Aug. 18. <https://www.leadership.ng/miyetti-allah-condemns-alleged-killings-of-pastoralists/>
- Lugard, F.D. (1965) *The dual mandate in British tropical Africa* (5th ed.). London, Frank CAass and Co Ltd.
- Lugard, F.D. (1929), *The dual mandate in British tropical Africa* (4th ed.). London, William Blackwood.
- Lugard, F.D. (1911), Annual Report, 1910-11, London.
- Maiangwa, B. (2017). Conflicting indigeneity and farmer-herder conflicts in postcolonial Africa. *Peace Review* 29(3), 282 – 288
- Mangut, J. and Wuam T. (Eds.). (2011). *Colonialism and the transition to modernity in Africa*. IBB University Lapai.
- NAK. Kano Prof. Provincial Gazetteer 2568 Vol II
- Nnoli, O. (1978). *Ethnic politics in Nigeria*. Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Punch*. (2019, 17 May). Miyetti Allah admits, clarifies N100 bn demand from FG [www.punchng.com/miyetti-allah-admits-clarifies/](http://www.punchng.com/miyetti-allah-admits-clarifies/)
- Toromade, S. (2019, 1 June). 7 things you should know about Buhari's controversial RUGA settlements [www.pulseng.com/7-things-you-should-know-about/](http://www.pulseng.com/7-things-you-should-know-about/)
- UNHCR. (2020, March 2020). Nigeria refugees in Maradi region [www.unhcr.org/nigeria-refugees-in-maradi-region/](http://www.unhcr.org/nigeria-refugees-in-maradi-region/)
- Vanguard*. (2018, 26 June). Plateau massacre, retaliation for loss of 300 cows – Miyetti Allah, [www.vanguardngr.com/plateau-massacre-retaliation-for-loss-of/](http://www.vanguardngr.com/plateau-massacre-retaliation-for-loss-of/)
- Vanguard*. (2019, 7 May). Killings, kidnappings: Ohanaeze fumes over offer of N100bn to Miyetti Allah <https://www.vanguardngr.com/killings-kidnappings-ohanaeze-fumes-over-offer-of-N100bn/>
- Vanguard*. (2019, 4 July). Why we're suspending ruga policy implementation – FG [www.vanguardngr.com/why-we-re-suspending-ruga-policy-implementation/](http://www.vanguardngr.com/why-we-re-suspending-ruga-policy-implementation/)

*Vanguard*. (2020, 20 August). Banditry in Nigeria has international dimension – IGP <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/08/banditry-in-nigeria-international-dimension>

WARN Policy Brief Nigeria 2019. (2020). Addressing armed banditry in the north west of Nigeria: exploring the potentials of a multi-dimensional conflict management approach. (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding – WANEP).

## **China's Economic Transition and the Identity Crisis of being Neither Home-Grown nor Western Model-Inspired**

***\*\*Iweze, Daniel Olisa, PhD & Orukpe, Williams Ehizuwa, PhD***

### **Abstract**

*This paper examines China's transition from capitalism to communism to capitalism to sustain communism. The phenomenon of communist liberalism enabled China to attract foreign direct investment and open up its economy to the rest of the world. The paper shows that China's transition is eclectic and was neither a straitjacket home-grown economic model nor a completely Western capitalist model. It examines the role played by various government enactments such as labour regulation, property rights, the role of state-owned enterprises, and the Communist Party to mark the triumph of communism in China. It adopts the qualitative method of research which involves a close reading of extant literature and the application of historical hermeneutics to data analysis.*

*Keywords: China, communism, capitalism, economic transition, home-grown*

### **Introduction**

One of the most important events in modern economic history is China's transition from a state-planned economy to a market-oriented economy starting in the last two decades of the 20th century. China's transition has produced many interesting contrasts to the experiences of transition in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. When the transition started in EEFSU, most economists in the West favoured economic stabilization, price liberalization, and privatization reforms which they considered to be

---

**\*\*** The authors are lecturers in the Dept. of History & International Studies, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

necessary for a successful transition to a market economy. From 1949 until the reform era, China adopted the communist model of industrialization. One of its unique features has been the continuation of communist party leadership at the same time carrying out substantial economic reforms. The China Communist Party (CCP) was in power before and during the process of economic reforms and therefore, played a significant role in directing the reform agenda (The Open University, 2006, p. 118). The period of officially designated “transition to socialism” corresponded to China’s first five-year plan from 1953 to 1957. The period was characterized by efforts to achieve industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, and political centralization.

It is against this backdrop, that this paper examines China’s economic development dynamics that tilt towards capitalism in the context of whether it was a home-grown economic model or rather inspired by the Western economic model; or whether it was a new hybrid model which was a veritable blend or mix of the two or dual economic models.

This investigation into China’s unique economic development model that emerged after the collapse of its second socialist plan is carried out within the context of its labour regulation, property rights, the role of state-owned enterprises, the role of the state and the changing roles of the Communist Party. It contends that from 1979, Chinese economic reforms were a departure from Soviet communist methodologies; but still, they helped preserve communism in China. They also created an economic identity crisis for China that the Asian giant has had to live with ever since. The foreground knowledge of communism in China and the capitalist reforms were used as a parameter for understanding China’s foray and a giant leap into the Global South and beyond. It also aids our understanding of China’s economic concord and discord (trade war) with the United States in the twenty-first century.

### **A Brief History of China Before the Reforms**

China is one of the oldest four ancient civilizations in the world. Historically, after the Egyptian civilization, Mesopotamian and Indus

Valley civilizations, the Chinese civilization was the next civilization that provided humanity with a continuous basis of cultural development. This was particularly so as other ancient civilizations before it, fell to either climate change or were assimilated and plundered. The World Economic Forum (2019) reported that many of the world's ancient civilizations were devastated by the effects of their locally changing climate. They included the Mayan civilization in Mesoamerica whose 3000 years reign was brought to its death knell by an extended drought that ruined the crops of the people and cut off their water source; the Mesopotamia civilization that was ended by a 300-year-long drought; while the ancient Egyptian civilization was plundered and assimilated into the Western civilization. This leaves the Chinese civilization as the only ancient civilization that has survived over time and space to intersect with the modern era of human development. Hence, the civilization of China that originated in the Hwang Ho and Yangtze River basins is today estimated to be over 5000 years old (Advantour, n.d.).

The ancient Chinese civilization, according to the National Geographic Society (n.d.), is directly responsible for the rich culture found in modern China. This means that the modern Chinese civilization was a continuum of the ancient. It is the only surviving cultural bridge between the two eras. Thus, Joshua Mark (2012) observed that ancient China is the oldest extant culture in the world. For several centuries, it has remained the dominant civilization in the East Asia. Several dynasties ruled China from the Xia Dynasty in 2070 BC to the Qing Dynasty, which ended with the emergence of a Republic in 1911.

The Republic of China existed till the victory of the Communists over the Kuomintang (Capitalist) group in 1949. Before 1949, China was engulfed by violence, civil wars, invasions and activities of warlords. From 1949 until it embarked on the “gradualist” reforms to a market economy in 1979, China experimented with different models within the communist mode of production and distribution. There is no consensus among economists about the role of that era in the outcomes observed in contemporary times. Some believe that the “foundation” for the recent

performance was laid during the communist era, while others see those decades as lost years for China (Soludo, 2006, p. 6).

Before the reform, China was largely an agrarian economy and its society was largely rural with slightly over 60% of its population living in rural areas. Yao Yang (2019) observed that the average Chinese adult lived on an income that was barely above one-fifth of the world's poverty margin. Hence, to reverse the economic backwardness of China that was responsible for this, the Communist administration adopted neo-classical development strategies that encouraged savings, high investment, human capital development, technological advancement, and industrialization. Furthermore, Dwight Perkins (2020) pointed out that the Communist Party organized the Chinese economy differently from the rest of the market economies across the globe. It abolished household agriculture and shifted to the collective agriculture system to increase raw material production for industrialization. This new agricultural policy made it possible for the Chinese to become the development partner of the rural farmers by supplying the industrial the state inputs and outputs needed to expand farming through the State Planning Commission (SPC). Spotlighting the economic development essence of these measures, Cheng Chu-Yuan (2021) noted that they were geared towards transforming the underdeveloped agrarian economy of China into a modern industrialized economy. However, during this period the USA Congressional Research Service Report (2019) revealed that China's economic policies to some extent before 1979, made the country very poor, stagnant, centrally controlled, inefficient, and relatively isolated from the rest of the world. Hence, to unlock and harness the full economic potential of China to address the imbalances in the Chinese economy, the Communist government initiated a series of non-Soviet type and non-Western model economic reforms. During this reform period, China made conscious efforts to create a manufacturing base for its growing population (Soludo, 2006, p. 6). In 2015, the Chinese government made innovation the top priority of its development planning. This led to the conception of the "Made in China 2025 Initiative" which sought to make all the products

consumed in China by 2025, products made in China (Congressional Research Service, 2019). The prospect of this initiative lies in the fact that by 2015 when it was initiated, China has been able to lift more than 800 million of its citizenry out of poverty (CRS, 2019, p. 1).

### **The Reform Era**

The Communist reform and economic recalibration in China began fully in 1979. It was marked by a series of experimentations to improve means of production, reduce waste and spur development with varying levels of success. The reforms adopted reflected the initial conditions of China. First, GDP growth was about 12.3% that year and hence did not give an impression of a total failure of the socialist regime. It started off reforms in a rather gradualist mode, still admiring the socialist model and without any clearly-spelt plan to quickly transit to a market economy (The Open University, 2002, p. 52). However, the successes recorded by the non-state sectors raised public sentiments for more reforms towards the market. In other words, it can be fairly argued that China embraced the market economy reforms not out of deliberate plans, but learned through experience that it had no better alternative. Privatization of state enterprises followed, salaries were freed up and foreign investment was encouraged. Beginning in 1990, six Special Economic Zones were set up to attract foreign investments, among them was the Shanghai Pudong Economic Zone.

In the agricultural sector, the Contract Responsibility System was introduced through which farmers were authorized to sell their surplus produce in the market for profit. Its transition to a market economy has intensified with success, and its aggressive export orientation culminated in accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001 (Soludo, 2006, p. 7). Some markets were liberalized and permitted to sell at market prices, but sell to state firms at administered prices. Our discussions on reforms in China are subsumed in the following sub-themes:

### **Labour Regulation**

In the wake of the 1949 Revolution, the China Communist Party created a dual economy in which workers were confined to either the urban industrial sector or the rural agrarian sector. During the period, China pursued a socialist model of transition towards an industrialized economy rather than market allocation. In the reform period, all these were altered, as markets began to develop alongside the planned economy, and an increasing number of peasant farmers began to drift from rural to urban areas and from agricultural to industrial activities within rural areas. New forms of enterprise, based on different forms of ownership, developed in the urban and rural sectors. These reforms were meant to accelerate the pace of the Chinese industrialization process; and to eradicate the market forces from creating acute imbalances and supply bottlenecks in the Chinese economy (Chu-Yuan, 2021; Yang, 2019; Perkins, 2020).

The adoption of the socialist system of government geared towards the industrialization of the economy led to the dramatic growth of the urban modern sector which created demand for both urban and rural workers. Newly established enterprises employed a pool of unemployed rural folks through the labour allocation measures of the government giving rise to a great surge in the urban population. In the years, 1952-1957, there was a population increase from 10.6% to 154% according to China's Statistical Yearbook of 1993. But this was not to endure as an excessive drive towards industrialization led to utter neglect of agriculture leading to low output and eventually famine. This reverse in agriculture production compelled the Chinese government to compel about 20 million workers back to their rural homes to reduce urban food demands and increase labour input to agricultural production. So, between 1961 and 1962, the government embarked on intense regulation of rural-urban drift which led to an increase in food production (The Open University, 2002, p. 69).

### **Privatization of State-Owned Enterprises**

China's state-owned enterprises were given preferential treatment that was unrecognized in the constitution. In the new economic development vision

of China that emerged from 1979; the government started deregulating its economy gradually to open it up to the rest of the world (CRS, 2019). The deregulation of the Chinese economy as a way of attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) through the establishment of private enterprises was not pursued as a Western- IMF economic Structural Adjustment Programme, rather it was a domestic developmental imperative birthed by the 1982 Constitution of China that allowed private enterprises in China to exist side-by-side with the state-owned business concerns. While privatization created new employment opportunities; the China Communist government took steps to ensure that by deregulating the economy, its communist identity was not lost completely. The government ensured that working for state-owned enterprises was attractive and lucrative. Hence, Chinese people working for the government were given substantial social welfare provisions in education, health, child care and a package of rights (The Open University, 2002, p. 29). During the privatization exercise, the state-owned enterprises were repositioned to enable them to compete with emerging private enterprises. Despite that, the privatization exercise ushered in the emergence of efficient privately-owned enterprises.

In 1979 when the Chinese Communist Party launched economic liberalization, it faced a lot of challenges. First, there was the problem of how to institute a legal framework that would protect property rights, ensure market confidence in the party's commitment to reforms and still retain its hold on power. The second challenge was how to tackle the different results of rapid development without jettisoning the one-party rule (*The Economist*, 2004, p. 6). It should be emphasized that the partial deregulation of the Chinese economy for private businesses to thrive gave the Chinese economy its current identity crisis.

### **Property Rights**

Property rights were the herculean task only a few one-party governments have succeeded in managing and the two tasks of the institution of a legal framework to protect property rights and provide solutions to the consequences of rapid development. This is because the rule of law, the

foundation of a market economy, is an aberration of a one-party regime. Despite these seeming obstacles, the Chinese government developed a strategy of opening up the county-side and passing commercial laws, while allowing no challenge to its power. The CCP gave recognition to private property rights and entrenched former President's Jiang Zeimin 'Three Represents' Theory, which acknowledged entrepreneurship (*The Economist*, 2004, p. 6). The constitutional review by the CCP was an example of such a strategy meant to provide stronger protection for private property. It appears to be a positive step, but the CCP had, not in the distant past, persecuted private property owners and considered it as an alien Western concept.

To sustain the tempo of economic reforms, the Chinese government liberalized the economy and made the judicial process independent and effective. There are obvious doubts as to the sincerity of government in this respect. This is because institutional changes are pre-conditions in making the provisions about private property rights meaningful since government restrictions had outlawed many legitimate economic activities. The government's control over the judiciary also casts doubt on the judiciary's ability to determine fairly which private property is legal and which is not. Another grey area is the party's willingness to allow constitutional restriction of its power which involves the institution of an independent review process, widening of elections and reduction of the party's control of the judiciary.

### **The State**

During the reform, the complex nature of the exercise of political power changed remarkably. Leaders at all levels were replaced, but the CCP focused on achieving results and thus shifted legitimization away from ideology to practice. Unlike Japan and South Korea, which transferred ownership largely to the private sector, China's communism had left major enterprises in the hands of the state. Her weak financial system led to the preponderance of dominance of large state-owned corporations, which received credit allocation of 90% rather than private firms (Kynege,

2002, p. 4). The state-owned enterprises were given preferential treatment in the form of listing on the stock exchange, tax subsidies and so on. In theory, there were trappings of a centralized economy, but in practice, China lacks a concrete central control mechanism. The political system gave enormous power to party officials at the provincial and municipal levels, who neglected the entrepreneurs while allocating resources to the inefficient state-owned industries.

### **The Communist Party**

The CCP) was poised to take risks in the process of directing capitalist economic development. This involved the closure and privatization of inefficient state-owned enterprises leading to the loss of millions of jobs. By embracing the middle class, irrespective of ideology, the party was acting out of necessity because the continued allying itself with inefficient state-owned enterprises, debt-ridden state banks and corrupt bureaucracies would endanger its survival (Kynge, 2004, p. 6). The CCP's role has been that of activating and monitoring the reforms as well as initiating ideas and coordinating the industrialization process. The precise nature of this transition remains unclear as the process is gradualist and still ongoing.

Economically, China has moved towards the entrenchment of capitalism, but there are no serious political reforms currently on the party's agenda. Many economic historians have argued that significant changes may take place when a new generation of leaders may have emerged (Soludo, 2006, p. 7). However, optimists contended that the leadership's conservatism is tactical and does not necessarily signify a rigid opposition to economic reforms. The drive towards democracy is far-fetched as the Chinese government's budgets are not transparent and therefore lack accountability. The CCP legislature passed the budget without amendment which is contrary to democratic rule. Thus, making the state budget process open for public scrutiny would enhance the enthronement of democratic governance at the grassroots.

China is gradually practicing and/or adopting a hybrid economic development model that is a mixture of a communist political system

and elements of a market economy with private and public ownership of means of production existing together. China's government has considered its industrialization process as consistent with its socialist ideal. The government envisaged the adoption of a long period of market-based industrialization as a necessary pre-condition towards socialization. This prediction made the party leadership develop the concept of a 'socialist market economy' as a way of theorizing this process. The relative success of the Chinese economy as compared with the record of Russia since 1991, where production was halved in seven years, prompted Nolan to argue against the 'gradualist' approach adopted by China, but favoured the rapid Russian reforms (Nolan, 1995, pp. 318-319). Critics of China's reforms, however, claim that the reform process has escaped party control and an unequal and exploitative capitalist framework is being established in China, whatever the rhetoric adopted by the government (Smith cited in Thomas & Allen, p. 319).

The political and economic reforms did not mean that China wanted to restructure its single-party system. It still frowns at opposition and direct elections for senior jobs. Whatever the leadership may claim the reality of the changes points to the fact that features of a capitalist society are being created. The signs from recent developments are there to show that China is ready to embark on vital reforms in its Communist economic system. Though the process is slow, cautious and gradual, it is too early to predict, but it can be inferred that it will be a hybrid of both communist and capitalist economic models. Therefore, it should be noted that James Kynge was hasty in his predictions on China's future when he predicted that China would eventually adopt a capitalist economic system. The assumption that the 1949 Revolution would save China was illusory because fifty-three years after, it was the bourgeoisie rather than the communists that lifted the nation into the ranks of great powers (Kynge, 2002, p. 4). Similarly, Prybyla was sceptical about the existence of a precarious balance between two halves of this hybrid economic model. He concurred that: "sooner or later (probably sooner) either plan

and centralized social property, or market and private must prevail and dominate the system” (Prybyta cited in The Open University, 2002, p. 160).

### **The Reform Challenges**

China’s path to greatness was set on course by the Communist Party-led reforms however, despite the enormous economic progress China had made the nation encountered many challenges. The challenges made many scholars to question the sustainability of China’s transformation. One of the most disturbing and perplexing challenges of the Chinese economic reform was the creation of an economic identity crisis. The question of whether China is still a communist state modelled after the Soviets or now a capitalist state modelled after the West is now rife. There is also the lingering question of whether the reform of State-owned enterprises birthed the high levels of persistent unemployment rate, increasing corporate governance issues, and the treatment of non-state enterprises plaguing China. There is the issue of financial liberalization in China and the concerns it generated regarding the continuity of reforms in the banking sector, insurance and financial sectors, exchange rates, interest rates and credit availability. To make trade liberalization feasible and sustainable, there will be a need for the adoption of effective laws under international practices to address growing trade relationships and new economic arrangements. Furthermore, issues relating to rural and urban poverty as well as income inequality associated with China’s comparative advantage due to shifting away from agriculture remain to be resolved (Soludo, 2006, p. 8).

### **China as a Modern Political Economy Miracle**

Globally, the admiration and respect of the People’s Republic of China stems first from the country’s modern political economy miracle, it has been able to overcome many challenges to become one of the global economic giants in the contemporary world. China had attained a level of economic development that rivalled American hegemony. The reforms succeeded in reorienting and repositioning China’s communism towards

capitalism. China has become a phenomenon among the comity of nations as its experimentations with capitalism have transformed the state into an economic and political enigma. China has moved from being a third world country to a first world economy in the shortest space of time ever imaginable and experienced in world history. For instance, while it took the USA approximately 198 years, from 1776-1914 to transform and re-enter the international system as a potent and hegemonic political and economic force; China achieved this in less than 70 years (Harrison & Palumbo, 2019) from 1911 when China became a Republic and isolated itself from the world to 1979 when it re-entered the world stage.

In 1949, when the Communist Party came to power in China, the country was very poor with no trading partner and diplomatic relations. Communist China was underdeveloped and backward and relied more on self-sufficiency. It practised a peasantry or mono-economy and this informed Mao Zedong's decision to rapidly industrialize China through what is known as the "Great Leap Forward". This effort did not yield immediate rewards as the country suffered more setbacks in the 1950s. From 1959 to 1961, China lost about 10 to 40 million people out of its population to famine and food shortage (Harrison & Palumbo, 2019). This was worsened by the Cultural Revolution which was launched by Mao Zedong to cleanse the Communist Party of his rivals. But this revolution, paradoxically ended in destroying much of China's social fabric up to 1976. However, the nation started getting it right from this period when new reforms spearheaded by Deng Xiaoping started bearing fruits. Under these reforms, peasants were granted rights to farm in their lands and this helped to improve the living conditions of the people and lessen food shortages. What would appear to be the game changer for China was the re-establishment and restoration of diplomatic relations with the USA in 1979. The USA's attempt to exploit the Chinese cheap labour and low cost of rent paradoxically contributed to the development of China. This implies that more US capital and investors moved into China and expanded its economy. This was followed by landmark market reforms that opened up

new trade routes and investment flows to China culminating in pulling hundreds of millions of people out of poverty (Harrison & Palumbo, 2019).

Arising from the opening up of China's economy to the rest of the world, the exports of the Asian giant increased from \$ 10 billion (USD) in 1978, which was less than 1% of global trade to \$25 billion (USD) by 1985; and by the 1990s China's export rose to \$4.3 trillion (USD) and the country became the world's largest trading nation in manufactured goods (Harrison & Palumbo, 2019). China's newfound economic prosperity is attributed to its political stability, and strong and visionary leadership for the formulation of new policies and programmes, thereby making China to become the new bride of the world. Chinese governments since 1978 encouraged the formation of rural and private enterprises, liberalized foreign trade and investment, reduced state control of prices of some commodities, and invested massively in the industrial development and education of its workforce (Hu & Khan, 1997).

China's political investment in its labour force led to a sustained increase in national productivity due to workers' efficiency, and this became the catalyst of the country's economic boom. Hu and Khan (1997) observed that from 1979 to 1994, productivity gains accounted for more than 42% of China's economic growth. It overtook capital as the most significant source of economic growth. Therefore, labour investment, (human capacity development) as opposed to the traditional view that capital is the engine of economic growth and development was the secret that Chinese leadership unlocked for the rest of the world. In 2014, labour investment enabled China's GDP to surpass \$ 10 trillion (USD); a growth which enabled the country to move from being the 15<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world as of 1978 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest global economy. It is pertinent to add that by this growth, China also became the producer of 15% of all global produce making its per capita income rise from \$220 (USD) in 1978 to \$8000 (USD) in 2015 (Yanbin, 2016). Furthermore, through increased productivity and foreign investment, the economy of China became intricately linked with the rest of the world. Chinese exports and investment spiralled over \$118 billion (USD) and China became one of

the biggest contributors to the widening of the global economy. By 2015, China was responsible for 25% of the development taking place across the globe (Yanbin, 2016).

### **Beyond Communism: China's Foray into the Global South**

Modern Chinese international relations intersect seamlessly between communist-oriented states and states that are neck-deep in Western capitalist orientations and practices. It could be noted that while China has maintained its ties with communist-oriented states of Russia, North Korea, Cuba, and Vietnam in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; the country's foreign policy has gone beyond communism. China has successfully dismantled virtually all its communist economic obstacles and built new liberal relationships with the Global South. However, while the Chinese economic system has not become mixed; it is now more open than closed to the rest of the world. China's foray and inroads into the Global South are some of the clear manifestations of this development. China's foreign policy of international economic liberalism around which China's relations with the Global South revolves, is not driven by the communist principle of welfarism and equitable distribution of resources, but anchored on the imperative of profiteering which is the hallmark of capitalism. While communism remains China's ideological foundation, its shift towards capitalist tendencies was circumstantially determined. China's need to survive and flourish side by side with other nations of the world was due to the triumph of globalization, advancement in information communication technology, political stability and internal economic repositioning of the country. These factors were critical for retooling Chinese communism away from economic closure to the rest of the world to an open economy. By unlocking and fully harnessing its economic potential, China was able to break into new frontiers that enabled it to attain the hegemon power status in the international system. This new status of China as a new hegemon prevented the US and her Western powers from isolating China economically and this made her make stringent efforts to reduce the Western spheres of influence across the globe.

China in the twenty-first century is the biggest trading partner of countries in the Global South. Chinese goods and capital through loans and grants for infrastructural development are increasingly flowing into Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and some parts of Latin America than ever before. Since becoming a hegemonic power, China has been committed to developing its South-South relations and cooperation through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms (Jiang 2021). There was the China-Africa Cooperation Forum established in 2000. This economic relationship with African states paved the way for Beijing to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, and to gain access to other developing world. Consequently, in 2003 China established the China-Portuguese-Speaking Countries Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum; the China-Arab Cooperation Forum in 2004; the China-Caribbean Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum in 2005; and the China-Pacific Island Countries Economic Development and Cooperation Forum in 2006 (OECD, 2012). According to Michael Schuman (2023), China's attitude towards the Global South was informed by the fact that the Chinese people viewed themselves as fellow travellers with the people of poor nations around the world. Hence, China could be seen as pursuing a foreign policy of sympathy towards post-colonial states in the Global South that have been excessively milked by the Western powers during the colonial era.

Understandably, China positioned itself as the balm to heal the colonial wounds and injuries that the Western powers had inflicted on their colonies. To this end, China increased its financial and economic aid to states in the Global South, which it conceives as the poor helping the poor with sincerity and with no strings attached (OECD, 2012, p. 5). This was, especially so, after the global economic and financial meltdown in 2008. Mejie Jiang (2021) observed that during the period, China's capital in the form of loans and investments found their way more into Latin America, where China helped to reposition the energy sector, agriculture, infrastructure, manufacturing, high-tech and information industries. These giant strides helped China to rebuild its reputation in Latin America. This was necessary because by the end of the Second

World War in 1945, no Latin American country, except Cuba, wanted to relate with China. They were all caught in the web of the American “Monroe Doctrine” through which Latin America remained under the sphere of USA exclusive influence. The lack of interest in China in Latin America then was also caused by the American embargo on trade with all communist regimes which discouraged allies of the United States from engaging with China. Furthermore, it was caused by the fact that in 1945 China was a poor developing Third World country that was seen as having nothing to offer to the Latin American world. However, since Chinese aid started pouring into the region in 2008, Latin American countries have become the most dynamic trading partners of China. China values the Global South because of its abundant primary resources and market opportunities which it needs to consolidate its economic growth and development (Jiang, 2023).

Consequently, in the USA and among her allies in Europe and in the Indo-Pacific, Michael Schuman averred that China’s gain in the Global South created a lot of panic. This was due to the understanding that its support of the developing world was conceived to be a critical factor in determining where the pendulum of global governance swung (Schuman, 2023). Hence, beyond Latin America, as China devotes huge financial resources to wooing governments across the Global South the more the uneasiness of the Western governments. Beijing consolidated its presence in the Global South by positioning itself as the new infrastructural development partner of Third World countries through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched in 2013 by Xi Jinping; and by assuring the countries of the Global South that “China will not do to them what the West did to them” (Schuman, 2023).

It should be noted that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China has replaced the USA as the biggest trading partner of African countries. The strategic partnership between China and Africa that started in 2000 with the formation of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum was based on equality and mutual benefit. For instance, in 2000 alone, trade volume between China and Africa reached 10.6 billion UD dollars (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the

People's Republic of China). Through this strategic economic partnership, according to Eleanor Albert (2017), Africa became the second largest supplier of crude oil to China after the Middle East (supplying 22% of Chinese oil needs, that is, 1.4million barrels of crude oil per day); China became sub-Saharan Africa's major credit provider, a most significant source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and biggest trading partner (IMF, 2023). One-fifth of sub-Saharan Africa's export goes to China; while China is the number one source for importing manufactured goods and machinery in the region (IMF, 2023).

### **Chinese Capitalism and Trade War with USA**

At the turn of the 21st century, China can hardly be construed as a communist country in practical terms. While communist ideology remains strong, the management of the Chinese economy and its international economic relations, capitalist tendencies appear to be the driving force propelling China's international conduct. This means that China has become a communist country with an open economy. The economic openness of China in the 21st century has positioned it as the biggest economic rival of the USA in global governance. This economic rivalry has dovetailed into what is known as the China and USA Trade Wars. This war with the United States is not a violent military struggle; but rather, the clashing of Chinese communist and American capitalist swords. The US-China trade war is an economic war manifested in US tariffs on Chinese goods and Chinese retaliatory tariffs on US exports. It began in the instance of the United States of America in 2018 because of the US trade deficit that the Western powers blamed China for. The US-China trade war was also caused by what the US perceived as China's unfair commercial practices; and the United States' over-investment in China.

Yukon Huang (2021) maintained that the US-China trade war has metamorphosed into the cold war of the twenty-first century. It is driven by different ideologies which, Joe Biden, the United States President, in 2023 explained as a battle between the utility of democracies and autocracies (Huang 2021). Economic relations between the USA and China have not

always been conflictual and problematic, but starting from 1979 when the United States established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China down to 2001 when China joined the World Trade Organization, trade relations between both countries grew exponentially (Siripurapu & Berman, 2023). It started as a mutually beneficial international relationship and since 2001 it grew to become the United States' largest export market; the USA also grew to become China's largest export market. Furthermore, the China-USA economic relations benefitted the US in the form of lower prices for consumer goods and higher profits for corporations. In 2009, the US and China launched the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue during the Presidency of Barack Obama; and in 2015 both countries successfully negotiated the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). However, over time, things changed between both trading partners when growth in the USA-China economic relationship was misconstrued by President Donald Trump as the cause of Americans losing their jobs at home due to import competition. American authorities also accused China of pressurizing some American companies to hand over their technology (Siripurapu & Berman, 2023).

Providing further insight into the causation of the USA-China trade war, Siripurapu and Berman posited that China poured subsidies into targeted industries to the detriment of US and other foreign companies. These developments propelled the United States to pull the plug on its relations with China. The US fought the resultant trade war with China through a mixture of negotiation, disputes at the World Trade Organization, increased scrutiny of Chinese investment, tariffs and its counter-industrial policies (Siripurapu & Berman, 2023). This twenty-first-century cold war like the USA-Soviet Union cold war before it was aimed at the economic containment of either of the two Superpowers and to preserve the right of one to global governance. In 2018, the United States under President Donald Trump kick-started the effort to contain China economically by fixing high tariffs and placing barriers to Chinese exports. Sino-USA economic relationship deteriorated further when the Chinese government accused the US of engaging in nationalist protectionism

and took retaliatory actions. Hence, China sanctioned some American companies and increased tariffs on the import of some American goods and services.

This economic tit-for-tat paved the way for the escalation of the Sino-China trade war in 2019. Trump imposed a series of sweeping tariffs on Chinese goods until US tariffs covered nearly all of Chinese imports. The US also adopted other radical measures of countering Chinese trade interests by withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); and by imposing tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of Chinese goods. However, in 2020 there was a lull in the US-China trade war with the negotiation of the "Phase One" agreement. This agreement expired in 2021 and led to the re-igniting of the cold economic war between the USA and China (Siripurapu & Berman, 2023). Consequently, taking the US-China trade war to another level President Joe Biden of US, introduced stringent export control measures on computer chips to restrict and weaken China's advanced manufacturing sector. In 2023, President Biden further signed an executive order restricting some US investment in Chinese high-tech industries (Huang, 2021).

### **Assessment of Chinese Economic Transformation**

It can be discerned from the foregoing discourse that China is a society in transition. While the historical roots of Chinese transformation are clear, it is too early to make any predictions on the 'shape' of China's political economy. However, the Chinese political economy has certainly undergone marked liberalization that is partly responsible for the nation attaining a high level of economic development and becoming a Superpower in the international system. Conversely, the degree of China's economic responsiveness to the forces of capitalism has not been accompanied by a commensurate political liberalism. State power remains highly centralized and tight political control over the people by the political elites loom large. China has a high reputation for human rights denials such as freedom of speech and toleration of little political opposition. It was under this apparent totalitarian climate that the imperative of economic

development in China paradoxically engendered capitalist leanings. Chinese transformation in this regard started in a much rather gradualist mode until communism in China was adapted to the internal peculiarities of China instead of the Soviet Union. China's domestication and adaptation of communism and transition to capitalism while still committed to the socialist model is phenomenal. It could be argued that China's economic reengineering towards liberalism was rather circumstantial than a deliberate contrivance. The urge for pragmatic national economic development made China undertake lengthy adjustments to its reform objectives resulting in repositioning it from a centrally planned economy to a socialist market economy. The 'dual-track' approach started with a reform of the urban cities and experimentation with reforming the non-state sectors. Pragmatism, rather than any deliberate plan, was what guided the transformation process.

The outcome of the reforms in China has been impressive and considerable. China has indeed transformed from the disastrous Cultural Revolution to a communist-capitalist economy. Before the reforms, China was a poor country, overpopulated, short of human and natural resources and constrained by an ideology that was hostile to markets. As of 2023, the story was different. Retrospectively, in 1988, China was less than half of Russia in GDP terms, but ten years later, Russia was less than half of China. China has transformed from an underdeveloped country to a middle-income emerging market status. It met its food needs by the 1980s, and is now the world's sixth largest economy with a GDP of over \$1.7 trillion (USD); accounting for about 6% of world trade (Soludo, 2006, p. 8). At present, China is reported to have the highest level of Foreign Direct Investment funding in emerging markets. It stood at US\$52.7 billion in 2002. From the period 1997 to 2002, China accounted for an average of 32.5% of the total developing world's Foreign Direct Investment and 55.5% of that of the whole of Asia. In 2003, about 45% of China's exports were funded by foreign funds and capital. It is the third largest trading bloc after the United States of America and Europe. Its market accounted for more than 20% of the increase in world trade in 2004 (Soludo, 2006, p.

8). Despite these considerable economic transformations, China is facing a lot of challenges as it has a poorly developed regulatory framework. This means that its institutional framework which underpins market rules, for example, contractual law is undeveloped so that patron-client relationships become an alternative mechanism for doing business. So, we are witnessing a fairly unique mix of socialism and capitalism, which could be called a 'hybrid' or 'socialist-market' economic model.

Karl Marx spoke about a transition to communism through a stage of capitalism. Is it, therefore possible that China is going through its capitalist phase on the road to something else? Or, we could just as well argue that China is inexorably moving towards full membership in a globalized, capitalist world. Given the geographical area of China, the size of its population, its past and present civilization and its historical trajectory, it would seem that China's transition does embody some unique characteristics, yet at the same time, incorporate some of the typical manifestations of industrial capitalism. But as regards where this will lead, it is too early to tell. For now, China's economic transformations have attained the enviable position of the second-largest economy in the world and competing with the United States in the pursuit of global economic governance. The modern political economy miracle that China has become today is a veritable source of hope to other Third World Countries that China had left behind.

### **Conclusion**

This paper explores communism in China and the economic transition it underwent to capitalism. Although communism was transmitted to China from the Soviet Union, China developed non-Soviet policies for preserving communism that gave its economy its eclectic identity. Communism began in China in 1921 when the Chinese Communist Party was formed; it was not until 1949 that communism gained its foothold. This implied that when Mao Zedong created the People's Republic of China in 1949, the country adopted a communist ideology in which the state became a centrally planned and controlled society. The Communist victory in the

Chinese Civil War over the Nationalist Party enabled them to take over mainland China and led to the USA severing diplomatic relations with China; and on the international scene, made China a pariah state of some sort. China's reaction was the introduction of sweeping economic reforms that rejigged and reconfigured the communist structure. The Chinese state was economically de-centralized to the extent that private property and economic rights were recognized and allowed in China's communist government. China also pursued rural development, industrialization, and entrepreneurship which allowed small and medium-scale enterprises to exist and thrive. China equally increased its investment in human capacity development leading to increased productivity. It can be contended that by allowing private individual enterprises to thrive, communism in China experienced a pragmatic revolution and recalibration that birthed China as a hegemonic power by becoming the second-largest global economy. The paper found that since 1949, communism has been a mixed blessing to China. It brought China out of international isolation and placed it on the path of repositioning its economy to compete favourably in the global market. This made China the second largest economy in the world after the USA but has paradoxically retained its communist ideology. This paper concluded that communism is transitioning in China which is neither homegrown nor Western model-inspired. It is a pragmatic China's response and survival strategy for overcoming economic underdevelopment, poverty, and international isolationism in the contemporary world.

## R E F E R E N C E S

- Advantour (n.d.). History of China, <https://advantour.com/china/history.htm#:~:text=The20Chinese%20civilisation%2015%20one,Ho%20and%20Yangtze%20river%20basins/>. Accessed February 23, 2024.
- Albert, E. (2017), China in Africa, Council on foreign relations, Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-africa> Accessed December 2, 2023.
- Anonymous, (2004), On the capitalist road, *The Economist*, 20 March.

- Anonymous, (2006), Good things in tiny packages, *The Economist*, 25 March.
- Christenson, R. M., Engel, Alan, S., Jacobs, Dan N., Rejal, Mostafa & Walter Gabriel, Satya, Is capitalism in China to stay? Saiya Gabnel's online papers: China essay series <http://www.satya.us>.
- Chu-Yuan, C. (2021). *The economy of communist of China, 1949-1969*. Michigan: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies.
- Congressional Research Service (June 25, 2019). China's economic rise: history, trends, challenges and implication for the United States, *CRS Report*.
- Editorial, (2006), How to make China even richer, *The Economist*, 25 March.
- Harrison, V. & Palumbo D. (October 1, 2019), China anniversary: How the country became the World's economic miracle, *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-49806247>.
- Reo, M. & Herbert, E. *Ideologies and Modern Politics*, London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1972, p.5).
- Hu, Z. & Khan, M.S. (1997), Why is China growing so fast? International Monetary Fund paper. Retrieved from: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/issues8/index.htm> Accessed November 30, 2023.
- Huang, Y. (2021), The US-China trade war has become a Cold war, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Available at: <https://www.carnegieendowment.org/2021/09/16/us-china-trade-war-has-become-cold-war-pub-85352>. Accessed on December 4, 2023.
- International Development (2002), *Challenges for a world in transition: Transitions*. The Open University Course Book.
- International Monetary Fund, (2023), Sub-Saharan Africa at a crossroads: Sub-Saharan Africa's economic relations with China, Available at: <https://www.imf.org/-/media/files/publications/REO/AFR/2023/October/English/China-note1.ashx>. Accessed on December 2, 2023.
- Jiang, M. (2021), Chinese relations with the global south: Evidence from Latin America. Available at: <https://www.revistaidees.cat/en/chinese-relations-with-global-south-evidences-from-latin-america/> Accessed on December 2, 2023.
- Kynge, James, (2002), Middle kingdom's class revolution, *The Financial Times*, 12, December.

- Kynge, James, (2004), A combination of appetite and energy has made China one of the World's fastest growing economies, *The Financial Times*, 24 March.
- Lovell, D.W. (1989). Socialism and communism, *Politics and government*, Vol. II. Oxford: *Encyclopedia of Life Support System*.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, China-Africa Relations, Available at: [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/ziliao\\_665539/3602\\_665543/3604\\_665547/20020425/t20020425\\_697901.html#:~:text=African%20countries%20firmly%20support%20china,of%20parties](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/20020425/t20020425_697901.html#:~:text=African%20countries%20firmly%20support%20china,of%20parties). Accessed on December 2, 2023.
- National Geographic Society (n.d.). Ancient civilization: China, <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/resource-library-ancient-civilisation-china/> Accessed February 23, 2024.
- Nolan, (1995) cited in Thomas, A. & Allen, T. (eds.), (2000), *Poverty and development into the 21st Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- OECD (2012), Trade-related south-south cooperation: China, *Policy dialogue on Aid for trade, organization for economic cooperation and development*.
- Perkins, D.W. (2020). The economy, 1949-1978. Oxford Bibliographies, <https://oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-97880199920082/obo-97880199920082-0016.xml/>. Accessed February 18, 2024.
- Prybyla, (1986), cited in *International development, challenges for a World in transition: Transitions*, (2002), The Open University Course book, p.160
- Schuman, M. (2023), Why China won't win the Global south, *Atlantic Council*, Available at: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/why-china-wont-win-the-global-south/>. Accessed on December 4, 2023.
- Siripurapu, A. & Berman, N. (2023), The contentious US-China trade relationship, *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/contentious-us-china-trade-relationship>.
- Soludo, C. (2006), Can Nigeria be the China of Africa? Being a lecture delivered at the Founders' Day of the University of Benin, Benin-City, Nov. 23.
- Thomas, A. & Allen, T. (eds.) (2000), *Poverty and development into the 21st Century*. Oxford University Press, Oxford/The Open University, Milton Keynes.
- The Open University (2006). *Updating China's transition supplementary material theme*. Milton Keynes, United Kingdom.

Watts, J. (2004), Mao's promised land ends in sweated labour, *The Observer*, 9 May.

World Economic Forum (March 29, 2019), Climate change helped destroy these four ancient civilisations, <https://weforum.org/agenda/2019/03/our-turn-next-a-brief-history-of-civilisations-that-fell-because-of-climate-change/>. Accessed February 23, 2024.

Yanbin, S. (2016), China's foreign policy, *Ideas for peace*, Vol. 9. <https://upeace.org/files/ideas%20for%20peace/ideas%20for%20peace%20vol.209.pdf>.

Yang, Y. (2019). China's economic growth in retrospect, <https://brooking.edu/wp-content/upload/2019/08/9780815738053.pdf>. Accessed February 18, 2024.