

# Insecurity and the State of the Nation

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## **Abstract**

*Nigerian's chequered political history is currently bedevilled by myriads of security challenges ranging from Boko Haram insurgency, kidnappings and hostage takings, herdsmen and farmers' clashes, organized armed robberies, ethnic militias, threats of secession by dissatisfied groups within the Nigerian state, banditry, home torture centres masterminded by clerics, human trafficking, massive decline in roads infrastructures across the nation, corruption and electoral violence. The frequency and intensity of these challenges are on the increase on a daily bases with no solution from the political leadership which tends to affirm the fact that Nigeria is dwindling towards the status of a failed state. The general objective of this paper is to examine the security challenges facing the country with a view to proffering lasting solutions that will enable us change the dynamics. Using the historical and survey methods of data collection with the political economy approach, the study examined the issues of insecurity in the country. It was found out that these problems bedevilling the country are elite driven deriving mainly from poor political leadership and the poor mindsets of our political elites to embark on what is needful to move the country forward. Secondly, it was observed that security has been compromised by security officials, hence its increasing intensity. Thirdly, it was also noted that unemployment and poverty are also major causes of the insecurity problem. The study is expected to contribute to knowledge production in the following ways: Firstly, it will bring to the fore strategies that will bring to an end the problems of insecurity in the country. Secondly, it will provide feasible and implementable policies that will check the early occurrence of some of these challenges with a view to detecting them early for appropriate action.*

**Keywords:** *Insecurity, chequered, kidnapping, Boko Haram insurgency, intensity, frequency*

## **I. Introduction**

The rising insecurity in Nigeria in recent times has called to question the essential features of democratization and development in Nigeria. Without doubt, the socio-political and economic landscape in Nigeria has been blighted by the endemic twin evils of crime and violence. The visible failure and inability of past government to checkmate rising structural problems like poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among varied ethnic nationalities, have enthroned anti-government sentiment in the for of anger, agitation and violent crimes against the Nigerian state by some individuals and groups. Such crimes include militancy, kidnapping, arm banditry, terrorism, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of government properties, among others (Albinus ibid). Historically, Nigeria used to be one of the relatively secure nations in the West African sub-region. Unfortunately, the nation has suddenly metamorphosed into an abode of serial

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bombings, hostage taking, kidnappings, armed robberies, cold-blooded murders and ethno-religious conflicts traceable to groups with conflicting political and religious ideological leanings.

The implications of these have resulted in violent agitation and attack on public and private property in different parts of the country. A study by Adebakin and Raimi (2012) indicated that Nigeria's expenditure on national security is rising faster than ever before. The Federal government has continued to allocate large chunk of public resources for the protection of both internal and external security in the country. This trend has constitute a drain preventing other critical sectors like the education, health, agriculture and infrastructural the needed attention and capital. Within global expenditure on defence and security rating, Nigeria ranks 57<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in Africa respectively with regards to public expenditure on military hardware in the West African sub-region (Adebakin and Raimi 2012). With all these expenditure, the government has been unable to address the varied socio-political and economic undertones to national insecurity. All that have seemingly dominated the government's security policy have been change in security heads and leadership, without much or any visible change in the existing security situations and socio-political and economic challenges plaguing the country. Nigeria's military expenditure in 2009 was \$1.864 billion or N276.5 billion, representing 0.90 per cent of the Gross Development Production (GDP). In the 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012 fiscal years, the total expenditure earmarked for both internal security and defence in the approved budgets were N292.7 billion, N422.9billion, N563.2 billion and N 921.91 billion respectively (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2012). This is five times greater than the expenditure on security in Cote d'Ivoire and almost 15 times of that of Ghana (Oladesu, 2012). Apart from the public resources expended on internal security at the central level, both the federating states and local government allocate different amount as security votes that in most cases are unaccounted for. Many individuals and groups have criticised the rationale of these humongous diversion of public resources especially in the face of growing security challenges in the country. As it stands, many public analysts have queried the objective behind such allocation, since evidently these resources are often without any means of accountability. This is why many have contended that the security votes have encouraged monumental fraud and stealing of state fund by the political elites in Nigeria (Eboh and Obodoechina 2012).

On their part, Okechukwu and Anyadike (2013) argued that the current security architecture is evidently incapable of protecting the lives and property of the citizenry. The over centralised nature of the security system is evidently fraught with lapses that have encouraged primordial sentiments and corruption in the face of growing security threat to Nigerians. This situation has further limits the power of the government to effectively secure the lives and property of the citizens. The reality is such that the lapses created have resulted in what can be termed the privatization of security in Nigeria. Situations of things around the country show clearly that the state no longer has the monopoly of the means of violence. In addition, the involvement of very powerful individuals have escalated the problem, bringing an unprecedented sophistication to the vice, as their automatic weapons and mode of operations have beaten the low ranging arms of the police hollow in the crime war. Evidences lend credence to the fact that the insecurity situation calls for a reform in the security sector, because it is the sole responsibility of government to protect the lives and properties of citizens. A government that cannot guarantee this, to say the least, has lost its essence. It is against this backdrop that this paper will examine insecurity and the state of the Nigerian nation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In May 1999, Nigeria's return to civil rule was accompanied with fresh hopes and latent optimism. This optimism was predicated on the fact that democracy would guarantee freedom, liberty, and equity and enhances security of lives and property, which would indeed reposition development trajectories to sustainability. Regrettably this optimism seems to be a mirage. This is because the current trajectory of development after more than 20 years into democratic governance has not given hope for optimism in Nigeria. Various indices of development have showed that Nigeria have continued to sprawl downward both socially, politically and economic wise. With the huge euphoria that greeted the return of democracy in 1999, the lives of many Nigerians have not fared any better. Indeed, there has been a geometric increase in the level of poverty, unemployment, crime, destitution, insecurity, child and women trafficking, drug abuse, armed robbery, kidnapping, vandalism and a general state of restiveness. Figures releases by the National Bureau of Statistics Report at different period have often pointed to the growing trends in poverty, unemployment, crime and insecurity. Yet, it would seems that those at the helms of affairs of the country has either failed to heed or lack the means to help savage the nation from these hydra-headed problems that often give rise to security challenges. The persistent ineptitude of the government to address these very critical issues in the society has continued in the form of armed banditry, farmers-herders' conflict, kidnapping, armed robbery and ever presence of the activities of the Boko Haram in the Northern Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this paper will examine the insecurity and the state of the nation, with a view to exploring the fundamental governance variables that provides basis for the current state of insecurity in the country.

### **Objective of the Study**

The broad objective of this paper is to examine insecurity and the state of the Nigerian nation while the specific objectives are to:

- i. Explore the historical context of security challenges in Nigeria
- ii. Examine key governance variables as they affect insecurity in Nigeria
- iii. Examine the frameworks or policy options that can help to reduce the insecurity situation conceptual clarification, bedevilling the Nigeria State.

## **II. Conceptual Discussion**

### **The Concept of Security**

Security is critical to the survival of any nation to forestall lawlessness, chaos and the eventual disintegration of the system. Security is considered as a dynamic condition, which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests (Omede, 2011). According to McGrew (1988), the security of a nation is predicated on two central pillars viz; the maintenance and protection of the socio-economic order in the face of internal and external threats on one hand and the promotion of a preferred international order, which minimises the threat to core values and interests, as well as to the domestic order on the other hand. Krahmann E. (2003) on his part defined security as activities that ensure the protection of a

country, persons, and properties of the community against future threats, danger, mishaps and all other forms of perils. Here security is viewed only as a futuristic phenomenon. In all places and countries, security is a multidimensional subject of numerous debates and is considered a 'first-order-value' worth preserving. There is no consensus about a general definition of security. However, two contending perspectives provide the basis for the conceptualization of national security: the realist/strategist theoretical framework predicated on the primacy and centrality of the state in conceptualizing security and the non-strategic definition that relies on socio-economic factors.

### **Discussion of Key Governance Variables as they affect State of Insecurity in Nigeria**

The specific issues examined in this section are, namely, poverty, security of life and property; rule of law; accountability, transparency, and corruption; and electoral system. However, in view of the pivotal role of leadership, it is also analyzed as part of the key factors in Nigeria's governance problem. According to Aning (2016), most of these security challenges have emerged partly as a result of "multiple socio-economic injustices," including but not limited to "marginalization, social inequality, political exclusion, corruption, economic deprivation, unequal allocation and distribution of state resources, among others. In Nigeria's First Republic, the country practiced a parliamentary system that was patterned after the British model. The government, at this period, was largely democratic and federal in character. Powers and resources were essentially decentralized, with the effect that sub-national units were strong, relatively independent and largely self-financing (Otobo, 2002; Simbine & Oladeji, 2010).

The centralization of power and resources in the hands of one person-the president-has continuously fuelled apprehension over exclusion and the agitation for better representation from across the different socioeconomic and political groups. This has worsened the country's age long clientelistic and prebendal politics, in which largely personalized public institutions have not only failed to uphold a necessary culture of accountability and transparency but have also pilloried the vast majority of ordinary citizens who are unconnected to the political elites in abject poverty (Abiola, 2006; Yagboyaju, 2007). Unfortunately, a critical analysis of the relationship between the government and the govern, showed evidently that the government by its nature and character is hardly interested in the common goods. This is possibly why they have failed to respond as expected to the socio-political and economic needs of the larger parts of the society (Tella, 2016). Evidently, time and space are constraints even if an attempt is made to analyse all indicators of governance in Nigeria. In the light of this, issues concerning Poverty and inequality, security of life and property, and the fight against corruption, rule of law, Divisive political leadership and development-oriented leadership are carefully selected for analysis.

**Poverty and inequality:** Despite its vast natural resources, Nigeria suffers from substantial social challenges, of which poverty remains one of the most significant. According to the World Bank, in 2013-2018 the proportion of the Nigerian population living in poverty was 64.2% or 48.3% using the adult equivalent approach. Poverty presents additional challenges to security because it is perceived to be distributed along

regional and social group lines. The perception of inequalities along social identity lines have been identified by some scholars an important factor in explaining outbreaks of violence, and forms the core of the concept of horizontal inequalities. In Nigeria, marginalisation is frequently used in the political discourse and it is commonly stated that there is a significant divide regarding socio-economic development between the North and the South. While there are other major differences within these regions, the underdevelopment of the largely Muslim Northern Nigeria is commonly seen as one of the root causes of militant Islamism in the area. The difference between regions can be seen in the poverty rates (see table below), where the overall average is 48.3% (adult equivalent approach).

**Region of Nigeria Poverty rate (adult equivalent approach)**

North East	59.7%
North West	58%
North Central	48.8%
South East	39%
South South	37.6%
South West	30.6%

**Source:** Yagboyaja, 2016

The differences can also be seen in many other indicators, such as maternal mortality rate, where the national statistic is 630 deaths per 100,000 live births. In the North East, this figure rises to 1,549, compared with 165 in the South East. For reference, the corresponding number in Sweden was four deaths per 100,000 live births in 2010. Food insecurity is also an important problem in Northern Nigeria, further accentuated by the security situation and displacement of population related to Boko Haram Insurgency. The differences between North and South Nigeria are often pointed out and are of significant importance. However, the differences within these regions, each roughly the size of Sweden, should not be forgotten. The Niger Delta, in the South South region where the vast majority of Nigeria's oil is found, has among Nigeria's highest rates of unemployment and is one of the five most polluted places on earth. The underdevelopment, poverty and unemployment in this region are closely connected to the security challenges. On the other hand, Lagos state (in the South West) has made great progress in reducing poverty, going from 43.8% in 2003-2004 to 22.9% in 2009-2019. Underdevelopment, lack of education and health services and malfunctioning service delivery in general are closely interconnected with the widespread corruption in Nigeria.

**Corruption:** Corruption is another factor behind the endemic security challenges in Nigeria. In fact, Nigeria is one of the most corrupt countries in the world, ranked 144 of 177 countries with a score of 25 out of 100 by Transparency International. Due to corruption, large parts of the oil revenue disappear and corruption is commonly seen as the main reason why the national poverty rate has gone up despite the oil income, from 36%

in 1970 to 64.2% today. Corruption is widespread in Nigeria and can be seen in many parts of society, including the security forces. In the Afrobarometer's survey of Nigeria in 2015, 59% of respondents stated that they believed most or all government officials were involved in corruption, while 77% believed that most or all of the police were involved in corruption too. In an earlier survey in 2001, the police and the political parties were also ranked as those perceived to be most corrupt. Corruption is an important challenge for Nigeria, with affect the government and state structures. Importantly, it has severe negative consequences for service delivery in the country. This is a major source of discontent, as funds that could have been allocated to the provision of public goods end up enriching the political elite. Overall, corruption reduces the government's ability to implement policies and tackle the existing challenges. With a political elite dependent on the distribution of oil revenue rather than taxation for funding, it also has less incentive to provide and care for its constituents.

**Security and security forces:** Nigeria faces several security challenges. The country is the scene of widespread violence, criminality and outright insurgency, such as Boko Haram in the North East. The spread of illegal small and light weapons is substantial. Border control, especially along the borders with Niger, Chad and Cameroon, is severely lacking and makes smuggling of weapons and other goods relatively easy. In this context it can be noted that it is suspected that Libyan weapons have ended up, via Niger, through Boko Haram. Nigeria's security apparatus consists most importantly of the Nigeria Police Force, the State Security Service (SSS – the intelligence services) and the military, all of which are federal institutions. Both the police and the military play an important role in the maintenance of public order and safety. Overall, it can be said that the security forces have taken a more military approach to the task of maintaining public security, which in some cases has resulted in casualties in response to riots and other disturbances. The insecurity nature of the Nigerian State has necessitated in recent times the formation of regional security outfit such as: Western Nigeria Security Network codenamed "AMOTEKUN" in the six states of the west while other regions or geopolitical zones are coming up with theirs as soon as possible.

**Divisive political competition:** The corrupt nature of the Nigerian state gives the political competition a distinctly winner-takes-all nature, as those in power have access to the revenue streams. Political patronage is common and financial backing of political parties by various economic interests. The prevalence of political patronage and its ties to economic interests contribute to making political appointments one of the most accessible pathways to economic success. As a result, political competition is associated with the buying and selling of votes, violence and threats. Politicians have been known to sponsor violent groups, and clashes between groups associated with or supporting different parties or individuals are not uncommon. There have even been suspicions of political involvement with, and support of, Boko Haram. The intense competition for political power and the use of political power to access wealth serves to accentuate inequalities, both between groups and, importantly, between the elite and the general population. This dimension comprises both the manipulation of the population and groups for political purposes, and the vast differences in wealth and access to services between the political elite and the general populace, ultimately generate bitter rivalries that have in most cases lead to insecurity in Nigeria. The current bickering between the Ruling All Progressive Congress

(APC) and the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) over the state of affairs in the country is a pointer to the point above.

**Security of Life and Property:** The place of security in the development aspiration and agenda of any country is quite pivotal. It has been consistently propounded that there is a symbiotic relationship between security and development (Akinola, 2011; Shanum, 2003). Shanum (2013) for instance argued that no country can aspire to develop if majority of its citizens lives in perpetual fear or insecure environment. Unfortunately, that is the tale of Nigeria. It is a tale of poor governance, insecurity and poverty in the midst of plenty. Poor development oriented policy and leadership have placed Nigeria in the categories of poor countries in the world. Therefore, the security-development convergence explains why every successive government, since Nigeria's independence in 1960, has reiterated the importance of security as the core goal and primary purpose of government.

Yet, it would appear that over the years, different administrations have come with the mantra the development is intertwined with peace and security. However, even though every regime pronounced security of life and property as one of its key purposes of state of governance, they have often failed to make it a reality. Section 14(2b) of the 1999 Constitution, upon which the Fourth Republic operates, clearly states the importance of promoting peace and security by the government. However, public security institutions and agencies saddled with the responsibility of providing security in Nigeria that include police personnel; the Army; the Navy and Air Force amongst others have failed to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the citizens in terms of securing their lives and property (Yagboyaju, 2016). Other prominent institutions controlled by the federal government include the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Department of State Services (DSS), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Federal Roads Safety Corps (FRSC), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Nigeria Prisons Service (NPS) now known as Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Federal Fire Service and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), among others.

**Rule of Law:** ensuring the sanctity of the rule of law principle is critical to effective governance, and security of life and property. Respect for the Rule of law is one of the foundations of true democracy. However for democracy to thrive, the laws and the various institutions saddled with implementing the laws must respect the sanctity of the law. Often times, failure to respect the sanctity of the law especially in its application create gap that breeds mistrust and consequently misgivings about the true intention of the laws. In Nigeria, there has been a rampant tendency to apply the laws to favour certain individuals against others. This situations have created situation where 'might is right' thereby creating a volatile situation that has manifest in certain individuals who feel cheated by the law and applications, opting to secure justice by other means including the use of violence. This means therefore, that for the rule of law to functions, the judiciary must be bold and independent in dispensing justice. In enforcing the rule of law, the judicial arm must ensure justice is fair and

equitable; hence the long arms of the law must help to ensure the sanctity of the law by acting as check on the excesses of government and its institutions in relations to other members of the society.

**The Leadership Question:** Leadership is, no doubt, a key factor in the whole gamut of public administration and the management of societal affairs. Evidently, leadership failure has been the bane of Nigeria's development. The absence of development oriented leadership have unfortunately resulted in divisiveness, national insecurity, growing poverty, unemployment and all other socio-political and economic malfeasance. (Achebe, 1988; "Mo Ibrahim's Sobering Report," 2013). In Nigeria, democracy has not yielded the expected results due to the nature and character of the political elites who has limited understanding of what governance requires (Agulanna, 2006). Shanum (2013) posit that no nation can make progress, if her leaders lack vision on how to pursue and drive development. He stated further that when a leader lacked vision, it is impossible for him or her to perform maximally. Unfortunately, many Nigerian leaders have been unable to live up to these expectations. The reality in the case of Nigeria is that most of her leaders are motivated by personal interest rather than the common good. This has created situations where many aspire only to line their pockets over that of promoting the welfare of the masses. It also explains why many leaders are often easily swayed into adopting public policy that is anti-people. The absence of leadership with public service ethics have thus far created disenchantment among the masses, leading to agitation, restiveness and wanton destruction of lives and property. These situations have further heightened the already volatile security situation with its attendant negative effect on development (Uzodike, 2009). In summary, leadership failure is one of the strongest foundations of state incapacity in Nigeria and the cause of insecurity.

Since the 1960 independence, the country's abundant human and mineral resources are yet to be significantly harnessed to combat the impoverishment of ordinary Nigerians. For instance, Nigeria remains the largest oil producer in Africa and the world's eighth largest oil producer, the world's fourth largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and possesses the seventh largest reserves of natural gas (Oshikoya, 2008). The country's crude oil resources include about 35 billion barrels of oil and an estimated 180 trillion cubic of natural gas, with reserves projected to be sustainable for the next 40 and 110 years respectively (Oshikoya, 2008). The inability of the state to convert the huge crude wealth to sustainable development prompted the following questions: Why has the country been unable to develop its oil and gas industry from which so much income has been earned? From an average OPEC price of "\$1.57 per barrel, in 1961" (Olla, 2015), the price of crude rose to \$17.44 per barrel in 1999 when civil rule was reintroduced in Nigeria. There was a phenomenal boom between 2010 and 2014 when the product averaged "\$77.38 pb; \$107.46 pb; \$109.45 pb; \$105.87 pb; and \$96.29 pb for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014, respectively," before dropping to between \$30 per barrel and \$50 per barrel in 2015 and 2016.

In 2016, the country exported an average of 2 million barrels per day; it was unable to fully account for its earnings, it also could not put its four refineries to "10.4 per cent capacity utilization" (Oil Report, 2018). Despite the oil wealth, majority of Nigerians still live in penury; this explains the outright hostilities to any form



of fuel increases in the country (Akinola, 2014). Nigeria has been referred to as “a rich country of poor people” (Agbaje, Onwudiwe, & Diamond, 2004), whereas Suberu (2014) believes that Nigeria is the “greatest single developmental tragedy in the world today . . . the metaphor per excellence for a failed developmental experience” (Suberu, 2014: 31). Its unsuccessful socio-economic reform, like the oil sector reform, becomes a point to note. Therefore, the failure to maintain the productivity of the refineries, weakness of oil governance machineries, and inept leadership led to the continued importation of finished petroleum products and a “criminally dubious fuel subsidy regime,” which stopped in 2015 (Akinola, 2014; Akinola & Wissink, 2018; “Swallowing the Bitter Pill of Fuel Deregulation,” 2016: 22).

### **III. Theoretical Perspective**

Based on the context of the discussion, the paper adopted the political economy theoretical perspective. Political Economy theory posits that people pursue collective economic goals and deal with conflicts over resources and other economic factors in authoritative way by means of government. Therefore, the Marxist Political Economy approach is deemed fit to be adopted as the analytical construct in this paper. The reason has been that, the approach scientifically studies the society in its totality and takes into consideration the interconnection of social relations, class conflict and the organic relationship between the sub-structure (economy) and the super structure (politics). Thus, Political Analysis adapts the approach to explain or present a critique of any major economic policy of political actors. The experiences in the developing States of the world have shown that scholars, who are Marxist- inclined in their writings, often adopt the approach to explain certain economic-political relationship existing in a named political system or between a political system and another political system. They do this by applying the contending theories in political economy – Class Analysis, Dependence Theory, Development/ Underdevelopment. In fact, their action only confirms the contention that the central concept of political economy is that of “class”.

Political economy is concerned about the relationship between the economy and state and about the various ways individual, try to use the state to improve their economic welfare. The central premise of this perspective is that the mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual process of life (Anifowose, 2008). Thus, the society has a sharp divide and is characterized into classes of the rich and the poor or the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Therefore, the rich own the means of production, distribution and exchange, use their wealth/resources to persuade the poor to gain power (Olawole, 2007). Put differently, the approach is seen as the window to understand the law that governs the economic life of the society. According to the Marxist thought, this domination (Politics), exploitation (economic), and marginalization (dependency) of society is a dialectical material distribution and power which eventually will result in a consciousness or revolt to upturn the status quo. Therefore, political leadership owns the apparatus of government which can be used to marginalize, exploit, and dominate others in the stratum of the society. It is in this wise that this paper tries to expose and criminalize acts of government that are detrimental and at variance to the expectation of the responsibility of political actors in the discharge of duties in the society.

Since Nigeria returned to democracy in May 1999, after almost three decades of military rule, and almost two decades of economic crises, the country has been faced with the complex challenges of national reconciliation, national reconstruction and economic reform, and democratic consolidation. Even after holding the post-transition general elections in 2003, Nigeria continues to grapple with these challenges and the citizenry are still anxious to see and enjoy the benefits of “democracy dividends” – social welfare, justice, equity, and equal access to resources and power. The opening up of the political space by the return to democracy has not only raised the hopes of those groups that had been hitherto marginalized or repressed, but also paradoxically raised the stakes in the competition for access to power and resources. Demands for inclusion have been strident, while the politics of exclusion has also been vicious – both reactions to and legacies of the long years of military dictatorship and the militarization of politics, as power controlled by the “few” remains the only gateway to the good life. But the present signs are rather complex and should not be read in a simplistic unidirectional manner. For although the political game has changed from the rule of the gun, to the rule of the vote, the long shadow of militarism and winner takes-all politics continue to loom large over the political process, fuelling frustrations, provoking violence.

The result of this has been a series of crippling crises. The opening of the political space has led to the in-rush of political forces that are as heterogeneous as they are complex. A new political elite and a generation of politicians mainly nurtured during the military era, with little or no experience in democratic norms and values have emerged into the Politics of the Nigerian State. Political entrepreneurs and politicians seeking to expand patrimonial networks and protect vested interests from being eroded by democratic principles have ambushed the political process and highjack power, thereby subverting it from within and disembowelling politics of its democratic contents, creating room for conflicts that seems to have no end within the political space. It would appear that since the return of democracy, Nigeria has witnessed an escalation of violent conflict. The struggles as noted earlier are driven by the quest to fill the power vacuum left by the retreating military, but more fundamentally, the contestations between various groups in a context of rising demands relative to shrinking scarce resources. These conflicts have largely been identity driven: communal, ethnic and religious. The “we” against “them”, “indigenes” versus “settlers” and “insiders” versus “outsiders” relations of inclusion/exclusion have been continuously mobilized and deployed in the rivalries and violent struggles for access to power and resources.

It would seem that the whole issue of political space has become in some sense the exclusive control and rights within a claimed territory, to the exclusion of “others”. The process of discriminating against or excluding “other” Nigerian citizens on the basis of their being “non-indigenes” or belonging to “other” religions or “other” communities can be gleaned from conflicts that have ravaged the Northern and Central parts of Nigeria, as well as the oil-rich Niger Delta region where violence has reached alarming levels. In all these conflicts, many lives have been lost, people have had their properties destroyed and some have been displaced as a result. Worse, the unity of the country and its very basis are being dangerously eroded in the face of the inability of the fledgling democratic institutions to effectively mediate the spiralling security challenge. What

can be seen is the use of security forces or the military to quell these conflicts, even when the political options have not been exhausted or the roots of conflict addressed.

Closely related to the foregoing, is the complete intolerance for opposition. It would seem that the transfer of the chain of command from the military to the political sphere left no room for opposition politics that was translated to disloyalty. As should be noted, the military ruled through decrees, and in the latter years of their rule, ouster clauses were introduced to place decrees above the law and the constitution that was in most parts suspended. In these context three trends seems to have emerged and by extension have contributed to the state of governance in Nigeria. The mentality of the military regime it would seems has created rooms for situation where: all opposition was seen as enemies to be excluded, punished or destroyed, the military rulers were beyond civil law and accountability, and public interests were subjected to the will of the military leader and its ruling council that was made of officers that were of ranks lower to it. In this way the state was “piratized” and those who captured it held the people to ransom, deciding when to “give” them democracy, and who they would hand over power to. In this regard, governance it would seem since 1999 have slipped into dictatorship shaped by an obsession to hold on to power at all cost. It has also created a network of power in which loyalty to the leader was valued above all else, and was rewarded within the patrimonial framework erected upon the distribution of the petro-dollars.

As argued by Obi (2004) the legacy of the military faction of the ruling elite to the political process was the paradoxical authorship of a democracy borne out of a dictatorship. At the very best it offered only part of an opportunity to advance a democratic project, but this was against the background of a tradition of the militarization of social life and politics, and the framing of the rules of the game to favour its long-term post-transition interests. The obsession with power, the use of violence in the struggle for access to resources and power, and the control of public institutions and resources to consolidate control over power, and the intolerance of opposition have outlived formal military rule in Nigeria. Elements of these tendencies could be gleaned from how the government perceived criticisms and response to opposition.

The implication of the political economy structure of contemporary Nigeria it would seems has fosters a type of politics that thrives on the centralisation of power by patrimonial networks of power that reproduce themselves by capturing state (oil) power, distributing oil largesse to members, while excluding non-members. As noted elsewhere, such a system offers no real incentive for the decentralisation of state power, accountability or development. Governance is therefore reduced to a hegemonic political and economic project, directed at sharing the spoils of oil, but excluding the enemies of the ruling faction, and holding onto power. Politics is highly personalised and factionalised, and institutions are weak. Thus making it difficult for a coherent national ruling class to emerge, and for a developmental ethos to take root within the state. This provides a context for the use of violence to contest for access to power and resources, but it also leads to instability. This type of instability is a cause for concern not just because the state is an actor in conflict, but that it is problematic for it to effectively mediate conflicting demands because it is captive to one of the actors involved in the conflict. For

this reason some of the marginalised but contesting forces distrust the state, see it as an alien force, and either seek to use the threat or the use of force to make demands on it, or to challenge it. The result of this is that instability assumes the appearance of permanence in the political system leading to the diversion of energies and resources towards stabilizing the system, as is the case today in Nigeria.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

This paper has been able to locate insecurity and the state of the nation on Nigerian leadership and governance crises in context. Among the several perspectives from which this issue can be analysed, this paper focuses on the economy, public accountability, and human rights. Obviously, Nigerian government has even failed to guarantee the security of a large section of the population, and militancy and insurrection have militated against effective governance since the return of civil rule in 1999. Institutional weaknesses, ethnic politics, historical reality, and evolution of Nigeria into un-negotiated statehood (the northern and southern protectorate were unilateral merged as a country unit by the colonial administration) have contributed to the weakness of the state and its institutions in the performance of its constitutional obligations. Nigeria has been under different sets of political leadership that were not visionary but regarded politics as an avenue to maintain their economic dominance and to sustain their business empires. Apart from the weak political leadership exemplified by the ruling elites, the structural composition of the state has also mitigated against effective governance leading to the current state of insecurity that is pervading the country.

The paper noted further that the state of insecurity is compounded by the lop-sided federal arrangements and institutional weaknesses. Incursion of the military into politics greatly distorted the Nigerian federal arrangements and laid the foundation for the promotion of individuals above state's institutions. Indeed, the political leadership exploited the structural weakness of Nigeria's federalism and its institutions. The emerging political leadership, after the collapse of the first Republic became self-centred and primordial in nature driven by patron-client politics. In addition, the negative impact of the military class resulted in authoritarian democratic practises, where might became right. This has been evident even in the nature of the conduct of democratic process. In Nigeria political structures an institutions continued to display ardent disregards to the peoples will. Election into public spaces has become attainment of only those that have the means financially, or politically connected , while others uses other means possible including violence to either attain political power or seek to undermine the process. In many instances, candidates for electoral positions were handpicked; thus, internal party democracy became obsolete and rigging of elections have become the other of the day. These situations have led to the emergent of illegitimate leaders. The citizens, whom from inception have worked and pushed for the enthronement of constitutional democracy, have in the face of disenchantment and disillusion decided to join the bandwagon. While many hitherto champions of democracy have been infiltrated with division, others have choose to pitch tent with any government in power with the hope that they can benefit from the crumbs that falls down from the table of the politicians. This explains why many youths have become readily available as political thugs and purveyor of violence during electioneering period. The result of all this is not far-fetched in the sense that the country is now saturated with leaders who lacked

vision, who are greedy and selfish. It has also resulted into situations where we have youths who have become so gullible and are therefore ready tools in the dismantlement of the national treasury. With structural and institutional decay, corruption and impunity evident in Nigeria's socio-political and economic environment, the capacity of the state to uphold the rule of law is greatly undermined. It is therefore not surprising wonder that Nigeria is currently experiencing serious security challenges that if not checkmated are capable of making Nigeria a failed state.

In the final analysis, the paper argues that as long as we continue to treat the issue of national security separately from the issue of national development in which challenges of poverty, inequality, unemployment, social exclusion on account of tribes and religion are not tackled proactively, the problem of insecurity will remain very much alive and will continue to plague the country.

## **V. Recommendations**

Flowing from the discussion so far, the following recommendations are proposed with a view to reducing insecurity in Nigeria:

- i. Policymakers need to appreciate fact, and start taking the necessary steps to builds institutions that can truly ensure justice, accountability and development in their countries. Otherwise, all measures designed to address insecurity will remain futile.
- ii. Second, the international community cannot afford to remain impervious to issues related to social justice, political reforms, democracy and good governance in developing countries. These remain central to peace, progress and sustainable development, and by extension, global peace. The involvement of the developed world in all spheres that promote these themes in the developing world is very important. Situations where world powers, for strategic reasons, blind themselves to gross human rights violations, bad governance, corruption, social injustice and inequality among their third world allies do no one any good. For in the end, it nourishes the conditions that endanger the global peace. Therefore, helping developing states like Nigeria by insisting on good practice by its leaders through good governance, genuine democratization process, and accountable political leadership, is a collective international obligation.
- iii. In addition, the retraining of Nigerian security agencies, especially the intelligence services on sophisticated and combative methods of restoring security rather than a complete overhaul of these agencies. The government should recourse to advanced countries like Britain and France in this regard for assistance.
- iv. Furthermore, the judiciary of the country needs to step up and eschew being compromised in all issues, especially that of security. When justice is guaranteed or seen to be done, people will resort less to violence or criminality.
- v. Education in the country needs to be revisited and upgraded if security can be restored in this country. The quality of education in the country is on the wane. Government needs to raise the quality of education by not only financially supporting the education sector but also, evolving programmes of

cultural and political education and orientation that seek to enthrone the fundamentals of democracy. This would make the Nigerian citizens imbibe principles and practices essential for sustainable democracy.

vi. The government needs to create sufficient employment for the people of its country. If the government cannot do this all alone, it should seek assistance from the private sector. This can go a long way in restoring security in Nigeria. When idle minds are occupied with meaningful work, they would be indisposed to perpetrating crimes.

vii. The government should embark on a de-radicalisation programme for the many young people in the Northern region who have been erroneously indoctrinated. A programme that goes beyond meting out punitive measures but entails “giving voice and representation to young people in the region.

viii. The initiate of the six states of western Nigeria to develop their own security network should be spared to other regions with the full mind-set to combat insecurity across the nation.

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