

Insecurity and its effects on Nigerian sustainable development

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Abstract

This paper is an explorative discourse on the security challenges and the attainment of sustainable development in Nigerian state. Nigeria's economy is relatively young being ranked as one of the emerging economies of the World. Her economic experience has been undermined by her failure in national security. The paper basically explores the concepts of security and sustainable development in the context of Nigeria, with a view to establishing the relationship that exists between national security, and sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper discusses the curses and effects of national insecurity, links them to the sustainable development which has the potential to deliver to Nigeria's strong socio-cultural, political and economic development. The paper ends with conclusion and some sustainable measures that can guarantee the promotion of the economy and national security in the country, ranging from reforms in electoral system and constitution, improvement in quality of leadership to poverty alleviation and enforcement of anti-corruption measures.

Keywords: Insecurity, Security, Development, Economy and Violence.

Introduction

The security of the citizens is the primary duty of any government. National security is the podium of democracy and its values for the people. As such, there is no factor that provides meaning and legitimacy to democratic rule than security. It is the protective umbrella of all other sectors of the democratic system. It is also the pillar of political order, stability and development in all segments of societal values and aspirations. In strategic context, democracy and security are correlates because both are people-centred. The chief end of every democratic government is to provide an assured welfare and security of its people. The survival of democracy is therefore dependent, among other things, on the dynamics of national security. It is expedient to note that the synergy between security and democracy is inseparable to the extent that if democracy loses its security essence, it has lost its core values. Barry Busan (1983)¹⁵ posited that the concept of security binds together individual, states and the international system so closely that it demands to be treated in a holistic perspective.

Assessment of strategic planners, thinkers and practitioners of national security from the cold-war era to date reveals an ineradicable tendency to conceive national security within military context-that is-in terms of weapons and military power. Furthermore, a general look at post independent Nigerian state tends to confirm Robert Kaplan foreshadowed future chaos arising from political turmoil, social unrest and armed conflict. This is despite the huge and enormous budgetary allocations to security. At the re-emergence of democratic rule in 1999, it was assumed that the removal of the tight lid under the military rule would lead to a new sense of freedom but available evidence reveals that since 1999, an atmosphere of insecurity has enveloped the country.

Conceptual Clarification

National Security

The concept of security of a nation goes back to the cradle of nation-states themselves. Armies for domestic peace-keeping and maintaining national sovereignty have existed since the dawn of recorded history. Civil and national police forces have also existed for millennia. Intelligence agencies and secret services of governments stretch back to antiquity such as the Roman Empire. While the general concepts of keeping a nation secure are not new, the specific modern English term "national security" it came into common parlance in the 20th Century. Methodologies and strategies to achieve and maintain the highest possible desired state of national security have been consistently developed over the modern period to this day. However; the concept of national security is very difficult to define because the root term, security, has remained a contested concept. In other words, it has no universally accepted definition due to its many-sidedness arising from ideology and time frame being addressed, as well as the locus of analysis.

More-so, the issue of national security is so critical to nations and national leaders that they are prepared to stake anything in defense of the nation, or to maintain its security. Hence Walter Lippmann observed that a nation is secured to the extent that it is not in a position to lose core values, life, property and liberty. National security also refers to the requirement to maintain the survival of the nation-state through the use of economic, military and political power and the exercise of diplomacy. President Olusegun Obasanjo, while presenting his grand strategy declared that the primary objective of national security shall be to strengthen the Federal Republic of Nigeria; to advance her interest and objectives; to contain instability; control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress and growth; improve the

welfare and well-being and quality of life of the citizenry Obasanjo in (Attah, 2006).

In this work, we shall be adopting Gwarzo (1998) definition which sees national security as freedom from hunger, or from threat to a nation's ability to protect and defend itself, promote its cherished values and interests, and enhance the well-being of its people. From the above definition, it can be observed that national security is not restricted only to weapons and military preparedness but encompasses political, social and economic well-being of the people. As such, any threats to any of these constitute a threat to national security.

Concept of Sustainability

There has been a growing recognition in many tourist destinations that current management practices may lead to undesirable impacts on environment and society, which, in turn, can threaten both tourism development itself and the economic viability of host communities and nations (WTO, 1996; Huyber and Bennett, 2003) ^[38, 26]. These problems are exacerbated where there is a lack of well-designed planning for and effective management of tourism development (Walter and Alix, 2000; Huybers and Bennett, 2002).

The failure of development in many areas has dictated the need for a reform or a radical rethinking of the concept of development, and changes are required in both goals and methods (Harris, 2000). The growing awareness of these challenges to traditional development doctrines has led to the increasingly wide acceptance of a new concept – that of sustainable development.

It can also be one of the most effective drivers for the sustainable development of regional economies. Many developing countries promote tourism as it offers the potential for creating jobs, improving community incomes, and increasing both foreign exchange earnings and government revenues (Sharpley, 2000) ^[33]. Sustainability is an act which relate to conservation and maintenance of environmental resources which aim at profitability for the future generations (Biotic *et al*, 1998) ^[13]. This means that there is a close relationship between sustainability and resource characteristics and resource use.

The concept of sustainable development was first proposed by the Brundtland Commission in 1972. This definition has evolved since the United Nations Earth Summit held by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Rio de Janeiro (1992). The characterization on the impact of economic, social and environmental development was later formally adopted universally (Amundsen & Asheim, 1991; Drexhage & Murphy, 2012) ^[10, 17]. Accordingly, those aspects are a major concern in local governments globally when dealing with development of a country. Essentially, the sustainability in local government's practices needs to be shown in providing the services to the public.

The pillar in which sustainability stand for in the development agenda are for the economic, social and environmental aspect to be recognized and put as priority (Adams, 2012; Hawkins & Wang, 2011). Those three are to be reckoned with in order for any development to be viewed as sustainable development.

Hence, the current established concept of sustainable development gives rise to many issues regarding the physical resources required for human existence and overall quality of life for both present and future generations. Moreover, many issues are driven to guide local governments in their practices

of sustainable development, as in Local Agenda 21 and Malaysia's Green Building Index (GBI) (Mohamed, Goh and Seow, 2013). More importantly, how can local governments become an effective machinery to facilitate national growth and enhance the sustainable development? In essence, local governments must now play a more effective role in urban planning, development control and managing the urban system and its environment. It is particularly in the practices of local governments in sustainable development.

However, a clear definition of sustainable development has still not been devised even though the Brundtland Report's definition is widely-quoted (Drexhage & Murphy, 2012; Redclift, 2005; Tovey, 2009) ^[10].

When looking at the definition "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", there are two issues here namely needs and generation. Hence, effective management in the implementation of sustainable development has become crucial issue for local governments (Dale & Newman, 2005; Norhaidah & Idros, 2005). The challenge is to solve matter regarding the needs of citizen in a sustainable manner, so as to generate continuing development and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders today while protecting, sustaining and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future (Goh & Yang, 2013). Hence the knowledge in sustainable development is crucial in evaluating all associated planning phase.

Meanwhile, population pressure can be assumed to be initially less than naturally resources and later increasing at an alarming rate than natural resources. Where population and natural resources are at equilibrium, a condition of sustainability is reached. Beyond this, a condition of environmental degradation is reached.

The concept sustainability has grown out of the need to reconcile conflicts between economic development and the conservation of the environment. In their 1987 report to the United Nations General Assembly titled "our common future" the Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. The report also recognized that the environment is where we live and development is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode and as a result the two are inseparable. This principle of sustainable development is related to all aspects whether ecological, natural resources, economic, socio-cultural or political environment and has been adopted in several parts of the world as a development standard.

Origin and Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

According to Ali (2013) ^[9] the fear of insecurity in Nigeria is on the increase and this has been compounded by the rising waves of terrorism since the country returned to democratic rule in 1999. Violent crime has a root and history in Nigeria, and could be traced back to the period from 1960 to 1970. At independence in 1960 a federal structure was imposed on Nigeria by the British. Where (1963) conceptualizes federalism as a constitutional division of power between two levels of government which are independent and coordinating in their respective spheres of influence. Unfortunately, the federal structure bequeathed to Nigeria at independence did not

conform to Professor K.C. Wheare's tenets of federalism as a system of government where two levels of government exist each sovereign in its sphere of jurisdiction (Awotayo *et al.*, 2013). The incursion of the military into governance, and the consequent imposition of military command structure in a federation set the tone for the distortion of Nigeria's federalism. Thus the practice of federalism in Nigeria no doubt has been distorted by overwhelming dominance of the federal government that distributes national resources to lower level government at its own whims and caprices (Ewetan, 2011) ^[22]. Since independence, the demand for true federalism, fiscal and political restructuring by different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria has not abated. These agitations have contributed to violent rebellious reactions by aggrieved ethnic groups in the country, endangering the security, unity, and corporate existence of Nigeria as one country. Federalism that undermines the independence and autonomy of its federating units will only bring about conflict, threat to national cohesion and peace, and ultimate disintegration (Ali, 2013; Adamu, 2005) ^[9, 4]

Insecurity challenges can be traced to the early years of military rule when large quantities of arms were imported into the country for the use of the military during and after the Nigerian civil war, some of which got into the hand of the civilians. Soon after the civil war these arms were used by civilians and ex-military men for mischievous purposes such as armed robbery. There was also the army of unemployed youths some of whom lost their job during the civil war. The level of insecurity assumed dangerous dimensions in the prolonged years of military rule beginning from 1970 during which people procure arms and light weapons for personal defence. Some of these arms and light weapons got into the hands of unemployed youths who used them for deviant purpose. While some researchers attribute youth violence to peer group influence and other psychological factors associated with growing up, others emphasized the impact of political and economic factors such as ethnic agitation, political agitation, unemployment, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as triggers of violent reaction among the youth.

Many scholars have identified several causes of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria that are inimical to socio-economic and national development (Ali, 2013; Okorie, 2011; Jega, 2002; Salawu, 2010; Onyishi, 2011; Ezeoba, 2011; Lewis, 2002) ^[9, 21, 24]. These causes have been classified into external and internal causes. In Nigeria the internal causes of insecurity pose major challenge to socio-economic development than the external causes of insecurity. This paper therefore focuses on the internal causes of insecurity in Nigeria. These causes include:

Ethno-religious Conflicts: These conflicts are caused by suspicion and distrust among various ethnic groups and among the major religions in the country. Ethno-religious conflict is a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious and another of such group in a multiethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation (Achumba *et al.* 2013; Salawu, 2010) ^[2]. The frequent and persistent ethnic conflicts and religious clashes between the two dominant religions (Islam and Christianity) is a major security challenge that confronts Nigeria. Since independence, Nigeria appears to have been bedevilled with ethno-religious conflicts. There are ethno-

religious conflicts in all parts of Nigeria and these have emerged as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno-religious identities (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002). Ethno-religious violence is also traceable to the inability of Nigerian leaders to tackle development challenges, and distribute state resources equitably. Other causes are accusation, and allegation of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry. In all parts of Nigeria, ethno-religious conflicts have assumed alarming rates. It has occurred in places like Shagamu (Ogun State), Lagos, Abia, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Jos, Taraba, Ebonyi and Enugu State respectively. These ethno-religious identities have become disintegrative and destructive social elements threatening the peace, stability and security in Nigeria (Eme and Onyishi, 2011) ^[21].

Politically Based Violence: Nigeria has a long history of politically based violence since the collapse of the first republic on January 14, 1966, and the incursion of the military into governance that same date. The electoral politics in Nigeria right from 1960s till date have been characterized with violent conflicts, political thuggery, assassinations, and arson. Politicians in Nigerian do not accommodate dialogue, negotiation and consensus (Eme and Onyishi, 2011) ^[21]. Political contests are characterized by desperation, and violent struggle for political power among politicians. Recurring political violence in Nigeria could be attributed to over-zealousness and desperation of political gladiators to win elections or remain in office at all cost. These misadventures have often been catastrophic leading to decimation of innocent lives, disruption of economic activities, and the destruction of properties among others.

Systemic and Political Corruption: This is a twin evil and hydra-headed monster that has held the Nigerian state captive. This has contributed to government failure and breakdown of institutional infrastructures. The state of insecurity in Nigeria is greatly a function of government failure, traceable to systemic and political corruption. It has added another dimension of violent conflicts which has eroded national values. Corruption is bad not because money and benefits change hands, and not because of the motives of participants, but because it privatizes valuable aspects of public life, bypassing processes of representation, debate, and choice. It has been described as cancer militating against Nigeria's development, because corruption deeply threatens the fabric of the Nigeria society (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013). Corruption hampers economic growth, disproportionately burdens the poor and undermines the effectiveness of investment and aid (Iyare, 2008).

Economic-Based Violence: It is also referred to as "political economy of violence". Eme and Onyishi (2011) ^[21] note that, in recent writings in the mass media, much emphasis is laid on the role of resources in generating conflict which is a major cause of economic-based violence across the globe and across political divide. Cries of resource control and revenue sharing regularly rent the air between proponents and opponents also leading to violent agitations among the contending actors and between the state and proponents. The Niger-Delta crisis in Nigeria presents a classic case of this violent struggle that has been on since the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970. These

violent agitations have claimed many lives of Nigerians and foreigners, military and para-military personnel, and properties worth billions of naira. It has also resulted in economic misfortune in Nigeria through loss of oil revenue as a result of shortfall in crude oil exports by the oil companies occasioned by disruption of oil exploration activities by the Niger-Delta militants.

Although by no means limited to oil in the Niger Delta, the most prevalent campaign about the link between resources and conflict in Nigeria focuses on oil and the Delta region. No doubt oil has given rise to vertical and horizontal conflicts between National, State and society or between dominant and subordinate geopolitical zones, classes and groups across Nigeria, given the pivotal role that oil plays in the political economy, and power relations in Nigeria.

It is however true those other types of resource driven conflicts have received less attention in the debate. Assets such as grazing and farming, and water resource, have tended to give rise to horizontal conflicts that involve communities across the geo-political zones.

Pervasive Material Inequalities and Unfairness: A major factor that contributes to insecurity in Nigeria is the growing awareness of inequalities, and disparities in life chances which lead to violent reactions by a large number of people. There is a general perception of marginalization by a section of the people in areas of government development policies, political patronage, and these are triggers of disaffection, resentment, and revolt.

Unemployment/Poverty: According to Adagba *et al* (2012) ^[3] unemployment/poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths is a major cause of insecurity and violent crimes in Nigeria. In particular youth's unemployment has contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria. Also, one of the major causes of insecurity in the country is the failure of successive administration to address challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities.

Organized violent groups: Organized violent groups such as ethnic militia, vigilantes, secret cults in tertiary institutions and political thugs contribute significantly to security challenges in Nigeria in different dimension and forms. Their emergence have been linked to a number of factors which include the culture of militarism that has its antecedents in military rule, the failure of the state and its institutions, economic disempowerment, the structure of the state and Nigeria's federalism, non-separation of state and religion, politics of exclusion, culture of patriarchy, ignorance and poor political consciousness (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002 as cited in Eme and Onyishi, 2011) ^[21].

Porous Borders: Achumba *et al.* (2013) ^[2] observe that the porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of the porous borders there is an unchecked inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country which has aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria (Hazen and Horner, 2007). Available data show that Nigeria host over 70 percent of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa (Edeko, 2011) ^[20]. Also, the porosity of the Nigerian

borders has aided the uncontrollable influx of migrants, mainly young men, from neighboring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin responsible for some of the criminal acts (Adeola and Oluyemi, 2012) ^[5].

Recommendations

Our development policies must be based on the short-term on immediate struggle for survival in order to address the more excruciation long term imperatives of socio-economic transformations. Out of pragmatic necessity, the government should fix-up the energy sector as a pointer to key development issues to ensure a realistic chance of success.

Our economy has remained dormant and mono economic for years now because our leaders have either lost vision of focus in addressing our problems. It is hereby suggested that the country should make use of the new partnership for Africa development (NEPAD) to attract, investment from the outside world. It is equally suggested that we can achieve success in economic advancement through the effective promotion of small scale industries.

People who go into politics to amass wealth should be shown the way out through constitutional means. At times they should be made to denounce the oath of office they have sworn to.

The police as it is today harbour criminal-mined persons and other corrupt elements in the force which have constituted the greatest challenge to the force as an entity in her bid to check threats to lives and property of Nigerians.

Government should review all her polices relating to the recruitment into the police force in order to ensure that bad eggs will no longer find their ways in the service. In order to ensure and sustain crime free society, the moral of officers and men should be kept high through training and retraining, welfare and re-orientation and building people's friendly police force. No investor can invest in an atmosphere of insecurity otherwise our quest for vision 20:20:20 will be a mirage.

Though there is a statutory limitation to what state government can do in the area of security, the states have something to contribute. The constitution places security on the exclusive federal list. The police and the Armed forces are all federal institutions, not legally accountable to state governments. However, I am suggesting that there should be partnership between the state and federal government in the area of security agencies with needed logistics for optimal performance. Secondly, as a complement to the services of the conventional security agencies, states should sponsor community-based vigilantes.

Again, re-organization of the security agencies to take them through a new reorientation via re-training of security agents. People should be more security conscious, share information with the police and other security agencies. The populace should not leave security matters to security personnel only. All should be involved in security information and data gathering. Moreover, efforts should be put in crime prevention than control.

Furthermore, the government should increase the size of Nigeria's security agencies, empower and motivate them very well and strengthen neighbourhood watch. Governments should equally fix social infrastructures – roads, street lights, schools and skill acquisition centres.

Apart from the above, there is no gain saying that lack of youth empowerment programmes contribute immensely to social insecurity in the polity. The government should create

programmes that would empower our youths technically. This will enable them to be self-reliant and avert their minds from criminal tendencies.

In addition, a process of legislative and constitutional review should be initiated to assess the country's constitution and amend or expunge as necessary areas that have been found to give rise to conflicts and security problems. The process should also introduce new provisions and legislations that will ensure better and more effective interplay of interests among all groups and stakeholders in Nigeria. Such exercise should also embrace ways of making the country's democratic space more open, free, fair and tolerant as exists in other democracies around the world. Among specific lingering political issues that should be addressed are: the laws relating to political parties and their activities; the establishment, funding and activities of the electoral body; local and state government relationship; allocation of national resources and revenue; citizenship rights; devolution of security powers to states and local governments. In addition, the legislative and constitutional review should also embody security sector reforms that will make the security agencies and institutions more effective in combating crimes and other threats to national security and make them accountable to the democratic political system and structures. These democratic structures include the states and local governments. I believe that we need to give a more concrete understanding to the definition of governors as the chief security officers of the state.

Conclusions

Recent occurrences in Nigeria clearly show that the state of insecurity in the polity has assumed a frightening dimension. While it may be posited that insecurity is a global problem, what looks rather strange in our situation is the seeming inability of our government to tackle the challenge head-long. The cliché of 'security threat' has almost transformed to 'security collapse'.

Book Haram and gun attacks on innocent Nigerians have become almost a daily routine.

Recently, the group added another dimension to the campaign. It has started the bombing of school buildings, abduction of secondary school girls and forcing them into marriage with the members of the sect.

In all, what we need is a good government. And a good government is possible in as much as people who are put in positions of authority are allowed and are committed to discharge their duties without fear or favour; are determined to serve with zeal and patriotism; are not ready to sell out to international capital and are ready to stand by the truth and die for it. In all, there is no mono cultural theory that is a cure-all to the diverse nature of insecurity in Nigeria but I believed and stand by the theory that Nigeria should evolve into six regions, each region having its Premier or Governor.

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